# Now & Then

Issue 2, May 2010

Affiliated with Royal Historical Society of Victoria Inc

Patron: Pamela, Lady Vestey

### 2010 Meeting Dates

May 1 June 5 July 3 August 7

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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Issue 2 May 2010

# A birthday to remember

When David and Isabella (Dow) Mitchell celebrated the safe delivery of their daughter at Richmond 149 years ago on May 19, 1861, one wonders if they realised the impact Helen Porter Mitchell was to have on the world. Nellie, a tomboy was blessed with her father's determination to not only succeed but be the best at what you sent your mind to do and her mother's love of music. This was the combination she needed when she set out to conquer the world of opera and rule the world stage for the next 30 years.

In this issue of Now & Then we reflect on Melba the child, Melba's home and her lasting contributions.

### Melba the child

Pamela Vestey, Melba's granddaughter summed up the early life of Nellie Mitchell in her book *Melba A Family Memoir*:

David Mitchell's iudgment was good; he thoughtfully watched town and country developments. His brick works supplied an essential commodity to the growing city and he continued wisely to assess the needs of the city and country throughout his life.

Isabella's first child, whom they



The photograph shows Nellie, Annie and Bella, three serious little girls. Nellie, composed, her habitual stance already established, very dark beside the two smaller blond girls. One could imagine that Nellie had been stolen from the gypsies rather than by them. (Courtesy Pamela Vestey).

christened Margaret, was born in March 1858. She was to die a few days before her first birthday. They were comforted by the birth of a son, William James, in July 1859 but the tragic pattern was to repeat itself and the boy died in June 1860.

They hardly dared to rejoice at the birth of a lively baby born on 19 May 1861. They christened her Helen Porter but she

was always called Nellie. She had a bright little face with dark brown eyes and a cap of soft dark hair. She passed the feared first birthday and tumbled around the house, finding new joys every day. Nellie could even entice her father in from his work for a glimpse of his little lass. When Nellie was eighteen months old,

her sister Anne was born. The baby took up a good deal of her mother's time and Nellie missed her undivided attention. The following years brought more sisters and brothers; and Nellie established herself in the role of elder sister with its responsibilities and rewards.

Continued page 2.

# A birthday to remember (cont'd)

Nellie cherished the moments she could spend alone with her mother. When Isabella found time to play her piano, Nellie would sit near her, silent and content, while the notes on the keyboard became as familiar to her as her alphabet.

The Dow family name had long been associated with music in Scotland. .... Isabella and her sisters were talented and well taught. They gave music lessons to the Mitchell children, taking pride in Nellie's precocious talent in piano playing and singing. Nellie had perfect pitch and a remarkable memory.

Mr and Mrs Dow's house in Bourke Street was a favourite place to visit...... Mrs Dow knew many 'Scotch' songs which Nellie loved to learn. With the encouragement of her grandmother and her Aunt Alice it was arranged that Nellie should take part in a concert held in a Richmond hall to raise funds for the local school. Almost sick with excitement', she carried her music to her first concert. She was six years old so they stood her on a chair, the better to be seen.

She sang 'with delight, "Comin' through the Rye" and "Shells of Ocean", which my grandmother had taught me'. Nellie had a great reception and felt very pleased with herself. The next day she rushed off to find her best friend hoping for more praise, but the best friend, shocked, remarked only, 'Nellie Mitchell, I saw your drawers'.

Growing up in the suburb of Richmond the Mitchell children were able to benefit from the culture available, and to be stimulated by the city's rapid growth brought close to them by their father's involvement in its building. With their parents they attended concerts and other entertainments, and there were many musical evenings at home, when amateur musicians and singers performed.

### 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

### 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.

### Grant

The society has applied for a grant under the Federal Government's Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs Volunteer Grants 2010.

The funding sought it to purchase a computer, software and printer so members and the wider community can do their research using our microfilm and CD copies of the *Lilydale Express*.

### Research

Did a member of you family serve in a theatre of war and was he or she buried at Lilydale Cemetery?

If so please contact Sandy Ross on 9735 1661 as he and several other members are compiling information on servicemen and women for a cemetery walk planned for Remembrance Day.

