

CAMBERWELL HISTORY

RECORDING THE HISTORY OF CAMBERWELL AND DISTRICT

Camberwell Historical Society



No 6

September 2011

ISSN 1838-0875

THE MEMORIES OF A HARTWELL LAD

Donald Hirst

This is the final part of an article in which Donald Hirst describes growing up in Hartwell in the 1950s.

The Royal Visit

In 1954 there was much excitement in the Hirst household. *Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, Queen of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith* would be making a Royal Visit to Australia!

To celebrate this momentous occasion, the Victorian Education Department announced there was to be 'A Royal Command Performance' at the Melbourne Cricket Ground presented by children selected from Melbourne primary schools. My school, Canterbury Primary, was to contribute a tunnel ball team, a marching squad and a contingent to be part of the word 'WELCOME!' which we schoolchildren would create by lying on the turf in front of the Royal Dais. Dressed in our white shirts, shorts and plimsols, our school was assigned the bottom horizontal bar of the second 'E' - not as prime a position as the 'W' but not as bad as the position the boy nearby to me had been given. Chosen for his diminutive size, he was to be the dot under the exclamation mark and had been instructed to roll himself up in a small, round bundle.

Came the Big Day and Our Monarch (OM) arrived by helicopter, transferred to a Land Rover then drove a circuit of the MCG while we enthusiastically cheered and waved little Union Jacks. In case OM might be homesick

She was entertained by us with a very British presentation of maypole dancing around which pranced and stumbled children dressed as cubs, brownies, fairies, elves, goblins and golliwogs. Following a thrilling tunnel ball exhibition and marching squad demonstration OM spoke to us in her Royal Court accent of which we understood not a



Her Majesty and His Royal Highness at the School Children's Demonstration at the Melbourne Cricket Ground
State Library of Victoria Acc H92.249/36



A massed display by school children at the Melbourne Cricket Ground for the visit by Queen Elizabeth II
Museum Victoria Image No 8023

word, especially as Her Speech, already echoing and in delay from the tinny public address system, bounced around the enormous empty spectator stands. 'Wadshezayin'?', someone asked. 'Dunno' we replied.

That evening the family all loaded into the Rover 75 and drove down to St Kilda Road to gather among the crowd near

the King Edward VIII Memorial to watch Her motorcade sweep by on its way to Government House. Being small, I stood down the front with the other small people while the adults in the crush behind peered up, over and around each other, some utilising the cardboard periscopes they had purchased from *The Herald* newspaper. A roar from back toward Flinders Street indicated the motorcade was nearing and before I knew it OM was approaching fast in Her large Austin Princess motor car. Sitting in the back under its clear perspex canopy, Her radiant face lit by a small spotlight from within, She passed where I stood, and, for one fleeting moment, my Monarch and I looked each other in the eye. A slight smile crossed her face.

On the eve of Her departure from Station Pier aboard the Royal Yacht SS *Gothic* we were at home listening to the farewell on 3AR. As the mooring ropes were cast loose and the Royal Yacht's fog horn moaned a final, sad farewell across the still waters of Port Melbourne, the band of the Royal Australian Navy struck up the National Anthem. Father, seated at the head of the dinner table, ordered us to stop eating and stand to attention while Her Anthem played one last time. My brother and I sniggered. Our father glared. For him, the Queen's departure was a sad day. 'Sadder than the day the King died', he related to me years later.

Continued page 2

CONTENTS

Next Meetings	Page 6
Private Schools of Camberwell—Marcellin	2
New Accessions	4
Obituaries Australia	4
Progress of Camberwell	4
Magazine review	5
Last Meetings	5
Thematic Environmental History	5
New Members	6
National Trust Tree Classification	6



PRIVATE SCHOOLS OF CAMBERWELL NO 2

THE EARLY YEARS OF MARCELLIN COLLEGE AND *ARDMARA*

Chris Roberts

Chris Roberts joined Marcellin as a teacher in 1971 and retired in 2009. He then took on the role of Archivist.



