

Greensborough Historical Society Inc.

# Newsletter

Edition 31, September 2018

Incorporation No. **A0054430X**

ABN **64 318 435 402**



## President's Report (from Noel at the AGM)

Another busy year for Greensborough Historical Society and a growing membership which is encouraging and we look forward to the future with enthusiasm but at the same time always seeking members suggestions for anything they would like to see for next year.

Our monthly meetings have had presentations by guest speakers as well by our members informing us of former times and how Melbourne and Greensborough have developed over the years as well as being asked to put on our thinking caps when questions have been raised about aspects of our history that we haven't got an answer to and there is a lot we need still to know and that is what we are about.

There were numerous highlights of the year including getting heating and air conditioning installed at our History Resource Centre thanks to part contribution from the Federal Government with the support of our Federal Member Jenny Macklin.

Getting the 13 plaques installed in Grimshaw & Main Streets funded by Greensborough RSL and assistance from Noella Jacobs of Greensborough Chamber of Commerce in getting permission from shop keeps and owners to attach the plaques to their walls and though it has been a long haul we got there in the end.

Our involvement with the Greensborough Primary School's 140<sup>th</sup> Anniversary helped to make it a great success especially for former students some travelling from interstate to be there. (See the report in this Newsletter)

So! We are getting our presence out there into the community so that it can see and appreciate our existence which is as it should be and that of course just doesn't happen without effort by a handful of members be they the Committee or those willing to assist in making this Society a success.

Organisations we have worked with over the year include Banyule City Council, Diamond Valley Community Support, Greenhills Neighbourhood House, Greensborough Chamber of Commerce, Greensborough RSL, Federal & State Governments, Nillumbik Shire Council, and Yarra Plenty Library Service all of whom provide financial and moral support which we couldn't survive without.

Though we are seen as being in the City of Banyule part of Greensborough's history happens to be in the Shire of Nillumbik which it has recognised and supports us each year with an Annual Heritage Grant which pays for our yearly internet connection for which we are most grateful as without that our research would be on the backfoot.

I wish to thank each member of the Committee and our Thursday research team for their ongoing work towards making this a progressive and successful Society and thank you our members for your support and encouragement over the past 12 months.

We all look forward to the coming year and whatever challenges and successes it may bring.

**Committee 2018-2019**

**President** Noel Withers 94354513

**Vice President** Peter Van Eeken  
Email: [pve101@yahoo.com.au](mailto:pve101@yahoo.com.au)

**Secretary** Norm Colvin 94352903

**Treasurer** John Gibson 94350097

**Committee Members**

Sue Brenkovich

Anne Paul

Marilyn Smith

Sue Ballantyne

**Contact the Greensborough Historical Society**

Web Site: [www.greensboroughhistorical.org.au](http://www.greensboroughhistorical.org.au)

Email: [info@greensboroughhistorical.org.au](mailto:info@greensboroughhistorical.org.au)

By Post: Greensborough Historical Society Inc.  
4 Jenna Close, Greensborough 3088.

In Person: **Resource Centre**  
34 Glenauburn Road (off Para Road), Lower Plenty  
Open Thursdays from 10.00am to 3.00pm  
Visitors welcome

**Meeting dates and times for 2018**

*New members and visitors are most welcome to join us at our meetings.*

Committee meetings are generally held at 7.00pm on the third Wednesday of each month.  
Venue: Resource Centre.

The Resource Centre will be open on selected weekends for research into your family or the local area. All welcome!

<b>Date</b>	<b>Day</b>	<b>Start Time</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
<b>13/10/18</b>	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>1.00 pm</b>	<b>Open day HRC</b>
27/10/18	Saturday	1.15 pm	Heritage meeting TBA
30/11/18	Friday	1.15 pm	SGM Christmas Meeting – GHNH
<b>Dates for 2019 will be attached to the December Newsletter</b>			

Do you have an idea for a story or photos to include in our Newsletter? Contact the Editor, Sue Ballantyne [sueballantyne2010@hotmail.com](mailto:sueballantyne2010@hotmail.com)



**Greensborough Primary School 140<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary Celebrations  
18<sup>th</sup> August 2018**

A big “Thank You” to the Principal of Greensborough Primary School, Ms Angela Morritt, the staff and students for inviting us to the Community Open Day and Reunion, held on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2018.

