



### Meeting Dates

2014

June 6

July 4

August 1

September 5

October 3

November 7

December 5

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

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*Lilydale & District Historical Society*  
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#### Contacts:

Sue Thompson 9761 9192  
Lorraine Smith 9735 1104

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## Vale Val Sheehan

Society members were shocked when they learned of the passing of Val Sheehan.

She was a special person who made a special contribution to the community, local history and our society.

At a celebration of her life held at daughter Christine's home, society vice president John Brown spoke about Val who had been an active society member since 1990 and Life Member since 2008.

Below is part of John's speech:

Val moved to Coldstream with her parents and siblings in 1943.

In 1946 her first job was at the local Coldstream Store and Post Office where she started to build her lifelong connections with local family's of the district. One of those families was the Vesteys of Coombe Cottage, the descendants of Dame Nellie Melba. Val was nominated by Pamela Lady Vestey, the granddaughter of Melba, for a Certificate of Recognition by the Shire of Yarra Ranges in 2005 for her contribution to the



*Val Sheehan with great grandson McKenzie.*

Coldstream area. Part of Val's work has been researching the vast collection of information held at *Coombe Cottage* on Melba. She was instrumental with her brother Les in erecting the Coldstream and Yering War Memorial which was unveiled in 1995.

Val spent many years researching and recording the History of the Townships of Coldstream, Gruyere, Yering and Killara which were part of the old Shire of Lillydale which is now the Shire of Yarra Ranges.

*Continued on page 2*

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## 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.

## 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)

## On the airwaves

Listen to us on Radio Station 98.1 Radio Eastern 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.

**For the latest news on the society, its projects and activities go to: [www.lilydalehistorical.com.au](http://www.lilydalehistorical.com.au) and click on What's New.**

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## Vale Mrs Coldstream

*Continued*

Val wrote four books plus a fifth still to be published, she collaborated with other members of the Society on other publications. Val was nominated and awarded on the 5th September 2014 by the President of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria The Award of Merit this was a very happy occasion for us all to see her once again receive recognition for her tireless contribution to our society and our district. She not only leaves a family legacy she leaves a great legacy to our community. She was a quiet achiever, she held wise counsel, she listened, she was a doer, she had great knowledge, she was a tireless researcher, she had an enquiring mind, she had a spirit of calm, she made the best egg sandwiches. Her smile, her spirit will be sadly missed by those who have known and worked with her over the many years of her lifetime. Vale our Mrs Coldstream.

*Go to page 6 to read Myrna McBain's tribute to her friend.*

## Guest Speakers 2015

The society will continue to have guest speakers every second month during 2015.

Our speaker for 6th June at 2pm will be Jennifer Jones topic will be Camino de Santiago which is a 1000 kilometre pilgrimage walk across Spain, starting in the south of France.

On Saturday, July 4 our guest speaker will be Gary Arnott, president of the Croydon Historical Society who will talk about his family history book.

Our meetings start at 1pm and the guest speaker will be introduced at 2pm. Visitors are welcome but the cost for non members is a gold coin donation.

If you know someone the society could invite to be a speaker, please call Lorraine Smith on 9735 1104.

## Research

Due to the increasing demand for research, all inquiries must be in writing and go to Sue Thompson via [info@lilydalehistorical.com.au](mailto:info@lilydalehistorical.com.au). A quote for the cost of the research will be provided and no research will be done until the quotation is paid. Our charges are \$20 per hour. Contact Sue Thompson 9761 9192.



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# Talks and tours



At our April meeting, the society welcomed Gary Taylor (left).

After 10 years and many hours of research of Naval records etc. Gary has compiled the story of his great uncle gunner Ronald ( Buck) Taylor and its brave crew who went down with their ship in 1942.

He proudly told members the history of the vessel and crew.

On March 4, 2014. Gary and his family attended the Investiture Ceremony for the presentation of the HMAS Yarra Two unit citation for gallantry to The Royal Australian Navy.

## Women on Farms Gathering

The society was delighted to be invited to be a part of the Melba tour organised by the recent Women on Farms Gathering held at Healesville. The tour booked out quickly.

After doing a tour of the Coombe Cottage gardens, the 50 ladies visited us at the Old Lilydale Court House where they enjoyed a welcome cuppa and afternoon tea.

While relaxing, Sue Thompson gave a brief talk about Dame Nellie Melba and the many technological firsts she achieved in her life time.

