“...and all at once, summer collapsed into fall.”  
Oscar Wilde

As the chaotic months of our seaside Summer evolve into the calmer climate of Autumn, we consider what has been a busy season. My thanks go to all our volunteers who have kept the Museum open throughout all but the most torrid conditions (we closed when the temperature reached 40°!). We receive regular feedback on the friendly and helpful information provided by our volunteers.

Volunteers are our lifeblood. Without them we could not operate. Some contribute many hours and some just the occasional one or two, but each is invaluable in keeping the Museum going. I urge you to consider even a small contribution of time.

“‘To achieve great things, two things are needed; a plan, and not quite enough time.’”
Leonard Bernstein

Our street stalls in Sorrento and Blairgowrie have been most successful and congratulations go to Jan Weston, Suzanne Edginton, Suzanne Ewart and the . . . few, the happy few, the band of sisters and brothers. We also had busy stalls at Point Nepean Market in January and March, where we had many discussions with passing local history aficionados, and the simply curious. As well as the obvious financial benefits, all our stalls are an important opportunity to promote the Sorrento Museum. Sadly, awareness of our collection, rôle and even existence is lacking in the local community, both permanent and itinerant.
In an effort to engage with the regular holidaying crowd we have created a form of fundraising titled ‘Friends of The Sorrento Museum’. This engages people to make an annual tax deductible donation of $100 to the Museum. Despite being early days, the response thus far has been encouraging. For further information see the website.

At last, the final Point Nepean Master Plan was released in January. A copy is available to download via our website. Frank Hindley and Dr Ursula de Jong were our speakers on this subject at the March meeting.

Important work continues, with NHS contributing information to the consultants tasked by The Shire with updating the Heritage Study for Portsea, Sorrento and Blairgowrie. My congratulations to Janet South and all working in archives for the ‘gems’ they have been able to unearth. Information on the Heritage Study project is on display at the Museum and your feedback is most welcome. In particular, if you know of any property that you consider has either historic or cultural significance and is not currently subject to a heritage overlay, we would like to hear its story.

The Shire continues to consider the addition of additional storage and working space at the Museum and we await further developments. I trust you had an enjoyable Summer and look forward to seeing you here in the months ahead. Why not bring a friend down to have a look around one weekend afternoon?

Clive Smith
Sorrento Ferry Terminal: After receiving recommendations from a Panel established by the Minister, the Shire Council has approved a proposal by the private company Searoads to change the Mornington Peninsula Planning Scheme, and have weaker planning controls applied to the site. This will allow Searoads to expand operations at the Sorrento Ferry Terminal, reclaim further areas from the sea (to be added to their lease area), and build a multistorey terminal building with dining facilities at the end of the Pier. The Council has forwarded the proposal to the State Planning Minister, but is seeking to have VicRoads agree in advance to fund and build the associated roadworks which will be required for the town, including two new roundabouts on Point Nepean Road. The Panel in its report accepted a submission of Searoads ( contested unsuccessfully by NHS) that the proposed expansion would have no detrimental effect on the heritage of the town and its historic pier.

Sandarne: This property in Ocean Beach Road is the subject of an application to build a multi-storey apartment block. It is on a lot which, unlike that of other developments in its sub-precinct, has no rear or side lane entry. The proponents’ plan includes demolition of a significant early twentieth century timber Swedish-design fisherman’s cottage, associated with the Croad family. The Shire Council’s refusal of the application led to the proponent seeking a review of the decision at VCAT. Parties to the dispute did not agree to a settlement at the Compulsory Conference called by VCAT on February 26, and the matter will proceed to a full hearing in April.

Point Nepean: The recently released Master Plan for Point Nepean National Park was discussed at a general meeting of the Society on March 2nd.
Singer and conductor Antony Ransome has composed a narrative chamber opera with libretto by local historian Richard Cotter on the theme of the historic Collins Settlement at Sullivan Bay, Sorrento, and the successful escape of the convict William Buckley.

Two performances of the new opera will be given in conjunction with the Rosebud Astral Theatre Society in the Memorial Hall in Rosebud on 4 and 5 May 2019 as part of the 2019 National Trust Australian Heritage Festival. Buckley and his Wathaurong wife Purran-Murnin, Lt. Governor Collins, Rev. Knopwood, Lt. Tuckey and other historical characters will all be brought to life for a modern audience here on the southern Mornington Peninsula.

In addition to the other grant applications being made, the project has been accepted by the Australian Cultural Fund, australianculturalfund.org.au (‘The Buckley opera’ is on their website and easy to find there via Google), which permits tax deductibility for any donations.