Ardmara, c1950. Marcellin College Archives photo

Ardmara, a stately home on about 2½ acres of land at 21 Canterbury Road, Camberwell, Victoria, was purchased by the Marist Brothers on 9 July 1946 from the estate of W Craig Esq. for £12,500.¹ It was used by the scholastic Brothers until 1950. After major building extensions which included classrooms, a library, school laboratory and a tuck shop, Marcellin College was officially opened in February of that year. The school was to provide a Catholic education to primary and secondary boys from Camberwell and surrounding areas.

The first Director of the College, Reverend Brother Nilus Kenny and his teaching Brothers lived in *Ardmara*.

THE MEMORIES OF A HARTWELL LAD

Continued from page 1

Childhood(lum) Days

At about the age of ten my best friend Andrew Masterton and I went through a phase of setting fire to things. We started on backyard incinerators then moved onto piles of cardboard boxes collected from the back of Mr Knight's grocer's shop on the corner

of Fordham Avenue and Hartwell Hill Road. But it wasn't enough. We wanted the BIG one and we found it at the large rubbish dump in Fordham Avenue, now the Frog Hollow Reserve. Armed with bottles of methylated spirits and kerosene, we scrambled over the rubbish pouring out the inflammable liquids before throwing a lighted match and rushing off to our

At its commencement in 1950, the college offered courses of study from Grade III (primary) to Form III (secondary). In subsequent years, classes to Matriculation were added. With increasing numbers came further building extensions and improvements.

As the student population continued to grow, fourteen hectares of land was purchased on Bulleen Road, Bulleen. A new campus was built there with excellent educational and sporting facilities. In 1962 the senior students were transferred from Camberwell to the new school.

Ardmara then became known as the 'Junior School' with classes from Grade 4 to Form II, or Year 8, as it is called today. It remained home to many Marist Brothers who taught there. Its high ceilings, rich woodwork and magnificent leadlight windows gave their home an elegant charm. On entering one could almost hear echoes of its dignified past. The presence of the Blessed Sacrament in the beautiful chapel added to its spiritual peacefulness. Visitors, lay staff, parents and students always felt welcome.

The Marist Brothers ceased to occupy *Ardmara* in 1988. The last Director being Brother Austin Redden. Mr. Peter Schlitz, the Deputy Principal became the caretaker and moved in with his family until its closure.

Due to the decreasing numbers at Camberwell and other economic factors the decision was made to amalgamate the two campuses at the one in Bulleen. A great sense of sadness and loss was experienced by all associated with the Junior School when at the end of 1992 it closed down.

Ardmara was sold and this chapter in the history of Marcellin College came to an end.

However, to keep its memory alive, first the portables for Year 7s at Bulleen were named *Ardmara* and later a classroom block was given the name *Ardmara*. □

Endnote

Continued next page



THE MEMORIES OF A HARTWELL LAD

Continued from previous page

lookout, the railway bridge over Culliton Road, where we hid in the girders to watch the blaze take hold. Clouds of smoke soon began rising, someone rang for the fire brigade who soon arrived with bells clanging and brass helmets gleaming. They made an exciting spectacle as they quickly put the blaze out, which probably wasn't that big anyway, then rolled up their hoses and drove off back to the fire station on Camberwell Road. Questions were asked, it was talked about at the 'The Tyrone', but our childhood code of *omerta* prevailed. No one was charged.

But for Andrew and I our desire for destruction continued so we then hit on train derailment. We would wriggle through the wire fence that ran alongside the rail track at Hartwell station and place a small rock on the line, then slip back and lie in wait in the long grass to await calamity, but the weight and speed of the train merely crushed the rock to grit. Unable to initiate a civil catastrophe we then took to defacing coin of the realm. By placing a penny on the rail line it could be squashed flat but for all the weight of the train it did not erase the images of the Queen or King who stoically stared back in profile as if to say, 'It'll take more than the 4.15 to Alamein to get rid of us.'

Holidays, Fifties Style

When the family made their annual migration to our holiday house down at Eastern View near Airey's Inlet everything that domiciled at our premises came with us, to wit; two parents, three children, one cat, one dog, guinea pigs, mice, birds, chooks — if it lived, it was loaded.

