



SHAPING A SHIRE

# BACK-TO NUMURKAH

Thursday, March 26th to  
Tuesday, March 31st, 1970

SHAPING

A

SHIRE

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THE STORY OF NUMURKAH

**COVER:** NUMURKAH — Aboriginal — Meaning Warshield

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transmission by post as a book.

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Price \$1.30

## *Welcome Back . . . .*

The Back To Celebrations have been arranged by the Numurkah Apex Club, to give former residents the opportunity to renew acquaintances and make new ones and visit friends and families.

You will read in these pages the story of the growth and development of Numurkah and how this area has become known as one of the most productive in Victoria.

An active and far sighted and progressive Shire Council has give the town and district a network of fine roads, services and amenities unequalled by any town of its size in the state.

These celebrations have been arranged primaryily for the enjoyment of past and present residents and not for raising large sums of money for a specific project, however, it must be understood that considerable finance is involved in a project of this nature and every effort must be made to keep this project on a sound financial plane.

I would like to welcome former residents to our midst and trust that they enjoy the program that we have arranged and appreciate the hospitality of the people and return home with a feeling of time well spent and pleasant memories of Easter 1970 at Numurkah.

**KELVIN SIDEBOTTOM**

Chairman, Apex Back To Numurkah  
Committee.

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THE SHIRE OF NUMURKAH

## Preface

This "Back To Numurkah" booklet is the third of its kind and is published to commemorate the fourth "Back To Numurkah". The previous occasions were August 1922, September 1933 (to celebrate the Jubilee Show) and March 1951.

This account does not pretend to cover fully the history of the town and district which could be done only after much research and enquiry and certainly could not be contained in such a small space.

The first occasion arose from an unpretentious meeting called for the purpose of promoting an effort to aid the Fire Brigade and the Band. It was suggested by Senior Constable O'Donnell, that a Back to Numurkah be held and at a subsequent meeting this was adopted. The President of the Shire, Cr Thomas Thornton J.P. became president of the committee.

Numurkah has a peaceful history behind it and former residents were given the opportunity to revisit the scenes of their youth and to renew old friendships. 150 people travelled on the first special passenger train run from Melbourne to Numurkah.

In the 1933 booklet we have eye-witness accounts of our beginnings by men who were able to give a vivid picture of early days in Numurkah and district. And although the impression is one of nostalgia

for the place as it was we are fortunate to have such impressions recorded by those who helped to lay the foundations. The material here presented was gathered by many people who have practical knowledge of their subjects and a lively interest in their town.

The 1951 "Back To Numurkah" was held soon after the most significant change in the history of the district. The soldier settlement scheme which opened 60,000 acres for dairying and fruit growing completely changed the face of the countryside and made many new facilities urgently necessary. So the Back To Numurkah was held primarily to raise funds for a new hospital, a very necessary amenity in an area which had become the home of so many young families.

Sources of material were from past booklets, Numurkah Standard and Leader, Bruce Tunnocks history etc. It is only when talking to people of similar small towns that we realise how lucky we were to have a man as interested as Bruce Tunnock who recorded our history when many of the first settlers were able to give an account of their experiences.

Any such collection as this must overlook something that others think important and conversely that which they think might have been excluded. We pray your forbearance and your interest in what has been attempted.

## The First Inhabitants

It was only after the arrival of the squatters that much was known about the aborigines of these parts.

It appears that the country comprising the Shire of Numurkah and that on the east near Yarrowonga to near Toolamba on the Goulburn was inhabited by the Bangerang tribes when the land was first taken up in 1840.

According to an estimate made in 1841 each of the tribes would average about 150 members. Some of the different divisions or subtribes were those of Yorta-Yorta, Yullaba-Yullaba, Ulupna, Moira and Yalta-Yalta. They have been collectively referred to as the Bangerang race because of many characteristics in common and similarity of language.

It was beautiful country with abundance of the essentials of life, fish, kangaroos, wildfowl, roots and wild fruit. Water was always available in the rivers opossums were plentiful and their skins provided warmth in the shape of a cloak worn with the fur inside. The country was well timbered and shelter was not lacking. The Murray River tribes were not so nomadic as those in less fertile areas and the country supported them well.

It was said the aborigines were very healthy people when whites first came amongst them. As the country became settled various diseases were introduced amongst the blacks and these took their toll. Edmund Curr mentions in one of his books that he saw natives who were marked by smallpox. The abandonment of their tribal way of life such as hunting and fishing brought in its train sickness and attendant troubles. The nearest settlements of aborigines was an interdenominational mission station at Maloga (meaning sand-hill) near Cummeragunga founded by Mr and Mrs Daniel Matthew in 1874 on their own property, and this attracted the dark people from surrounding parts.

Later, in the year 1888 the people were moved a few miles north of Maloga to what is now called Cummeragunga under a State Government scheme whereby the men were given a block of land and encouraged to work it.

The descendants of these people are still in this area, some of them living at Cummeragunga and others at Shepparton and Mooroopna. Some of the well known names of these families are Atkinson, Briggs, Turner, Charles, James, Walker, Murray, Morgan, Ferguson, Cooper, Nichols (Pastor Doug) and Muir. Stan Charles was a runner-up at Stawell and Alf Morgan won the Botany Bay Handicap. Yorta-Yorta was the last aboriginal language to be spoken in this area.

## The days of the Squatters

The first record concerning the land, now forming most of the Shire of Numurkah, appears to have been made in 1840. In that year a licence, in respect of the run, sometimes known as the Ulupna run, and also the Strathmerton run, was granted to a man named Lundy. This area included those parts. The next event of note was in October 1842, when Benjamin Boyd became the licensee. As such he held this run, until the year 1847, when he applied for a lease. Under her Majesty's Order-in-Council dated 9/3/1847, a formal application was made by him. The following particulars in connection therewith appeared in the Port Phillip "Gazette" on 26/7/1848 — "Name of applicant, Benjamin Boyd; estimated area, 192,000 acres; grazing capabilities, 2,500 head of cattle, northern boundary 22 miles along the Murray River, from marked tree to marked tree, the southern boundary, the Back Creek, the eastern boundary, a line running southerly from marked tree and the western boundary, a line running southerly from marked tree". The back part of the run is described as scrubby and devoid of water, and is only useful to drive stock upon, when the low country is flooded, which occurs annually.

Benjamin Boyd was a man with big ideas; his enterprises were noted for their magnitude and variety, especially in pastoral circles. In addition to the Strathmerton run, containing about 400 square miles of country, he took up under pastoral licence about 400 square miles of land along the Murray River, near what is now Deniliquin

He began stocking his respective properties with cattle, which travelled from the New England district, and he obtained valuable Rambouillet rams from France, in order to improve the quality of his flocks of sheep. He also imported from overseas, six valuable horses, which it is said have formed ancestry of some of the best horses now in Australia. It is recorded, he was the first to introduce Kanakas into Australia with a view to obtaining cheap labor. For sometime, he is said to have employed some 70 odd South Sea Islanders, or Kanakas on the Strathmerton run. Here they built large cattle yards and buildings of pine.



A CORNER OF COONANGA, a squatter's home built by Geo. Currie in 1866.

Edward Sprott Boyd followed his illustrious brother as the licensee of the Strathmerton run. They were sons of Edward Boyd of "Merton", Wigton, Scotland and applied the Gaelic word "Strath" meaning a valley of considerable extent, through which a river flows, to the name they gave to this splendid area of country of their father's home, to form the name Strathmerton.

Next as licensees came William Dawes 1849, Samuel Browning 1849-52, both well known men in Sydney at that time, followed by J. C. McClaren 1852-53, J. Challis 1853-54, and S. K. Salting 1854-56. Then Thomas Herbert Power held the run from November 1856 to March 1860. He arrived in Melbourne in 1839 and later became a leading auctioneer, and also a member of the Legislative Council. Gideon Rutherford followed him, in the occupation of this run in 1860, then J. Badcock 1860-61 and again Gideon Rutherford 1861, until it was divided into the Strathmerton East and the Strathmerton West runs. He, and his brother James who later had the former run, came from Scotland.

James Rutherford became a leading pastoralist. He and Thomas Brown, acquired the Strathmerton East run; but Brown shortly afterward sold his interest to James Rutherford who greatly improved the station. He gave particular attention to the portion then known as the 18 mile plain, the south portion of which comprised the land on which the town of Numurkah was later established.

The Strathmerton East run was later held by Thomas Brown, Brown and Rutherford, McCulloch and Sellars, Brett and Russell Ross, Trust and Agency Co of Australia Ltd., Ewen McPherson, Robert Sellars, Alex Armstrong and Sam Allardyce and H. E. McColl. The Strathmerton West run was successively held by James Rutherford, Currie Scott, Dufroyer, and George Currie and Alex Dufroyer. The subdivisional line running north and south between the two runs was immediately to the west of Numurkah, and it is possible the Strathmerton East run has also been referred to as the Ulupna run.

The possession of sheep constituted the right of the squatter to occupy the land. The licence fee was £10 per annum, for which he could occupy an area



sufficient to graze a flock of sheep, together with their increase for the ensuing two years. The homestead on a run was really a slab hut. The inside walls were embellished with firearms, stock wips, spurs, and other articles hanging from wooden pegs driven into the wall plates. On shelves made of bark were to be found history and travel books and magazines. The table was a strip of bark nailed on top of four posts, which were driven into the earthen floor.

The original homesteads were replaced by more spacious dwellings and as townships became established they had less distance to travel for their requisites.

## Farming in the District

In the latter part of the 1870's the huge grazing leases expired and were thrown open for selection in blocks of up to 320 acres.

With the influx of many new settlers the towns sprang up every few miles for people needed supplies and could only travel short distances for them.

The original holdings were on licences that were negotiable and certain conditions had to be fulfilled before leases were granted. These were a residence and improvements to the value of £1 per acre in the first six years.

The land boom and its succeeding crash in the 1890's thinned the ranks of the originals and the ones remaining soon accumulated substantial holdings.

Water was of prime importance and areas closer to creeks were much sought after and away from these wells were sunk. Many had mining experience at Bendigo and other places so this was probably no real difficulty, but still quite a job. Water was found from 60-100 feet deep and was often brackish and, of course, some failed completely and had to rely on surface storage.

Clearing the timber was a formidable task, apart from clearing a small area for initial cropping. The big timber was ringbarked and when dry was burned. Good trees were cut and used for fences, sheds and houses; some of these still remain today. Most log fences have been used for firewood and most sheds with their thatched roofs have suffered a sim-

ilar fate. As a child I remember climbing one of these searching for sparrows' eggs and falling nearly to my death. Hollow logs were also used for horse feeders, water troughs and as pipes under roadways.

Early transport was a horse and dray, but as time went on people could afford a buggy. These made a vast difference allowing people to travel to town and church in reasonable comfort at moderate speed.

First crops were usually wheat and were sown on the small clearings, ploughed with a single furrow plough and broadcast by hand. A man would carry a bag strapped over his shoulder with about half a bushel of wheat. Two strokes of the harrows followed and the job was completed. The area had to be fenced against the squatters' sheep and kangaroos. Chock and log fences were mostly used. Men worked from daylight till dark and even the women helped the clearing by picking up sticks.



KATUNGA'S FIRST SMITHY, built by  
Mr Carter in the 1880's.

Crops did well that first year — 1878, but were a failure in most places because of rust. Harvest was carried out by a back delivery binder which was followed by six men binding the sheaves. Later after stooking and carting, the thresher came along with its team of 14 men, better yields that year being in the order of 10 bushels per acre.

The next year, 1879, things improved considerably with schools being opened, the railway completed to Shepparton in time for wheat carting. The harvest was good, about 25 bushels per acre and the farmers were in good heart.

Wheat was carted 16 bags at a time in a dray pulled by two horses. The journey to Shepparton took all day and the return just as long.

In 1881 the double furrow plough came into general use. This machine had wheels and therefore a man could ride on it and not have to walk behind and guide it all day. The stripper also took over the harvesting. This machine simply stripped the heads of wheat and gathered them in a large box, later to be cleaned in a winnower — quite a job in 110 degree heat for two men. So began the first agricultural revolution in Australia — the age of the machine.

By 1885 most people had their permanent homes built and sheds and stables completed and thus qualified for purchase leases.

As time went on livestock were introduced and numbers accumulated. Cows were essential to supply the family with dairy produce and spare cream helped to pay the bills even if the price was only 6d. per pound and eggs 3d. per dozen. Wheat was worth about 3/6 - 4/- per bushel.

About 1895 the dairy industry revived and people diverted their energy to cream production. Creameries were established and farmers brought their milk to these and were paid for the cream and returned home with the skim milk for calves and pigs. This system soon gave way to home separators with great savings in time and work.

About the turn of the century artificial fertilizers were first tried and the results were soon taken seriously. It has been found that all soils in Australia, with a few exceptions, are deficient in phosphorus. Land soon became wheat sick and better farmers found that spilling and fallowing and fertilizer improved yields. Another phase of the revolution in farming.



LOG HUT, typical of first homes of the early settlers, belonging to Mr Byrne of Tallygaroopna. Over 100 years old.



DOG CART, used to transport the Hansen children to school, Made by Soley & McCoy.

Improved varieties of wheat were developed by men like William Farrer which were better suited to Australian conditions, giving better yields, better baking quality and being resistant to disease. These points are still the aim of plant breeders today.

The drill which sowed seed and manure together was introduced along with the harvester. A machine that combined the stripper and the winnower into a workable unit pulled by six or eight horses.

By 1925 tractors began to appear, but not until the 30's did they make much difference in replacing the horse on farms. When satisfactory models and rubber tyres became available and people realised the work could be done so much faster, the horse soon gave way.

Harvesters gave way to headers in the 20's and 30's. The header actually cut the top off the plant and threshed the grain from the head, discarded the straw and cleaned the grain all in one continu-

ous operation. Its main advantage was in difficult conditions where it could pick up down and tangled crops where a harvester would have to leave them.

Farm machinery in general has kept pace with the times and today we have tractors and headers of very sophisticated design. These have become machines of precision and reliability and are very expensive. The plough too has seen vast changes — the disc has replaced the mouldboard in most places and has grown in size and design to match the tractor. Wheat is, of course, all handled in bulk.

Wheat is all handled and sold by the Australian Wheat Board since 1937 and this has been a period of unprecedented stability. Wheat silos were built in the early 1940's in this area, providing permanent local storage facilities for farmers.

Irrigation and the soldier settlement scheme have changed this area from wheat and sheep to a very diversified and fertile area now regarded as a garden of Australia.



Dairying is now our biggest industry and fat lambs and wool with beef production and orchardists playing important parts.

Subterranean clover was introduced in the 1930's and has contributed more to farming than any other plant in Australia. It is the basic species of improved pasture either dryland or irrigated and has also revolutionised wheat growing due to its ability to build up soil fertility and choke out undesirable weeds.

Grassland farming has brought the need for fodder conservation and machines such as the haybaler and its associated machines are now commonplace.

These things, with liberal use of fertilizers and better breeds of livestock, have enabled stocking rates to be increased five or six-fold to levels undreamed of by our forefathers.

In the past 200 years there have been three predictions that the world would die of starvation because not enough food could be produced. Twice this has been changed by machines, better varieties and better farming methods.

Today we are in the throes of a revolution far greater than the previous two.

Men and machines are still improving, but the greatest advances are being made in plant breeding. Modern science has given the hungry countries of Asia

varieties of rice and wheat that can provide enough to feed themselves with some to export. Irrigation schemes are being developed by engineers and bringing vast areas into intensive production. Fertilizers are playing an ever increasing role in greater production from the land with new and better types constantly appearing. Insect, weed and disease control by chemicals is now a multi-million dollar industry making huge improvements to production.

Economic conditions for the farmer are not as good as a decade ago and some have turned to management consultants to help make correct decisions in these high-pressure days. Costs have gone up together with the competition of synthetic products and world surpluses of wheat and dairy produce have all made things more difficult.

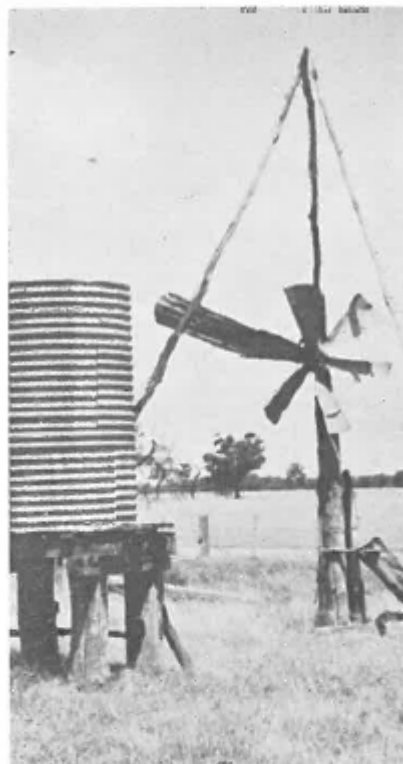
Mining has become a very important export item and will soon displace agriculture as the top item. Australia is becoming an industrialised country and is taking its place among the great nations of the world.

We must honour our forefathers for the hardships and privations they endured to make the way clear for us. It is up to us of the present generation to face the future courageously and forge ahead using all the aids that modern science and technology can provide.



LAST OPEN WHEAT STACK AT KATUNGA STATION.





EARLY WINDMILL AT BEARII

## The Shire of Numurkah

The area which is now known as the Shire of Numurkah was originally part of the Echuca Road District which was proclaimed on 19/2/1864 and later on 26/5/1871 it was proclaimed a Shire, with an area of 1,766,400 acres.

This large tract of country extended in an easterly direction, as far as the present site of Yarrawonga. It also included the territory now forming the Shires of Numurkah and Shepparton. The first alteration made to the Echuca Shire was the severance of part thereof to form

the Shire of Yarrawonga on 15/5/1878. The next partition took place on 30/5/79, when another portion was proclaimed the Shire of Shepparton, with an area of 326,000 acres. The Shire of Shepparton included most of the Shire of Numurkah, as now constituted. In April 1884 an area of land containing 150 square miles, and having its northern boundary, between Wunghnu and Tallygaroopna, was proclaimed the South Shepparton Shire. On 11/9/1885 the other portion of the Shepparton Shire, which had continued to be called by that name, was then named the Shire of Numurkah. It had an area of 700 square miles. Later this area was increased to 800 square miles by the addition of the Moria riding, and in 1899 the area was reduced to 765 square miles.

For some time before 11/9/1885 the residents of Numurkah and the immediate districts had been agitating for severance from Shepparton. With a view to satisfying the agitators a Council meeting would be sometimes held in Numurkah instead of Shepparton. This was not sufficient, however, and the time arrived when a deputation which interviewed the Minister for Public Works in Melbourne met with success, and the change mentioned took place. The Shire of Numurkah had not long been proclaimed when the residents of Nathalia and immediate districts talked of severance from the Shire of Numurkah. In order to give a measure of satisfaction the Council Meetings were arranged to be held alternately in Numurkah and Nathalia, and this was the procedure until severance of the Shire took place on May 31st, 1957.

### Severance of the Shire of Numurkah 31st May, 1957

With the advent of closer settlement and the resultant increase in works required to meet the needs of the highly productive small holding ratepayers began demanding more of their Council in the way of all-weather roads, civic amenities, health services etc.

