

MORNINGTON & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC



Corner Main Street and Esplanade, Mornington 3931

NEWSLETTER

February 2023

Newsletter No. 298



President's Report

Between Christmas and Australia Day, we had over 350 visitors to the Museum. I would like to share some of the comments written in the visitors' book:

- Super Museum
- Interesting and historic! Great Museum!
- Very special memory lane and the volunteers so kind and helpful. Good, so special.
- Lovely Victoriana examples of days gone by. Pretty Mornington.
- Very interesting! Thank you so much for the tour.
- Interesting and lovely to speak to you.
- Really well done.
- Always wanted to see inside, just lovely
- Great to see Museum open.
- Great artefacts.
- Thank you so much, what a treasure trove
- and "thanks to the volunteers"

People seemed generally pleased that we were open again and I want to thank our volunteers, your committee and their helpers for giving up such important family time to enable us to be open every day between Christmas and New Year. Mornington is crowded in that week when most people are on holiday so it is great that we can offer them a visit to the Museum as part of the activities available.

I hope you have all recorded that we are now having our coffee mornings at **St. Marks Church, Cnr Waterloo and Barkly Street**. And a reminder that it will now cost \$10 for a very good speaker, morning tea and friendship. We are very grateful to the RSL for the use of their room for the past few years.

We are planning to have an information session with volunteers on aspects of the Museum to help you when you are on duty to locate things and discuss any ideas you may have. Watch out for the details of the date in the next newsletter.

In our archives, we have a lovely account of life at Moondah, home of James and Annie Grice. You will by now probably know that the community's and Council's concerns with development of this property by Ryman has been overruled by VCAT and work will now go ahead. You may like to read what the place was like in its early days according to Rose Wilmshurst - Mrs. Grice's companion.

Diane White

Bus Trip

Libby is trying to gauge interest in a trip to Mulberry, the National Trust home of Daryl and Joan Lindsay - Picnic at Hanging Rock. Followed by lunch at McClelland Gallery and Sculpture Park. Before she makes any bookings, Libby is keen to know if enough numbers are interested. Please call her on 0409 149 089 if you would be interested in this trip. Because it is local, the bus should not cost us as much as it has in the past.

We had a contact through our website wanting information on the Balcombe Army Camp gates. He has allowed us to share his story when the family lived on the camp.

Hi Diane,

My parents found some photos and I have found the gates on Google maps thanks. The "Balcombe Village" where the Army Officers lived is now Village Close. We lived at No.13 but that is now No.23 in the new numbering system. There was a path next to no. 13 (now 23) where the residents of the village could walk down and across the creek then up to the Army base. The attached shots of house 13 (23) and the base from the Village were taken in 1961. The photos in .pdf - I found on your FB page and I have marked our house.

We had a milk truck that had a park brake failure in the Village Close - it rolled down and hit our house where the middle window was. The driver was in a panic as he thought he had killed the baby (me) but I was asleep in the back room - that bedroom was unoccupied!

Regards, Gordon



MORNINGTON & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

Dates for Your Diary 2023

Website: www.morningtondistricthistory.org.au

Follow us on Facebook Museum Phone (03) 5976 3203

Visitors warmly welcomed

Tuesday 14th March @ 10.30am - \$10

COFFEE MORNING at St. Marks Church Hall

Cnr. Barkly Street and Waterloo Place

Ian Stephenson coordinates the volunteers at Fossil Beach and he has successfully completed a project to give visitors more information on the fossils. He will tell us all about this project.

Tuesday 11th April @ 10.30am - \$10

COFFEE MORNING at St. Marks Church Hall

Cnr. Barkly Street and Waterloo Place

Julia Young gave us that wonderful talk on Dr. Dax last year and we now welcome her back as she has had twelve months to settle into her job as Local History coordinator at the Shire.

Tuesday 9th May @ 10.30am - \$10

COFFEE MORNING at St. Marks Church Hall

Cnr. Barkly Street and Waterloo Place. Speaker to be advised.

From the Archives



The Grand Hotel.
Photo from "The Rose" Collection.



The Esplanade, Fisherman's Beach.
Photo from "The Rose" Collection.

Memoirs of Rose Wilmshurst - *Lady's companion*

This was written in 1987. These memoirs gives us a glimpse of life on a large estate in the 1900s. Rose worked at *Moondah* between 1908 - 1912.



The historic "Moondah", home of the Grice family (circa 1904).

My memories of Moondah

Personal background: Rose Ellen Wilmshurst. Born Corowa, New South Wales August 28, 1893.

Educated at Albury Superior Public School - Merit Certificate at 14 years also Intermediate for Music (pianoforte).

My father—Manager Ovens and Murray dairy company, and later chartered accountant of butter factories around Victoria. Boralma, Springhurst Warragul, Camperdown, Nilma etc...

My mother died when I was 11 years of age. I spent a lot of time with my father, travelling around the various factories. Doing so, I learned the art of testing milk and cream for quality and butterfat. Also processing cream into butter and cheese.

At the age of 15 1/2 (1908) like a moth emerging from the chrysalis, I felt I needed a change in my lifestyle, I fancied nursing, but not being 18 years I had to wait.