Our father Max, who dabbled in carpentry had built a chook pen out of a packing crate and chicken wire. He was always making something from large packing crates delivered to our nature strip in the early hours of the morning by a truck from the wharves which he would set on with his heavy duty crowbar. When not being used it would stand in the tool shed — made from packing crates — beside his equally heavy duty Canadian log splitter which sadly never realised it's full potential, not at our house anyway. Instead of splitting a mighty fur tree in the Canadian wilderness the best it ever split was a bit of gumtree, the Mallee roots having already been delivered hearth size by Mr Coates from the wood yard.

Anyway, on moving day we would round up the chooks, put them into their pen and slide it into the trailer around

which we stowed our baggage. The family's bed linen and towelling were laid out in my father's WW2 officer's sleeping bag. Constructed of thick canvass and secured with strong leather straps and brass buckles it was a lovely piece of kit and weighed a ton.

In the 1950s a motor journey as far a field as Eastern View was a major undertaking, so a few days prior to departure our car was taken for a final inspection by 'our mechanic' Frank, who was the head motor man at a big garage on Burwood Road near Wattle Valley Road. In my mother's opinion Frank's word was gospel in all things mechanical; 'Frank thinks the throgmorton on the car is shot', 'Frank thinks the Johnson rod on the car is shot' and finally, 'Frank thinks the car is shot'.

Lawns were given a final mow and hoses rolled up and stored away 'under the house'. Our house was built on a steep incline and the rear had a clearance of about one and half metres which made ideal storage space - and we always had plenty to store. Nothing was ever thrown out as 'it might come in handy' and whenever someone misplaced something we would say, 'it might be under the house', or 'have you looked under the house?'

Come the time to leave the Rover 75 was reversed down the drive and the trailer lifted onto the ball towbar which when not in use had half a tennis ball fitted onto it as a rust prevention cap which looked like it was wearing a little *yarmulke*. When we *finally* got away - having waited for what seemed like hours as our mother finished fussing in the kitchen - we would head off up the hill toward Riversdale Road, slowly gathering speed like a locomotive with the occasional neighbour waving us good bye. 'When are we going to get there?', one of us would ask before we had reached Camberwell Junction.

Prior to the West Gate Bridge finally opening, to get onto the Geelong Road meant having to drive through Footscray. Every year as we approached the Footscray railway crossing the gateman in the signal box would see us driving into view and immediately swing his wheel and shut the gates. What seemed like three miles of goods train would then pass before us at snail's pace carrying, *inter alia*, cars from the Geelong Ford plant or wool from the Western District bound for the docks. Our timing for meeting freight trains at this crossing was meticulous - year in, year out. We seemed *never* to get though without having to stop. Once through however, and having driven past Sam's Coffee Pot and the seemingly permanent camp of gypsies at the bend where the old Princes Highway turned south, we were on our way. Camberwell was free of the Hirst's for the next month. □

DONATION

The society gratefully acknowledges the very generous donation of \$100 from the Camberwell branch of the Grill'd hamburger chain.



NEW ACCESSIONS

A postcard photo of Mr William Spence Mappin has been donated to the society by Tim Gibson. On the reverse in pencil, is written: *Wed 11th Nov 1940. In the Sun News 26 Sept [sic]. Mr William Spence Mappin of Camberwell. He celebrated his 100 birthday on Tues 24 Sept 1940. His photo was taken next day on Wed 25th. He died on Thur 29th July 1943 & only two months off his 103 birthday. He came from Sydney in 1845 & could remember Melbourne as a village with aborigines [sic] on the banks of the Yarra. Was at the Bendigo gold rush. has lived at Camberwell for 48 years. An expert coachbuilder & did much work for vice royalty. His wife died 40 years ago. He leaves 2 sons & 3 daughters. Wm. Mappin in the army in Northern Territory & T.R. Mappin an AIF chaplain in Aust. Mesdames GL Sampson. W Hurts both Camberwell & W Hotton and the funeral will leave St Johns Church of England Camberwell this afternoon for Boroondara Cemetery.*



Camberwell Historical Society Papers relating to the re-formation of the society in 1985. Donor Mrs E Shields

Camberwell Cricket Club Photographs and history of the club. Donor Ms Catherine Walsh

OBITUARIES AUSTRALIA

Obituaries Australia is a digital repository of obituaries published in newspapers, journals, magazines and bulletins. Here you will find the life stories of Australians from the earliest times to the present.