A number of ratepayers in the Eastern Riding believed that the Shire was not making the progress it should and it was being retarded by the extremely large and varied area which it covered.

Nathalia and Numurkah representatives on Council were persistently vetoing moves to better the respective town, as neither party wanted to see one town

develop at the expense of the other.

It was claimed that too much time and money was spent by staff in travelling long distances to supervise and carry out works and this was one of many factors keeping the Council bogged down in financial straits. The aforementioned Eastern Riding ratepayers formed a Shire Severance committee and after three years of public meetings, delegations and representations to Government Ministers and departments, a third poll was taken of ratepayers which resulted in an overwhelming majority in favor of severance. This poll was taken in 1956 and a few months later the Public Works Department through the Minister agreed to grant severance in accordance with the peoples wishes. It is interesting that Council resolved against severance on the three occasions on which a poll was taken. This meant that the whole Eastern Riding and the Parishes of Drumanure and Muntoona in the Central Riding were to form the new Shire. This area embraced the townships of Numurkah, Strathmerton, Katunga and Wunghnu and consisted of 279 square miles of country.

In order that the name of the newly constituted Shire should remain "Numurkah", it was agreed to change the name of the original municipality to that of "The Shire of Nathalia".

An order was then gazetted to the effect that the area described above would be severed from the Shire of Nathalia as from 31st May, 1957 and would be known as the "Shire of Numurkah".

Elections were held and the following Councillors took office in the re-constructed Shire.

**South Riding** (Parishes of Muntoona, Drumanure and Township of Wunghnu). Crs. R. Lowe, A. R. Watters and J. J. Osborne.

**Centre Riding** (Numurkah Township and surrounds). Crs. R. Batey, R. W. Hodge, and A. C. Miller.

**East Riding** (Parish of Katunga and Strathmerton including Katunga and Strathmerton Townships). Crs. J. M. Farrall, A. M. Freestone and E. J. Barton.

**West Riding** (Parish of Baulkamaugh and Ulupna). Crs. N. R. Sutton, R. H. Robinson, and F. W. R. Johnson.

The new Council first met on 5th June 1957, and at a special meeting held on 12th July, 1957, appointed the following executive officers. Shire Secretary: John Wallace Reed. Shire Engineer: George Frederick Harding.

The parent Shire, the Shire of Nathalia transferred its headquarters to Nathalia where new municipal offices were built; also residences for the Shire



PHOTO OF RETURNEES TAKEN IN FRONT OF THE FIRST SHIRE HALL AT BACK TO NUMURKAH, 1922.



NUMURKAH SHIRE COUNCIL TAKEN 1967. A. J. Pumpa, Photo.

Secretary and Shire Engineer were erected.

Physically the severance of the municipality had been completed but the legal and financial wranglings that were to follow, had not begun. Incidentally the value of rateable properties following the split was on the proportion of 4/7 Numurkah Shire, 3/7 Nathalia Shire. his proportion was taken as the basis for cash adjusting items of value retained by one municipality or the other. Nathalia claimed the sum of £12,984 as compensation due for loss of Council officers, transfer of equity in capital assets, etc. The major item in the claim was the Numurkah Mechanics Institute Building which had been gifted to Council at the time of dissolution of the Mechanics Institute Committee, to assist in financing the building of the Town Hall in 1937.

Council of the day did not sell the premises as intended but let the property as retail shops. By the time of severance (1957) the asset was valued at £18,000; it actually sold later at auction for £16,250. Nathalia claimed that it was gifted to the

Shire as a whole but Numurkah successfully protested that the Numurkah Mechanics Institute was solely a Numurkah body and that the people in 1937 did not intend in any way that their asset should be shared with Nathalia, which had their own Mechanics Institute anyway.

After three years of arguing, the Minister for Local Government finally made an order to the effect that Numurkah should pay Nathalia the sum of £5,500 cash in settlement of their claim. This amount was actually handed over in 1961. The resultant effect of severance was immediate and rewarding.

Both Municipalities set about re-organisation and community progress with vigour and enthusiasm.

The following list indicates some of the improvements in the Numurkah Shire in the period since severance.

127 miles of bitumen road sealed; Drainage schemes at Numurkah and Strathmerton; Beautification of the Creek Frontage, and creation of gardens; Public Library; Pre-School Centre; Senior Citizens Club; Strathmerton Public Hall;

Filteration and Chlorination Plant; Football Club Pavilion; Golf Club House; Youth Club; C.W.A. Rooms; New Wing at Hospital; Olympic Swimming Pool; Ambulance Station and Residence; Additional Classroom Numurkah State School; Addition Classroom St. Joseph's Convent; Housing Commission Low Rental Units; Selling Ring and Buyers Stand at Saleyards; Anglican Church; Strathmerton Sports Pavilion; Methodist Sunday School.

During the 12 year period since severance the Council has developed the picnic camping area at Morgan's Mill Beach and constructed septic sewered toilet blocks on seven recreation reserves. The Numurkah Caravan Park was given a "facelift" by the Apex Club and power is available to 26 sites. The Council has implemented the provisions of the Town Planning Scheme and widening of Melville Street and abolition of the deep open gutters is proof of the enterprise of the "new" Council. Access lanes have been constructed at the rear of the Commercial premises giving shopkeepers the opportunity to unload goods at the rear of their premises and fully utilize their valuable frontage to the main street.

On 24th February, 1968 the Minister for Local Government Hon. R. J. Hamer, officially opened the \$131,000 Numurkah Swimming Pool, this complex of 3 swimming pools is the most modern in the Goulburn Valley and the best outside the Metropolitan area.

In recent years the Council has considered reports on the feasibility of a sewerage scheme for Numurkah and approval was sought from the Governor-in-Council to form a Sewerage Authority; consent was granted on 10th December, 1968 and approval gazetted on the 11th December, 1969. Inaugural meeting of the Numurkah Sewerage Authority was held on the 21st January, 1969, and at this meeting Councillor R. W. Hodge was elected Chairman of the Authority. The estimated cost of the sewerage project is \$864,250 and the whole scheme should be completed by 1974.

At the present time an investigation and survey is being carried out to construct a Sewerage scheme for the Township of Strathmerton, the estimated cost of this project is \$222,000.

To illustrate the development of the Shire it is interesting to note that the

Council expended \$234,662 in its 1958/59 Financial Year and in 1969-70 it has budgetted to spend \$586,617.

## Laying the foundations

### The Early Township

There is no History. Only Biography.  
Ralph W. Emerson.

The history of the small Australian town is the history of Australia itself, and after the Land Act 1869 and the selectors began to arrive and take land in the Shire area in the early seventies, the small towns evolved to serve the selectors. One of our early selectors Mr A. Meiklejohn selected in 1875 "on the 18 mile grass plain which became Numurkah, a nice circular plain, well grassed, the creek having a nice flow of water and an abundance of wildfowl".

Numurkah was surveyed on 18/6/1875 by Alfred Leahy who also surveyed Nathalia, Wunghnu and Waaia, and the first land sale was held in Shepparton on 11/1/1878; when 9 lots in Melville Street were sold. The upset price was £4 and some of the purchasers and prices paid were — A. Leahy, Allotment 1 £4; Allotment 2, J. Nelson £20; Allotment 3, J. Morressy £16; J. Haynes bought 2 allotments, one at £8 and one at £13. The sale was conducted by William Oram esq. J. P.

These allotments extended from the Church of England corner to the south of where Coxon's garage is now situated and more blocks on the opposite side of Melville Street were sold from Brenion Street to Knox Street.

An early plan of the town shows the speculative interest of the first comers and the origin of some of the street names. Some early purchasers were Peter McCaskill, Cliver Dolphin (who had an aerated water factory in Bolton Street, now McDona'd Street), Commercial Bank, Cuthbert Corke (of Brown and Corkes) J. Crow and George Currie.

Melville Street was named after the man who selected land south of the bridge embracing South Numurkah, race course and show grounds, but being reported as a dummy for the squatters he was summoned to appear before a board of enquiry at

Benalla. Acting dummy was a serious matter and when he received the official summons he took to his horse and disappeared.

Orchard Street was named after the first Bible Christian minister, Rev Orchard, a man who interested himself in all aspects of the town's welfare and was the first President of the Mechanics Institute.

It seems reasonable that men wouldn't speculate in town allotments in a new town without some feeling of confidence in its future and it is also reasonable to think that the realisation of that future depended somewhat on their own efforts. And by dint of making an effort for their town they assumed a proprietorship that expressed itself in continued responsibility for the welfare and good reputation of their own community.

The tone of Mr Crow's advertisements that prophesied a prosperous future for Numurkah, the constant emphasis in the Numurkah Standard on the importance of the town and the desire on the part of its citizens for it to have and to be the best, all add to the feeling of pride in the place which still persists.

Imagine the first ten years of a town — not in these days of machinery of every description for each conceivable

requirement but in the "horse and buggy days" when every effort was made by man himself with the plough and shovel, with a horse and cart for transporting himself and the tools and materials for the job.

There were selectors in the area before there was any township and so we have a description from some of the early arrivals of the conditions and the appearance of the place from the beginning. Mr John Saxton arrived here in 1876 (his father and grandfather had arrived a year previously) and found only a Bajanna boundary rider's hut near the creek on the eastern side. This man was Mr Warden who lived in the hut with his wife and two daughters.

North of Saxton Street was a forest of pines and oaks, and a further description of the country when the first selectors arrived listed the trees as Murray pines, black wattle, golden wattle, grey and yellow box, red gums and all the wild flowers recorded are still here except for two or three orchids.

The first person in residence in Numurkah was Peter McCaskill who erected the covering of his wagon of goods as a tent and was ready for business. He later built a shelter of bark which did duty as the Numurkah Hotel and store about where



COMMERCIAL STORE BUILT IN 1882, NOW KNOWN AS BITCONS





THE ROYAL STORE, which was converted from Royal Mail Hotel on enr. of Saxton and Melville Streets.

the Numurkah Hotel still stands. He died on January 23, 1882 at the early age of 42 so he did not live long after starting our local trading activities.

John Callander selected in 1877 and John junior (Later to become the proprietor of the Standard) described his first view of the village when he arrived some time after his father "as a collection of huts, tents, and sleeping places without any apparent order, surrounded by dense growth of saplings and pines and scrubby undergrowth. Other early arrivals were Mr J. Crow who started a newsagency in 1878 and Mr Murdoch Stewart who was the first blacksmith.

In 1879, after the partitioning of Echuca Shire, the Shire of Shepparton was proclaimed and Cr George Graham was the first President. The size of the Shire and the distances involved in attending Council meetings made the work difficult for councillors and Cr Geo. Reynoldson who lived near Strathmerton left home at 4 a.m. on council days returning in the early hours of the following day.

The school opened in 1879 under Mr Thomas Livingstone who rode in daily from his brother's farm at Drumsnure. The school was a portable wooden structure. Mr Livingstone afterwards re-

signed and bought the Tungamah Express which he edited and he later became the Minister of Education.

In 1880 there was already a cricket team, which according to George Reynoldson, who used to walk in from Strathmerton to play, was virtually a progress association. After each match there would be a discussion on some matters of importance to the town i.e. the extension of the railway from Shepparton etc. Perhaps from this grew the desire to form the Vigilance committee which was concerned with all matters pertaining to the advancement of the town. This committee became known throughout the district for its untiring persistence in promoting the progress of Numurkah, sending delegations to the Shire Council and to Ministers in Melbourne when the occasion warranted such action. Its efforts were enthusiastically commended in other towns and Shepparton News exhorted its local citizens to do likewise. At a council meeting on 1/6/80 it was resolved that the secretary take steps to have stumps and trees cleared from the main street of Numurkah and when the work of forming it began in 1882 John Callander, who had won ploughing matches with a single furrow plough, was asked by Mr Barrah, the shire supervisor to

assist by marking with the plough, the lines on either side separating the footpaths from the thoroughfare. Sighting poles were in position on either side and a furrow 2 inches deep was drawn almost to the creek at the south end and to the site of the present memorial at the north end. Mr J. Nicholson, the shire engineer spoke approvingly of the lines drawn.

The formation of Melville Street brought some order into the place and the proclaiming of a street meant that horse-men could not ride on the footpath with impunity. Even in 1886 the only street that was proclaimed was Melville Street. The Vigilance Committee asked the Shire Council to have all streets proclaimed to prevent the driving of vehicles along the footpaths.

Numurkah was fortunate in having a newspaper established so early in its history as it would be difficult to over-estimate its importance to the town's progress. The first editor Mr George Salas was

actively concerned with local affairs and criticised, and encouraged and publicised everything that affected the welfare of the citizens.

He served on several committees (though it is not recorded whether he wore his smoking cap and slippers to meetings as he did in his office) and while he lived in Numurkah he made it his own. The Numurkah Standard started publication in March 1881 "when the sleeping village was comparatively unknown". An enlarged edition was published in 1882 and in the editorial of 2/6/1882 an extract read "the attention of townspeople until this time having necessarily been concentrated on establishing business and farms etc, the editor of the Standard now suggests that it was time to think about other things such as establishing a Mechanics Institute". Mr Salas left Numurkah in 1886 and became the manager of the West Australian in Perth.

After the arrival of the railway in



MELVILLE STREET AT NIGHT, taken in 1950's, from "Venable's corner".



MELVILLE STREET, from opposite side of street.

1/9/1881 progress was rapid and it is astonishing to read of the number of new buildings erected in a short space of time. Every now and then the Standard would list the number of new shops and houses which were in course of erection since the last report. There was at first as much activity in Knox Street as in Melville Street. There were seven or eight businesses between the corner of Meiklejohn Street and the station and also around the corner in Bolton Street, now McDonald Street where there was a cordial factory and hotel and a tentmaking shop. Three coaching lines operated from Numurkah at this time taking mails and passengers to Nathalia, Echuca, Yarrawonga etc.

Numurkah was first recorded in the Victorian Municipal Directory in 1882, i.e. "Numurkah is now rapidly coming to the front being the terminus of the Goulburn Valley line for the time being". There was

a fuller description in 1883.

1882 was a year of so many firsts that the impression must have been one of bustling activity. Many new buildings were completed including the first Post Office (under Post Mistress Green), a football club formed, the first appointed court held and consideration given to the need of a Mechanics Institute.

Also the first Agricultural Show was held, the first president being Geo Graham, afterwards member for this area in the Legislative Assembly.

Early in its life the Society instituted competitions for the selectors in the form of prizes for the best managed farm, best crops and orchards. This was an incentive to try new methods and different crops and a panel of judges from outside the area would spend two or three days in the district examining all entrants and this did much to stimulate interest in pro-



per farm management.

Mr J. Tweddle was first for the best crop of wheat in 1883 and Mr James Thornton won the prize of £25 for the best managed farm in the district in 1885. In 1886 Mr James Williams had the best kept homestead.

Until this time most of the buildings had a temporary look because of the need for something erected quickly but towards the end of 1882 and in 1883 locally made bricks were more often used and tenders would be invited for 10,000 bricks or so, as very often different parts of the building would be tendered for separately i.e. materials, labor, building etc. Some of the buildings erected about this time were the Commercial Bank (No 1), Presbyterian Church, Bitcon's (then Le Leuvre), the Bank of Australasia, the Mechanics Institute and Kinnaids shop (now Peter Bau's). These were an indication of the stability of the growing town and after a disastrous fire in 1885 when five light timber shops in the main street were destroyed one night in about half an hour they were replaced with brick buildings. Fire was a big hazard because of the nature of the buildings, and as there was no reticulation, unless the water carriers had their tanks full each night there was no way of fighting the fires. Also water was expensive and when the Fire Brigade was formed it found itself in financial difficulties because of debts incurred for water which had been left for them to pay.

In 1883 the new school was started. Alternative tenders were called, a, for a wooden building and b, for one in brick. After some time had passed and the successful tenderer had not started work except to chop down one tree it was decided to invite new tenders as by this time the proposed new building would not be big enough for the number of pupils by now enrolled. It was decided that a brick building should be raised and the original part of the present building dates from this time.

This same year a special train brought to Numurkah 43 reapers and binders to be displayed at the Agricultural Show. This was initiated by Mr James Williams, agents for McCormick and after the next year when this effort had been outdone by another local agent the committee limited the number of vehicles to be exhibited. The footbridge leading to the

showgrounds was completed in time for the former show.

During this year and in the next few years following many new organisations were started including a dramatic club, a harmonic society, and the first brass band. Also by way of amusement there was a quadrille assembly held during the winter months. There was a debating club run by the Mechanics Committee and one formed later by Kaarimba called the Kaarimba Farmers' Debating Society whose first president was Mr J. Twitt. The subjects debated by both clubs were various topics still being discussed today such as the pros and cons of capital punishment, commercial morality etc. The President of the dramatic club and the brass band was Mr Thos Richards and Mr W. P. Sinclair of Thresher and Sinclair was conductor of the Choral Union.

In the Numurkah Standard of 15/2/1887, the subject of the editorial was "Reticulation for Numurkah". At this time there were some bores and rain water tanks in the town but many people were dependent on water carriers. One man stated that at the present rate the water he used weekly cost him £3.

Com. Reynoldson gave notice at a water trust meeting that he would move that reticulation of Numurkah be proceeded with. The volunteer Fire Brigade which "practises and is most proficient" had all its efforts brought to nought because there was not enough water to do the job.

In April 1888 the Water Supply Department notified the local water trust that tenders for laying pipes and erecting the engine house for reticulation had been accepted.

The Standard in looking back over the progress of the past few years says "Numurkah was a typical bush township even as late as 1885 when the newly formed Shire began to make its influence felt. Five years ago only three streets in the town were formed, Melville Street, Meiklejohn Street and part of Knox Street.

In this year, the tenth after the actual activity in the town had started the Standard ran a series of articles entitled "Progressive Numurkah" which outlined the advancement of the community during those years and gave a detailed account of businesses and new buildings.

For some years between 1884 and 1890 typhoid fever and diphtheria afflicted

the town and district and nearly every family was affected, many losing one member. Finally the figures for Numurkah became serious enough for investigation by the State Health department. The officer in charge found at this time 20/4-1888 that the population was 1000 and the buildings 200 mostly of wood. There was no drainage and no regular collection of refuse. Roads and streets consisted of about two miles, of which not quite half a mile of road was macadamised and about the same length of footpath gravelled. Of public buildings there were Mechanics Institute, five churches, Post Office, State

School and Shire Hall in process of being built.

The advent of street lighting (16 Street lights) in 1887, and reticulation in 1888, were important advances and as significant then as sewerage is today.

When we consider the difficulties and problems that have been overcome in creating our small community we realise that these same problems are those of people everywhere and that everyone who cared enough to persist in an object until obstacles were overcome played a part in establishing Numurkah.



SEALING NEWLY CURBED MELVILLE STREET IN 1966. A. J. Pumpa, Photo

## Our Local Schools

### STATE SCHOOL NUMURKAH, No. 2134

The township of Numurkah was surveyed in 1875 and five acres in a central position were allocated for the school late in 1878.

A wooden classroom with attached 2 roomed quarters were sent up and erected in January 1879 at the cost of £190.

