

# Now & Then

Issue 4, October 2010

Affiliated with Royal Historical Society of Victoria Inc

Patron: Pamela, Lady Vestey

## 2010 Meeting Dates

October 30  
December 5

All meetings are held on the 1st Saturday of the month (except January) commencing at 1 pm at the Athenaeum Theatre Castella St., Lilydale.

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*Lilydale & District Historical Society*  
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or  
suthompson50@ozemail.com.au

website: [www.lilydalehistorical.com.au](http://www.lilydalehistorical.com.au)

### Contacts:

President: 9735 1661  
Secretary: 9761 9192

## Join us at the Wallace Gardens

All members, family and friends are invited to our only major function this year the Wallace Gardens Gala Day to be held on Saturday, November 6 from 1 to 6pm.

After the hectic Melbourne Cup season, this is your chance to unwind while wandering around the one hectare piece of garden paradise Christine Wallace has created at the family's Madden's Lane farm.

The day includes a wonderful

wood-fired cooked pizza with your own selected toppings, mouth watering desserts and glass of fantastic Coombe Farm wine donated by our Patron Pamela, Lady Vestey.

Tickets are \$30 each and can be ordered by phoning Sue Thompson 9761 9192 or Lorraine Smith 9735 1104. All proceeds will go to the society for our fitout of the Lilydale Courthouse. Bookings are essential and must be made by Monday, October 26.

The garden is at 7 Maddens Lane, Coldstream Melway Ref 277 A11.



*Hedges and the dry creek bed (below) are key features of the one-hectare Wallace Garden.*

## Courthouse Update

The Shire of Yarra Ranges has indicated it will respond to all the society's concerns about the terms and conditions of the licence agreement by the end of October.

The society executive committee were concerned over the high utility costs we would have to meet and the open-ended maintenance costs.

The agreement proposed to charge a peppercorn rental but the draft maintenance policy greatly concerned the society as members would be exposed to open-ended costs although we have a limited income.

In the light of our concerns and the need to provide simplicity and certainty in the costs of the courthouse, the shire is developing a cost model that works for all council buildings including the

courthouse.

The negotiating team wants the licence finalised to give us certainty about our though it is not known when we will move into the courthouse as that is dependant on when the new museum is finished and the staff move from the courthouse next year.

## Annual General Meeting

As our meeting and AGM fell on the same day as the replay of the AFL grand final between Collingwood and St Kilda, attendance was down but still enthusiastic.

Our executive and committee remained the same with the exception of committee member Gwenda Mutimer who passed away during September.

For the list of office bearers and Sandy's President's Report, turn to page 4.

## 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](mailto: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 direct on 9735 1661.

### 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 9,30 am to 10am. The other societies on other Tuesdays are Ringwood, Knox and Croydon

### 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](http://www.lilydalehistorical.com.au) or

[www.nelliemelbamuseum.com.au](http://www.nelliemelbamuseum.com.au)



## Vale Gwenda Millicent Mutimer March 14, 1927 – September 21, 2010

In many ways Gwenda Millicent Mutimer was the backbone of our society. Her local knowledge and love of history came together at the society. Gwenda was the society's go-to member when people wanted information about something or someone in the town.

It was left to others to do the research for the facts and figures but it was Gwenda who put flesh on the bones of people, businesses and places.

Off the top of her head, Gwenda could build you a picture of the person – their personality; incidents that they were involved in – many funny and others that couldn't be repeated; who they dated, courted or married; where they lived in Lilydale; where they worked and the family they had.

Her love and knowledge about Lilydale was unquestioned. She was born in Lilydale where her parents Ralph and Kathleen Goode operated a drapers shop established by Gwenda's grandparents.

Gwenda attended Lilydale Primary School and when she left school had various jobs before working in the family business. She married Wal Mutimer and they later moved just 50m up the road into their own home which Wal built. This was where Gwenda lived the rest of her life raising and caring for their two daughters Barbara and Diane.