### Quiz about Lilydale

Thank you to Marion & Doug Mackie who compiled the questions for the Lilydale Probus:

- 1. How many railway stops to Flinders Street Station via the City Loop?
- 2. When were the railway boom gates, near the Lilydale station, first lowered?
- 3. When and where were the first traffic lights installed?
- 4. When did Mitchell's Quarry begin operating?
- 5. When did MacDonald's open in Lilydale?
- 6. What is the walking distance around the Lilydale Lake?
- 7. Where is the office of the Lilydale Agricultural & Horticulture Society?
- 8. When is the show held each year?
- 9. Where was the Lilydale Hospital?
- 10. How many miles to Bushells Tea from Lilydale?

For the answers go to page 8.

### For more information:

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

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

### **DVD** project report

Thanks to the generosity of a member, the society has received another donation to help digitise our microfilm copies of the *Lilydale Express* and have them available on DVD. If you would like to make a donation - no matter how small - to this project, contact either Sandy Ross on 9735 1661 or Sue Thompson 9761 9192.

# Remembering on ANZAC Day

The most ennobling of traditions euphemisms, the Fallen, was given new currency as soon as the dying began, when Laurence Binyon, an elderly English scholar, poet and librarian, published in September 1914 his verse: For the Fallen

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old: Age shall not wear them, nor the years condemn, As the going down of the sun and in the morning We will remember them.

(From The Australian, November 11, 1998.)

# AUSTRALIAN COMMONWEALTH

### About the author

### Laurence Binyon, poet, scholar of East and West

From a book written by John Hatcher

"But for four memorable lines in an otherwise unremarkable poem, the name of Laurence Binyon, poet, dramatist, art historian, museum curator, editor, critic, biographer, translator, lecturer and essayist, in short, the complete man of letters, would barely have, survived his age outside the admiring world of academe.

Best remembered, most often quoted words in the English language. Yet anonymous. Asked who wrote them most people would be hard to say.

During his 40 years at the British Museum, Laurence Binyon (1869-1943) lifted the veil on Oriental art and, by his scholarly and revelatory translations forced the West to swallow at times uncomfortable truth that it had no monopoly on style and beauty.

He was also an authority on Asian art; an expert on the 19th-century British Watercolour; and was held to be one of the three most eminent British art critic of his day; he wrote the vastly erudite, four-volume 'A Literary History of England', and his poetry was successful adapted to sweeping changes spanning the gulf between late Victorian to Modernist."

(From This England, autumn, 1996.)



### The toll

Australian population:	4,870,000
Enlistments:	416,809
Serving Overseas:	331,781
Serving on the Western Front	:: 295,000
Serving at Gallipoli:	60,000
Killed (All Services):	61,720
Killed (AIF, 1914-18):	59,330
Killed (Western Front):	45,333
Killed (Gallipoli):	8,000
Casualties (AIF):	213,061
Casualties	
Western Front:	181,221
Wounded (AIF):	153, 731
Wounded Western Front:	136, 188
Wounded Gallipoli:	25, 600





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Coombe Cottage Madame Melba's Country residence neat Lillydale. From a picture spread in the The Leader December 30 1911, page 30.

Note the Tennis court on the left and the pergola on the flat roof section.

# **Home Sweet Home**

In June 1910, 100 years ago, work started on Melba's "recently acquired" country residence at Coldstream, just outside Lilydale.

Melba was busy in London studying the plans drawn up by one of the state's well known architect John Grainger of Grainger and Little architects.

He was the architect who designed the Princes Bridge and was also the father of Percy Grainger, the extraordinarily talented pianist.

The acquisition of the property from the estate of the late John Dooley in October the year before rated only a couple of lines in the Lilydale Express as few people would have realised the significance the property would become to Melba, her family and the wider community.

In the year following the purchase the newspaper was going to great lengths to report on the property calling it the diva's retirement:

When Madame Melba decides to abdicate her brilliant position as Queen of Song she will retire to a lovely home which is now being prepared for her at Coldstream, in the neighbourhood of her father's property, Cave Hill, Lilydale.

There is at present a pleasant homestead on the property, but this will be taken in to the main scheme of buildings, which are to be of reinforced concrete. Around the house will be a succession of terrace lawns and gardens covering an area of eight acres. There are now being prepared under the personal direction of Mr W. Guilfoyle, whose complete work in the Melbourne Botanical Gardens is world-famous.

In addition to the terraces, decked with rate plants and beautiful trees, there will be croquet lawns, tennis courts and arbor, vistas will be afforded over the Yarra Valley and terminating with the Dividing Range.

