



2011

Meeting Dates

November 5

December 3

2012

February 4

March 3

All meetings are held on the 1st Saturday of the month (except January) commencing at 1 pm at the Old Lilydale Court House 61 Castella St., Lilydale.

Inside this issue

- Christmas Party2
- Wallace Garden.....2
- Vale Kath Davis.....3
- New displays.....4 and 5
- Guest Speakers.....6
- What to do in Lilydale ...7

Lilydale & District Historical Society

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Issue 4 October 2011

The passing of a great, compassionate lady

How in just a couple of hundred words do you pay tribute to a person who touched so many lives throughout almost 93 years?

Every person who came into contact with Pamela Helen Fullerton Melba Vestey (nee Armstrong) has a different recollection about her but everyone was struck with her quiet, dignified and unassuming manner.

Unlike her famous but much loved grannie Dame Nellie Melba, Pamela shunned the limelight and preferred to do things her way – quietly, without any fuss and bother but in a determined manner.

Through her support Melba's legacy continues today. In 1978 Pamela generously donated many of Melba's costumes, accessories and gowns to the then newly established Performing Arts Museum in Melbourne and was for many years served on the council of the Dame Nellie Melba Conservatorium now the Dame Nellie Melba Opera Trust.

However Pamela's love of Coldstream and the Yarra Valley saw her generously support and champion many local organisations – the Yering Primary School which her sons Sam and Mark attended; The Coldstream Fire Brigade; The Lilydale Red Cross; Tullamore Aged Care; the Lilydale & District Historical Society of which she was a Life Member and its Patron and the society's museum now the Yarra Ranges Regional Museum to which Pamela donated many valuable items of Melba memorabilia.

Pamela's support took many forms - taking along a plate of sandwiches, making cups of tea in the kitchen after a meeting to opening the gardens of her beloved Coombe Cottage to the public.

Throughout the years, tens of thousands of dollars have been raised through Pamela's generosity yet she did not want to take the credit.

Continued page 2



Pamela Vestey during a Red Cross fund-raising event held at Coombe Cottage.

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The passing of a great, compassionate lady (from page 1)

Her satisfaction was being able to help a worthy, local cause.

When holding a function, nothing escaped Pamela's attention be it making sure the garden was perfect to ordering the portable conveniences.

People fascinated Pamela be they children, young mums or the elderly, she enjoyed their company and welcomed them warmly when they visited her at Coombe.

The garden, the environment, animals, family, local council politics and local happenings were among the many topics discussed at Coombe and Pamela always contributed her own view on them all.

Pamela left a lasting impression on everyone she met. None of us will forget her and her contribution to making the district a better place for us all. That is her lasting legacy and a legacy I think she would be proud of.

Biography

Pamela Helen Fullerton Melba Armstrong was born at Armadale, Melbourne on September 12, 1918, the only child of George Armstrong and Evelyn Doyle. Pamela was educated at Coombe Cottage and Westonbirt School in England before returning to Coombe Cottage.

In 1939 Pamela married William Howarth Vestey, the only son of the second Lord Vestey at Vancouver Island, Canada. The couple settled in England where their sons Sam and Mark were born in 1941 and 1943 respectively.

Bill joined the Scots Guards in 1940 and was killed in action in 1944. After the war, Pamela and the boys came to Coombe Cottage for several years where they went to Yering Primary School. The family later returned to England where the boys completed their education at Eton. While In England, Pamela was raised to the rank of Baroness, Pamela, Lady Vestey. She returned to Coombe Cottage in 1973 where she lived until her death on September 2, 2011. For Pamela, as with her parents and grandmother Melba, the words on Coombe's clock tower sums up everything - East West Hame's Best.

Awards and Honours

- In 1976 Pamela was appointed Patron of the Lilydale & District Historical Museum (now Yarra Ranges Museum) and patron of the society.

- On August 14, 1996 Pamela received an honorary Masters of Arts from Victorian University in recognition of her years of service to the Melba Memorial Conservatorium of Music where she served on its council and later, as its Patron.

- Patron of Tullamore Aged Care, Montrose.

Pamela also wrote and published two books:

- David Mitchell A Forfar Man (1992)
- Melba and Family Memoir (1996).

Sue Thompson

Annual Christmas Party

The society will be celebrating its first Christmas in the court house with a traditional Christmas lunch on its December meeting date – Saturday, December 3. Our short meeting will start at 12 noon and be followed by our lunch of Weber- cooked roast turkey, pork salads and dessert.

Wally Thompson will again use his Weber to cook the turkey and pork at the court house. The cost is \$10 for members and \$15 for non-members.

So we can order the meat, anyone planning to attend is required to book with Lorraine (9735 1104) by Friday, November 25 at the latest. All you have to bring is yourself, drinks and a chair.

Wallace garden open

The Wallace Garden at 7 Madden's Lane, Coldstream will be open to the public October 28 to November 1. The three-acre garden features a mix of native and exotic plants. Features of the garden include Rugosa roses and mass plantings of iris that bring people back to the garden every year just to see the blooms.

