

**YARRA GLEN & DISTRICT
HISTORICAL SOCIETY Inc.
FOUNDED 1973**

NEWSLETTER

September 1999. Published December, March, June & September. Issue No:4.

From the President

Well here we are into September, where has the year gone ?

The lovely new bridge has been opened with its "Heritage Lamps"; A wonderful entrance to the town and this should stave off many nasty accidents. We have waited 50 years for this to happen.

I am very proud to tell you , at our A.G.M in October Olive Herkes and Dorothy Fothergill are to be made Life Members of this Society.

They are both, the only two original members left from when the Society was first formed in 1973.

Our other former Life Members, Bill Herkes and Bill Lawrence have both passed on.

E. J. Smith.

REMINDER

Next month is the Annual General Meeting.

Presentation of the President's Report.

Annual Financial Report.

Election of office bearers.

President, Vice President, Secretary & Treasurer

Nomination forms are available from the Secretary.

Subscriptions will also be due.

Members will no doubt be interested to learn that we have been given a copy of the 1879 Electoral Roll for the ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF EVELYN, St. ANDREWS DIVISION. This is a Roll of those Rate Payers entitled to vote. The Roll covers the districts of St. Andrews, Kangaroo Ground, Yarra Flats (including Steels Creek & Dixons Creek) and Healesville. We are very grateful to the St. Andrews / Queenstown Historical Society for giving us a copy.

I have entered all the data from the Roll on my computer and then sorted the names by District. A printout will be placed in the filing cabinet.

Does any member know of the existence of any other similar Electoral Roll ?

Another project recently completed was the copying of the Yarra Glen School Register. this appears to date from 1910 with some backdated entries and finishes February 1961. Unfortunately the earlier registers seem to have disappeared.

Luckily the earliest Dixons Creek Registers survived and these have also been copied from July 1875 to 1964.

The Steels Creek School Register 1886 - 1943 was destroyed by fire and the later roll seems to have disappeared. However I have been able to partially reconstruct the earlier roll from other sources.

These rolls plus copies of local postal directories from 1868 - 1900 and the 1903 Electoral Roll give us a good listing of those resident in this district.

HEALESVILLE GUARDIAN 22nd July 1916.

Proposed Volunteer Church at Dixons Creek.

Methodists in and around Dixons Creek have long felt the need of a new Church Building. The old Church, which is a paling structure at present propped up on all sides to keep it together, has done duty for the past 30 years, and is altogether inadequate for present needs. The Trustees, remembering the success of the volunteer movement which built the Badger Creek Church in a day, made up their minds to see if organization and a little hard work could get a similar movement going to meet the need at Dixons Creek. Matters have progressed so satisfactorily that there is now every prospect of a building being erected during September. One firm, (Beach & Gordon) promised the necessary hardwood for a building capable of accommodating 120 persons, and various other supporters offered cash & kind. careful investigation showed that at least £ 125 would have to be raised to roof, floor, paint, line, varnish and furnish, apart from the item of labour. So far the donations have nearly reached the desired total, and the labour necessary has been nearly provided by volunteers. It is not proposed, however, to attempt to put the building up in a day, and a week will be spent on it.

25th November.

A start was made on Monday last on the building of a new church at Dixons Creek, and the ambitious attempt to erect the building by voluntary labour in a week seems now to be certain of realization.

For a long time the little old paling building which has done duty as a house of worship for over 30 years has proved inadequate for present needs, and the movement which is so successfully terminating this week was put on its feet away back in the early winter months of this year. (*Does anyone know of a photo of the old Church ?*)

Once a start was made offers of help in the way of material, cash, and labour, were freely made. The wet weather of the past three months caused the postponement of the work, but the climatic conditions of the week during which the work was undertaken were most favourable.

About 30 workers assembled on Monday morning and Mr. Hurstone (architect), a brother of one well known townsman took charge of operations, with Mr. W. Smith as foreman. Willing hands made light of the work, and by Monday evening the frame work was up, and the rafters for the roof in position. Tuesday evening saw the roof iron and the weatherboards for the walls all nailed on. By Wednesday evening the floor was laid, and a

start had been made at the lining. Thursday night found the heavy work practically completed, and Friday and Saturday the programme is the painting, varnishing and furnishing. It is confidently believed that the work will be easily finished by Saturday afternoon.

The building will be 30 ft. long by 20 ft. wide apart from the porch and will comfortably seat over 100 persons. the design is an attractive one, and one and all connected with the work cannot but feel satisfied with the finished article.

The Dixons Creek people were most lavish in the hospitality they extended to the volunteers, and the workers are unanimous in stating that the trip was made most enjoyable to all.

2nd December.

The "volunteer" Church at Dixons Creek was completed by Saturday evening last, as anticipated, and services were conducted in the building on Sunday at 3 pm. and 7 pm. The Rev. W. Morley, D.D. of Melbourne, occupied the pulpit at both services, and the building was crowded. *(then follows a long description of the service).*

The land was given by Mr. Wm. Bell, of Yarra Glen, and the labour was supplied voluntarily right through. Much of the timber used was growing in the forest a week before the building commenced. Timber cutters felled the trees, carters carted them to Mr. Beach's mill, sawyers cut the timber up, carters took it to the ground, and carpenters, painters, plumbers, and glaziers cut and planed, polished and fitted, nailed and painted, and did the hundred and one things necessary, and produced the finished article - and all the work was voluntary. The Church will stand as a reminder of what generosity and unity of purpose can do when properly organised.

Unfortunately the building only survived for 10 years, being destroyed by a bushfire in 1926. The building was replaced in 1927 and this also was destroyed in the 1939 fires. the present building was built in 1940 and survived longer than any of its predecessors.

NEXT ISSUE : We will look at the history of the Churches of Yarra Glen, Presbyterian, Anglican and Catholic.

On the 17th September there is to be a book launch "Valleys, Mists and Mountains" a history of the Catholic Parish, by Bernie Morrissey. Your editor was able to provide Bernie with some information and no doubt the Catholic Church in Yarra Glen will get a mention. Our next issue will contain a review of the book.

DON'T FORGET THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

Meetings are usually held the second Sunday of the month at the Yarra Glen, Living & Learning Centre, 1.30 pm. and are advertised in "MOUNTAIN VIEWS MAIL"

Membership Subscription : \$6.00 per year. Dates from 1st October.

President, Mrs Evelyn Smith.
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