A stage director and a leading baritone for the role of Buckley have agreed to be engaged along with a First Nations soprano for the role of Purran-Murnin. The composer will conduct.

All are welcome to attend the official launch of the project at the Collins Settlement Visitor Centre, Leggetts Way, Sorrento, on Sunday, 15th April 2018 at 2 pm. (Melways Ref. 157 F10)
MEMBERSHIP

We welcome the following new members to the Society and look forward to them attending meetings and functions:

Tim GULLIFER, Patsy PATTEN, Anne BARNETT, John & Helen PIZZEY, Jack BOWEN and Family, John & Leah DAY, Claire & Alan REID, Jan FREESTONE & Family, Mary HAWKINS and Family, Julia WILSON, Dr William RYAN, Julie JAME and Anthony STYANTBROWNE, Catherine WALTER and Family, and John & Rose DOWNER (re-joined)

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS
Thanks to all members who have renewed their subscription for the current financial year. Subscriptions pay for the running of the society and the museum, including electricity, cleaning, stationery, postage, printing and telephone. So we would be pleased to receive any unpaid subscriptions as soon as possible. If you would like to pay over the phone by credit card, please telephone me on 5981 8957.

DONATIONS
Many members include donations with their subscriptions, and the committee thanks you sincerely for these contributions. All donations over $2 are tax deductible and I try to send you all a receipt. If you have not received one, please let me know. Donations have helped us purchase two reverse-cycle air-conditioners for the Heritage Room. Those who froze through last winter's meetings there will appreciate this!

Val Stieglbauer
Membership Secretary
The Shepherd’s Hut - Pt Nepean

You never know what you might learn! Museum cataloguing might not sound exciting work, but investigating the background to artefacts can be very interesting, and here’s one example. Sandra Briant and I have been focussing on the NHS picture collection recently, and were cataloguing a small painting of the Shepherd’s Hut (by Joan Goss). The underground section is the oldest non-indigenous structure at Point Nepean. Its date is uncertain but it may even have been built and used by the shepherds of Edward Hobson, whose 1830s pastures seem to have extended, unofficially, all the way down from Dunns Creek near Dromana to The Heads. The hut may have lain unused until Dennis and Honorah Sullivan, from County Kerry, arrived with seven children at The Heads in 1843. (Their daughter Hannah had already married James Ford, and had been there for two years.) They landed at Skelton’s Flat (now Shelly Beach) to be greeted by the Skelton family, and might have stayed there but some sort of dispute made them move further towards Point Nepean, where Dennis was granted a lease on about four acres of land, which they enclosed. The family were obviously hard workers, running a few cattle using the dairy, growing potatoes, oats and other crops, and doing some lime burning, and by 1845 they had a very solid ‘Irish bog hut’ style stone cottage, a wattle and daub cottage, two wells and a lime kiln in the cliff face near the jetty. Meanwhile, immigration to Victoria had gradually increased. Then it exploded after the 1851 discovery of gold. Overcrowded ships meant more infectious disease, and larger and better quarantine facilities further from Melbourne were urgently needed. After much investigation, Point Nepean was declared to be the ideal location, and on 28th October 1852 Dennis and family were given a month’s notice to terminate the lease, and may only have received the rest of that year’s lease (running Jan-Dec, £12 per annum for lime, plus £2 for land) in compensation, that being the rule. They asked for £200 but we don’t know if they got it. It must have been heartbreaking for them, especially as it appears that Dennis’ health (at age 66) was probably
failing, since sons Patrick and Daniel are increasingly the ones mentioned, and he was to die in 1860.

The Sullivans moved to Rye. We know little about the eldest son John who died in 1856. Three more daughters had married into Portsea families – Cannon, Murray and McGrath. Patrick and Daniel tried their luck briefly at the diggings, then Patrick had a lime kiln and later opened Rye’s first hotel. Daniel is said to have gone to America and he certainly disappears from the records. Timothy, known as Ted, became the Sorrento baker, and Sullivan descendants still live in our area today.

The upper part of the ‘The Shepherd’s Cottage’ was added about 1854 for the Sanitary or Quarantine Station, and used as a doctor’s dispensary and office (1897-1908) then as a general office and store. In 1941, the basement was rediscovered and made accessible as an air raid shelter for the Army, and then became the Regimental Sergeant Major’s Office until at least 1981.

While Sandra and I were discussing what to record about the painting, Shire Digitisation Officer Murray Adams enlightened us about Regimental Sergeant Majors. “They saw themselves as above the Commandant”, explained Murray. It was they who ran the discipline and parades. The RSM ensured that when marching, the soldiers strode uniformly. He held his folded Pace Stick under his arm and the appropriate length of each soldier’s stride was marked on the ground ... and you can still see these pace marks near the little Shepherd’s Hut!