The chilly afternoon did not deter hundreds of people from attending. From the time the gates opened at 2.00pm until well after 4.30pm, past students were treated to a trip down memory lane.

The old school building was open for tours, and the 'new' buildings were full of photos, memorabilia and old friends. The school Art Show was well worth a visit and current students entertained with short presentations. A BBQ was provided by Lachie Pitman from Aussie Direct, Northcote. Lachie even organised for three Variety Bash cars to be



present, which raised much interest. Afternoon tea was catered by the Rosanna Country Women’s and coffee courtesy of the school.



The Greensborough Historical Society was pleased to assist in the lead up to THE BIG DAY, with:

- classroom visitors for talks with the children. Thanks to GHS members Eric Barclay, Norm Colvin and Gary Partington, and volunteers Peter Ellingsen, Robyn Heywood and Jan Muller.
- access to our collection of school photos which were displayed around the school
- loaning memorabilia for display
- providing PowerPoints on the history of Greensborough for classroom use and for use at the Open Day
- sorting out their newspaper box and mounting the clippings ready for display
- advertising the Open Day on our website and in the Newsletter
- Dawn produced a display at DVCS Greensborough Plaza
- Marilyn attended the ‘Dress-up day’ and took photos
- supporting a proposed student walk utilising the Main Street Plaques



*Colin Brooks and Principal Angela Morritt welcome visitors to the celebrations*



*Some of the GHS Members: Dawn, Merilyn, Marilyn, John, Sue, Norm, Rosie and Adrian.*



*Looking for yourself in old photos is always fun!*



*Glenys and Bryan enjoy the afternoon*



*Geoff Butterworth and Eric Barclay return to their old school*



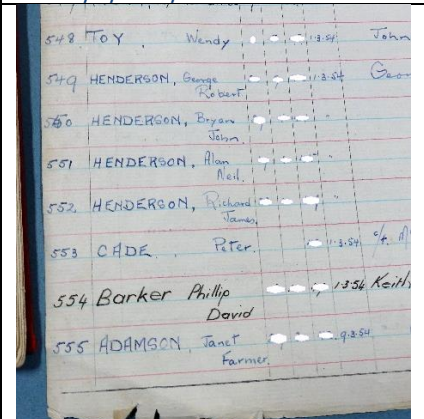
*Searching the rolls for your name was a popular pastime*



*Teacher Janet Troy at the Art Show*



*Teachers taking it seriously at the "Dress-up Day" in May*



*Four of the Henderson siblings enrolled together*



*Banyule Mayor Mark Di Pasquale and Rosie Bray join the fun*



*Sue, Kim and Angela agree that the day is a success!*



*Faye enjoying the reunion with old friends*

## A Message to the students of Greensborough Primary from across the world

Dear pupils!

I am honoured to say a few words about my school days back in the 1950s. It might seem a long time ago, over 60 years, but when you reach my age – 75 - you will see that it isn't really such a frightfully long time. Time does pass, sometimes very quickly. Ask your grandparents!

Back then Greensborough was almost country. We lived on Poulter Avenue, just below the station, and had three cows, 40 hens, a dog and cat. It was built by the first settlers in Greensborough William and Mary Poulter in 1853! Do you know any of their offspring and relatives?

The old house is no longer standing in the valley. Now there is a nice park, but when you look down at it from the station, can you imagine a boy your age lugging a big bag with cucumbers and tomatoes up the hill to the vegetable shop on Main Street and selling them? The owner Mr O'Neill gave me a handful of shillings and coppers for them from his pocket which I gave my dad. Dad let me keep some of it and I shared it with my little sister Aija. We, after all, weeded the garden, and pocket money was our reward.

Another chore I had was to feed the hens, chop wood for the stove, and, with my big brother Aivars milk the cows. The frothy milk straight from the milk bucket was delicious! We made our own butter, curd, and cheese. That's why I still have strong bones!



*The Lejins family with milk fresh from their cow*

We had the best eggs; dad sold them at Eltham High School where he taught math. There were never enough eggs – today we would say - demand outstripped supply.