So my father took me to an agency in Collins Street where I met a very nice lady who was wanting a suitable young lady for the position of lady's companion in the household of Sir James and Lady Grice at Moondah, Frankston.

...Continued on the next page.

Having lived at Pearcedale for two years, a lonely country farming area, I had a qualm about returning to the country—but Miss Beatrice Quarterman the housekeeper thought I was just the girl for the position, and we returned to Frankston that evening.

First impressions of Moondah.

I had seen some lovely properties around Victoria's Western district but the majestic beauty of Moondah and its surroundings was above my wildest expectations.

Painted white, and sitting astride the headland commanding a magnificent view of the sea, this stately mansion seemed like an angel with wings outspread, keeping watch over the vast estate.

I felt immediately at ease in this elegant home and wonderful family, consisting of Sir James and Lady Grice; sons Richard, Geoffrey, and Claude between the ages of 45 to 25 years: then Nancy the only daughter, aged 20, who was very sweet and attractive.

Nancy's great love of horses and outdoor life meant she spent many hours out of doors around the estate, riding with brother Geoffrey who was the overseer of the estate.

My duties were a delight—preparing her clothes etc. to wear for different occasions, keeping her room tidy, helping her to dress for dinner each evening, which was a strict rule for the whole family.

Gracious living:

Living at Moondah was carried out in the strict English–Scottish tradition, each member of the family having his or her own sitting-room, morning room or office.

The redeeming feature of each room was the fireplace with hobs to take the logs for the long winter days and nights. In some rooms the fires were never allowed to go out—particularly the billiard room, which had a fireplace at each end of the huge room—the reason for this, the temperature was never allowed to drop, as the big full-size billiard table had to be kept at a certain warmth. Strong salt air was injurious, too.

Sir James' morning room was a very private place. I myself never entered this room (which I see now is the College reception and administrative office).

Sir James' "den" was of course the vital vein of his business between Moondah and Melbourne city, which was transacted through himself and son Richard who travelled to Melbourne each day to an office. We always knew when he was nearing home: the car he drove was a small white snorting beetle with huge headlights, the handbrake on the outside of the drivers door!

Lady Grice's drawing-room was opened up occasionally for special guests, but apart from that there was little social activity.

But what a change when the fox hunt was held on the estate of Sir James and brother John's next door (Manyung)—once a year. A large marquee was erected on the lawns and an informal lunch provided, served on trestle tables, for the family guests.

Then at night the scene changed. A ball was held in the billiard room with a hired orchestra or band, the ladies looking lovely in their gowns, and gents in tuxedos.

On Sunday mornings, to the delight of those who were within hearing, the big organ in the great Hall was played by Sir James. The sound brought me to a standstill—my heart thumped with joy!

The inside staff had their own sitting room and dining room, also their own rooms (some shared) all situated in the South Wing. I had a room to myself.

The inside staff all got on well together;

- Miss Beatrice Quarterman—housekeeper;
- Lady's companion—Rose W.
- Full-time laundress—Ellen
- Seamstress/needlewoman—Jess
- Head parlourmaid—May
- Head upstairs housemaid—Mary
- Silvermaid and pantry—Jenny
- Cleaner, upstairs and downstairs—Alice

There were also several others whose names I don't recall: downstairs housemaid, kitchen and pantry maid, sculleryman and cook.

The inside staff had breakfast by 8 AM, lunch 12 to 1, tea at 5 PM. Most wore standard uniform. As lady's companion I wore blouse and skirt, made for me by the seamstress.

Our time off consisted of one week every three months. It was then that we received our pay. We were then driven in the hooded buggy, drawn by two horses, down the winding gravel road to the Frankston station. From then on, we were on our own for one glorious week!

(I well remember spending one of my "weeks" living it up at the Federal Hotel).

...This article will be continued in the next Newsletter

FOR SALE - *Please contact the Museum:*

FIFTEEN YOUNG MEN

by Paul Kennedy - Published by
Penguin Random House \$25

THE WOLFDENE STORY -

**The Families and Functions of a
Mornington Historic House**

by Joy Cullen \$10

**A JOURNEY ALONG BALCOMBE
CREEK** *by Winty Calder \$30*

**READY AND WILLING,
WE STRIVE TO SAVE -**

**The story of the Mornington Fire
Brigade 1917-2017**

by Colin Fisher \$5

**OUR BOYS AT THE FRONT -
from the pages of *The Peninsula Post*.**

This award winning book including DVD
disc on World War 1 is now reduced to \$25

**THE NAMES ON THE MORNINGTON
HONOUR ROLL**

Who were they? *By Val Wilson \$15*

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and Honour Roll \$30 together*

WORLD WAR 1 POEMS

*Selected from *The Peninsula Post* \$10*

**REV GEORGE COX - A MAN OF
MANY PARTS** *by Joy Cullen*

\$10 per copy plus postage.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

A big welcome to Margaret Patterson.

We hope you enjoy your time with us.

*We offer our respect to the First Peoples. The members of the Boon Warrung/
Bunurong, past, present and future, the custodians of this land and waters.*

Thanks to the Mornington Peninsula Shire for their support.

Mornington & District Historical Society Inc. A00041916W

ABN 7515 1057 105 - PO Box 71 Mornington 3931

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

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