Other features are ponds, a dry creek bed and silver birch forest. There will also be a giant garage sale, plants for sale and delicious Devonshire teas on sale.

The proceeds will go to the Victorian Animal aid Trust and cancer research.

The garden is open from 9am to 6pm and the cost is \$5.



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Vale Kathleen Marie Davis (January 27, 1921 – August 14, 2011)

By Sue Thompson

The society farewelled another of Nongenerians with the passing of its second oldest member Kath Davis.

About 20 members attended the funeral of Kth who was a Life Member and former vice president. Kath passed away on August 14 at Box Hill Hospital.

After the Eulogy and Kath’s son Chris spoke, an emotional Sandy Ross spoke of the Kath we all knew and loved at the society.

A dressmaker, Kath made many wedding gowns and bridal party outfits for local girls. This skill she also brought to the society when she made flags representing the countries of origin of Lilydale’s residents. In the end Kath made 27 flags which were proudly unveiled at one of our exhibitions. I am sure when Kath took on the project she didn’t realise how many nationalities had settled in Lilydale.

Kath also took on another seemingly simple project – produce our own cookbook featuring recipes mothers, grandmother or great grandmother used to make. It took a lot of time, many hours trying the recipes and then selecting the recipes to include. Undeterred, Kath’s dogged attitude paid off when the book was finished, launched and then sold out. Even today, we still have

Snail Mail

POST-OFFICE NOTICE.

On the 12th inst, the post-office at Brushy Creek will be closed, and in lieu thereof a post-office will be opened at Lillydale, to which office all correspondence addressed to Brushy Creek will be forwarded.

Mails for Lillydale will close at this office every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, at eight a.m.

Return mails will be due at Melbourne every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, at half-past three p.m.

(The Argus Monday, September 9, 1861 page 4) <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article57039>)



Kath Davis relaxes in Melba Park during an exhibition opening with society member Daisy Chapman.

people ask if we have any copies of the book available.

However, there was one project Kath was determined to achieve – produce a society tea towel. Every year Kath would bring it up and update the cost but members always felt the number we had to order would see us with heaps of then left unsold. Finally, a delighted Kath achieved her goal when the then Shire of Lillydale produced not one but two different tea towels to help raise funds for the Museum of Lillydale redevelopment in the 1990s.

Kath was so pleased. A member since 1981, Kath’s interest in the society never wavered even when she moved to a special accommodation home at Canterbury. Farewell Kath, we will all miss you engaging smile and dogged determination to promote and raise funds for the society.

Closed for Christmas

The Old Lillydale Court House will be closed from 4pm on Wednesday, December 21 and re-open Wednesday, January 18. However, anyone wishing to do research during that time, can call Sue or Lorraine and arrange a time to access our files.

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Society Information

Research

Due to the increasing demand for research and the failure of some people to pay for the information provided, the society's executive has now introduced a new system to ensure any inquiries are handled quickly and efficiently and payment is received.

All inquiries must be in writing and go to our archivist Sandy Ross at aross35@bigpond.com Sandy will contact the people involved and provide a written quotation. No research will be done until the quotation is paid.

Our charges are \$20 per hour.

Anyone with any queries can contact Sandy 9735 1661 or Sue Thompson 9761 9192.

Talks, tours and walks

Anyone looking for a speaker or a different place to go should contact Lorraine Smith as the society has several members willing to give talks about their area of special interest.

These include Melba, aspects of Lilydale township and its history, Lilydale Cemetery, the Lilydale Express newspaper and Lilydale's military history.


Contact Lorraine Smith on 9735 1104.

Speakers program

Lorraine Smith is presently compiling a list of people to approach as guest speakers at the society meetings or special evenings next year. If you have heard someone - not necessarily related to heritage - who you found interesting and entertaining, please call Lorraine on 9735 1104.

On the airwaves

Listen to the Radio Station 98.1 FM. The society is on the airwaves on the second Tuesday in the month from 9.30am to 10am. The other societies on other Tuesdays are Ringwood, Knox and Croydon



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New displays

In keeping with the need to promote ourselves, the new display panels were erected during the school holidays.

Call in, bring your friends and have a look at the new panels based on research by several of the members. There are many photos not been displayed before. The panels, content and researchers are:

Families

Williams – Myrna McBain and Goodall – Evelyn Tull

On the bench - JPs

Colin Hill – Dorothy Hill

John and Frederick Lithgow – Keith Lithgow and Elizabeth Lithgow

Cemetery

Robertson and Duck families– Lorraine Smith

Main Street

Edward Armstrong Janson and Arbor Day – Sandy Ross.

School

Lilydale Primary School – Lorraine Smith, Evelyn Tull and Sue Thompson

Businesses

Furphy and Furphy Tanks – Sandy Ross

Reece Hardware – Dorothy Hill

Melba - Pamela Vestey and Coombe Cottage – Sue Thompson and Val Sheehan.