Now you will want to know how on earth we managed to live without TV, not to speak of smart phones! How could we have survived without Twitter, Facebook, What's Up, and all the other apps?

Not only did we survive, we had great fun!

First of all, we enjoyed school. Every day was exciting. I wonder if we did not spend more time outdoors than inside the old brick building. We played football, cricket, marbles, all kinds of games. The girls played tag, hide and seek, and did a lot of skipping.

Best of all it once snowed and we shot out of our classes shouting and screaming to throw the already melting snow at each other. The teachers didn't mind and when we trooped back they continued the lessons where we had interrupted them.

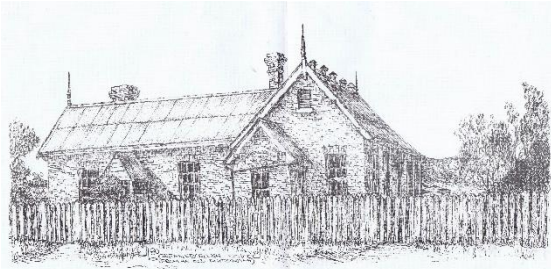
There were regular football and cricket matches between the red, gold, and green teams in the school, and between other schools. We also had athletic competition games between these schools, like the Olympic Games. My brother came second in the 100 yards sprint!

The Queen with the Duke visited Australia on her coronation tour in 1953 if I'm not mistaken. We were taken by train to the Melbourne stadium which was packed with school children from all the schools in the Melbourne area. The Queen and the Duke, standing in a car, drove in circles in the stadium (there were older pupils standing in columns in the centre too) and we all screamed like mad without stopping. Unforgettable!

Later, when she visited Latvia in 2006 and I shook her hand, she and the Duke were astounded when I told them I had already "met" them in Melbourne...

I actually did watch the real Olympic Games, when they were held in Melbourne in 1956. I had started

attending Heidelberg Junior Technical School, and bought tickets to watch the track and field games in the Melbourne stadium. What excitement!



And we did learn the subjects offered in class. The teachers were just fine. There was a young man who always came in a suit and white shirt with a stiff collar and tie. He always had a musical key that he lifted to his ear to get the right key of the song and then off we started with Waltzing Matilda in full throttle. Actually, all teachers wore suits then and the lady teachers, as always, dressed very nicely.

We got free milk at school in small bottles that were brought in metal crates in the mornings. After a while, chocolate was added to the milk which met with our great approval! We brought our own sandwiches to school from home.

I remember a debate between one pupil in my class whose father was a farmer with a teacher who taught history and social subjects. The question was which country grew the most wheat. The teacher maintained that it was America, my mate said that it was the Soviet Union. Many years later the Soviet Union started to buy wheat not only from America and Canada, but also Australia!

Now, of course, there is no Soviet Union, and I could return to my home country Latvia.



*Greensborough  
State School badge  
donated by Sandy  
Anton*

We had great fun after school, with our home-made tin, wood, and tar canoes in the Plenty River. We pretended we were in a jungle on dangerous missions and paddled up and down the river below low hanging branches and darting across shallows all the time ready with our bows and arrows for the enemy lurking in the bushes and trees along the banks.

My sister's task was to bail out the water from the leaking canoe with a tin can. If it had sunk, I would have to rescue her as she had then still not learnt how to swim. I was a good swimmer since I had plenty of practice in the Plenty River.

Our neighbour John wanted to build a submarine. Luckily, he never finished it, otherwise he and his sister might have drowned.

Of course, we older boys had our favorite girls with whom we were secretly in love, but never dared admit it. The girls knew it well enough and tried to look as pretty as possible.

Well, that's about it. Hope you enjoyed my story of life as a kid in Greensborough "back in the good old days"?

We kids had a lot of fun, there was not one day that was boring!

### **Atis Lejins**

Riga, Latvia. August 4, 2018.



*Atis and his classmates at Greensborough*

## The Digital Library at GHS: A Report by Peter Van Eeken

The Digital Library houses some 20,000 records pertaining to local history. Half of these records are lodged on the Victorian Collections Database. The Digital Library is housed on all our resource centre computers and backup copies are stored on portable hard drives and member home computers. Should there ever be a catastrophic event that destroys our Resource Centre then most of our historical resources may be retrieved from backup copies of the Digital Library.