The school was opened on the 4-3-79. Thomas Livingstone was the Headmaster and Charles Ross was his assistant. The pupils enrolled were:

Rosetta, Annie, Maggie and Robert Brennon; Jim and John Callander; George and Salome Collett; L. Cutbbert; Emily and Charles Eliot; Louise and Arthur Green; Rebecca Mortill; Johanna, Anne, Mary, and Cornelius McAuliffe; Jack and William Patterson; Elizabeth Ralston; Grace and Louisa Tilburn; Anne, Joseph, John, Frances and William Saxton.

John Saxton later became Chief Inspector of Primary Schools Mr T. Livingstone eventually became Minister for Education.

Evening classes in shorthand, Latin and mathematics were taken by the first Presbyterian Minister, the Rev. John Urquhart.

At this time the land was uncleared and the Brennon children had to follow

a plough furrow to school.

1881 attendance rose to 40 and the Headmaster's quarters had to be used.

1882: Numbers rose to 90 and the Bible Christian Church Hall opposite the school was leased for £1 per week.

1883: A contract was signed for a new brick building of 40' x 18' costing £660. The wooden school was to be converted into a four room dwelling.

1885: A new 30' x 18' brick room was built.

1898: Attendance rose to over 200 and many leased buildings were necessary to cope with the numbers.

1900: Another 30' x 18' room was built for the Infant school and in 1912 the whole school was remodelled.

1924: Due to efforts made by local people the school was raised to the status of Higher Elementary School with Mr Timothy Lebane as Head Teacher.

In 1925, the Mother's Club was established.

Numbers grew rapidly and two Army huts were erected.

1956: The Cafeteria was established with Mrs Fennis as voluntary supervisor.

In 1964, a new wing was built, consisting of 8 new classrooms, staffroom and infant storeroom.

Present enrollment is 478.



PUPILS OF STATE SCHOOL, during Mr Lane's headmastership in 1880's. Taken at Back To Numurkah 1922



THOMAS LIVINGSTONE,  
first Headmaster of Numurkah State  
School, 2134.

#### PRE SCHOOL

On 28-11-55 at a meeting held in the Infant Welfare Centre it was agreed to form a Committee to inquire into the formation of a Play Centre at Numurkah. Mrs Tippett was elected president with Mrs Crozier as secretary and Mrs R. Smith as treasurer. It was necessary to raise money for a shed to house outdoor equipment if the area behind the Infant Welfare Centre was to be used. In May 1956 the Council approved the establishment of a Play Centre in the Rest Room, with the grounds behind the Infant Welfare Centre to be used as play area.

The Play Centre was opened in May 1957 with Mrs McLaren as Play Leader.

By 1958 it was obvious that a larger building was needed to meet the increasing demand for Pre School facilities. A Building Fund was established and efforts began to raise the money necessary. With a proper building a trained kindergarten teacher would be subsidised by the Government. In 1962, over £2000 had been raised. With the Government Grant of £3000, only £2000 more had to be found. The Council donated this money to the Pre School Building Fund.

The Pre School was opened on 24th August 1962 by the Hon. G. C. Moss.



CLASS AT NUMURKAH HIGHER ELEMENTARY SCHCOL, 1920's

### HIGH SCHOOL

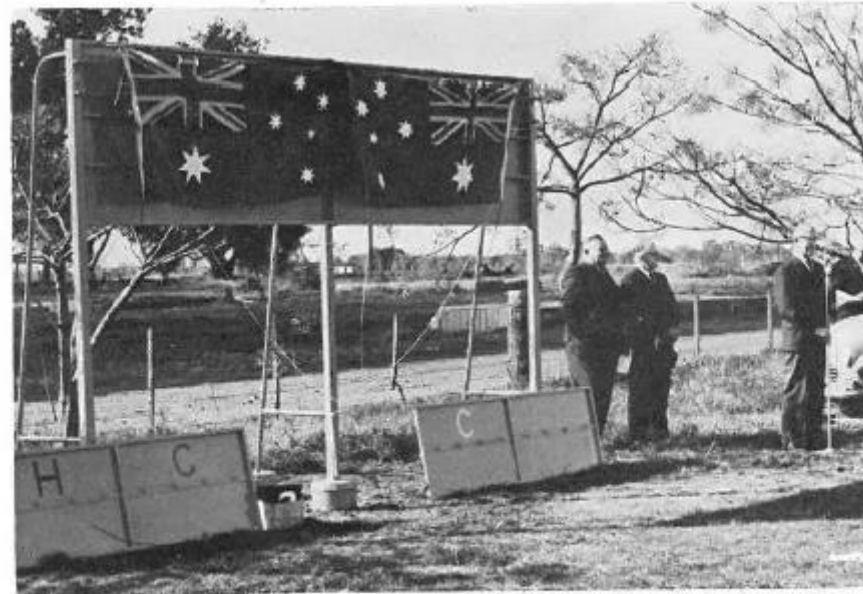
In 1943 it was decided by the State School Committee to take the necessary steps to have a High School established in Numurkah. Mrs Twitt offered to sell the committee nine acres of land on Tocumwal Road for a High School site, the present position of the school. It was considered necessary to have a High School because of serious overcrowding in the Higher Elementary school and the development of the irrigation area meant more intensive settlement and a growth in school population.

In July 1950 the school committee of N.H.E.S. was notified that it would be

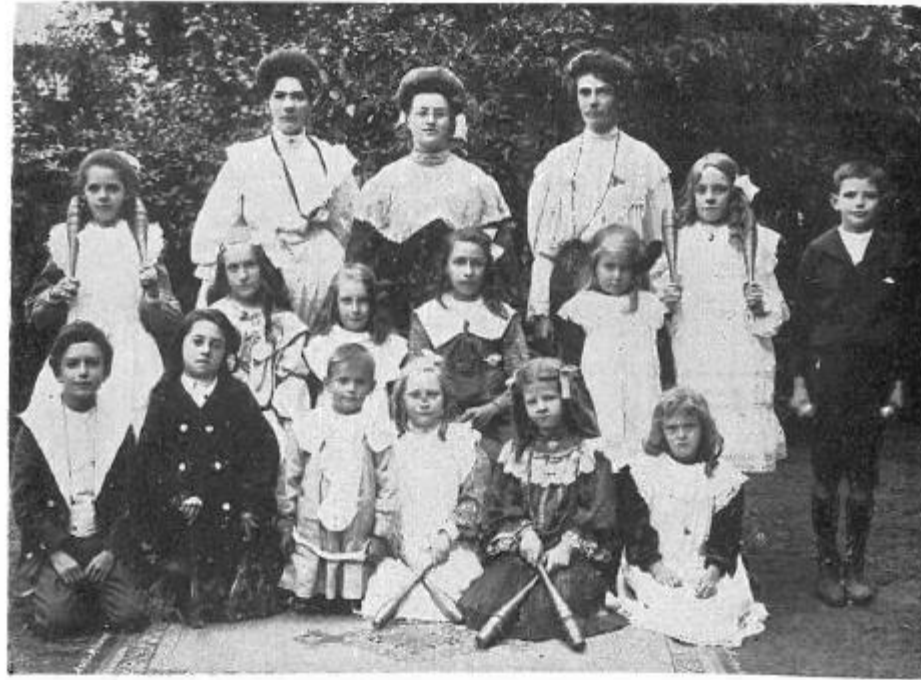
raised to the status of a High School at the beginning of the next school year, and later in the year was informed that A. M. Rogers would be the first Headmaster.

The high school first used some primary school buildings. In 1953 building was started on the high school site — more land had been acquired along Pine Street, and in 1955 the school was ready for use. It was officially opened in 1957.

Since the school was officially opened another wing has been added, the Alan McLeod oval has been developed and more land adjoining the school has been acquired for playing fields.



OPENING OF ALAN McLEOD OVAL AT NUMURKAH HIGH SCHOOL, by Mr J. Christie, President of Advisory Council in 1968, A. J. Pumpa, Photo.



CHILDREN ATTENDING MISS DARBISHIRE'S PRIVATE SCHOOL IN SAXTON STREET.

## Establishing the Churches

### THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST

The Seventh-day Adventist Church of Numurkah extends a sincere welcome to all visitors during these celebrations; and on this occasion expresses appreciation for the spirit of co-operation and friendship established in this town and district.

Among the many changes you will see is a new brick building on the east side of Tocumwal Road, set well back on a deep building allotment. This hall and welfare centre forms the stage one of future church extensions.

The first congregation was organised on May 14, 1910 with Pastor C. H. Parker officiating. With a membership of ten the following officers were elected: D. Sheppard, elder; T. Armstrong, deacon; I. Ferris, deaconess; W. Armstrong, sec-

retary; A. Ferris, treasurer; P. Swan assistant treasurer.

Although a concrete brick building was planned in 1911, the brick-making machine was disposed of after a former Methodist Church was procured for removal. From seven miles out along the Katamatite Road. The hall, a sturdy timber structure, was transported by wagon to a site on McDonald Street, where it has served for another fifty-eight years.

As we record the progress from one generation to another, as we recall the names of former citizens of this town who have passed on, we are reminded of the beauty of life. It also brings to mind a heavenly "back-to", to which we are all invited. Let us determine to be there too.



SKETCH OF PROPOSED SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN TOCUMWAL ROAD.

#### ST JOHN'S CHURCH NUMURKAH

St John the Baptist Parish Numurkah embraces the whole shire area and in addition some 120 square miles to the S.E. known as Invergordon.

It became an established parish on 24-10-1887 being administered previously by Fr. Kennedy of Shepparton. It included Nathalia until it became a separate parish in 1905 and Cobram was attached until it became a parish in 1922.

The first Parish priest was Fr. O'Connor who lived at first with Mr and Mrs Tom McTighe at Katunga. The first church was a wooden building in Gray Street. Early parish records show that Mary Josephine Morrissey was the first baptism on, 30/10/1887 and the first marriage that of William Bourke and Julia Carney both of Ulupna on 17-11-1887.

Work commenced on the presbytery in 1889 — built with 14" perimeter walls 15' high, which were cement rendered, the building stands today in sound condition. Renovations were carried out in 1966 and the whole building painted white. Surrounded by lawns, roses and shrubs it is greatly admired. Still remaining is the coloured glass inscription over the original main door "Michael Archangele Veni in Adjutorium Populo Dei", "Oh Michael Archangel come to the help of the children of God".

In the same year (1889) Mother Mary of the Cross, foundress of the Sisters of St Joseph, whose cause for Beatification is now before the authorities in Rome, came here in person and established the convent — a wooden

building in Saxton Street on the site now occupied by Mr and Mrs T. Cummins. It was the first foundation of the order in Victoria. The convent was officially opened on 12-1-1890 with Sister Gertrude in charge followed by Sister Bonaventure.

Arch-priest James McCarthy succeeded Father O'Connor and was responsible for the erection of the present parish church opened free of debt in June 1902. The foundation stone was laid by the Most Rev Dr Reville O.S.A. on 28-3-1902.

Another highlight in the 31 years reign of the Arch-priest was the new convent and school building in Tocumwal Road. The foundation stone was laid by Bishop McCarthy and Arch-bishop Mannix formally opened the building on 4-2-1920.

The ceremony was followed by a sports meeting culminating at night in the crowning of four district queens Misses M. Fitzpatrick (Peace), M. Wilson (Charity), M. Hickey (Sport) and M. Ross (Victory) who raised \$5100.

It is fitting that the memory of these two great pioneers is perpetuated by streets bearing the names of O'Connor Street and McCarthy Avenue.

Father Rohan came to the parish on 1-2-1928 and despite the heavy depression years built a new church at Strathmerton opened 1-9-1935. The Numurkah Leader records that in 1945 a tumultuous farewell was tendered to him despite torrential rain which fell throughout the whole evening. Mr P. Deane chaired the function and present on stage were Crs W. L. Moss and W. G. Hooper, Dr Coombs and Messrs D. Hickey and G.

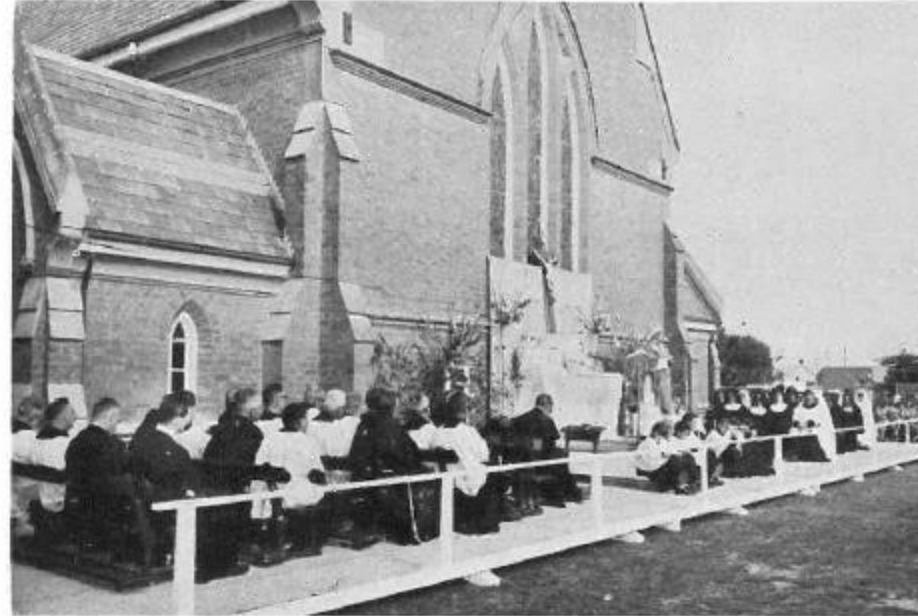
Biteon.

Father James Cremin succeeded Father Rohan in 1945 and it was during this time that this parish experienced a great change with the Closer Settlement Area project. Father Cremin exemplified his faith in humanity in his daily life and was ready to warmly welcome the new comer and freely give of his vast and practical knowledge of stock and land.

The large influx of families to the parish brought with it demands for more buildings particularly in the educational

sphere. Two additions have been carried out in the last ten years and a Science Room added this year. Present enrolment is 330 going as far as Form 4. In comparison enrolment in 1925 was 60 and in 1950, 100.

We, the people of Numurkah are proud of what has been accomplished. This historical summary proudly records the part played by pioneer priests, sisters and laity. It is incumbent on us the present generation to maintain this great heritage.



CELEBRATORY MASS, on the occasion of 100th anniversary of the foundation of the Sisters of St Joseph, whose school in Numurkah was the first in (the Diocese) Victoria. A. J. Pumpa Photo.

#### ST ANDREW'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Though Presbyterian services had been held in the district prior to that date, it was on October 16th, 1882 that the first minister (the Rev John Urquart) was inducted into the Presbyterian Church Charge here. The Rev J. C. Coutie succeeded Mr Urquart in 1886, and he remained until 1895, when he resigned, and the Rev Fenton was induct-

ed in his stead. The first Elders were Messrs John Callander, Peter Robinson, Slessar, Marcus and R. Brenion. The first church in Numurkah was erected 1883 and the date for the opening services was 24-11-1883.

The church was erected on land donated by Mr John Gray and in 1886 the Manse was built the Presbyterian Hall being erected in 1914. The church originally comprised the Numurkah,



Waaia South, Drumanure and Yarroweyah churches, but a re-arrangement of boundaries was made, Yarroweyah being attached to Cobram and Yalca to Nathalia so now there are just Numurkah and Drumanure.



DEDICATION OF THE NEW PORCH AND STAINED GLASS WINDOW AT ST ANDREWS,

Services were first held at Waaia South in 1876 (by the Rev Swift of Murchison) and at Drumanure in 1882.

Following the Rev Fenton were the following Revs David Millar (1899-1903), G. M. Baird (1903-1910), W. Tulloch (1910-1912), J. A. Lee (1913-1923), J. Jones (1923-1926), J. G. Sharpe (1926-1933), A. F. H. Smith (1933-1938), Rev Johnson (1938-1941), Rev Allison (1942-1945), Rev Wallace 1946. In 1947 the Chaplain-General Rev A. Stewart asked for Mr Wallace's services for the defence forces in Japan so Rev Gavin Lawson relieved him in 1947-1950. In 1950 services were commenced in Katunga on April 9th.

After Rev Chris Williams (1951-1954) a return call was given to Mr Allison who stayed until 1961. Mr Dyster has been here since 1962 and left Numurkah 16-12-1969. During his term a new hall was opened at Drumanure in 1968.

Some beautiful stained glass windows have been dedicated in St Andrews adding much to the beauty and dignity of the building. The windows were given by Mr and Mrs A. Retalick, Mrs C. Gray and Alan, Mrs Dohnt and Miss M. Gordon presented the new porch and window which were dedicated on 11-8-1968.

#### ST GEORGE'S CHURCH, NUMURKAH

It has been a little difficult to compile a history of the Church of England in this parish as the parish records were lost when the rectory was destroyed by fire about 1893. The following account has been gathered from the memories of the oldest members of the parish.

Services were first held in the supper rooms of the Mechanics Institute and the first resident clergyman was Rev Harry Willis Lane who was rector here in 1886-87. It was during his first term of office that a church was built.

There was no rectory at the time and Rev Lane lived in McCaskill Street at the rear of Brown Corke and Co's present premises.

Opening services in the new church were held on May 9, 1886 and the church was crowded for both services. Numurkah Choral Union rendered Birdwaters full service in 'A' in a highly creditable manner.

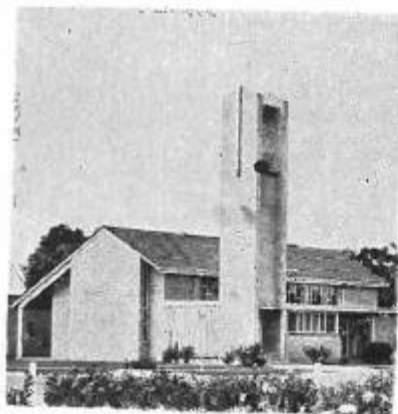
The first rectory was situated in South Numurkah and was burnt down in 1898 or thereabouts. Rev R. Elliott was in charge of the parish at that time and a new rectory was built next to the church in Meville Street. This was demolished in 1968. The present guild hall was built while Rev A. F. Falconer was in charge of the parish.

The following is a list of rectors who served at Numurkah since the church was established locally: Rev H. W. Lane, Rev Youlden, Canon Dalton, Rev R. Elliott, Rev F. Grist, Rev P. J. Edwards, Rev Stanley Wells, Rev S. W. Williamson, Rev E. Hankinson, Rev J. Townsend, Rev W. E. Boydew, Rev J. S. Bullough, Rev V. H. Williams, Rev Hannaford, Rev S. G. Davis, Rev L. G. Rose, Rev Lines, Rev G. L. Perry and present rector, Rev Gibson.

While Rev Perry was in charge of the parish, a move was made to build a new church at Numurkah. During 1957, a Wells Fundraising organisation was engaged for a three-year term for the

new church. Tenders were eventually called for the building of the present church through architects, Messrs L. Williams and the successful tenderers were Clements Langford of Melbourne at a price of \$42,000.