When functions were held, Gwenda was always on hand, usually with the late Daisy Chapman, to talk with people and make them welcome. Would you like a cup of tea? was one of her most popular sayings. Always self-effacing, behind her mischievous and fun-loving veneer was an intelligent person who observed and understood life and people. Having lived through the Depression and World War II, life today was easier for Gwenda and she made sure she enjoyed it to the fullest.

Gwenda we will all miss you witty comments, you wonderful sense of humour and ever present laughter.

That woman is a success who has lived well,

Laughed often, and loved much.

Sue Thompson



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# Celebrate our History Week

**Sunday, October 24 to Sunday, October 31.**

The society has again joined with the Yarra Ranges Heritage Network to organise a series of local events to celebrate Victoria's History Week (October 24 to 31).

Members, family and friends are welcome to attend our events which will be:

## 1. Melbmania: A Diva's Day Out



Melba was Australia's royalty and rock star of the 1900s. Sue Thompson will give a talk about the phenomena that is Melba and why she became our nation's first Diva and was treated like royalty and mobbed like a rock star by the masses of Melburnians.

Saturday, October 23 at Lilydale Library, Anderson St, Lilydale from 2pm. Free

## 2. Melba and Other Amazing Women

Experienced tour guide Lorraine Smith will lead this Lilydale Cemetery tour. Learn about Dame Nellie Melba and other amazing women buried at the cemetery such as pioneering women supporting their families to artists and leading women who have made a difference to our society.

Sunday, October 24 at Lilydale Cemetery, cnr Victoria and Nelson roads, Lilydale at 4.30pm.

Cost: \$7.00



## 3. What's in a Name?



President of Lilydale & District Historical Society Sandy Ross will talk about 50 of Lilydale's streets and their names. Sandy is the author of the book "What's in a Name?" and has spent years researching the stories behind Lilydale's street names.

Tuesday, October 26 at Lilydale Library, Anderson St, Lilydale at 7pm. Free

## 4. Melba and Her Mates

Tour Lilydale Cemetery with experienced guide Keith Lithgow and hear the stories about Dame Nellie Melba and her local Lilydale mates.

Thursday, October 28 at Lilydale Cemetery, cnr Victoria and Nelson roads, Lilydale at 1.30pm.

Cost: \$7.00



## Appraisals Day

A feature of this year's History Week October 24 to 31 events is an antiques appraisal day which gives all residents the chance to take along their precious antiques or collectables and have them valued.

Organised by the Yarra Ranges Heritage Network, the day will be held at the Montrose Town Centre on Sunday, October 24 from 11am to 4pm

On hand will be experts on kitchenalia, toys, coins, bank notes, military badges, medals and clocks.

The day will include local history displays and lunch and Devonshire teas will be available.

Entry for the appraisals is \$2 which includes up to two items for valuation.

For more information, contact Marion on 9726 8740.

### Lilydale Travel Centre

License No. 32743  
AFTA Member  
IATA Accredited

**Ian Garbett**  
Managing Director

219 Main Street Lilydale Vic 3140  
Email: lilydaletravel@bigpond.com

Tel: 03 9735 1144  
Fax: 03 9735 3201

144 Main Street Lilydale 3140  
**Telephone 9735 4365**  
*"Purveyors of High Quality  
Cakes and Pastries"*

# Annual Report of the Lilydale & District Historical Society Inc.

## October 2010

The Lilydale Historical Society has just completed another year of meetings at the Athenaeum Theatre's Melba Room, Castella Street, Lilydale. We would again like to thank the directors of the theatre for the use of their premises and their co-operation in providing us with this venue for our monthly meetings.

The Athenaeum Theatre Company commissioned a collection of Melba historical photographs and records to be installed on one of the walls of the Melba Room. These draw favourable comments from the patrons of the theatre, and gives an added Melba atmosphere to the room.

The Lilydale Historical Society is at present engaged in talks with the Shire of Yarra Ranges regarding the Old Court House building in Castella Street and its use when the renovations to the Museum building are completed in early 2011. We have asked for a decision by the end of October 2010 so that we can plan our program for 2011.