This site is hosted by the National Centre of Biography at the Australian National University, which also produces the award-winning Australian Dictionary of Biography. While the ADB focuses on the lives of notable Australians, Obituaries Australia offers a sample of the Australian experience by reproducing, in a convenient online format, published obituaries relevant to the history of Australia.

Obituaries Australia, was officially launched by the Vice-Chancellor of the ANU, Professor Ian Young, on 14 April 2011. □

PROGRESS OF CAMBERWELL THE PAST AND PRESENT

The gigantic strides of progress made by the different suburban districts has been simply marvellous, and none the least wonderful by reason of the short space of time in which the changes have been accomplished. Perhaps in no suburb is this more apparent than at Camberwell, where but a few short years ago the whole district was merely the home of market gardeners and those engaged in agricultural pursuits. The streets, which are studded with magnificent edifices, were then heavily timbered with gum and other species of trees, and only frequented by the woodcutter who made Boroondara his home. The Camberwell of today is vastly different to that of only some 15 years ago. Along the Burke and Camberwell roads are erected some magnificent places of business, whilst numerous handsome private mansions have superseded the old slab huts of early Camberwell. Perhaps the most notable additions to the buildings in the suburb are the number of new places of public worship which of late have been erected. In the Camberwell-road the Wesleyan denomination have constructed for themselves a most imposing structure, and the Catholic body have been no less backward in securing a large and commodious building in which to pay their devotions. For a long time the worshippers at the Camberwell Anglican church were taxed for lack of suitable accommodation, but now extensive additions have been made to their edifice, and the assiduous pastor

(the Rev. A. W. Cresswell) ministers to his flock in a fine and well appointed building. The Congregationalists have some little time since had completed for them a pretty new church just on the rise of the hill in the Riversdale-road, where large congregations assemble each Sabbath. The Presbyterians, perhaps, are the only denomination which has not been called upon to erect a new buildings, and a they still continue their devotions in a rather primitive looking building in the Riversdale-road. Turning from the churches, progress is written in no less plainer terms in the many different industries which have found their home in the suburb of Camberwell. In the Burke-road, between the station and the junction, several lofty structures have been erected, and the few private residences which had remained on this road are now being demolished to give place to more remunerative buildings. Premises have just been completed in this road for the Commercial Bank, and only last week Mr. T. McAlpine, ironmonger purchased land at the high price of £40 per foot, upon which to erect a three story [sic] warehouse. With such rapid progress as has been made by Camberwell, it is only to be expected that the council have been unable with their limited income to keep pace with all the requirements, but the loan of £25,000 which has recently been floated, will effect many marvellous improvements, and to do so much to add attractions for business and private individuals to settling in that district.

The Boroondara Standard 1 November 1889



REVIEW

Inside History Magazine



Well illustrated, with a bevy of regular authors, this new bi-monthly periodical was launched with the November-December 2010 issue: to date five issues have appeared.

Short articles cover Australian history and genealogy while regular features include letters to the editor, questions and

answers, and book reviews. Else Churchill, a well known genealogist with the Society of Genealogists in London, talks of family history in England while Michael Flynn writes on Australian matters. A diary records coming events around Australia.

A number of general Australian history periodicals have been born from time-to-time, never to live long. *Inside History*, with its strong family history content and attractive presentation, may well have found a recipe for success.

Inside History is available on subscription, or at newsagents for \$10.50 per issue.

LAST MEETINGS

21 May 2011 **Tour of Camberwell Grammar School**

Members and friends toured Camberwell Grammar School in Mont Albert Road, Canterbury, on Saturday, 21 May. The school transferred to this campus in 1935. Beginning with the purchase of 1880s building *Roystead*, the site has grown through other property purchases, including the also still standing *Highton* (1906), *Norge* (1919), and *Kingussie* (c1890) where we finished with late morning tea. Along the way the group inspected the Performing Arts Complex (1997) where member, John Maidment, entertained us with a demonstration of the recently installed pipe organ. CHS provided notes on buildings to complement heritage walk notes provided by the school.