The foundation stone of the new building was laid on October 22, 1960, by the late Bishop Armour of Wangaratta. The building was completed in April 1961 and the dedication ceremony was also celebrated by Bishop Armour on April 22 of that year.



ST GEORGE'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

The present rectory was built in 1965 by W. Poad and Son at a tendered price of about \$12,000.

The following church wardens and vestrymen were in office during the building of the present church.

Wardens: Messrs L. Hamon, W. Little, J. Roche. Vestrymen: W. Tuttle, Sr., J. B. Murdoch, A. Bernard, A. C. Clark, E. Booth, H. Booth, E. Charter, F. Amor, J. McLaren, C. Thompson, M. Foote. J. Roche was secretary.

#### METHODIST CHURCH

As it is now constituted the Methodist Church can trace its origin to the arrival of the Rev John Orchard in Wunghnu. He was in fact the pioneer protestant minister in this northern part of the Goulburn Valley. He made Wunghnu his headquarters, and working from there established Bible Christian churches throughout the district.

The first protestant service held in Numurkah was in the diningroom of the Numurkah Hotel by the Rev John Orchard. The township at the time consisted of a small boundary riders but, and the hotel above mentioned and one or two tents. The site of the hotel was near where the Numurkah Hotel still stands.

In the year 1879, a small wooden church was built on land between the present church and the Masonic hall. This building 30' by 18' with stage and porch cost little more than £90 of which £60 was either promised or in hand. The first service was held on 21-12-1879 when addresses were given by Rev John Orchard and Messrs W. H. Hosken and John Green.



THE TROWEL USED FOR LAYING THE FOUNDATION STONE OF THE WESLEYAN CHURCH, 1888.

The wooden building becoming inadequate for the growing congregation, the present church was built of bricks made in the district and the memorial stone was laid on 12-2-1889.

The new church was opened in April of the same year, the Rev Cory being the preacher. The first building used by the Wesleyan denomination prior to the union of themselves with the Bible Christians was erected on land at the south end of McCaskill Street where the home of Mr Ralph Taylor now stands. Later a brick building arose on the corner of Knox Street and McCaskill Street and a parsonage was built on the south side of the original wooden building. The Rev Flockart was the first minister of the Wesleyan church when Numurkah became separated from the Shepparton Circuit in 1886.

In 1902, after the union, the church became known as the Methodist Church.

However in 1900, two years earlier the Rev Cory (Bible Christian) and the Rev Osborne foreseeing the union had united their two churches.

In the years following the church has surged ahead. In 1924 our present Sunday School Hall was erected at the cost of £971 and in 1934 a kindergarten room was built on to the vestry and enlarged in 1953.

Some wellknown names to preceding generations are those of the late William Tyres who served faithfully as lay preacher, trustee and S.S. Superintendent, the late H. J. Glenny (father of Mrs V. Allen) who served in similar positions, the late A. B. Jaffray, who served as trustee and lay preacher and the late Austin Stringer who served as trustee, steward and Trust secretary for a period of 28 years.

The late Hilda Tyres served as choir mistress and organist for many years.



BIBLE CLASS AT BULKMAUGH METHODIST CHURCH.

# Businesses, Professions and Public Services

(Now and Then)

During the past 20 years, Melville Street has undergone a considerable face-lift and the three main features are outstanding.

These are the widening of the roadway by setting back shops on the east side, curb-to-curb sealing and lowering of the roadway itself in 1966, and the removal of hotel verandahs.

Individual buildings have altered and some have disappeared to be replaced by others.

We commence with Hodge's Esso service station built in 1962 replacing Alan Hyde's blacksmith shop and Patching and McDonald's garage.

Venables' grocery store, the Egg Board building and S. Konig's machinery shop have all been demolished leaving vacant blocks.

Extensions have been added to the rear of the Shamrock Hotel, formerly Simpson's, now operated by Mr Fred Brown who took over from Mr Charlie Schillier.

The office of Mr S. W. Stife, solicitor, is next adjacent to several new shops built by I. and R. Hodge on the site of Dr Thomas' residence.

From this point, extending to the Farmers' Arms Hotel, all shops were set back in the remodelling project. The first shop to be set back was Mr Alan Girdler's furniture store which was built in 1957.

Croft's grocery store was built in 1951 replacing Gerry Nicholson's funeral parlor. The post office was rebuilt in 1964 and the automatic telephone exchange added in 1967.

Bitcons began as a family business at Numurkah which was later bought by Mathews, Thompson. In more recent years it was bought by G. J. Coles.

The shop next door was originally a bakery but now operates as a delicatessen. The adjacent shop was once a shoe store but is now a fruit mart.

Brown Corke and Co. was established at Numurkah in 1881 and is still going strong. The store was remodelled in



NUMURKAH POST OFFICE, built 1904



LAST DAY OF USE OF OLD MANUAL EXCHANGE, NUMURKAH P.O.

1964 with additions at the rear and south end.

E. Coxon and Sons garage still stands on its original site although some remodelling works were carried out in 1969. The old foundry which housed the joinery works of Suffield and the panel works of Heywood and Powells, has been demolished to make way for a used car yard.

On the west side of Melville Street, commencing from the south, the Australian Estates building was erected in 1956 but is now vacant.

Greens building next door formerly B. Cox, now a machinery shop. McNamara's Blue Bird Cafe is now run by Alan McKay. Lands Department Office is next, followed by McNamara's Gift Shop, which is now vacant.

The Commercial Banking Co. of Sydney, is on the corner with H. Prideaux's garage opposite, now occupied in front by N. Blake as spare parts and accessories and petrol, and at the rear, Hogg and Davies engineering works, also

Stanbrooks dry-cleaning factory now vacant. Mrs Blake's cafe is now Magic Mirror hair-dressing salon, James Williams estate agency is now Ken Phillips upholstery works.

Win Hyde, hairdressing salon, formerly Jean Robertson's. W. Ingram shoe shop, formerly Collin's shoe shop, Dalgety and N.Z.L. formerly Eelt's then Kilpatrick, McLellan's building now Dennys Lascelles, and N.Z.L. offices. IXL Cafe, conducted by E. and S. Chrisafis, Eric Lee's butcher shop, demolished and rebuilt, now D. Dryden's fruit shop. Two new shops formerly Lilburne's delicatessen and IXL Cafe now Seiter's hardware shop. Leader Office now conducted by Lorna Morris, formerly T. Morris & Son; T. McMahon, watchmaker, now J. & L. Dry Cleaning depot. Victorian Producers office, formerly J. Corlass, Col Hansen and L. Hamon.

Gerald Heard's flats occupy the building formerly used by J. McNamara and Co., this was the very early Numurkah Post Office. L. Hamon's new chemist

shop occupying the site of Mrs Lees Crystal Cafe, previously Ken Hills, and before that Nightingales.

Retallicks News Agency remodelled in 1963, formerly Clarkes, and W. A. Fairless'. F. Firman hairdresser commenced 1963. Morrison and Teare, Solicitors now conducted by C. E. Newman and G. Cattermole. Guenther's Pharmacy now conducted by Reg McFarlane, Geoff Morieson, dentist, formerly H. J. Pearson, Numurkah Bakery now conducted by Bruce Miers, formerly Fred Smythe, who remodelled the front.



NEW AUTOMATIC EXCHANGE,  
Numurkah P.O.

Ian Booth's Electrics, formerly B. McNamara, and before that the late W. F. Wall. Heard Bros. who commenced their hardware business in the old Mechanics Hall. Maurice Nash's Numurkah Hotel, formerly the late Jack Laidlaw, Scotty Watson, Henry Bock, Rosa Bourke, etc. State Savings Bank, manager at present is Tom Thynne. The New A.N.Z. Bank building built in 1965, J. Knight manager. McPherson's Arcade also built in 1965, occupied by Marge for Fashion Junior Shop (Marge Peddle), Buck Staggard hairdresser, Betty Elkington baby wear, J. McColl and Associates Agricultural

Advisers, Ken Morgan chiropractor. A. McPherson and Son remodelled in 1958, formerly McPherson, Callander, business started in 1908 by A. McPherson.

Bill Baldwin, formerly A. Robinson, after Alan Elliott, L. and G. Jones Shoe Shop formerly C. Stonehouse, and H. Moore. Chapman's Fruit Shop, formerly Pell's. Treacy's newsagency still going since 1920. Georgina Rex hairdressing salon, Dianne Webster proprietress, Girdlers' Drapery now run by J. and H. Simmons. The Red Cherry Cafe, now owned by Simoss was opened by Jim Moseby where Pozzi and O'Brien were, and subsequently owned by Barrettes. Ron Collins Sports Store formerly Mosbey's Babywear.

Finlayson's Electrical Store formerly Chas Bennett's Gift Shop. Wooleocks Shoe Store formerly H. Elliotts. A. Pumpa photographer, and Tudor Rose hairdressing salon (Patricia Hansen), then Doctors Edwards, Hudson and Hartnett, formerly Dr. Whitaker and the late Doctors Coombs and Parker. The Commonwealth Bank on the site of the old Chinese Laundry. Veris and Nickles formerly Frank Priestly Fruit Shop for 17 years, and before that owned by F. Cavallaro and A. Bolte. These premises were occupied as a saddler shop for years by Tom Adkin and then A. Fawkes.

Gervasoni's Butcher Shop formerly A. Heap and F. Amor electrical shop, now Barry O'Brien's hairdressing shop comes next, then N. Manley insurance agent, Maurice McNamara stock agent and Hodge Motors, formerly W. Plancke builder, A. Blackley sweet shop and J. Moore garage.



NEW RAILWAY STATION, NUMURKAH





A FACELIFT FOR BROWN & CORKE'S IN 1964. A. J. Pumpa, Photo.

S.E.C. Office, manager D. Goyen, veterinary service Chas and John Thomson, W. Tuttle's mortuary on the site of the old fire station, the T.A.B. Office at the back of the Numurkah Hotel are all additions in Quinn Street.

T. Tuttle and Sons building contractors now conducted by W. Tuttle, Jnr., J. Powells engineering works formerly D. McKay's blacksmith shop, J. and L. Drycleaning factory, then C. Granger milk bar and corner store, K. Faynter dairy are on the west side of Meiklejohn Street, C. Heywood panel works in Scott's picture theatre building and the A. I. building are on the east side.

W. B. Hunter transport and hardware business, D. McKellar manager is in Knox Street as also are W. A. Luke, accountant and Ron Tremellan second-hand dealer and pet's supplies.

Petersville, formerly Holdenson and Nielson, has been remodelled and a powdered milk section built, manager

Ron Bray, Geoffrey Pell, garage and machinery agent, Reg Stevenson, engineering works, Clyde Sharp, plumber, Pat Wheeler electrical engineer, Brian Hyde construction works, Les Tu'ly grain merchant are all close to railway line in McDonald Street.

Seiter Brothers joinery works, Picton Hopkins plaster works, Morey's concrete works are all located west of the railway line in Knox and Nelson Streets.

Dr Pitts surgery is in Tocumwal Road, further north is Barry Blewitt's taxi service, Hurren's Motors, garage and machinery shop, Jim Graham's milk bar and store, formerly Jack Morris, Ryan and Bau butcher shop, managed by Alan Lee, the Numurkah Motel and Oswin and Scott's Ampol Service Station.

Local builders are J. Duddley, Eddy and Sanders, Foster and G'adman, G. Green, D. McDonald, A. Pell, W. Poad, and J. Sharpin. Plumbers: D. Doody and A. Mathews. Painter: W. Gunn and T. Heap.

As well as the garages already mentioned we have Sidey's Service Station at the turn into town, and Doug Grennis in Saxton Street.

Fitzpatrick Brothers, I. Gribben, W. Gread, Harbor Brothers and I. Scrivens are local cartage contractors, while W. Green and B. McCormack run

livestock transports. N. Firman is still carrying on the carrying business started by his father. Holmes, Stonehouse and Wannemacher run bus services. Local electricians are Peter Cox, C. Hajok and W. Sealey. Joe Vigar runs a wool store in McDonald Street formerly owned by H. Morey.



OPENING OF SEITER BROS. NEW ANNEXE, at their joinery works, Knox Street, Numurkah.  
A. J. Pumps, Photo.



CONSTRUCTION OF NEW STORE FOR PETERSVILLE, McDONALD ST., NUMURKAH  
A. J. Pumps, Photo.



## Public Organisations

### APEX CLUB OF NUMURKAH

In May, 1957, Shepparton Apex Club began making inquiries into the possibility of establishing an Apex Club at Numurkah.

Progress was slow at first but a provisional club was finally formed and an inaugural dinner was held in November of that year with Mr Alan Keith the inaugural president.

Charter No. 229 was granted the club on August 27, 1958, at a dinner at the Farmers' Arms Hotel and Mr Keith Christie was elected first president of the new club.

President in succeeding years have been John Reed, Vic Chaffey, Barry Ryan, John Thompson, Alan Keith, Brian Heard, Frank Mills, Noel Murdoch, Lou Hamon, John Holmes, Ed Fitzpatrick. Current president is John Hodge.

Over the years, the club has had

a variety of meeting places. These included the Telegraph Hotel, Farmers' Arms Hotel, Shamrock Hotel, not forgetting the memorable meetings held in Lamaro's Cafe where attempts were made to hold a dinner and fine session amid the general run of customers in the cafe. The ideal set-up has proved to be the CWA catering service which the club has returned to on three occasions after other venues had proved unsuitable.

In the field of civic service, the club has fulfilled its obligations and ambitions with outstanding success due entirely to the strong line of president-backed up by a hard-working board and eager club members.

Notable achievements include the foundation of a caravan park beside the Broken Creek in 1959. This was later handed over to Numurkah Shire Council for supervision. The club has also given



START OF APEX TAXITHON, to aid research for retarded children. A. J. Pumpa, Photo

a Porta-Cot to Numurkah Hospital and an air-conditioning unit to Numurkah ambulance.

Other achievements include the formation of a Civilian Widows' Group, construction of tennis courts at the high school, donation of a billiard table to the Senior Citizens Club, two-way radio to Numurkah Fire Brigade, three sets of talking books to the Victorian Institute for the Blind, annual bursary to high school students, \$600 towards the cost of a steam locomotive for Numurkah Historical Society, Numurkah Library building, in 1961.

The club also buys wood for the residents of the Miller Homes at Numurkah. Its donation to the Apex Association Foundation for Research in to Mental Retardation was the second highest in Australia. This money was the result of a trash and treasure auction and a return walk to Shepparton pushing a cart.

It has also established a children's playground near the swimming pool and has undertaken landscaping the area surrounding the old swimming pool site.

In 1965, the club was instrumental in the formation of Nathalia Apex Club which has proved a valuable extension to the association.

In 1966, the club brought its own clubrooms in Saxton Street, near Numurkah Police Station. This is a unique achievement as very few Apex Clubs in the association have their own clubrooms.

Perhaps the best money-spinner for the club over the years has been the waste paper collection conducted in conjunction with Australian Paper Mills.

Thousands of dollars have been raised in this way and together with the projects already mentioned, the numerous donations to charities and the erection of the library, the club is established as a valuable asset to the community as a result of many service hours by its hard-working members.

Members come and go both by transfer in occupation and reaching the retirement age.

But Numurkah Apex Club can be justifiably proud of a job well done during the past 13 years upholding the aims and ideals of the Association of Apex Clubs.

## AMBULANCE SERVICE IN NUMURKAH

In July 1951 the Numurkah Citizens Association called a public meeting to discuss the formation of an Ambulance Service. This meeting was held in the Numurkah Town Hall on Tuesday July 24th at 8 p.m. A foundation committee to be known as the "Numurkah Provisional Committee of Shepparton and District Ambulance Service" was formed and held their first meeting immediately after the public meeting.

Members were J. J. Thornton, president, W. Carnie, secretary, A. C. Miller, L. Hamon, R. W. Elliston, K. McKeown, J. T. Mosbey, W. Gale, C. H. Fulton, M. Dudley, I. Lewis, E. P. Holmes, I. Stringer, V. Hargreaves, G. Cowan and J. D. Galt. Mr Chapman, Superintendent of S. and D.A.S. was also present.

An order was lodged with Coxon and Sons for the supply of a Ford chassis.

Subcommittees were to be formed at Wunghnu, Strathmerton, Nathalia and Katunga for the purpose of fundraising. By the end of 1951 approximately £1,300 had been raised, mainly the result of the vigorous efforts of committee members. A Ladies' Auxiliary was formed in October 1951 to help in the efforts of fundraising.

The first Ambulance officer, Mr McGinley was appointed in April 1952 and a house provided at 5 Biteon Place, Numurkah.

The first Ford Ambulance was delivered on 8.5.1952. Much of the original equipment for the ambulance — stretchers, blankets, oxygen equipment etc. was donated.

After suffering a recession in 1952 the Ladies' Auxiliary was reformed in October 1953 with Mrs M. Wall president, Mrs V. Wannemacher and Mrs G. Sutcliffe vice-presidents, Mrs A. Appleby secretary-treasurer, Misses E. Gunn, D. Gunn and Mesdames W. Poad, J. Brooks (snr), G. Dudley, L. Firman, W. Sanders, J. Hyde, Decker, Chapman, N. Firman, Carnie, McMillan, Gordon and Stanbrook.

The provisional committee after attaining their objective of providing the Numurkah district with a modern ambulance, an ambulance officer and a residence, then handed the responsibility of maintaining this to the Ladies'

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Township of  
**NUMURKAH** *Proclamation, 14th 1875 262 pages*  
*Except two sections under survey 1871 - 1872 82/84 pages*  
**PARISH of KATUNGA** *87 6 pages*

611

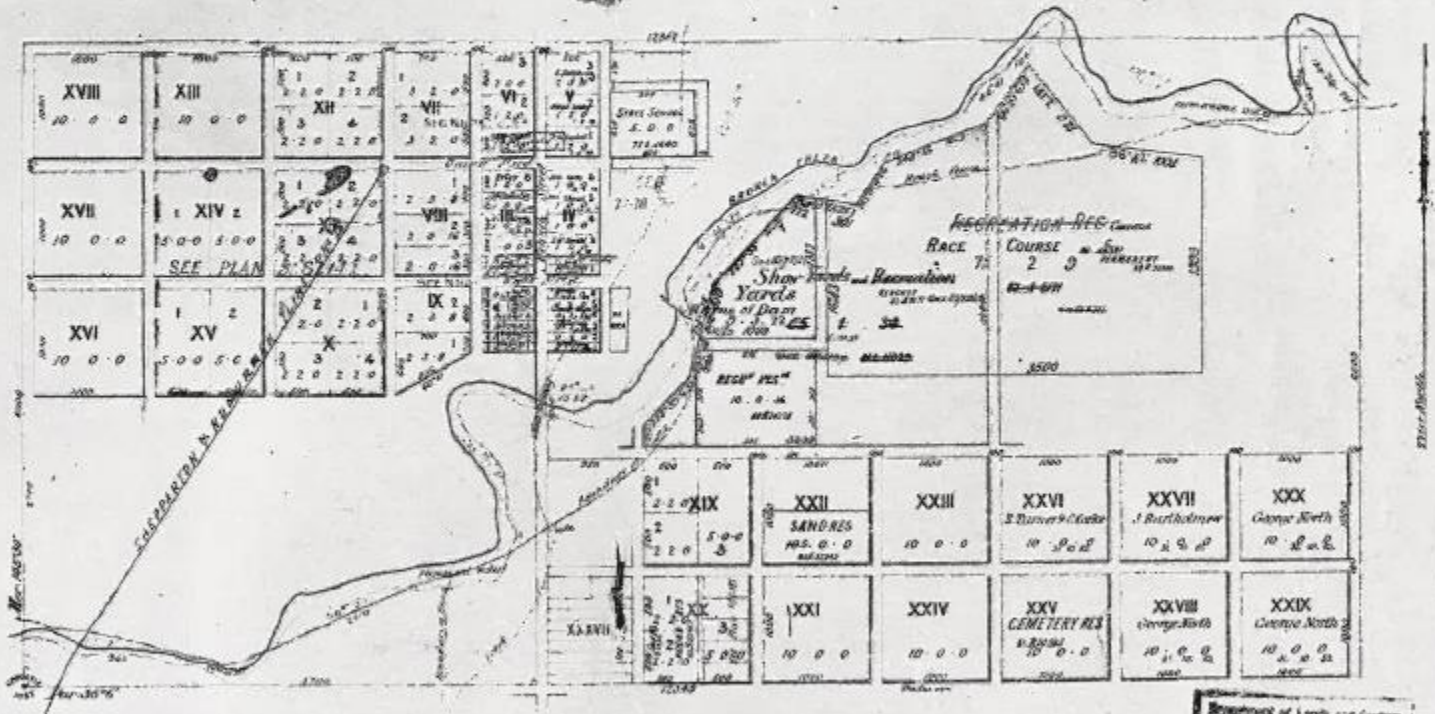
County of Moira

*Proclamation 6/90 page 262*



SURVEYED BY  
*Agnes Leahy*  
 Contract Surveyor  
 18. 6. 75

L. 5088



REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF THE  
 DEPARTMENT OF CROWN LANDS AND  
 SURVEY.