Our project with the Lilydale Cemetery Trust has been completed, and there are now twenty-six plaques on stands beside specific graves which give a short history of the person buried there. There is also a large drawing on the building at the Victoria Road entrance which shows where these graves are located plus a small plastic holder in which there is a paper map that allows you to do your own cemetery tour. This project was financed by William Mathews Funerals and the Cemetery Trust.

We continue to speak on historical matters by way of radio 98.1 FM, we also run the lost children's tent at the Lilydale show and conduct frequent cemetery and town tours.

We are also doing a lot of research work as people contact us through e-mails and phone calls. Due to these requests we continue to have our local newspaper, the Lilydale Express recorded onto CDs and DVDs.

During our August 2010 meeting we had Megan Sheehy speak to us about her role at the Shire of Yarra Ranges Museum, which is to work with the history groups and societies in the shire.

Three members of the Museum of Lilydale Trust were voted back into office for a further three years, after a lengthy discussion it was moved that they should in future be appointed by the Yarra Ranges Heritage Network.

The age of society members is of some concern. Two of our life members, Daisy Chapman and Gwenda Mutimer passed away this year and will be missed greatly.

We were able to celebrate with our member Dorothy Hill when she became a life member of the Lilydale Historical Society.

The President and his wife attended a day long session of the RHSV which was held at Moe this year.

Locally, a guard has been fitted by the council around the Cork tree outside the Lilydale station, this tree was brought to the shire's attention by the society.

Work is well underway on the supports for the foot bridge that will continue the walking trail across the busy Maroondah Highway, Lilydale. This will be replacing the old Red Bridge used by the trains going to Warburton and then removed when the line was closed.

We are only able to function as a historical society because of the support and dedication of our members, and to them we say a big "thank you."

**Sandy Ross, President**

### At the helm of the society

The following office bearers were elected at the Annual General Meeting held on Saturday, October 2:

President: Sandy Ross

First Vice President: Lorraine Smith

Second Vice President: Ruby Kwijas

Secretary: Sue Thompson

Assistant Secretary: Maree Phelan

Treasurer/Public Officer: Phillip Burton

Committee: Evelyn Tull, Dorothy Hill, Val Sheehan and Keith Lithgow.

Museum Board of Management Representatives: Sandy Ross, Lorraine Smith and Sue Thompson

Yarra Ranges Heritage Network Representatives:

Sue Thompson, Carol Balshaw and Maureen Sutton.

After several years, treasurer Phillip Burton has stepped down as the society's representative on the Museum board of Management due to the commitment required in his new business venture. His place has been taken by secretary Sue Thompson.

Before closing the AGM, chair Lorraine Smith expressed her thanks to Sandy for all his hard work during the year and also the support given by the executive and committee members.

### See us at the Lilydale Library

Lilydale & District Historical Society members are now on duty at the Lilydale Library to help anyone with a research query.

The times are:

First Saturday (meeting day): 10am – 12.30pm

Fourth Saturday: 1.15pm – 3.45pm

Second, third and fifth Saturdays: 1pm – 4pm

All Sundays: 1pm – 4pm.

# Memories of Melba

*Celebrating Dame Nellie Melba's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday.*

In May next year, the society will celebrate the anniversary of Melba's birthday on May 19, 1861.

Members have agreed that May should be dedicated to a series of activities about Melba, her life and her hometown of Lilydale/Coldstream.

Planned are cemetery tours; walks around Melba's Lilydale; a special *Walking in Melba's Footsteps* township walk for the local school children; a series of talks on various aspects of Melba's professional and private life, a special publication and a photographic display.

This will be the society's major event for the year and already planning is well underway to remember the lasting contribution this world famous Australian made on the world of opera, to the World War I effort, her homeland and her own local community.