Resources in the library are stored according to place, person, group and time.

1. The Greensborough Folder is the largest folder in the library holding nearly 9,000 items.
2. The next largest folder is the Historical Societies Folder, holding some 2,000 records collected from local Historical Groups. Our Society is the one represented most in this folder holding over 95% of the records.
3. The third largest folder is one pertaining to Australia as a nation, holding some 1,900 records. The state of Victoria holds some 600 records.
4. Watsonia holds some 1,000 records. Nearly 400 records are held on the Watsonia High School which closed in 1989.
5. All other local suburbs like Greenhills, Briar Hill, Montmorency etc hold the remaining set of resources representing some 30% of our collection.

So then, when researching a topic, the Digital Library offers a catalogued venue from which to retrieve what is desired. There is a catalogue index of all resources which may be viewed chronologically or by place.

The Digital Library was begun in March 2016 and today all of its resources are being drawn on to develop and produce the Society's third book on the chronological history of the River Plenty and Greensborough District. This book will be published in a year or two and will focus on the period 1800 to about World War 1. A volume on the more recent period in local history may be produced at a future time.

Currently, the work on the new book has reached the year 1840 and is attempting to describe the lives and interests of the first land owners of the River Plenty south of the Janefield Mental Asylum Reserve. Following the first land owners, the subsequent land owners and early settlers will be covered. All this is interesting work that does take time.

All members are invited to liaise with Peter Van Eeken regarding any contribution they may wish to make to our next book or to the resources held in the Digital Library.

### **The Diamond Valley Story**

Greensborough Historical Society has obtained 10 copies of *The Diamond Valley Story* (first published 1979, this edition 1995) from Banyule Council. Any member interested in a copy should contact Noel (9435 4513) or Sue (9439 5454) for further details and cost.

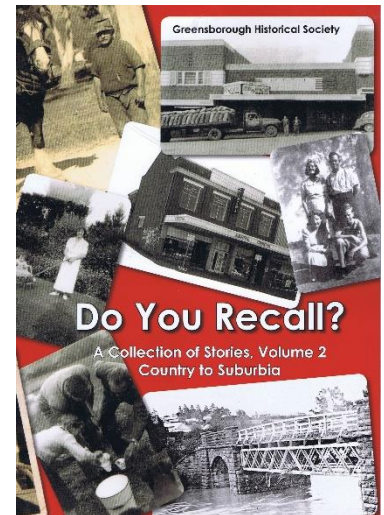
## Victorian Community History Awards

The Victorian Community History Awards recognise excellence in historical method: the award categories acknowledge that history can be told in a variety of formats with the aim of reaching and enriching all Victorians. The Awards have been held since 1999, and are organised by the Royal Historical Society of Victoria in cooperation with Public Record Office Victoria.

Our recent publication 'Do You Recall?' was nominated by Anne Paul, with assistance from the Committee, for the "Local History - Small Publication Award".

The list of all the entries and a description of the works can be viewed at <http://www.historyvictoria.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/VCHA-2018-All-Entrants-book20190919.pdf>

They cover a very wide range of subjects, themes and locations and demonstrate the wealth of historical research and writing being undertaken across the State.



The 2018 Victorian Community History Awards ceremony is on the 8th October at the Arts Centre – with Noel and Anne representing the Society.... fingers crossed as we are in the company of quality competition.

Copies of "Do You Recall?" are available from the Society (\$20.00 each for GHS members)

Limited numbers of our first volume "As I Recall" are still available at \$20.00 each.

Or for stocking-fillers, we have published 3 series of historic postcards featuring sites around Greensborough (6 in a set for \$5.00) or GHS Pens (\$3.00 each or 2 for \$5.00)

### COMING EVENT

**Join us for our Annual Heritage Meeting at 1.15pm on Saturday October 27, 2018 at Greenhills Neighbourhood House. This is the GHS Seniors Month activity and all members and visitors are welcome to join us. Afternoon tea provided.**

GHS Vice-President Peter Van Eeken will present a history of the growth and development of the Greensborough district.

**Printing of this Newsletter supplied courtesy of Colin Brooks MP.**