Part of the group inspecting
Roystead Robert Green photo

26 May 2011 **Dame Nellie Melba - Ann Blainey**

This most enjoyable meeting opened with Melbourne soprano Deborah Kayser singing two of Melba's signature songs: 'Coming Through the Rye' and 'No Place Like Home'. This set the scene for distinguished biographer Ann Blainey to tell us something of the life of Nellie Porter Mitchell. Mrs Blainey outlined the difficulties Nellie met with in establishing her career and outlined her climb to fame, her attachment to Australia, her charity work and her death. Answers to questions from members added appreciably to the night which finished with Melba's own voice in a recording of 'Sempre Libera' from Act 1 of Verdi's 'La Traviata'.

29 July 2011 **Reflections of an Accidental Councillor - Cr Jack Wegman**

Jack Wegman was elected as councillor of Junction Ward in 2002 and has been mayor four times — an extraordinary record in 'modern' times. Cr Wegman detailed and commented on various statistics that amplified the management of the City. His frank and humorous description of how he became a councillor, and anecdotes of his time as a member of the City Council were well received by the members. Numerous questions were answered by Cr Wegman with equal openness and humour.

18 August 2011 **Annual General Meeting**

At the Annual General Meeting the members of the committee were returned unopposed. The committee for 2011-2012 is: Jan Alexander, George Fernando, Adele Fernando-Swart, Val Goldsworthy, Trevor Hart, & Steve Watson. The committee will elect the office bearers at its meeting on 12 September.

THEMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY

Earlier this year the City Council commissioned Built Heritage Pty Ltd to compile a Thematic Environmental History of Boroondara and the history groups in the City were invited to a briefing discussion that sought input to the project. Seven groups participated.

In July a draft report was released for public comment. Your society has made a substantial submission in relation to the draft. The final document will be released in the next few months.



MEETINGS FOR 2011

3 September	Excursion	Heidelberg Historical Society
22 September	Baillieu Family	Hon Ted Baillieu, MP
29 October	Excursion	Maling Road - Don Gibb FRHSV
	This excursion is your Society's main activity during <i>History Week</i> 23 –30 October 2011	
6 November	Excursion	Villa Alba
24 November	Writing a history of Hartwell: The trials and tribulations of a researcher	Volkhard Wehner

Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of March, May, July, September and November

All meetings held at **Meeting Room, Hawthorn Town Hall (side entrance via car park)**
360 Burwood Road, Hawthorn at 8.00pm

EMAIL ADDRESSES

Many members now receive the Newsletter and notices by email. This helps to reduce costs and provides speedier communication to members. If you have an email address and are prepared to accept communications electronically from the Society would you please advise your email address to the Secretary at enquiries@chs.org.au.

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following as new members of the Society in the six months ending 30 June 2011.

Ordinary

EC Burton
S Cramer-Roberts

C Enticott
JA Frydenberg
NC Lee OAM
MB Waldron
Family
K & M Hughes
D & M DiMattina
B Cosgrove & P Heath

NATIONAL TRUST TREE CLASSIFICATION

The National Trust has advised that the Black Mulberry (*Morus nigra*) at 25 Kasouka Road, Camberwell has been classified as a significant tree at the regional level. It was planted by the Sutherland Family who occupied the house from the time it was built c1895 until the late 1970s. The Black Mulberry is one of the earliest examples of the species planted in the Camberwell locality still alive, in good form and condition, which still produces abundant fruit. Classified: 30 May 2011

CAMBERWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC

ABN. 79 935 200 741 Incorporation No A0041541Y
Affiliated with The Royal Historical Society of Victoria

Secretary: Adele Fernando-Swart PO Box 1274 CAMBERWELL 3124 Tel: 9885 9927

Web address: <http://www.chs.org.au>

email address: enquiries@chs.org.au

President – George Fernando; Secretary - Adele Fernando-Swart; Treasurer - Steve Watson
Committee members Jan Alexander, Val Goldsworthy, Trevor Hart