The complete program of activities and events will be announced in our February Now & Then and on our society website [www.lilydalehistorical.com.au](http://www.lilydalehistorical.com.au) so try and keep some room on your calendar so you can join in the festivities.



Melba at *Coombe Cottage*.

## Society Christmas Party

This year the society's Christmas party will be held at secretary Sue Thompson's home at Kilsyth.

It will be a traditional lunch of roast turkey and pork, ham, chicken and selection of delicious homemade salads.

It will be held on Saturday, December 11 from 12 noon.

For catering purposes, please contact either Sue Thompson 9761 9192 or Lorraine Smith 9735 1104 if you are planning to attend by Monday, November 29.

The cost will be \$25 for adults and \$20 for pensioners.

Bring yourselves, bring your Christmas cheer, and BYO chair and drinks.

## A first for Council

It is amazing what you find in the local paper. In its edition of June 22, 1956 the Lilydale Express reported on an extra-ordinary election which featured Mrs Lil Bramall, the first woman candidate in the Shire of Lillydale's history:

It would appear that ratepayers in the North Riding are still very interested in the affairs of the local council. At least, that is the conclusion one draws from the hustle and bustle which took place behind the scenes before nominations closed for the extra-ordinary election on Wednesday. At one stage of proceedings at least five well-known names were mentioned as possibles, but by Wednesday morning the field had been narrowed down to three, namely Mrs. Lil. Bramall, Mr. Eddie Hill, and local businessman, Mr. Orm Quinn. The nomination of Mrs. Bramall is interesting, as it is the first time in the history of the shire, to my knowledge, that a woman has vied for council honors. Mrs. Bramall owns one of the best farming properties in the district, in which she has lived for many years, and if elected, would undoubtedly make her presence felt. Lil, as we all know her, is not the type to sit back and let the grass grow under her feet; she is too forceful by nature for that, and

I'm sure, would put her experience in business and public affairs to very good effect. It is a pity indeed that she should come up against opponents of such high standing as Messrs. Hill and Quinn. The former is a member of one of the district's most esteemed pioneering families, and, with his knowledge of local affairs, is fully equipped to take over the reins of councillor. The same could be said of Mr. Quinn who, although not one of the older identities, has every other qualification, including a go-ahead outlook and a conscientious desire to put Lilydale right on the map. All in all, it should be an interesting preview to the annual elections in August, at which it seems likely there will be opposition in all ridings.

For the record the election was caused by the resignation of former shire engineer and later councillor Reg Eldridge. Eddie Hill won the election on preferences and remained on the council until 1972. He was shire president in 1959, 1961 and 1966.

The votes were: Hill 544 Quinn 385 Bramall 317. Of Mrs Bramall's second preference votes 280 went to Eddie Hill and 37 to Orm Quinn.

The final vote after the allocation of preferences was Hill 824 and Quinn 422.

If undeliverable return to:  
Lilydale & District Historical Society  
P.O. Box 834, Lilydale Vic 3140

**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 [sue.thompson50@ozemail.com.au](mailto:sue.thompson50@ozemail.com.au) and I will email a copy to you. Back copies are also available electronically.

**Society books for sale Order now for Christmas**

30 years of History (1971-2001) compiled by Sandy Ross	\$ 3.00
Reminiscences of Life Notes and memories of Lilydale residents, edited by Sue Thompson & Myrna McBain.	\$14.50
Prosperity & Progress (1889-1989) The History of the former Shire of Lillydale Offices by Sue Thompson.	\$5.00
Lilydale Primary School Pupil Register	\$15.00

**Also available**

Yarra Valley Historical	
A brief look at early life in the Valley during mid 1800s to 1900s	
Vol 1. Issue 7. Special 36 page Lilydale Edition.	
The Early History of Lillydale/Lilydale	\$5.00

Please ring Sandy on 97351661 to purchase these books or any historical society publications.

**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 2010-2011 are now due**

**Membership Subscription 2009-2010 were due on the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2010.** (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: \$ .....

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The Treasurer  
Lilydale & District  
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