Outside the design of the house will not be elaborate; the best taste will be exercised in the internal fittings. Here the main feature will be the magnificent musicroom, panelled and raftered with carved and polished blackwood. There will be space to accommodate large companies, and, needless to state, the musical equipment will be complete.

In the morning rooms, drawing rooms, boudoirs and suites of bedrooms Madame Melba has brought to bear her own taste and experience of the best European homes. In one suite the fittings and furnishings will be in accordance with the gorgeous and elegant styles of the Louis XV period; in another the room will be a replica of the best Empire models; a third will reflect the stately taste of Tudor days. Practically the whole expanse of the roof will be flat, and on it will be a raised pergola, where from among arbors of roses and palms, will be seen wide views of the surrounding plains and mountains.

(Lilydale Express June 10, 1910).

Throughout the years, *Coombe Cottage* has entertained visitors from around the globe and put the district onto the world stage. These included members of royalty, friends from England, our own Governors General and Governors plus a host of painters and performers. During World War I Melba and her family hosted groups of wounded servicemen and their families at Coombe.

It was Melba's country retreat when in Victoria and was the home of her son George, his wife Evie and their daughter Pamela. Throughout the years, they have also opened the door to the home behind the hedge to support many local charities and organisations.

But above all else it continues to be the family's home sweet home.

# 150 years of Lillydale settlement

They all crowded into William Perry's auction rooms in Melbourne. The people were from all parts of the colony anxious to stake their claim, not to dig for gold but to buy a piece of the land on which to build a home for their families and establish a new life for themselves.

The Victorian government was surveying and opening up land, creating new townships and settlements to cater for the thousands of people who had arrived in the colony in the search for fame and fortune by digging for gold. When they didn't find the gold, they drifted back into Melbourne wanting to start a new life in their new country.

In 1859, government surveyor John Hardy had surveyed he site for a town at the junction of the Woods Point Road and Running Creek and part of this land went under the hammer on May 31, 1860 - 150 years ago.

The Argus described the auction as "town lots at Lilydale on the Olinda Creek, on the road from Melbourne to Mr de Castella's station and suburban lots at Yering on the banks of the Olinda Creek.

Under the terms of sale of Crown lands by public auction, the purchaser was the highest bidder above the upset price and had to put down a 10 per cent deposit immediately and pay the balance within a calendar month of the sale.

Title to the land would be issued once the balance of the purchase price was paid and the relevant fees paid - £1 for all lots under



50 acres; £1 5 shillings for lots 50 to 300 acres and £1 10 shillings for lots more than 300 acres.

The 28 town lots in Main, and Castella streets had an upset price of £8 per acre.

The lots were all 2 roods except where noted and the lots and section numbers are in brackets



Above: John Hardy Government Surveyor. He surveyed and names Lillydale. (Sandy Ross)

Left: Main St, Lilydale 1864. Within four years of the first land sales, many businesses and homes had been built at Lilydale.

The photo is looking towards the Lilydale Hotel with the Bullock team in front. (Sandy Ross)

The prices	ana	tne	purchasers	were:
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Lot 1	£14.5s	Thomas Sherar (Lot 3 section 1 Main St)
Lot 2	£7	William Cargill (Lot 4 section 1)
Lot 3	£8	Denis Murphy (Lot 5 section 1)
Lot 4	£8	Denis Murphy (Lot 6 section 1)
Lot 5	£8	Denis Murphy (lot 7 section 1)
Lot 6	£8 5s	Andrea Lagogiannis (Lot 8 section 1)
Lot 7	£9	Andrea Lagogiannis (Lot 9 section 1)
Lot 8	£9	James Balchin (Lot 10 section 1)
Lot 9	£8	John Hutchinson (Lot 11 section 1)
Lot 10	£8	John Hutchinson (Lot 12 section 1)
Lot 11	£8	John Ryan (Lot 13 section 1)
Lot 12	£10	Alfred Watson 2r 16 8/10p(Lot 14 section 1)
Lot 13	£7	John Ryan 2r 24 7/8p (Lot 15 section 1)