Joy Kitch, Co-ordinator, Collection and Displays, with Janet South, Archivist and Research Officer

SOURCES:
Major J. Welch, various writings
Patricia Cullen, Family History of Sullivans 1981
Friends of Quarantine Station, Museum leaflet, undated
John Alexander’s Genealogical research
Shire Thematic History, July 2013, Graeme Butler & Associates, and Context Pty Ltd
Monash University ‘Analysis of Heritage Significance of the Commonwealth Holdings at Point Nepean, Portsea” by S. Power et al. 1985
The second half of 2017 saw our team as busy as ever. Carey Grammar year 7 camp paid their annual visit when we were fortunate to have Judy Walsh adding her expertise on Collins Settlement to the programme.

St Brendan’s Catholic Primary School excursion in September involved 75 year 5/6s from Somerville and called for some lateral thinking. We arranged a full day’s programme that enabled us to cope with that number by basing Tash and Jenny Griffiths at Collins Settlement Site to introduce half the students to the way of life of the Boon wurrung people and the short-lived 1803 settlement. Their teachers then took the students on a bus tour to see the Sorrento Pier, the Tram Platform and the Back Beach.

Meanwhile the rest of the group were at the Museum where Geraldine Carrodus, Alison Jones, Leigh Lansdown and I enlightened them on the lifestyle of the pioneers of the 1800s focusing on clothing, shipwrecks and Watts’ Cottage. Paddlesteamers and Sorrento tourism were covered by our DVD shown on the big screen. We also provided a table of mystery objects for viewing and handling by the students. The connection with Collins Settlement was made as they were shown the artefacts in our collection which are remnants from that site.

After lunch in Sorrento Park the groups swapped over and eventually left at 2pm after a very full day.
Once again the NHS hosted the orientation groups from the Defence International Training Centre prior to their embarking on further training courses at Duntroon and other Defence Force centres in Australia.

There are always two groups who come in December and this year the combined count of countries represented by the 30 members of the Officer Cadet group and the 47 Senior Brass spanned 24 from every continent except the Americas.

This was the greatest diversity we have experienced in ten years. As usual the excursion was led by Des Young, Tash Wicks and Garry White after a background briefing in the Museum where we were assisted by Alison Jones.

I am grateful to all the team who helped to raise the record sum of $2228 for our Society funds through hosting tour groups in the first six months of this financial year. Thank you all for your enthusiasm and cooperation.

Bergliot Dallas
Many thanks to our volunteers for giving your valuable time to help us open the museum to the public, manage street stalls and group tours, and the many other tasks you perform.

Suzanne Ewart does an amazing job making items for the stalls, and has made over 100 jars of jam since January! We have a small team making jam, which is a big seller, but needs lots of preparation time. More help would be greatly appreciated, even with small jobs such as washing jars and removing labels, if anyone can spare an hour or so once in a while.

More helpers are also needed for the street stalls every second Saturday in Blairgowrie and Sorrento, an hour or two at a time. If you can spare some time for any of the above, please email/ring Secretary Val Stieglbauer at admin@nhs.asn.au or 5981 8957.

As you know, we welcome visitors to the museum from 1.30-4.30 pm at weekends, and more often during school holidays, and we need more people on the roster to do that every month or two. Beginners are paired with more experienced volunteers after a short period of training. If you are interested in this enjoyable job, please contact Annette Buckland, Roster Co-ordinator, on email anetb@live.com.au or 0402 858 878.

Val Stieglbauer
Secretary
Book sales continue to be strong, with web sales becoming more frequent. Having books on the stalls certainly generates interest in the museum and in the history of our area.

Jan Weston, Stalls and Bookshop Co-ordinator

A RECENT ADDITION TO THE LIBRARY


In December 1802, Lord Hobart (Secretary of State for the Colonies) ordered a change of plan for the British warship then preparing to take the next convicts from Woolwich and Portsmouth hulks to New South Wales. HMS Calcutta would instead transport several hundred prisoners to a camp to be established at Port Phillip. This decision would signal the start of European occupation of the future State of Victoria.

John Currey's recent book Sullivan Bay – How Convicts came to Port Phillip looks at the circumstances behind this decision, the detailed planning of the expedition by Lord Hobart and his brother-in-law (Colonial Office Undersecretary John Sullivan) and the difficulties met on the long voyage. It then covers “Hobart Camp” settlement at Sullivan Bay in 1803-04, abandoned in favour of a new “Hobart Town” on the banks of the Derwent River, and continues with re-settlement in
Van Diemen’s Land. In this light Sullivan Bay is seen as a stepping-stone to the colonisation of Tasmania.