Sue also spoke about the death of Melba and highlighted just how famous our local and international star was.

Then it was off to the Lilydale Cemetery where Sue and Lorraine Smith guided everyone to both Melba's grave and that of her father and mother David and Isabella Mitchell.



*Some of the country visitors in town for the Women on Farms weekend which included a Melba tour.*

## Google + and Facebook

As there is so much happening between magazines, the society has now established a presence on Google + as well as on Facebook.

To be kept up-to-date with what is happening, simply

go to Google + in your web browser, type in Lilydale Historical Society and you can read the latest news or events the society is involved in.

Don't forget to check Facebook as well.

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*RACV members dropped into the Old Lilydale Court House for a short Melba talk and later visited Melba's grave at Lilydale Cemetery.*

### **Donation to our library**

Raymond Henderson, author of the book Jolimont to Yering has donated to the society about 50 books covering the early Swiss settlers, early Victorian, aboriginal and local histories.

These combined with his book and his copious research material will be a valuable resource for those studying the history of the Yarra Valley.

These books are now being catalogued and can be accessed at the Court House.

### **Dreaming about their futures**

At our first meeting of the year, Yarra Ranges Mayor Maria McCarthy kindly stepped in when guest speaker Luigi Fotia was unable to attend and talk about the book "Dreams from a Suitcase".

Maria spoke of how they raised the money to produce the book which tells the stories of many of the local Italian families.

The first fund-raiser was to produce a calendar. Each person brought along a family photo and sold advertising space. The calendar sold out in two weeks and raised \$6,000.

Another calendar was produced featuring a photo of the area they came from in Italy. This raised another \$6,000. The much needed extra money to publish the book was given by a generous donor.

Then the hard part commenced - getting the stories. All were so glad they preserved them as many have passed away since.

The book named after Luigi Fotia's family who came with a suitcase and a dream.

"Dreams from a Suitcase" was launched at Parliament House with 250 people attending.

We enjoyed many of Maria's funny stories and looking at family photos and items from the kitchen.

**For the latest news on the society, its projects and activities go to: [www.lilydalehistorical.com.au](http://www.lilydalehistorical.com.au) and click on News.**

### **Digital Recordings for our collection**

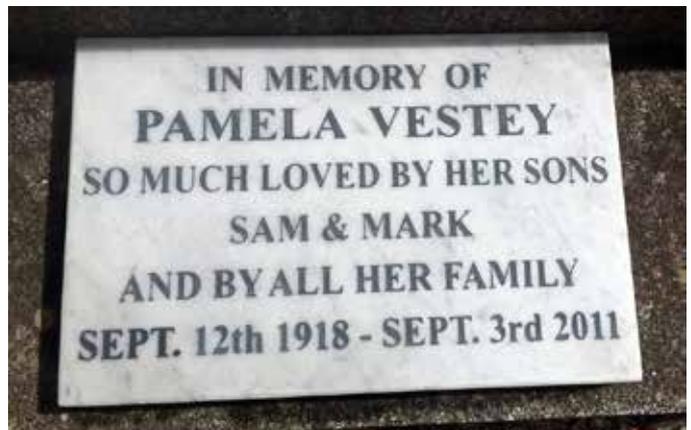
Thanks to the skills of Radio Eastern FM's Ken Boness, the society has now added three valuable digital recordings to our growing digital collection. The recordings were on cassette tapes owned by Sue Thompson.

The recordings are:

- The 1995 ABC 3LO Nostalgia program interview with Pamela Vestey about her book on her grandmother: Melba A Family Memoir. This is the first and only radio interview Pamela gave and is a real treasure.
- Jack Lundy Clark's A Ballads Tour of the Dandenong Ranges previously compiled and published by the society and Jack.
- Eastern Broadcasters (now Radio Eastern FM) Peter McArthur's interview with the Lilydale & Yarra Valley Express editor Sue Thompson as part of the newspaper's centenary in 1986.

One copy has been added to our collection and the other copy to our library so they can be played for visitors.

Ken also donated to the society a digitised copy of the Melba Story - a radio program on Melba starring Glenda Raymond. This was made from the original recordings and skilfully digitised. Radio Eastern FM played this as their contribution to the 150th celebrations of Melba's birth in 2011.



### **Pamela Vestey plaque**

During a recent visit to the Lilydale Cemetery the team photographed the plaque erected where Pamela Vestey's ashes have been interred on David Mitchell's grave.