LOI 14 £14 108	Fleming Hewell (Lot 3 section 2)
Lot 15 £10 10s	Fleming Hewett (Lot 4 section 2)
Lot 16 £10	Henry Perrin (Lot 5 section 2)
Lot 17 £10 10s	Henry Perrin (Lot 6 section 2)
Lot 18 £12	Patrick Mornane (Lot 7 section 2)
Lot 19 £4	James S.H. Bowman (Lot 1 section 6 Castella St)
Lot 20 £6	James S.H. Bowman (Lot 2 section 6)
Lot 21 £4	Edward Hill (Lot 3 section 6)
Lot 22 £4 4s	James Balchin (Lot 4 section 6)
Lot 23 £4 12s	James Balchin (Lot 5 section 6)
Lot 24 £4 7s	Samuel de Pury (Lot 6 section 6)
Lot 25 £4 11s	Clement Deschamps (Lot 7 section 6)
Lot 26 £4 11s	Clement Deschamps (Lot 8 section 6)

Clement Deschamps (Lot 9 section 6)

Lot 27 £4

### 150 years of settlement (cont'd)

Lot 28 £4 Henry Perrin (Lot 10 section 6)

While all the township blocks sold, the land east of the town attracted little attention. The upset price was £1 an acre.

Lots 1 to four were passed in with no offer.

Lot 5 96a 3r 31/2p Patrick Mangan (Lot 1 section 28)

Lot 6 to 15 passed in no offer

Lot 16 37a 2r 18p Susanna Smoothy (Lot 5 section 29)

Lot 17 55a 3r 18p Denis Rourke (Lot 6 section 29)

Lot 18 50a 3r 131/2p Denis Rourke (Lot 7 section 29)

Suburban lots on the west bank of the Olinda or Running Creek adjoining the township (Section 30) had upset prices of £2 and £1 10s per acre.

Lot 1	£3 15s an acre	46a 2r 4p	William Hand
Lot 2	£5 11s an acre	35a Or 2p	Edward Hill
Lot 3	£3 an acre	40a 1 r 38p	Clement Deschamps
Lot 4	£1 18s	45a 3r 9p	Clement Deschamps
Lot 5	£4 1s an acre	29a 2r 24p	Edward Hill
Lot 6	£4 13s an acre	30a 3r 12p	John Hutchinson

### **Milestones**

This year there will be several interesting milestones reached. 150 years ago

September 1860: Brushy Creek local store keeper James Balchin appointed post master of Brushy Creek.

May 31, 1860: First land sales for Lilydale Township along Main and Castella streets.

September 14, 1860: The site for public buildings in Lilydale gazetted – now site of the state school, court house and police station

December 21, 1860: Second land sale in the township (Yering Parish map)

100 years ago

June 1910: Work underway on Melba's new Coldstream home. 50 years ago

November 28, 1960: First council meeting of the Shire of Lillydale was held in the new shire offices in Anderson St, Lilydale.

December 7, 1960: The offices were officially opened. December 20, 1960: Governor-in-Council approved the creation of the Shire of Croydon.

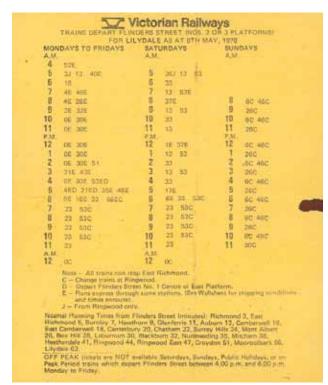


Lot 7	£5 an acre	27a Or 36p	John Hutchinson
Lot 8	£5 3s an acre	29a 3r 30p	John Hutchinson
Lot 9	£5 5s an acre	36a 1 r 2p	John Hutchinson

Lots situated on the east bank of the Olinda or Running Creek adjoining the township (also Section 30) had upset prices of £2 10s and £2 an acre.

Lot 10	£2 17s 6d an ac	ere 19	9a 2 r	36p	John Ryan
Lot 11	£2 an acre	25a 2r 8p		Clemen	t Deschamps
Lot 13	£2 12s an acre	14a 1 r 18	p	George	Brown
Lot 14	No offer				
Lot 15	£2 2s an acre	17a 3r 22 <sub>I</sub>	ρ	George	Brown
Lot 16	£2 an acre	17a Or 30p	ρ	John Ro	ouget and Nicholas
Gaudio	n				
Lot 17	£2 10s an acre	16a 3 r 12	p	Denis F	Rouke
Lot 18	£3 an acre	11a Or 9p		Bradsha	aw Campbell
Lot 19	£5 an acre	10a 3r 28 <sub>I</sub>	ρ	David I	Bruce

To see the maps go to www.lilydalehistorical.com.au



### An interesting find

Acquiring new furniture can be an interesting exercise particularly when you have to clean out the old furniture before it heads to a new home.