The author's meticulous research and clear style make this book both comprehensive and full of interest. He has teased from the archival material a persuasive story, presenting considered views on the associated historical controversies. The decisions to land and settle at Sullivan Bay, and to decamp to the Derwent so soon after, attracted early criticism from historical writers. Rusden thought Collins' selection of Sullivan Bay a serious error. Collier in 1910 said deciding to abandon the settlement showed a weak-kneed man. Manning Clark judged Sullivan Bay settlement an “incredible folly”. Currey’s research leads him to question and qualify those judgements.

The later exploits of two people at Sullivan Bay add to the story interrupted by the transfer to Tasmania. Convict William Buckley's sensational reappearance more than thirty years after absconding from Sullivan Bay and surviving more than 30 years with indigenous people is etched into Australian folklore. Another to gain a place in popular imagination is John Pascoe Fawkner, the eleven-year-old who accompanied his mother and convict father to Sullivan Bay. Unlike Buckley, he did go to the Derwent in 1804, but later achieved fame back in Port Phillip as one of Melbourne’s important pioneers.

Currey in his final chapter refers to current heritage projects at the Collins Settlement Site. One is an archaeological search, commissioned by the Nepean Historical Society with assistance from the Shire, for the 19 graves of people who died at the settlement. Their discovery would help to further public appreciation of Sullivan Bay and its historical significance.
John Currey also mentions the pathway linking the two beaches of the Site. At the public Panel Hearing in 2001, he was the expert witness supporting the Shire’s case, leading to recognition of the Site’s heritage status and its incorporation into the Mornington Peninsula Planning Scheme. Regrettably, the Shire did not proceed with some Panel recommendations, including that for completion of the public walk across the Eastern Sister down to Sullivan Bay beach, approving instead a proposal for private development of the headland, with adverse effects on public access and viewing. In 2017 they did however build a seawall around the base of the promontory, with a path linking the two beaches, allowing greater public recognition of this important Victorian heritage site.

**PROMOTIONAL STREET STALLS**

Our average takings for the December-January period were $585, thanks to the tremendous efforts of Suzanne Ewart (jams and knitwear), Bernie Poll (gingerbread houses), and all the team. Stall dates and venues for April to June are set out below:-

**COMING STALLS**

The NHS stalls are held outside the NAB Sorrento & IGA Blairgowrie

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blairgowrie</th>
<th>Saturday 7 April</th>
<th>Sorrento</th>
<th>Saturday 21 April</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blairgowrie</td>
<td>Saturday 12 May</td>
<td>Sorrento</td>
<td>Saturday 26 May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blairgowrie</td>
<td>Saturday 9 June</td>
<td>Sorrento</td>
<td>Saturday 23 June</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Suzanne Edgington and Jan Weston*
COMING EVENTS

Our meetings are held on the first Friday of the month  
at 8pm in the Sorrento Museum, Mechanics’ Institute
  Corner of Melbourne & Ocean Beach Roads Sorrento
  Free and open to all - Tea or Coffee afterwards by donation
  If you would like to join us for dinner prior to meetings we meet
  at 6.15 pm at Sorrento RSL, 1-33 Hurley Street, Sorrento [off George Street]

Friday 6 April, 8pm at the Museum
  Speakers: Annette Buckland & Clive Smith
    Genealogy at the Museum

Saturday 21 April to Sunday 20 May each weekend 1.30 -4.30pm
  Special Museum Exhibition for the Australian Heritage Festival,  
  Nepean - Point of All Nations
  Photos, stories and memorabilia to showcase and
  cerebrate the diversity of cultures that have shaped our
  shared heritage on the Southern Peninsula

Photo NHS Collection: William Schlipalius selling ice-cream on Sorrento Beach

Friday 4 May & Friday 1 June
  Speakers to be announced
NEPEAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

Office Bearers of the Society 2017-2018

PRESIDENT: Clive Smith

VICE-PRESIDENT: Joy Kitch

SECRETARY: Val Stieglbauer

ARCHIVIST: Janet South

COLLECTION & DISPLAY COORDINATOR: Joy Kitch

TREASURER: Clive Smith

COMMITTEE: Annette Buckland, Marie Clark, Anna Hackwill, Jenny Nixon, Natasha Wicks

The Nepean Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the support of:

Disclaimer: Opinions expressed in The Nepean are not necessarily those of the Society, whose stated values are non-sectarian and non-political.