73 Lots containing 255. 2. 76

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Checked and forwarded to the Executive Council of  
 the Government of New South Wales  
 18th Dec 1875  
 Geo. Cullen

Department of Lands and Survey  
 COMPILED BY THE  
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 1875

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Auxiliary and then disbanded.

The Ladies' Auxiliary carried on the task of raising finance, and by 1958 had sufficient to purchase a block of land in Tocumwal Road, for the building of a permanent ambulance station and residence for the station officer.

At the annual meeting, September 1958, Mr W. P. Cox was elected president and several other male committee members appointed and from that time there has always been a mixed committee. On November 1st, 1959 the new ambulance station and residence was opened by Mr G. Moss M.L.A. This was the last major step in the establishment of the service in this area and from now on it was just a matter of maintaining and replacing vehicles and equipment as required.

Mrs Agnes Constable and Mr W. P. (Bing) Cox have both received Honorary Life Governorships for valued service rendered over the years. Mrs Constable held the position of secretary from October 1953 till August 1962. Mr Cox took office as president in September 1958 and is still in the chair at this time, and has also given many hundreds of hours as a relief driver.

Station officers have been Mr L. McGinley, Mr L. Wel's, Mr G. Parker, Mr D. Strawhorn, Mr W. Collicot, and Mr J. McGregor.

#### **A SHORT HISTORY OF THE NUMURKAH HOSPITAL**

In 1945 a Provisional Committee was formed to raise funds to build a 30 bed War Memorial Hospital.

The town was already provided with a fine Memorial erected after World War I, but this Committee felt that a utilitarian Building and service would be most suitable. Also the town was only served by a private hospital, run by Sister Annie Williams, who had provided a service almost single handed during the war. As the town and district was expected to grow, this Committee felt that a 30 bed hospital would be adequate for a considerable number of years. Money was raised by various means, and the planning of the hospital began with Mr W. L. Moss as president and Mr Bill Carter, secretary of this Committee.

The Charities Board, now the Hospitals and Charities Commission, were busy planning Victoria's Hospitals needs. Post War had made irrigation and Soldier Settlement a reality in Numurkah

and District. They considered that a 46 bed hospital with provision for development was in keeping with the expected population increase here. Accordingly plans went ahead. It was decided to erect a nurses' home, prior to the building of the Hospital, which would provide accommodation for work men engaged on the main project.

A Bristol building of aluminium construction was imported and set up on a concrete base on the Eastern part of the area, now called the new hospital site.

This area of land was made available to the Hospital Committee, the corner part was a gift from the Trenchgrove family and the eastern half being obtained from the Holmes family. The generosity of these families is gratefully remembered as our hospital enjoys a fine site in our town.

The programme went ahead, architects produced plans for the main buildings, and tenders were called. The lowest tender £430,000 being eventually recommended.

It should be noted that the local committee's aim to erect a 30 bed hospital had been set aside when the State Hospital planning went ahead, and the ability of the local committee to finance such a project was now out of the question.

In 1955, as a result of a State Election and a change of composition of the Government, the Hospital's Commission was changed under the new Health Minister, Mr Barry.

Doctor John Lindell was appointed Chairman.

The Commission examined the Hospital Building programme in Victoria, and it was decided that any project, not actually under construction, should be held up, pending extensive enquiries as to alternatives.

As a result of this decision a meeting at the Hospital between president J. J. Thornton, and secretary, W. Carnie, of the local committee, and Commissioner Mr McLelland and Chief Architect, Mr Armstrong of the Commission, was held, at which it was stated that the existing plans would not be realised, and that efforts were to be made to use the Bristol building as the Hospital, as it was not a proposition to dismantle or sell it.

A plan was produced converting this building into a Hospital of 9 beds

theatre, nurses' quarters, kitchen block and administrative offices.

In the meantime, the Commission bought "Penzance" from Sister Williams, and the Committee had let this Hospital to tenants to provide a Hospital service. This was not satisfactory, and in 1955 the District Hospital Committee was incorporated in place of the Provisional Committee. The Committee appointed the first Matron, Miss Warr and our first manager, Mr Bill Layther. The hospital operated at "Penzance" until the new building was opened in 1957, by Sir Edward Dunlop; still using the two sites, Mid at Penzance and General at the Memorial site.

This arrangement continued until February 1962 when a further building project was realised, a new wing being built onto the Bristol building. The Penzance hospital was then sold, and at last the whole hospital was on the new site.

Further alterations, small extensions and re-arrangements giving us two more beds, bringing the total to 35, have since been carried out.

In the early years the Hospital, although adequately used with a Daily Average of 20-22 has since increased in tempo to 28-29 patients per day.

This sharp increase has placed a considerable strain on present facilities and the Committee is actively investigating our needs for the next ten years.

Due to close association with the District's Medical Practitioners, the Numurkah Hospital has a high reputation as well as being one of the busiest hospitals of its size in the state.

The Hospital Committee has been greatly assisted through the years by its several auxiliaries, Rotary, Apex and Uncle Bob's Club, and the public on Hospital Sunday, Shire Council, and the Hospitals and Charities Commission.

Present office bearers are: Mr E. R. Booth, president; Mr K. Christie, senior vice-president; Mr A. Wellington, junior vice-president; Mr J. Knight, treasurer; Mr E. Macaulay, secretary-manager, and Miss P. Clarke, matron.

Of the original Provisional Committee formed in 1945, Mrs E. P. Holmes is the only member at present serving on the Committee.

There has been 3 former managers since incorporation. They were, Mr W. Layther, Mr B. Ryan and Mr A. Wallace.

#### NUMURKAH FIRE BRIGADE

Numurkah Fire Brigade was formed on 7th February, 1884, and was named the Numurkah Volunteer Fire Brigade. The following office bearers were appointed, president, Mr Geo North; vice-president, Dr M. U. O'Sullivan and Mr A. W. Day; secretary and treasurer, Mr W. P. Sinclair; captain (pro tem), Mr H. Montgomery; Lieutenant, Mr T. E. Draper and the apparatus officer, Mr E. Brooks.

In all, twenty-three citizens volunteered to become active members. The only uniform was a cap and badge.

As the water for fire-fighting cost ten shillings to half a crown a tankful, the first big fire the brigade attended after its formation proved to be financially embarrassing — the water for the fire cost £10, which was subscribed by the members! However this was later refunded by the townspeople.

The 1885, the first Fire Station was built. It was a building 20 x 14 x 10 feet in height and built at a cost of £16 on a site at the rear of Thresher and Sinclair's store, facing McCaskill Street, not far from the corner of Quinn Street.

In January it was resolved that members attending the coming demonstration at Sandhurst were to be provided with new uniforms. As these were the first uniforms to be issued, it was evident that the townspeople were now supporting the Brigade satisfactorily.

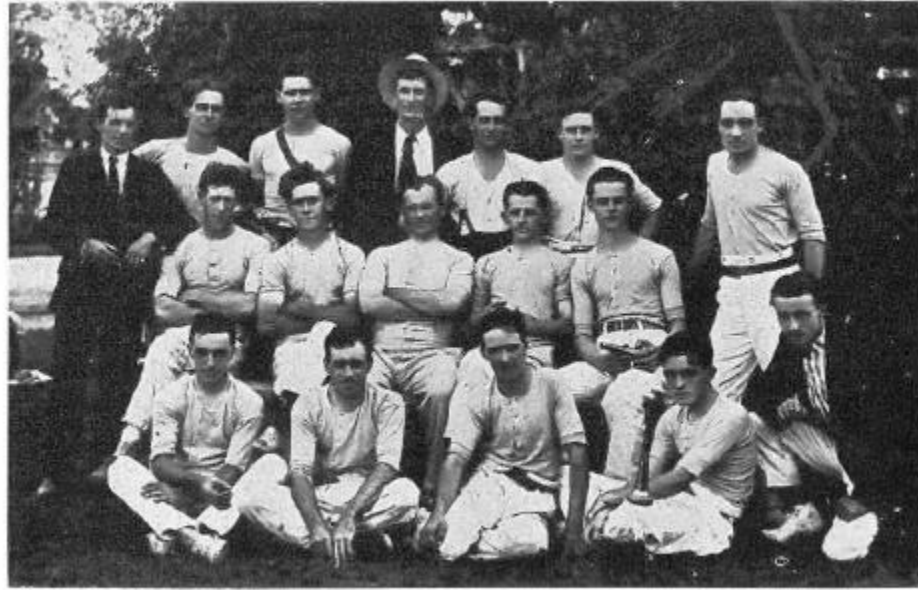
In 1890 the brigade decided to purchase a new reel and the tender of Mr J. Ord at £25 was accepted.

Funds again became low and a canvass of the town realised only £11/14/-. After some discussion about the unsatisfactory state of affairs the Brigade decided to disband and the result of this was that Mr H. J. Glenny called a public meeting when about 60 residents attended. Eventually new trustees and a committee of management were appointed and arrangements made for paying off the debts of the Brigade.

When the committee of management had collected sufficient funds to pay all accounts, fourteen of the former members handed in their names as working members of the new brigade. After the passing of the Fire Brigades Act in 1890, it was decided to hand over all plant to the recently formed Fire Brigades' Board.

The Secretary and Inspecting





NUMURKAH FIRE BRIGADE IN THE 1920's

Officer of the C.F.B. Board visited Numurkah and pronounced the apparatus as being in fair order and the hose reel made by Mr Ord as the best he had seen. He considered the station too small and stated that a larger site should be found.

On December 7th, 1900, the opening of the new fire station at the corner of Quinn Street and Meiklejohn Street was celebrated by a banquet. The Brigade commenced in the twentieth century with a strength of 39 members including Captain E. G. Bennett, Lieutenant P. Swan, foreman George Pollock, apparatus Officer W. Hussey and Secretary Jack Hore.

In the year 1903, Fireman Harold Segrave resigned his position as Life Member and was again elected to active membership and later became Lieutenant and Secretary to the Brigade. Officers elected during the next decade included, Captain Frank Firman, Captain Peter Swan, Lieutenant Alex McPherson (who later became Chief Officer of Victorian Fire Brigades), W. Bayley, Tom Johnson and Frank Bristol.

In 1919 a most successful demon-

stration was held in Numurkah, when most of the Goulburn Valley Brigades attended.

In 1925 the brigade was informed by the C.F.B. that a self-propelled Fire Brigade Engine then being developed would be available to brigades which contributed half the cost estimated at £600. An enthusiastic committee was formed under the leadership of Cr W. Hooper, Messrs A. E. Morris, Geo Bitcon, Jim Tyres, and E. J. Coxon and were so successful that efforts raised nearly £500. In October 1926, the "Dodge" Motor Fire Engine, complete with Gardiner Pump, the first fire engine of its type to come to the Goulburn Valley was delivered to the Numurkah Brigade. It cost the Brigade £320.

During the years 1921-1934 many fine athletes and sportsmen passed through the ranks including Eddie and Hugh Soley; Tom, Fred and Chas Jackson; J. Ahern; Ed Mathews; Jock Paterson; Herman, Ern, Roger and Reg Krutli; Jack Bitcon; Croft McKenzie; Eddie and Bowie Holmes; Jack and Geo Tyres; Wal, Bert, Bruce, Kitch and

Gordon Crozier; W. McKay; Ern Moneghetti; Pat Daly; Jim Lee; Will and Jim Tuttle; J. O'Beirne; Roy Eddy; Ed McKenzie; N. Brownlee; Merv Dudley; Stan Sutcliffe and Horrie Stewart.

In 1930 a new brick station was erected in Quinn Street by local builders Geo. Dudley and W. Tuttle. A grand opening was held to celebrate the occasion which was unique in that the Captain of the Brigade was also the president of the Country Fire Brigades Board that year.

In 1932, the brigade won the five men hose and ladder event at Ballarat demonstration in record time.

In August 1935, Captain Alex McPherson resigned as Captain on account of his appointment as Chief Officer of the Country Fire Brigades Board. It was decided to record his valuable services to the brigade as Captain for 16 years of the 27 years as a member.

Captains since 1940 have been J. Tyres, Herb Williams, Bill Tuttle, Len Pell, Max Baker.

Commencing with 1921 demonstration at Warranambool when discipline contests were resumed the Numurkah Fire Brigade during the next twenty years had a remarkable string of successes which have never been equalled and probably will never be surpassed. In 24 consecutive starts the results were 15 firsts, seven seconds and twice third.

#### AUXILIARY FOR THE BLIND

The Numurkah Auxiliary for the Royal Institute for the Blind was formed in 1952 when Dr and Mrs Parker called a public meeting in the Mechanics Institute. Mrs Parker was the first President, and Miss Anderson the first Secretary.

Mesdames A. Marshall and W. C. Shaw held office for many years as President and Secretary respectively.

The President now holds office for two years. The current office bearers are President, Mrs L. A. Hamon; Secretary, Mrs R. Hilliard; Treasurer Mrs J. Bitcon, the two latter having held office for 12 years and 20 years respectively.

The Auxiliary used to hold a ball every year but for many years have relied on annual collections to raise funds for the Institute.

Two members, Mrs Ethel Coxon and Mrs Bitcon have been members since

the foundation of the Auxiliary and Mrs J. Cowan joined one year later.

#### NUMURKAH RED CROSS

Numurkah Red Cross Auxiliary formed during 1914-18 war, to provide comforts for soldiers, and postwar to provide hospital comforts. The Auxiliary became an official branch of the Red Cross on 7-11-1928, Mrs Corlett being president, and Mrs B. Cohen secretary.

It was agreed to devote all efforts to war comforts at a meeting on 15-9-1939, under office bearers Mrs C. Hilliard, president, Mrs T. Morris, secretary, followed by Miss Baxter, Mrs Stringer, treasurer, followed by Mrs F. Coombs. During this first year members donated 553 articles, sox, knee caps, toilet articles, pyjamas etc and this effort has been carried on with vast quantities of clothing, hospital requisites and food being set to H.Q. for distribution.

In 1940 Mrs Johannsen became president with Miss Baxter, secretary, and Mrs McDermid treasurer, and in the following year Lady Bruche made presentations of long service medals to Mesdames James, J. Coxon, W. A. Campbell, D. Stewart, W. J. Thornton, B. Cohen, C. Hilliard, A. Stringer, C. Stevens and Misses A. Wightman and E. Christie.

On 4-9-1942, a Red Cross Emergency Company was formed with Mrs Johannsen as superintendent, Mrs Poad, secretary, and Mrs Charlesworth, treasurer and this company undertook to train in First Aid and Home Nursing and were available for any emergency — however in 1945 this company merged with the branch to form an emergency group with Mrs Davis as Group Leader.

1945 saw the return of the first of Numurkah's prisoners of war who were welcomed home at branch meetings — namely Messrs T. Saxton, J. Sheehan, and A. Cuthbert followed by C. Moss, R. Cowan, J. Shannon, R. Miller, S. Gainey, C. McPherson, L. Christie, G. Dickie, L. Venables and R. Haynes.

During the next few years, presidents were Mrs Davis followed by Mrs A. Marshall and secretary Mrs B. McMillan and treasurer Mrs Petering.

The branch disbanded in 1950 through lack of support but was re-established in 1953 when Mr K. McKeown was nominated president, Mr J. McGeehan secretary and Mr Bill Carnie treasurer. This decade marked the first visit of the

blood transfusion unit to Numurkah district which service continued annually until the opening of the Regional Blood Bank in Shepparton.

In 1954 Mrs C. Threlfall became President with Miss H. Jones as secretary a position she held until 1964. Later under the leadership of Mrs G. Saxton, two libraries were provided by Red Cross for both Numurkah and Penzance hospitals.

When in 1957 a nucleus of a trained group was formed to train in First Aid and Home Nursing it was led by Mrs Giovanetti, Miss H. Jones, Mrs John Hodge, Mrs Ian Scrivens and Mrs John Scott.

In 1959 a tree was planted in the hospital grounds to commemorate the Centenary of Red Cross.

During the sixties the following women have led the branch as president, Mesdames J. Henderson (snr.), M. Arthur, A. Watters, Potts, who is at present in the chair. Of the later Mrs Henderson and Mrs Potts both received long service medals and Mrs D. Miller 1st bar to long service (30 years) and Mrs J. Coxon and Miss E. Christie 2nd (40 years service).

Others who have received long service medals for 20 years service are Mesdames Berry, Harris, Saxton (snr.), Gray, Harbor, Wilson and Batey. Mrs G. Heffer has been appointed a Red Cross Welfare Officer in 1969.

During 1969, two new ventures worthy of notice are Meals on Wheels, a service started by Shire and staffed by voluntary drivers of Red Cross and the opening of an Opportunity Shop in a building donated by Mr Harold Pridesaux. It is impossible to enumerate the many services rendered or money raised by Red Cross members in Numurkah who, however derive satisfaction in the knowledge of a call for help readily answered both locally and in the international field.

#### THE STORY OF ROTARY IN NUMURKAH

The main object of Rotary is Service. This is achieved through working in the spirit of friendliness which pervades the 14,000 clubs, 650,000 members in 147 countries of the world.