#### **World War I Indexes**

Anyone working on World War I projects are welcome to access the indexes the society's Judy McDonald had done on the Lilydale RSL Minute Books and Anthony McAleer's scrapbooks which contain all the articles published in the Lilydale Express during the war years and beyond.

The indexes are under both name and subject and the RSL also lists the children of returned service personnel. Already the indexes have helped us identify many of the people for our website.

# Headstones project launched

Although without power due to Ausnet maintenance, the show still went on when Yarra Ranges Mayor Cr Maria McCarthy launched the society's latest project – Stories Behind the Headstones.

A fully charged laptop, cold drinks and a delicious afternoon tea more than compensated for the lack of power.

Society president Lorraine Smith said the project would not have been possible without the \$2500 grant from the Shire of Yarra Ranges which built on our previous online work of Faces, Places and Events.

Stories behind the headstones is an online project, accessible to anyone who had headstones for their ancestors buried at the Lilydale Cemetery prior to 1931.

The project was based on headstone images photographed by Sandy Ross. Using these images, a team of 12 society members then spent more than 12 months researching the stories of each person based on accounts published in the Lilydale Express, history books, family histories or information held in the society's archives.

There are just over 400 headstones and while they have not been counted there is more than 1,000 names listed and information provided where available.

Sadly, for some we have no information and this is where we hope the wider community who may be descendants, will give us information about their forebears.

To access the website, simply go to [www.lilydalehistorical.com.au](http://www.lilydalehistorical.com.au) and click on the headstone icon or simply use the search engine and type in the name you want.

## Reprint of David Mitchell book

After several years out of print, the society gained permission of the family to reprint Pamela Vestey's book on her great-grandfather David Mitchell.

The cost is \$10 and it can be purchased from the court house or online.



*Above: Yarra Ranges Mayor Maria McCarthy.*

*Below: society president Lorraine Smith with Maria after the launch.*



## Website launch

Regular visitors to our website will have noticed the site has been completely overhauled. As we weren't successful in gaining shire funding for it, the society decided to go ahead and do the update ourselves.

Again Paradigm4, one of our major sponsors has done a fantastic job and now the Gun Alley pages and our other pages on the site sit well together.

As before, the site has been designed so we can update the pages any time we want using a simple editor. This is a huge savings as we don't have to pay a webmaster to do

the work for us and we can do updates when it suits us.

An additional feature is the inclusion of a search button. Simply press the button, type in the name, event or place and the results will be shown. The search engine also searches pdf attachments so all our newsletters are now included in the search.

Please look at the site and let Sue Thompson know what you think and if there are others things we should look at including on the site. You can contact Sue via the inquiry form or email: [suethompson50@ozemail.com.au](mailto:suethompson50@ozemail.com.au)

## So many memories

There are just so many memories of Val and I am so very, very lucky to have had her as a very dear friend. I will miss her very much and duty day at the Court House just won't be the same.

The last two projects Val worked on were The Coldstream Panel for Lilydale and District Historical Society at the Old Court House and Wool Bale story for Coombe. To Val 'near enough' was never good enough and she spent quite a lot of time worrying about the panel. The Wool Bale story is in February 2015 Newsletter both projects she enjoyed doing but wanting things to be accurate often caused her stress.

Val was sorting out the mountains of paper work and research she had at home and was slowly bringing into the Court House information etc that needed to be on file there. Many a time this caused consternation when she would receive a phone query and, guess what, the info was now in Lilydale.

Val worked for many years on the "As it Happened" series of books about people and events in the Coldstream, Killara, Yering and Gruyere areas, which she compiled from cuttings mainly from The Express. Three of these books can be purchased from the society but sadly Val did not get to see the fourth one published.

Val was very interested in the new Coombe Restaurant and was a great ambassador for it and I'm sure she encouraged many people to visit and enjoy the food, the venue, the history or a garden tour. The Devonshire tea was her idea.

The February Now and Then Newsletter has the story of Val receiving her Award of Merit from Don Garden, Royal Historical Society. As usual Val's concern for other's well being suggested the award ceremony be held on a meeting day so that members did not have to come out to two events in a month. It was a lovely day with the Court House packed with Val's family and friends as well as society members.

Val did not drive and caught the bus into Lilydale from Coldstream when coming to the Court House for meetings or her 'duty days'. I finally convinced her to let me drive her home after we had been on duty on the fourth Saturday of the month. We had many laughs, jobs to do, and then locking up etc. Val never saw the results of Philip's marvellous diagrams for turning on the TV/ video.