A small part of our display on E.A. Janson is also featured in the History Week's Face to Face display at the Yarra Ranges Regional Museum.

The community owes a huge debt to Janson who instigated regular arbor days in Lilydale from 1896 and planned out all the tree plantings of our streets.

Anyone wanting to date buildings and homes should purchase a copy of Sandy's book *The Growing History of Trees* as they can estimate the age of their property from the age of the trees if photos include both.



Matt Tilney
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Speaker program

The committee has decided to have guest speakers every second month. We are now organizing speakers for next year. If you know of anyone who would be a good guest speaker, please contact Lorraine Smith (9735 1104).

Meetings, Events and Speakers					
Month	Date	Event	Time	Members	Non Members
October	1	General Meeting	1pm	free	free
		Stories About Lilydale. Tell us your story about Lilydale as part of History Week's Face to Face	2pm	free	free
	8	Sandy Ross talk: Janson and his fight over the Warburton Railway.	1pm	free	\$2.00
	23	History Week October 23 to 30. Local theme Face to Face E.A. Janson			
November	5	General Meeting	1pm	free	free
		Leading Senior Constable Linda Hancock Safety for older residents.	2pm	free	\$2.00
	8	Sandy Ross Military Cemetery Tour as our contribution to Remembrance Day.	1pm	\$10.00	\$10.00
December	3	Christmas Lunch at the Old Court House - Weber roasts	12pm	\$10.00	\$15.00
	14	Cemetery Tour	1pm	\$10.00	\$10.00
	26	Our traditional Australia Day Twilight Cemetery Tour	4pm	\$10.00	\$10.00
January					
February	4	Society Meeting	1pm	free	free
		Topic: Highlights of your working life	2pm	free	free
March	3	Society Meeting	1pm	free	free
		Speaker TBA	2pm	free	\$2.00

Members doing walks, talks and tours

Members have been busy doing talks and tours in the last couple of months.

Sue Thompson has taken three groups on Driving Melba's Yarra Valley. Two were car clubs driving their own old cars and the third a bus from Richmond Historical Society.

We also were visited by 90 Grade 1 and 2 children and their teachers from Lilydale West primary School. Members Ros and Marg Thomson, Dot Hill, Myrna McBain and Ruby Kwijas bought along things from home and spoke about their use in the home and workplace – marbles, books, toys, buttons and a typewriter were studied with great interest. Our members chatted about their lives when they were children.

Members are now gearing up for the youngsters from neighbouring Lilydale Primary School to visit us and

Keep up to date

If you want to find out more information about the society, our local history, its people and places or about Dame Nellie Melba go to:

www.lilydalehistorical.com.au or
www.nelliemelbamuseum.com.au

also do a short township walk looking at places of interest. About 100 children will be walking the streets on November 23.

Members have also been kept busy giving talks at the court house and going out and giving talks to various groups

Opening Hours

The society will open the doors of the old Lilydale Court House on Wednesdays, Friday afternoons, the weekends, and public holidays throughout the year.

The hours will be 11am to 4pm and Friday 1 to 4pm.

We can advise and arrange insurances on your behalf including Home & Contents, Private & Commercial Motor Vehicle, Farm, Business Insurance, Liability and much more.

When your insurances are due for Renewal give us a call.

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Now & Then by email

With the rising costs of paper and postage, the society is inviting members who are happy to receive their newsletter by email to contact Sue Thompson at suethompson50@ozemail.com.au and I will email a copy to you. Back copies are also available electronically.

Gifts for Christmas

The society has a comprehensive range of publications available for the Christmas stocking. For those into collecting, there are still a few Melba stamp packs available for just \$10. The pack contains three different first day covers:

- The first day the Lilydale Melba postmark was released on May 19, 1995.
- Australia Post's first day cover issued on May 10, 2011 to celebrate Melba's 150th birthday.
- Our first day cover featuring the local Lilydale postmark issued on Melba's 150th birthday – May 19, 2011.

We also have packs of DL envelopes featuring the Coombe Cottage clock tower available for just \$5 for a pack of 5. This is a great way to promote our society to your family and friends.

Your Membership

Members are the life blood of any organisation and that includes your society.

As a member you receive many benefits:

- Free access to our extensive archive of families, places and events in our community;
- Free access to our digital archives such as the Lillydale Express and rate books;
- Four issues each year of our newsletter

Now & Then by either mail or email

- Invitations to all our special events, talks and tours;
- Discounts on all our publications; and
- Opportunity to learn more about our local history.

Renew your membership or invite a friend to join our society today by filling out the form below.

Membership Subscription 2011-2012 now due

Membership Subscriptions 2011-2012 are due on the 1st July 2011. (If you are not sure if you are financial, please ring Lorraine on 9735 1104 to check.)

Name of Member: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Family Membership	\$20.00
Single membership	\$15.00
Pensioners	\$10.00
Students (under 16 years)	\$5.00

Amount enclosed: \$

SEND TO:
The Treasurer
Lilydale & District
Historical Society
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