Rotary came to Numurkah in 1957, when the Rotary Club of Shepparton made the preliminary arrangements for a club

of 25 members. The first president was Mr Henry Lea, an engineer with the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission. In succession to Mr Lea were Mr Arthur Hart, Headmaster of the High School; Mr Len Spinks, headmaster of the Primary School; Mr Athol Hodge, grazier, who is having his second term at present; Mr John Morris, chemist; Mr Noel Manley, insurance officer; Mr George Stone, bank manager; Mr Wal Crozier, spray firm; Mr Jim Tuttle, builder; Mr Mervyn Spowart, electrician; Mr Ralph Cohen, municipal valuer.

As part of the extension of Rotary, Numurkah did the spadework for the introduction of a Rotary Club in Nathalia.

The Rotary Club of Numurkah has made some notable contributions to the community life of the town. Working under its principle of investigating a need, reporting on it and instigating and maintaining action until completion. It has had much to do with the establishment of the Ray Denman Memorial Swimming Pool, the Senior Citizens' Club, the Day Room at the Memorial Hospital, the Commission Housing area and other playgrounds and equipment, provision of a K class locomotive as a tourist attraction. It has under consideration at present, possibilities of action on seven projects, one being the establishment of an artificial lake to the east of the town. A survey of the town's industrial potential was recently undertaken by an appropriate authority.

During the past few years Numurkah Rotary Club has made valuable contribution to the cause of international understanding and goodwill. At High School level it has sent many local students to other countries, U.S.A., the Philippines, Rhodesia and Canada and preparations are in hand at present time for interchange of students with Japan. Rotary makes the initial arrangements with its clubs in these and other countries, students live with Rotary families and attend High Schools there. The only expense parents are involved in is the travelling expenses to and from the country.

In turn Numurkah Rotarians were hosts to students from these overseas areas, and we were privileged to meet these five boys and girls in our own town.

Rotary in Numurkah has raised thousands of dollars over the years for purposes associated with its projects. The



main sources of revenue are the collection and sale by its members of scrap iron, buying and selling of calves which are reared by members and supporters of Rotary, a paddy's market style collection and sale and quite recently an outstanding event was an antique show, spread over several days.

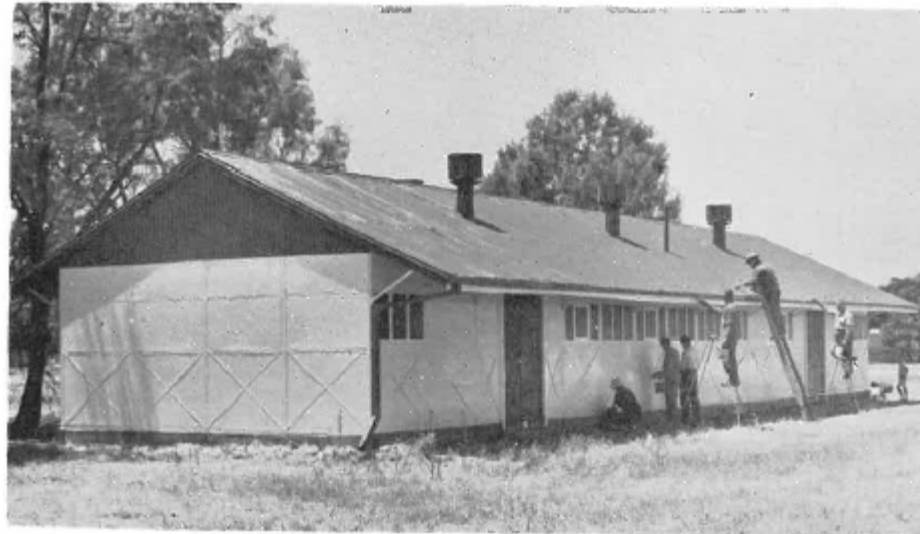
A service club such as Rotary is required to take part (and does so cheerfully and well) in all sorts of community efforts. A list of these would be too unwidely for the purposes of this booklet, suffice to say that it helps with many different "door-knock" activities, collections for Hospital and other appeals. It does not forget its aged and aboriginal friends at the appropriate times, supports its schools and scholars, Scouts, Guides, the Historical Society, the Rose Festival and meets dozens of other similar commitments.

The Lions Club of Numurkah was sponsored by the Lions Club of Shepparton under the direction of Past District Governor, Errol Wallace.

After preliminary talks in May 1969 it was unanimously decided by those present at a public meeting (26-5-1969) to form a Lions Club at Numurkah. It was decided to hold the first dinner meeting on Monday, 9th June, and it was on this day that the Lions Club of Numurkah was officially formed with 15 members. The three office bearers elected were: president, Bill Gerrish; secretary, Laurie Bacon; treasurer, Peter Bau.

Under the guidance of Shepparton Lions, fortnightly dinner meetings were started, the Board elected, and projects commenced.

The first main event in the life of the Club was the Charter Presentation Night held at the Shire Hall, Numurkah, on 13th September, 1969. On this



ROTARIANS PAINTING THE ROOMS OF NUMURKAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

#### LIONS CLUB OF NUMURKAH

The International Association of Lions Clubs has extended over 140 countries or geographical locations on six continents with nearly one million members.

Their motto is "We Serve", and Lions Clubs are non political, non sectarian service organisations.

memorable occasion, about 200 guests saw 201 C District Governor Frank Pullar (also a Shepparton Lion) present the Charter. By this stage there were twenty two (Charter) members.

During the first few months of its existence the Club has carried out practical assistance for girl guides, welfare work for children, has assisted in

public appeals and has assisted in the preservation of the Historical Homestead, Coonanga.

The Club has received requests for assistance from other town organisations and to this end has made efforts to raise money. The most notable achievement here was a successful Boxing Tournament held in December 1969, and which netted over \$450. This has set the Club on the road to rendering effective community service.

The Club has contributed internally to Lions International and decorations designed for its Charter Night were displayed at the Chevron Hotel for the 1969 district convention. The decorations have been on loan to Cohuna Lions Club and they will again be displayed at the 1970 Convention in Bedigo.

Numurkah Lions have had contact with other service organisations and were recently guests of Numurkah Apex Club. This will provide a basis for future co-operation with other organisations.



NUMURKAH LIONS GLAZING WINDOWS AT COONANGA HOMESTEAD,

#### IMPROVEMENT TRUST

An enterprise that could have far-reaching effects for the community of Numurkah was mooted at the annual meeting of the former Citizens' Association (now Chamber of Commerce) in June 1955.

It was at this meeting that a committee was formed to investigate the possibility of tendering for the lease of Numurkah Town Hall with the aim of staging picture shows for town promotion.

A lease then held by Mr J. Scott of Cobram, now deceased, was to expire at the end of the year.

The first committee comprised Mr R. W. Hodge (president), W. P. Cox, (secretary), C. Fulton, A. Hodge, R. Batey, R. Robinson, K. McKeown, the late J. McGeehan, and Mr E. Elliston as treasurer.

Other members elected to the committee at a later date were D. Cumming, G. Heard, G. Morieson, R. Collins, N. Payne, and the late E. Coxon.

The tender submitted for the lease of the town hall by the trust was accepted by Numurkah Shire Council and plans were then commenced to arrange finance to buy the necessary equipment to start screening films early in the new year.

The whole project received its inspiration from a project at Yerrawonga which, through the profits of a similar scheme coupled with Government grants, provided the finance for the development and beautification of the foreshore there.

To finance the Numurkah scheme, debentures were taken out and through several guarantors, the money for financing the scheme was readily available.

The first showing under the banner of the "Civic Cinema", was held on January 6, 1956, when the musical "The Student Prince" was screened to capacity crowds over three nights.

The aims of the trust were somewhat dampened when the previous lessee of the town hall decided to open in opposition. This resulted in the erection of the Melba Theatre in the record time of five weeks so that screening there commenced on New Year's Eve, a week before the Civic Cinema was in operation.

However, both theatres enjoyed satisfactory audiences until the impact of television seriously affected attendances which later led to the Civic

Cinema being offered the rights of the Melba Theatre which the trust took over in 1961 with the result that the Melba Theatre was closed.

Although the setbacks received by the trust were not apparent when the venture was planned, the enterprise has proved fruitful in providing first-class programs and in some cases, has been able to help local organisations financially.

It is interesting to note that in the first year of operations, a sum of \$530 was distributed to local organisations. When the new swimming pool project was launched, the trust gave a donation of \$200 towards the scheme.

During recent months, it has been found necessary to curtail screenings and these have been limited to once a fortnight. This has proved satisfactory with reasonable attendances and present indications are that more funds will become available for distribution to organisations, so long as public support continues and financial commitments can be overtaken.

#### NUMURKAH-NATHALIA LEGACY GROUP

Legacy is an Australia-wide voluntary association of ex-servicemen formed after the 1914-18 war to care for the widows of deceased comrades, and to promote the moral, mental vocational and physical welfare of the children.

Its badge is the Torch, signifying the undying flame of service and sacrifice handed down to us, and the Wreath of Laurel signifying remembrance. The spirit of Legacy is service, and personal effort is the main essential.

In 1949 a Group of ten members was founded at Numurkah after a visit by General Stan Savige. Foundation officers were: C. E. Newman (President) and J. F. Westh (Secretary-Treasurer).

A Group was also formed at Nathalia but this later amalgamated to form the present Numurkah-Nathalia Group, which is responsible for the area Barmah to Katamatite and Katunga to Wunghnu. It has 58 widows and 30 children in its care.

Present membership is: C. M. Stevenson (President), C. M. Moss (Secretary), T. J. Thynne (Treasurer), W. J. Bourke, J. K. Dancocks, F. J. Fulton, L.

D. Jones, A. W. Leaf, W. J. Little, N. L. Low, C. R. McPherson, A. G. Miller, C. E. Newman and A. R. Patching.

#### THE NUMURKAH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Numurkah Chamber of Commerce has played an important part in the development of Numurkah over the last 25 years.

By promoting progressive moves, and continued agitation in support of these moves big projects have finally realised fruition to the betterment of facilities for the town and district.

Way back in 1944 at the closing stages of the last war when thought was already being given to settlement of returning soldiers and also to irrigation in the Murray Valley, the Chamber was very active in its efforts to bring these projects into reality.

Agitation for a new water reticulation in the town were promoted by public meetings promoted by the Chamber. Support for the establishment of a new High School, and also continued support, first for the old swimming pool in the creek, and ultimately the new Olympic Swimming pool were projects to which Chamber lent its support.

The new Numurkah railway station and reduced railway freight charges to the town resulted from efforts promoted by the Chamber.

Festoon lights and bunting, and promotion of Christmas eve matinees, and New Year's Eve celebrations over the years have largely been due to the Chamber's efforts. The appointment of a nightwatchman service in the town was also promoted by the Chamber.

The annual Numurkah Rose Festival has received a lot of support from the Chamber, which recognises the promotional value of these festivities.

The Chamber deputation to the Minister of Education in 1969 in support of local agitation for technical education was successful in that a technical course is now under way at the High School.

In 1945 the name of the Chamber of Commerce was changed to the Numurkah Citizens' Association to enable wider public representation of members and views, and continued under this name until 1956, when a new constitution was drawn up, and the Chamber of Commerce

resumed under its original name.

Many prominent citizens have participated in Chamber affairs and the chairmen over the last 25 years have been: L. A. Hamon, F. A. Guenther, A. C. Venables, C. W. Patterson, C. E. Newman, J. R. O'Brien, R. F. Batey, C. K. McKeown, M. T. Spowart, C. R. McPherson, C. Fulton, J. T. Morris, G. Heard, G. A. Paterson, L. Pell, A. S. Hodge, D. Dickens, G. F. Kenner, K. Sidebottom.

Guthrie, Bill Moss (twice), Chas Newman (twice), Bill Little, Jack Martin, Jock Dancocks, Fred Westh, Les Venables, Sandy McIntosh, Norm McBride, Bob Elliston, Ted Coxon, A. G. Miller, Ray Patching, Max Boase, Frank Harbor, A. G. Pell, Geo Ross, Doug Dickens, Percy Prosser.

Foundation members still with the branch are E. Holmes, Bill Lynch and Bill Moss. In 1919 or thereabouts, the old clubroom was provided by the public as an



ANZAC DAY CEREMONY AT MEMORIAL GARDENS. A. J. Pumpa, Photo.

#### R.S.L.

The Numurkah Sub-branch of the R.S.L. was founded in 1919. The foundation president was Egbert Lee ex 7th Battalion, who still lives in Numurkah, and the foundation secretary was Rupert Lee, his brother. He was followed by Archie McIntyre.

The following have been president of the sub-branch not necessarily in this order — Joe Youlden, Chas Levy, Tom Kent, Eric Dibbs, Frank Webster, Jim Coxon, T. Lumsden, Eddie Holmes, Hugh

assembly and recreation room for soldiers returning from the war. The late Richard Kilpatrick was instrumental in obtaining the building which was the billiardroom of a hotel then being dismantled. This club room was placed on Masonic Lodge ground, the use of which was allowed free of charge by the Lodge.

This became the R.S.L. clubroom and was used as such until 1948 when the M.U.I.O.O.F. hall was purchased. This hall in eminently suitable for use as a clubroom.

The purchase was made possible partly through the generosity and co-operation of the M.U.I.O.O.F. and partly through the generosity of the late Jim Coxon.

The club rooms have been useful to the community in different periods being used as the infant school by the Education Department, a temporary Post Office while the new one was being built and also by the A.N.Z. bank for the same reason. Recently the rooms were extended and a billiard table installed to provide entertainment for the members.

Members of the branch take an active interest in raising funds for Legacy and also assist at their wood gathering working bees.

Bill Little was secretary for 16 years and has been a member for 53 years and is the oldest active member in Victoria.

Life membership badges in recognition of services to the club have been awarded to the late Jim Coxon and Bill Little.

#### C.W.A.

A branch of the C.W.A. was formed in Numurkah in August 1935, by the late Mrs Hicken O.B.E. of Shepparton.

The first president was Mrs J. Campbell and the first secretary Mrs E. Moss, with Mrs L. Hamon taking the position four months later. During the intervening 34 years a new president has been elected each two years. With no limits on the secretary's term, fewer secretaries have held office, until alterations to the constitution now restrict both secretary and treasurer to a five year term. So this year Mrs R. Hilliard who has served as treasurer for 15 years and Mrs Whyte with five years as secretary have both relinquished office. The present president, Mrs S. Cave, has served three different terms as president, as well as holding office as secretary and as treasurer at various times and being catering organiser for many years. This long devoted service to C.W.A. was recognised by fellow members of the organisation by the presentation of a Life Membership. Another member, Mrs Wellington, also holds a Life Membership in recognition of her work for C.W.A. at group and state level.

With a present membership of 49, the branch has an impressive record of

service in community life as well as for C.W.A. objectives. Varied and extensive craft work, as well as music and drama, speakers and demonstrations, socials and birthday bus trips, have catered for the interests of members at every level.

Members share in group activities such as conferences, craft schools, bus trips etc mixing friendship and pleasure with service to others.



C.W.A. HALL, McCASKILL STREET.

For many years the dream of members was to have a C.W.A. hall and towards this aim catering was undertaken and carried out competently and consistently, proving not only a successful financial venture, but filling a real need in the community.

In 1962 we obtained a long lease from the Lands Department of a block of land in McCaskill Street, and in 1964 permission was given for the commencement of the long awaited C.W.A. Hall.

This was opened by C.W.A. State President, Mrs W. Lang, on the 28th April, 1965, practically free of debt, the cost being close to \$10,000. The hall is proving an asset to the Central Murray C.W.A. Group for group functions, group craft days, and executive meetings which are held there. The hall is also filling a need amongst community organisations for regular meetings. As we have now achieved our objective with the completion of our hall, our catering activities are now confined to small functions in our own hall.

A C.W.A. Younger Set was formed in Numurkah in 1938 and continued until

all Younger Sets were disbanded in 1967 when the local members formed an evening branch of C.W.A. known as the Boomerang Way Branch. With a membership of 17 this branch caters for the younger women of the town and district.

Office bearers of Numurkah branch: President, Mrs S. Cave; Secretary, Mrs H. Prentice; Treasurer, Mrs W. Gunn. Boomerang Way Branch: President, Mrs N. McCartin; Secretary, Mrs R. Taylor; Treasurer, Mrs J. Adams.

Moto — Honour to God, Loyalty to the Throne, Service to the country, Through Country Women for Country Women by Country Women.

#### OUR SENIOR CITIZENS CLUB

From the beginning, when a large gathering in the Town Hall was addressed by Mr Brundell White on the 15th December 1961, enthusiasm was shown.

A resolution "that a club be formed in Numurkah" was carried. A committee of volunteers was called for, to assist in the establishment of the club. Many meetings were held and the Council allowed the supper room to be used until such time that a building could be provided.

On the 10th of October 1963 Sir Rohan Delacombe opened the new rooms and the Shire President handed them over to the Senior Citizens Club.

For nearly eight years this club has been warming the hearts of our senior citizens. One finds this is so when becoming a member, if he or she attends meetings and joins in the social gatherings.

The atmosphere in this and kindred clubs has retrieved the companionship and goodwill that we were accustomed to more than half a century ago.

The consistently high attendance at Numurkah Club is evidence of the need for it and members look forward to the first and third Wednesdays each month and also to the cards, billiards and games of carpet bowls which are always available.

The members have visited every club in the northern part of the state and have had return visits from these clubs.

Talented young people in the town and district provide entertainment for their seniors, who much appreciate their efforts. The Visitors' Book notes the

number and areas from which our many visitors come.

At a nominal figure of 25 cents for enrolment the membership reached 177 in one year. The present president is Mr Ted Graham, secretary, Miss Anne Burkitt, and treasurer, Mrs V. Allen.

The first president was Mr Gildea and Mrs R. Firman was the first secretary.



THE GOVERNOR OF VICTORIA, Sir Rohan Delacombe attends the opening of Senior Citizens' Clubrooms.

#### SCOUTING IN NUMURKAH

Scouting history in Numurkah dates from early 1930 when a public meeting was held in the Shire Office to discuss the possibility of forming a group. As the offices of a Scoutmaster were available the meeting was definitely in favour of forming a Group, and Mr J. Martin was elected the first president and Mr A. Stringer, secretary and treasurer. A troop of Scouts and ten Cubs were started and led by Mr Hugh Monaghan assisted by Rev Sharpe. At first the group met in a small tin shed behind the Shire Hall and carried on their activities with the minimum of materials. Owing to the departure of the Scoutmaster later in the



year the troop was taken over by Mr J. C. Draper, the local junior constable and the pack by H. Corlett, assisted by Miss P. Guenther. In 1933 a second pack was formed under the leadership of Miss J. McPherson and Miss T. Blakely. The troop progressed well under J. C. Draper and brought home winning trophies from the first two rallies they attended.

In 1931, a small Anglican church was bought and made servicable and placed near the creek. This hall was used until 1938 when plans were made to build a larger hall which was later opened by Mr Thomas of State Headquarters.

Scouting in Numurkah has made good progress since 1951. From 30 scouts and 30 cubs at that time, we now have seven senior scouts, 47 scouts and 50 cubs. In 1959 a new district was formed consisting of Numurkah, Nathalia, Katunga, Katandra West, and Waaia. Waaia later dropped out and Invergordon was added. This district is known as Yullaba District, and had Mr G. H. Morieson as it's original District Commissioner, a position he filled until November 1969, when he resigned. The new District Commissioner is Mr Neil Derrick of Katunga.