Recently, tucked away in one of my drawers I found my first payslips; letters to Santa written by my now 37 and 35 year-old sons and on old train timetable from Lilydale Station from 1978.

I have now scanned it an added it to our digital files. Do you have any similar Lilydale-related items tucked away that you can scan and email to me so I can add them to our digital files? Send them to: suethompson50@ozemail.com.au

I have added a couple of other items – a train ticket and Croydon Cinema ticket to our website
www.lilydalehistorical.com.au - Sue Thompson

# Thoroughly modern Nellie

(By Sue Thompson reprinted courtesy Lilydale & Yarra Valley Leader)

IF DAME Nellie Melba was alive today she would be right up with the latest technology.

Travelling the world, her iPhone would always be at hand so she could keep in contact with her family, fellow artists and friends.

On Twitter and Facebook Melba would have kept her fans up to date with her latest appearances on the world stage while her daily blog would have provided us all with a unique insight into her seemingly glamorous, frenetic life.

Melba didn't live to see these 21st century tools as she died on February 23, 1931, just short of her 70th birthday.

However, during her life, cars, recordings, the wireless and live broadcasts were all developed and Melba revelled in meeting the inventors and trying the new technology.

While always willing to give new inventions a go, Melba was also an astute businesswoman, careful to protect her image, her influence and her income while using every means available to promote and market herself to her fans around the world. MELBA'S voice was first recorded by Lionel Mapleson on an Edison wax cylinder recording device on January 28, 1901.

In 1902 she made several records for her father. Her commercially available disc gramophones (records) were released in July 1904 in London under Melba's own special mauve label.

The 12 discs sold for one guinea (\$2.20) while records by lesser-known artists sold for 12.5p or \$1.25.

At the time it was customary for artists to receive a fixed fee for each recording session.

Not Melba. Her records were released only after the company agreed to a royalty of five shillings (50 cents) on each record sold. THE forward-thinking Melba created several firsts in her life.

She was the first person to sing on the radio and the first to allow the BBC to broadcast a complete opera live to the people of London.

There was much hype surrounding Melba's singing on the wireless on June 15, 1920, organised by the British newspaper *The Daily Mail*.

Starting with her famous trill, during the concert Melba was supposed to sing three songs in three languages: *Home Sweet Home* (English), *Addio from La Boheme* (Italian) and *Nymphes et Sylvains* (French), which catered for the European fans 1600km away.



Melba as Elaine. (Courtesy Pamela Vestey).

She became so enthusiastic she did two encores: *Chant Venetien* and *Nymphes et Sylvains* again before finishing with *God Save The King*.

Three years later, wireless broadcasting had come of age and the new BBC wanted to broadcast its first complete opera.

Of course it turned to Melba and on January 17, 1923, thousands of people heard the live broadcast of Melba as Mimi in *La Boheme* at Covent Garden.

The sell-out event had thousands of listeners at home by their fires listening to the three hour performance.

It was Melba's one and only broadcast opera performance because she realised it could be the death of live operatic performances and her concerts as people would stay home rather than book a seat. If undeliverable return to:

Lilydale & District Historical Society

P.O. Box 834, Lilydale Vic 3140

### Lilydale quizz answers

1. 28 including Flinders Street.

2. 1986.

8. November.

3. 1991 / Anderson Street & Maroondah Highway.

9. Swansea Road.

7. Market Street.

4. 1878.

10. 24 / the sign was on the corner of Anderson

5. 1980-1981.

Street, near the new Medical Centre.

6. 2500m.

### 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.

# **Books for sale to celebrate** Dame Nellie Melba's birthday

Melba A Family Memoir - Pamela Vestey	\$20.00
Melba: Australia's Greatest Daughter CD-R0M, teacher's kit	
and student activity sheets	\$17.00
Melba Lilydale Queen of Song - Sue Thompson	\$ .50
Melba: Important Dates of her Life -Sue Thompson	\$ 2.00
Coombe Cottage: Melba's home in Coldstream	Free
A D' A D O A G TEL	#10.00 (DD

\$10.00 (RRP \$14.95) A Diva's Day Out - Sue Thompson

### 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.

## **Membership Subscription 2009-2010**

Membership Subscription 2009-2010 were due on the 1st June 2009. (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	SEND TO: The Treasurer
Single membership	\$15.00	Lilydale & District
Pensioners	\$10.00	Historical Society
Students (under 16 years)	\$5.00	P.O. Box 834, LILYDALE 3140
Amount enclosed: \$		

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