Most members remember Val as being a quiet lady sitting in the corner using the micro-film reader to check up on a story or some dates. Yes, she was quiet and very patient but when she started something she saw it through no matter how long it took. They also remember her egg sandwiches for afternoon tea at meetings. Quiet she may have been, but left a lasting impression on many, many people. And her memory was fantastic.

Val always volunteered her time whenever asked. She

made a miniature clothes line complete with prop for a school group, sold tickets for events, helped out with washing up and so many other things without making a song and dance about it. She did not like speaking publicly but loved to write letters giving people answers to their questions or contacting people who may be interested in articles she found or knew of by phone or mail.

Val loved her trips to Wandin to the Auction rooms with Christine and having a look around then maybe putting a bid on something, maybe a new doll to add to her fabulous collection. A comb through the hair and a cleaned face and washed clothes spruced up many a doll looking for a new home.

Val had many interests and loved a good cup of coffee. We had many coffee's and lunches and lots of phone calls about family outings, research, gardens, plants, events in the news, local goings on, her latest jam making or the picking of figs, feeding the magpies in her garden, going to movies, the list goes on.

Christine's Garden Day was another very enjoyable event for Val and her family as they all pitched in to serve Devonshire tea, man the bargain table, look after the garage sale, take the money at the gate. I loved being a small part of these days. I felt so lucky to be able to arrange a birthday party for myself at the Court House last year and along with my family and friends this was one time Val was free to come along as my birthday clashed with Garden Day.

Last year I managed to put the TV on for the Grand Final pre-game entertainment and we sat together at the Court House (our duty day) and then I drove her home in time to watch the game. Val loved Hawthorn and up until a couple of years ago always went into Melbourne (by train) to see the Grand Final Parade. One of Val's other loves was tennis and sat up in bed at night to watch TV from England.

Her wonderful 'gathering' at Christine's showed how much she was thought of by so many people. The day was held on what would have been her 88th birthday and with the sign on the gate saying 'Val's Party' you just knew that this day would have been exactly as she would have wanted it to be.

Val and I talked often about gardens to visit or new coffee shops to try and we just ran out of time but I will think of her when I do get to do these things.

I have only just touched on the Val Sheehan that I knew and I'm sure others have their own lists of memories.

**Myrna McBain.**

### Red Dots

**If your edition of Now & Then has a red dot on the back cover it means your membership subscription is now overdue. Please contact either Philip or Lorraine if you have any queries.**

## Historic Manor House returning to former glory

For almost two years, Eva and Jeff have driven across Melbourne every weekend to lovingly restore the Manor House back to its former glory. Their eye for detail and determination to get everything right has been amazing as has the results.

At each stage they have carefully documented all the work and everything they have done.

It is a project which has blown the budget but will become their "dream" home when they finally move in.



Clockwise from top right:

Top: The Manor House in 2013.

Right: The front of the Manor House in early 2015.

Above: The roof and verandahs near completion.

## Help for Tudor Village

The society were delighted to participate in a naming project with the Tudor Village at Lilydale. We were approached and asked to suggest some people's names which could be used for the various elements of the new

community centre.

The society drew up a list, provided a brief biography and an image or two on each to the management for consideration.

## Early Lilydale bakers

The Herry family were early bakers in Lilydale and Ringwood. This is one of six images that have been sent to us by the Ringwood Historical Society. The photos were used in the society's recent publication on East Ringwood.

Names of subjects written below on photograph reads, "Back row - Frank G., Jack Herry, Florence, Leo Herry, Kath Herry, Louis Herry, Bert Parker, Philip" Those in centre of photograph are labelled, "Dad & Mum". Written below that is, "Jack Junior, Marie Criggin with Louise, Philip Herry and Elaine Parker. Taken on Hill, Lilydale, Oliver Photo."



If undeliverable return to:  
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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](mailto:suethompson50@ozemail.com.au) and I will email a copy to you. Back copies are also available electronically.

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For the latest news, listing of events and our publications, go to our website at [www.lilydalehistorical.com.au](http://www.lilydalehistorical.com.au) Google+ or Facebook and type in Lilydale Historical Society

**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 2014-2015 now due**

**Membership Subscriptions 2014-2015 were due on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2014.** (If you are not sure if you are financial, please ring Lorraine on 9735 1104 to check.)

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