SENIOR SCOUTS, after their investiture as Queen Scouts. A. J. Pampa, Photo.

The 50 cubs divided into three packs are led by Mr C. G. Eastham, who is now a District Commissioner, general duties, assisted by Mrs A. Weston, Mrs Aileen McPherson, Mrs Anne Strong and Mr W. Yarwood.

In 1962 with 44 scouts in the Troop a Senior Scout Troop was formed with Mr Lionel Mitchell as Senior Scout Master, and early in 1963 a second scout troop was formed with Mr Lou Hamon Jr. as Scoutmaster.

Numurkah Scouts have been represented at every Jamboree since 1961, five scouts went to Sydney in 1961, one scout to New Zealand in 1966, five scouts to Queensland in 1967, while at the Melbourne Jamboree in 1964 as well as the scouts, the Camp Commissioner of Cubmasters, the Camp Dentist, and a cook's assistant came from this troop. The scouts of the second troop under the guidance of Scoutmaster Lou Hamon built their own raft, and in January 1963 sailed this vessel down the Murray River from Tocumwal to Echuca.

In 1964 the Senior Troop was taken over by Lou Hamon. In this year the boys made a holiday trip to Tasmania, and also entered our first troop in the Hoadley Hide, had fun and gained experience, in 1968 another troop of seniors from Numurkah entering in the Hoadley Hide were runners up and gained a "B" Pennant. In 1964 four senior scouts won the coveted Queen's Scout Award, the first for Numurkah. These scouts were, Alan Jamieson, Gary McPherson, Ivan Routley, and Terry Brennan were later joined by Alan Dudley, John Gunn, Trevor Paterson, Alan Pridesux, Warren McKeown and Bill Yarwood in 1965, Ross Eastham, John Lease, Edward Patching and Peter Hill in 1968. In 1965 Mike Harrison became Scoutmaster for the Senior Troop, and a Rover Scout Crew was formed, unfortunately this Crew does not exist at the present time.

Scouting's award, the Silver Acorn, was presented to Mrs. Hilda Morieson in 1965. As "Akela" to the Numurkah Cub Pack, Mrs. Morieson held this position since 1930, and when she retired in 1966 a dinner was given her by the Group Council. This function was held at the Scout Hall, and catered for by the ladies' committee.

The Group Committee has over these years kept the Group going finan-

cially. It has organised two visits from the Melbourne Gang Show, one in 1963 and the other in 1968. In 1964 two new rooms were added to the front of the Scout Hall. These rooms were built by voluntary labour, under the skilled direction of Jack Dudley. At present a new Den for the Senior Scouts is being built, tenders being let in September 1969. The present office bearers are: President, Mr. W. Ingram; Secretary, Mr. Eric Kinsey; Treasurer, Mr. C. Kilgour; Social Secretary, Mrs. E. Jamieson.

The present Group Scout Master is Jack Jamieson, who has held this position since 1963. His immediate predecessors were Merv. Dudley, the late Ossie McPherson, G. H. Morieson, and K. Aitken. Present Scout Masters are S. F. Hill, N. Strong, W. Bloomfield, with J. Jamieson acting as Senior Scout Master. Past Cub Masters and assistants were Hilda Morieson, Jeanette Charter, Kathie Charter, Tony Holland, Bill Price, Cliff Kidd, Anne Gardiner, Judith Simmons and Vicki Harrison.

Past Scout Masters include K. Aitken, B. Smythe, H. Holmes, Mr Whitford, the late Tom Lee.

Past Presidents of the Group Committee: 1960, F. (or W.) Chivers; 1961 & 1962, J. Warburton, R. Patching; 1963 & 1964, K. McKeown; 1965 - 1968, W. Ingram 1968 & 1969.

Past Secretaries: Ian McLaren, Phyl Brennan, Mr Naughton.

Social Secretary since 1961: Eve Jamieson.

Past Treasurers: Peter O'Dwyer, Kelvin Dickinson, Don Pollard, Peter Chitty.

Past Transport Officers: Jim Warburton, Gordon Gillespie, Kel Sidebottom.

#### GIRL GUIDING IN NUMURKAH

In 1933, Numurkah was part of a large Division, of which Mrs L. Lansell of Bendigo was Commissioner. With help and encouragement of local people, Brownie and Guide Units were formed; also a local Association of which Mrs A. Marshall was president.

Some of the early leaders known were, Misses B. Glasson, A. Hawker, M. Powell, R. Stringer, M. Owen, E. Hyde, M. Armstrong, N. Levings, B. Edmonds, and Mrs Campbell.

Some of the early Guides were, Karen Marshall, Gladys Tweddle, Marj Bitcon, Marj Stringer, Madge Cleary,

Norma Levings (later captain) Eileen Hyde (later lieutenant), Joyce Trott, Win Hyde, Val McBride and Betty Moss.

1st Numurkah progressed until May 1945, when it was necessary to be in recess for three years.

In 1948, Numurkah commenced again under leadership of Mrs N. Aitken, nee Levings, and has continued until the present day. Brownies were active in the 30's but were in recess for many years. 1st Numurkah Pack was recommenced in 1952 with Val Fussel as Brown Owl, assisted by W. McLaren and was continued until the present day.

Rangers were first in evidence in 1952, and worked as a Ranger Patrol. In 1954, a company was formed, but was closed when Mrs Yarwood the captain, became leader of Guides due to Mrs Aitken leaving the district.

As the town grew so did the enthusiasm of the girls. With a long waiting list, a 2nd Pack was commenced under the leadership of Mrs M. White and later Mrs R. Robinson, who is now present leader. A 2nd Guide Company was started by Miss Margaret McNamara, in 1958, and has continued with present leaders Mrs F. Hill and Mrs McKeown.

Perhaps a reason for the continued enthusiasm has been the appointments of our District Commissioners namely Mesdames Mal Galt, C. Threlfall, S. Wood, R. Robinson, and L. Pell. Divisional Commissioners have been Mesdames J. Browning, F. Chivers and R. Hodge.

The main highlight has been the purchase of the hall. Inspired by Mrs L. Lansell and with the leadership of Mrs F. McNamara as president of L.A., a hard working and fund raising committee, paid for the purchase, transport and erection of an Army Hut to give us our own home in 1948. This hut was brought from Deniliquin at a cost of £100.

Numurkah Brownies, Guides and Rangers, have always been keen on outdoor activities, and have had many opportunities for Pack Holidays, camps and interstate trips. Many camping qualifications have been achieved.

There have been three Queen's Guides: Judith Simmons (now Mrs Grennes), Margaret Yarwood and Diane Douglas. Margaret Yarwood also represented her country at an International Function at "Our Chalet" in

Switzerland, 1969.

During the latter years we have been grateful to the Shire, Apex, Rotary, Mr W. Tuttle for work done to the Guide Hall. We now have a comfortable home with many modern amenities.

#### NUMURKAH YOUTH CLUB

A public meeting was called on 12th of October, 1956, for the purpose of discussing the possibility of forming a Police and Citizens' Youth Club in Numurkah. The decision of the meeting was that a club should be formed and officers and committee were elected, Mr A. Naismith being elected President.

At first the High School was used for activities, the gym being ideal for physical training which was under the supervision of the late Ray Denman and Mrs Betty Denman who were leaders of boys and girls respectively.

A Ladies' Auxiliary was formed in 1957 to help to raise funds for a building and this was started in April 1961 and finished in June 1962. This was the result of an admirable effort on the part of local citizens, 85 of whom had a part in the construction of the hall, the main part of which measured 75 feet by 45 feet. Approximately 2000-2500 hours of voluntary labor of local tradesmen and others were used in the building which cost \$8000 and is free of debt. The committee was grateful for help from the Shire Council, Apex and Rotary, and the constant support of the Ladies' Auxiliary under the Presidency of Mrs M. Wadeson.

It has been decided in collaboration with Police Public Relations to rename the club, Numurkah Community Youth Club.

Various activities that have proved popular are, for boys, badminton, cricket, basketball, judo, boxing and athletics, and for girls, marching and hockey.

Some past presidents are A. Naismith, W. Gayfer, K. Edwards, K. Wadeson and T. Backstrom who is at present in office, and secretaries have been D. Dickens, K. Wadeson and C. Firman.

Some leaders have been Pat Wheeler (Boys' Club), C. Granger (Boxing), A. Aldridge (Athletics), S. Knee (Marching Girls), Mrs E. Booth (Girls). Leaders who have come forward recently are Roy Maskell and Laurie Kennedy who are working with the boys.

#### MASONIC LODGE

Freemasonry in Numurkah 1885-1970

From a humble beginning in 1885 of one lodge of fourteen members, Freemasonry has progressed to the point that in 1970 there are now two Craft lodges with over 200 members.

Our ancient brethren named the first lodge "Rupertswood" and held their meetings in the Mechanics Institute on March 27th, 1885. The first Worshipful Master was Worshipful Brother George North, the first Senior Warden Brother C. Chamberlin, and the first Junior Warden Brother W. P. Sinclair. Also among the foundation members were Bros C. Gifford, J. C. Trengrove, Cuthbert Corke, and Thomas Kilpatrick.

Meetings were held in the Mechanics Institute until 1890 when the first Masonic Temple was built. Additions to this building were made in 1913 and 1927 and it is still in use at the present time but will be replaced with a larger and more modern Temple in 1970.

The present Worshipful Master is Worshipful Brother W. P. Burston.

A second craft lodge was formed in 1956 called the Numurkah Lodge. The first Worshipful Master was Worshipful Brother John Henderson, the first Senior Warden, Worshipful Brother R. W. Hodge, and the first Junior Warden, Brother T. O. Enn's. The present Worshipful Master is Worshipful Brother R. F. Helmore.

A lodge of Mark Master Masons was formed in 1921. The foundation officers of this lodge were Worshipful Brother W. J. Teare, Worshipful Brother C. Corlett, and Worshipful Brother J. F. Bedwell. Also among the foundation members was Worshipful Brother A. McPherson, the father of the present Senior Warden, Brother C. A. McPherson. The present Worshipful Master is Worshipful Brother J. S. C. Henderson.

A Chapter Lodge was formed in Numurkah in 1961. The first Principal officers were Companions D. Guthrie, A. L. Girdler, and J. Crane of Nathalia. Also among foundation officers were Companions L. A. Hamon, A. C. Miller, F. E. Amor and J. S. Ellet.

A study of this history of Freemasonry in Numurkah shows that its members have left their mark on the progress of Numurkah and District.

#### NUMURKAH AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY

Records show that the first exhibition of the Numurkah Agricultural Society took place on October 22, 1882. The first show was fairly well patronised exhibitors being drawn from Melbourne and other centres.

In the following year J. Williams had a display of 43 reapers and binders which had been sold to district farmers and the display caused some interest in Melbourne press. This exhibit was eclipsed next year by Thomas Kilpatrick which led the committee to limit the number of future displays to 12.

In 1885, Samuel Trethowan, vice president, offered a prize of £25 for the best managed farm in the district (won by Mr J. Thornton) and this was developed into a regular competition thus helping to raise standards of farming and fruit-growing. Some of the winners of these competitions were entered for statewide ones and acquitted themselves favourably.

Numurkah district earned for itself a reputation as the home of draught horse studs and some local stock won prizes at the royal show and the offspring of these

champions brought high prices.

On three occasions the show has been opened by the Governor of Victoria, Lord Hopetown, Sir John Fuller and Lord Huntingfield. In 1930 a pair of gates was presented to the Society by Frank, Thomas and James Thornton in memory of their father Thomas Thornton who had always been an interested member of the Society.

With the changing face of farming, there have been some changes in the form of the show but some basic exhibits remain unchanged. With the changing of farming from dry to irrigated land, the emphasis is on dairying and the entry of dairy cows has become a special feature with large entries in different sections. The dog section has also become important with entries coming from all parts of the state.

And not least important is the advent of the pony clubs which has brought the horse back to the fore and the hunting and riding events are increasing each year.

Improvements to the showgrounds are the new sheep pavillion and the general exhibit pavillion near the entrance gate.



NUMURKAH SHOW, on the occasion of the visit of the Governor of Victoria, Sir J. Fuller.

### CAMERA CLUB

With the formation of Numurkah Camera Club in October 1961, a definite and progressive step in furthering the aims of amateur photography was taken in this district.

For those associated with the club, the camera has been as the paintbrush, the violin or piano has been to others.

As is true to the nature of the arts, the club has achieved success due to the ready help given freely and unselfishly by well-known photographers in this region and throughout Australia.

Members have followed the trends of modern photography, advancing to higher standards through constantly changing patterns year to year.

To keep abreast with these changes, the club is affiliated with the Victorian Association of Photographic Societies and with the equally important North Eastern and Goulburn Valley Association of Camera Clubs.

Through this association, the club selects six slides in both B and C grade four times a year for competition at a gathering of associated clubs. Guest speakers and judges attend these meetings to give constructive comments.

Competing in C grade, club exhibitors were upgraded to B grade after winning the C Grade cup three times in one year. These exhibitors then went on to win the B grade cup.

Several members have gained "best slide" awards in both B and C grades as well as gaining acceptance in outside competitions.

A few members belong to the Australian Photographic Society and by these members attending conferences, interest in the club is constantly being refreshed.

Inaugural members of the club were; president, Henry Lee; secretary, Beryl Ingram; treasurer, Gwen Graham. Mr Lee remained president for two years, followed by Mr Les Johnson and Wal Stebbing, who each held the post for 12 months. Mr Frank Yarwood was then three years followed by current president Mr Tom Fielder.

Miss Ingram was secretary for six years assisted by Elizabeth Adams and Ruby Spowart. Elizabeth Adams was elected secretary in 1968 and currently holds the post.

### NUMURKAH AND DISTRICT GARDEN CLUB

Numurkah and District Garden Club began under a different title 14 years ago when the constitution was drawn up in a book form for Numurkah and District Horticultural Society. The first president was Dr Threlfall and secretary was Mrs Martin.

The small club of enthusiasts were responsible for the planting of many attractive avenues of trees in Numurkah greatly enhancing the look of the town.

The introduction of garden competitions has fostered even greater interest in home gardens and residential areas show the evidence of a keenness brought about by these competitions.

The first of these competitions was held in 1968 and Mr and Mrs L. A. Hamon of Thornton Street hold the honor of being the first winners, of this annual competition which was to become a main factor in overall attractive appearance of residential areas.

In 1961, the club changed its name to the present title in accordance with general Victorian horticultural doctrine.

Annual rose pruning demonstrations were also introduced by the club and these are carried out at Numurkah War Memorial Hospital.

As well as providing an excellent venue for these demonstrations, the hospital's rose bushes are pruned at the same time. Two annual flower shows are held, one usually at Easter and the other about November.

Proceeds from street stalls and annual subscriptions are the only means the club has of raising finance but the public is usually most helpful, and today the club is financially sound.

Only three presidents have officiated since the inception of the club, Dr Threlfall served only one year but Mr Hamon was president for 10 years while present head, Mr L. J. Gould, has been in the chair for two years.

Despite the club's small membership, much has been achieved over the years and its activities will continue to place Numurkah high on the list of garden-conscious areas of the State.

The club provides many first class judges of flowers and floral art and neighboring garden clubs favor their services. Local rose growers have attained State wide recognition by winning most of the

major prizes for country exhibitors at the annual Melbourne Shows. The club can be congratulated for fostering these ventures.

One of the most important shows is held during the Numurkah Rose Festival when the club assists the festival committee in organising a first class show.

Progress continues within the club and a busy schedule provides keen interest for garden lovers.

#### NUMURKAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Australian towns seem to have lacked a sense of pride in their history until the last decade. Since then local societies have flourished, their aim being to preserve articles of interest and to record memories of the past before memories faded and objects were destroyed or lost.

On 4th August the Shire President (Cr F. W. R. Johnson) convened a meeting at which the Numurkah Historical Society was formed.

First officebearers were: President Mr C. E. Newman; Secretary, Mr Harold Gray; Director; Mrs G. H. Morieson.

The Society immediately started to receive gifts, such as Matthew Crawford's story of life and a copy of the 1850 survey of the Murray River and Broken Creek by Surveyor Barnett.

The public responded generously and the Clubroom established by the Shire Council now contains an interesting collection of old books, photographs, postcards, clothing and other items of household, business and farm use.

Larger items such as farm implements and vehicles have been collected. The Camera Club organised a competition which provided photographs of historical relics throughout the district.

Extracts from early Numurkah Standards have been published in the Leader. Displays and Exhibitions have been organised.

With the aid of a government grant, a log cabin is to be erected in Melville Street, also a shed to display machinery.

With gifts from Rotary and Apex the Club has brought K 181, one of the few remaining steam railway engines for display near the log cabin.

The biggest current venture of the Society is the restoration of

Coonanga Homestead. The owner Mr H. J. Lang proposes to give this old house to the Society if public interest ensures its restoration and preservation.

The Society is making tape recordings of pioneers' reminiscences and has marked with bronze plaques the sites of the earliest buildings in Numurkah.

Present officebearers are: President, Mrs G. H. Morieson; Secretary, Mr C. Watters.

Visitors to the Back-To are invited to inspect the display in the Club Room.



TAKEN DURING THE FIRST COLLECTION OF VEHICLES FOR NUMURKAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY. RACV



## Irrigation and Soldier Settlement

Announcing the completion of the Murray Valley Irrigation System in 1956, the Premier of Victoria, Mr Henry Bolte (later to become Sir Henry), described the district as one of Victoria's most ambitious water supply projects.

It had involved the construction of 645 miles of channel with more than 5,000 structures and over nine million cubic yards of earthwork. At the same time, 440 dairy farms and 109 orchards had been developed for soldier settlement.

Because of its central position, Numurkah had been the headquarters for most of the work which had transformed the country in 21 years. Its early history had been a different story.

The first squatters had soon learnt that their property, and even their existence, depended on the conservation and economic use of water. They dammed the north-flowing streams and turned the water down depressions and floodways to reach the dryland. On some runs, irrigated gardens and pastures were developed and summer pastures watered by flooding.

There was one of these early dams just above where the footbridge is now sited at Numurkah. This was shown on the town plan dated 1875 and its ruins are shown at that point.

In later years, a town dam was built there.

From these beginnings, fore-sighted men began to investigate and plan large scale development with channels stretching across northern plains. But their knowledge and resources were not yet sufficient to carry these out.

There had been a succession of good seasons and prospects were favorable when the first land sales were held at Shepparton about 1875. Then the newcomers had to contend with the great drought from 1877 to 1881 which caused widespread and devastating losses. The merits of irrigation were again canvassed here as elsewhere and the Government of the day appointed an engineer and a surveyor to report on the water supply and irrigation of the northern plain.

Their investigations resulted in the passing of the Water Conservation Act of 1881. This Act laid down the conditions for the formation of waterworks trusts, allowing councils to draw up proposals for construction and finance and to elect commissioners to form these trusts.

Later Acts in 1883 and 1886 widened the powers of trusts and allowed them to sponsor irrigation trusts where a strong majority of landholders favored them.

At a dinner held at Numurkah in 1881 to celebrate the opening of the railway, the first local champion of irrigation



EIGHT HORSE TEAM, working on irrigation channel, north-east of Numurkah.

had already appeared.

He was George Reynoldson, a young Strathmerton farmer who spoke strongly on the subject. He was elected to the local council and trust in 1883 and for many years, continued to work and speak for water supply.

Before he died in 1947, his selection was being sub-divided for irrigation farms.

The Shire of Shepparton, which then included Numurkah and Nathalia, set up one of the first Waterworks Trusts. By late 1882, this Trust had adopted a recommendation from the Government report and planned to build weirs on the Broken River, at Goorambat and Currewa to turn water down the Broken and Pine Lodge Creeks to the country between Shepparton and Numurkah-Nathalia. Low weirs were to be built on these creeks to maintain summer flow and channels would run from these weirs.

Although the Numurkah and Shepparton Shires were severed in 1884, the Shepparton Waterworks Trust, now including only Numurkah councillors, continued to control the whole area until 1892, persevering with the scheme meeting first at Wunghnu Courthouse and later at Numurkah.

Pine Lodge Weir was built in 1884, Casey's Weir on the Broken River in 1886 and Katandra Weir in 1887-88. The successful tender price was £384 (\$768).

The Broken Creek system was successful but the site of the Pine Lodge Weir had been chosen by the Water Supply Department against the advice of the trust and the first flood rendered it useless. The "Numurkah Standard" spoke scathingly of the Pine Lodge Weir and used most intemperate language about the Department's chief engineer.

Later, a pump was set up on the site and another on the Goulburn near Tallygaroopna, but only a trickle of water reached Wunghnu.

The remains of the Broken Creek works may be seen in the old weirs in the Tungamah area and the Katandra Weir which still diverts water to the Baala, or northern arm of the creek.

There is also the remains of an earth bank where the town weir had been and another at Murphy's Weir at the junction of the two creeks in Mundoona.

This development by the trust was typical of the Victorian scene in the

eighties. Alfred Deakin had visited the West Coast of America in 1884 and on his return, published a report: "Irrigation in Western America", which led to the 1886 Act.

In 1885, the Chaffey Brothers came over from California to investigate Australian opportunities. Although they finally established themselves at Mildura, they first made an inspection of several other areas along the Murray Valley.

George Reynoldson brought them to Numurkah and showed them over the Strathmerton-Yielima area. They were very impressed with the land and location of Numurkah but considered the dews would interfere with the drying of fruit.

This was a great opportunity lost as the brothers had to overcome the same difficulty later at Mildura.

The same year, George Graham of Wunghnu, the local Member of Parliament sat on a Royal Commission which recommended State ownership of all sources of water supply. (Mr Graham was MP from 1883 until 1914 and Minister of Water Supply 1890-93 and 1909-13). The findings of the commission provided a blueprint for irrigation development until the present day.

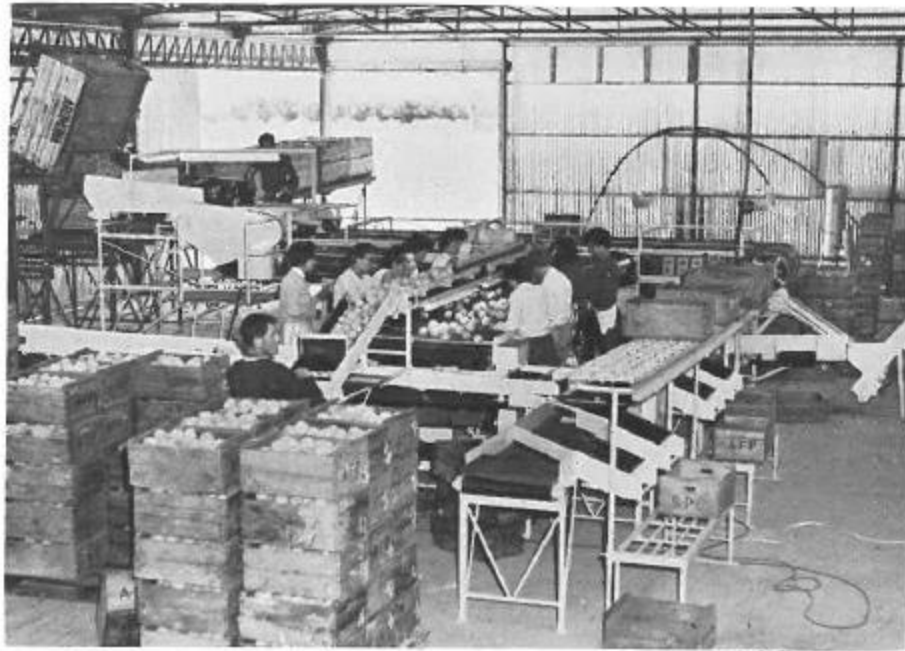
Local interest at the time was a continuous series of reports and articles on viticulture and other aspects of irrigation in the local newspaper.

In 1888, an advertisement offered 20 ten-acre blocks facing the township of Numurkah and there were many other advertisements featuring irrigation potential.

A. Deakin, E. C. de Garis (a founder of the Tragowel Plains Trust) and other notable advocates of irrigation, made visits and gave lectures in local halls to crowded audiences. In 1890, a local Fruit and Vinegrowers' Association was formed sponsored by George Graham.

The Waterworks Trust, with George Reynoldson one of its most active members, initiated two petitions to appoint and create irrigation trusts north and south of the Broken Creek. The northern scheme for the Koonoomoo Irrigation and Water Supply Trust was much the larger. This petition was presented with a wealth of information about the district, its area, population, and potential.

It outlined works to cost £203,511 (\$407,022) and to serve more than 235,000 acres between Koonoomoo and



FRUIT GRADER AT INVERGORDON

Picola. From a pumping plant near Koonoomoo township, a main channel would conduct water 23½ miles to Numurkah with three distributory channels running westward — a total of 75 miles of channel.

Unfortunately, there were still many conservatives who thought irrigation "Chinamen's work"; below the white-man's dignity, and spoke of 'young men making swamps to grow weeds.

Neither scheme received enough votes at a referendum and both lapsed. However, some of these "young men" were successfully watering farms, orchards, and gardens from creeks and wells.

Pottenger's farm, a mile south of Wunghnu, had 13 acres of vines in 1885 and by 1887, Mr Rendell had irrigated lucerne at his "Longfield" farm as well as five acres of Hermitage grapes from which he made wine, using at first a corn crusher and a cheese press.

At the first Numurkah Autumn Show in 1889, and in succeeding Numurkah and Nathalia Shows, there were classes for locally made colonial red and

white wines (no French names in those days) which appeared to be well-supported. The most widely known of the local exhibitors was S. G. Thompson and Co.'s orchard and vineyard about three miles east of Numurkah on the Baala Creek, "near Millers". It became a show piece and in 1889 won second prize of £30 (\$60) in a Government competition for the best irrigated orchard garden or vineyard in the State. Next year, Thompson's dried raisins carried off first prize at the Mildura Show.

By the middle nineties, the boom had burst; many enthusiasts, including N. H. McKay, onetime owner of the "Numurkah Standard", had gone to Mildura and the failure of the Koonoomoo scheme was followed by the onset of phylloxera plague which practically wiped out northern vineyards.

The great depression of 1893 finished the job and most of the trusts were in a hopeless position. It was now realised that large storages and organisations would be needed and in 1905, the State Rivers and Water Supply Com-

mission was formed to take over the load.

For the next 30 years, there was little change in the Numurkah area apart from private schemes along the Ulupna Creek. Crowley brothers had a pump on the creek in the nineties but this had fallen foul of Government regulations.

In 1907, three 15-inch pumps with steam engines were installed on the creek by Ross-Soden, Laidlaws and the Bouchier brothers respectively, and a total of 12 miles of channel was constructed.

Laidlaws' installation has been dismantled but the other two are still in use.

The River Murray Agreement between States and Commonwealth signed in 1915 made large storages and irrigation projects along the Murray possible. A band of local enthusiasts continued to speak in favor of the schemes. Prominent among these were Ernest Breusing of Waaiia strongly supported by F. G. Moss, J. T. Christie and John Bedwell of Baulkamaugh, Thomas Thornton and his son Frank of Waaiia and other stalwarts.

Ernest Breusing had attended a notable irrigation convention at Wodonga in 1900 and much later, at a Strathmer-ton meeting, Sir Reginald East, then chairman of the Water Commission, described him as the "greatest damn nuisance it had been his infinite pleasure to have met. The writer became acquainted with him in his old age when locating channel lines through Waaiia. He was still full of enthusiasm then, which was just after World War Two. He died not long after.

Larger scale development began in the early thirties with the Water Commission investigations for the design and construction of a diversion weir at Yarrowonga and a system of supply channels for the area between the lower Broken Creek and the Murray River.

By 1935, construction had commenced; the Murray Valley Irrigation District was proclaimed in October, 1938 and the first water turned down the Yarrowonga main channel on October 3, 1939. (The title of the district has since been changed to the Murray Valley Irrigation area of the Goulburn-Murray District).

With the outbreak of war, the work slowed down and when the works closed in 1942, the water had hardly reached the eastern portion of Strathmer-ton and Katunga.

The break lasted until 1944 and in March that year, the Survey and Designs Offices were moved from Cobram to a rented house in Quinn Street, Numurkah. The construction office followed later in the same year but expansion soon made the Quinn Street premises too small.

The commission then acquired the house and grounds at 9 Tocumwal Road in 1945 and these still house the survey office of the commission's Northern Zone.

By the end of 1946, a large camp to accommodate more than 300 men had been set up at the northern end of Numurkah and the first departmental residences bought in the town for commission staff. At that time, there were about 200 men and 180 horses employed on the works and the staff included such well-remembered figures as Jack Brewer, Works Superintendent, and Fred Swannell, Works Accountant.

The original intention of the commission was to supply an acre-foot of water for every four acres of land, enabling landholders to increase sheep and cattle production and provide some security in dry years.

But when the establishment of a soldier settlement for intensive culture was proposed at the end of the War, 60,000 acres in the Murray Valley District were selected by the new Soldier Settlement Commission on the Water Commission's recommendation.

In 1946, the Soldier Settlement Commission acquired this land from the original owners. Development for intensive culture entailed more channels and more water to supply small farms and orchards with a minimum allocation of 1 1/2 ac. for each irrigable acre.

In addition, the Water Commission was asked to develop the land. This included survey and subdivision into suitably sized holding, clearing, ploughing and grading of blocks, construction of internal supply channels and structures, sowing down pastures and planting fruit trees on the holdings.

This increase in the overall program meant that, whereas in 1945 there had been talk of five year's work, the camp lasted for 20 years, and construction is only now being completed.

During 1946-47, the whole area was surveyed to provide over 600 plans with contours at three-inch intervals from which the layout of the channel system and the subdivision into farms were

designed by the commission.

In the meantime, the construction branch pushed forward the channel system outside the settlement area towards Nathalia and Picola.

The Murray Valley Construction Works was the last of the great earth-works projects employing large numbers of horses.

When Number 6 main channel was built across the depression north-east of Numurkah in 1946, more than 100 heavy horses were used to pull scoops and the

one whose name was recorded in the old books.

Contractors were paid a fixed price per yard excavated with sliding allowance when the price of hay rose above normal limits. Commission officers scoured the country for feed during droughts.

Contractors were reluctant to see the horses go and swore their hooves were necessary to consolidate the banks. They proved in error when the channels on Rockliff's Road had to be shifted back and



OVER 100 HORSES WERE USED IN CONSTRUCTION OF MAIN CHANNEL IN IRRIGATION WORKS FOR SOLDIER SETTLEMENT NEAR NUMURKAH.

three small 5-7 yard power scrapers introduced to the works at this time were regarded as an innovation worth chomicing.

Many well-known names were represented among contractors who camped along the channels with their horse teams. Some came from the Goulburn Valley Works, some went on to Gippsland when the horses were finished here, others brought scrapers and dozers and carried on.

Baldi Brothers, Mackay and Tyres, Murdoch, Hinchcliffe were among the regulars but local farmers sought contracts in lean years. George Moss was

the ripping showed loose earth under the crust.

The old RAAF hospital at Tocumwal was acquired for the settlement camp early in 1947 but a couple of years later a nursery for soft-fruit trees was begun opposite the Katunga South State School and the headquarters moved to Numurkah.

The supervisor for field operations was Cliff Wolfe who had wide experience in engineering and allied works in three States. Cliff is at present writing his autobiography and has promised to tell of the problems "not usually referred to". He left his position in 1951 when the



commission brought all its work to Numurkah and a senior engineer, J. W. Moore, took charge. Johnnie Moore was later a chief divisional engineer for the commission.

He was succeeded by Henry Lee who had been his second and who carried on until well into the sixties when the major part of the work had been done and the pace was beginning to slow down.

In 1953, the Soldier Settlement Commission aquired another 5,000 acres in Ulupna Parish, an area which was developed with the original subdivision. By 1956, the channels were completed and the last settlers were moving onto these blocks.

It has been said that success in irrigation depends above all on getting the excess water off the land. The Government and the commission had deferred drainage works to concentrate on developing the land and settling the ex-servicemen.

This paid off at first but a series of wet years between 1951 and 1956 caused much flooding. A drainage advisory council formed by the settlers pressed hard for rapid action and with the channel program completed, the men and machines were concentrated on construction of a comprehensive system of drainage channels. These have cost more than \$6 million to date and the work is so close to completion that Numurkah construction works was finally closed down after 24 years in the town.

Although the district is now well established, there is still change and progress. Irrigation direct from the creeks is increasing and the creeks and channels will require constant maintenance and eventually remodelling.

Between 1965 and 1967 the bed of the Broken and Nine Mile Creeks were lowered up to six feet by a "suction cutter dredge" which chopped off the clay, sucked it up and pumped it out on the bank.

As intensive watering has raised the water table, it has been necessary to carry out groundwater investigations and on some properties, water has been pumped out and used again.

Evidence of the change brought by the water is seen in a calculation by G. V. Lawrence in the "Riverlander" in 1954. He estimated that when one dry farm of 836 acres was converted to six dairy farms and four orchards, production

value increased sevenfold.

Including those areas retained by their owners, there were 600 farms and orchards in the settlement area — nearly half the number in Numurkah Shire — as well as the mixed farms with the lower water right of one acre foot for three acres.

It is a far cry from Thompson's 13 acres of oranges, grapes and vegetables, but they, with George Robinson, Ernie Brensing and their supporters, started us on the road.

#### SOLDIER SETTLEMENT

The Murray Valley Soldier Settlement Area was set up at a time of change and severe shortages. The commission's staff and the settlers were starting off from scratch and there were mistakes and hardships.

But the job of building up a community of 550 farmers — almost a fifth of these placed on group settlement — was an immense one. On the basis of the contour plans and an earlier soil survey, the whole area was subdivided into dairy farms and orchards whose minimum acreage were respectively, 95 and 40 acres commanded and suitable for irrigation. Water rights of 100 and 50 acre feet, respective, were allocated and added sales quotas of 30 per cent to 70 per cent of this were made in later years.

While the water commission developed the land, the soldier settlement commission selected the settlers, allocated the farms, provided improvements and controlled the finance.

Their supervisor was Bill West and their accountant Kevin Clarke, both from the Lands Department. Bill was succeeded by Norm Cooper, an ex-farmer, but Forster-Clarke soldiered on until his jobs here were completed.

Applicants accepted as eligible for farms were encouraged by the commission to work on developing and when their holdings were allotted, they were required to do so. As soon as the allotment had been fenced off, 50 acres sown down and accomodation provided, the dairy farmer and his family moved in.

The original accomodation was a shed usually a hut or half-hut, and they lived hard until the houses were built. For at least 12 months, the new settler was given a living allowance and advances were made for development of the pur-

chase of stock, plant and equipment. Houses, sheds, dairies, windmills and internal fences were provided by the commission. In all, 65 acres of land were sown down.

When it was considered the settler could carry on, he was given an interim lease and charged rent based on a preliminary valuation. After seven years and when the farm had reached full production, he obtained a Purchase Lease and began to pay off his advances.

The land was originally acquired when prices still frozen at 1942 values and most blocks cost from \$8,000 to \$16,000 and there were also the advances for all improvements. The interest rate was two per cent and repayment spread over 55 years.

The orchardist moved in when land was prepared and he worked for wages until the trees began bearing. Most of these settlers who remain on their blocks are still holding them under Purchase Lease.

As in all pioneering schemes, there were dropouts. Some were not suited to the life, ill health and other difficulties were too much for others. There were a few "problem" farms but many settlers are still there and some of their sons are beginning to take over; others have sold out and retired. The orchardists have had marketing and other problems and some orchards have been converted to dairying and stock raising but again, many have held on.

No one has made a fortune on the settlement, but the area compared well with others and a community has been built up which has much to show the stranger.

It is a monument to all who helped to bring it into being.

## The Realm of Sport

During the past 80 or 90 years, Numurkah has been a very sports-minded town. From the beginning when the first football and cricket teams were formed, sporting activities have expanded to the present program which encompasses a wide variety of sports over a year.

The main sporting clubs in the district

now are: Football, cricket, tennis, bow's, basketball, badminton, table tennis, golf, swimming, athletics, shooting and horse riding.

A variety of clubs have been formed over the years in addition to the present list but many of these have since disbanded. Some of these sports were: Croquet, soccer, la crosse, polo crosse, horse racing, marching girls, go-karting and cycling.

### FOOTBALL

Football first became an organised sport in 1882 when the first football club was formed on May 17. Seven years later, the Goulburn Valley Football Association was formed comprising teams from Numurkah, Wunghnu, Yarraweyah and Nathalia. Due to travel problems, the association was later divided into northern and southern zones.

It is interesting to note that the blue and white colors worn by the Numurkah team in the present Murray Football League were chosen with the foundation of the first association.

While in the GVFA, Numurkah won the premiership six times between 1888 and 1926.

In 1931, the Murray Football League was formed and Numurkah again became dominant winning the pennant in 1932 and 1933. Premierships were also won in the years, 1937, 1938, 1950 and 1950. The most recent premiership was won in 1962 when the side was coached by Mr Eric Beitzel.

Teams which comprise the MFL are Numurkah, Cobram, Nathalia, Strathmerton, Tocumwal, Berrigan, Finley, Deniliquin and Jerilderie. The league was reduced to nine clubs when Shepparton East withdrew in 1968.

### CRICKET

Cricket also began in the 1880s when matches were played against Drumanure, Muckatah and Cobram competing for the Kilgour Cup donated by Mr Kilgour, a Numurkah watchmaker.

In 1925, a meeting was held at Strathmerton to form the Goulburn Valley Cricket Association. Teams represented were Cobram, Katamatite, Strathmerton and Numurkah.

The first president was Mr John Reynolds who later was succeeded by Mr S. Scott who held the position for several years.

In later years, Wunghnu, Naring, Fire Brigade, Yarraweyah, Katunga,



NUMURKAH FOOTBALL TEAM, PREMIERS 1926.



DRUMANURE FOOTBALL TEAM, 1928

Waaia and Barooga were admitted to the association. It was then decided to divide the association with Numurkah, Fire Brigade, Wunghnu, Naring, Waaia and Katunga becoming the southern division.

Since then, Numurkah has always been a strong cricketing town and at present supports two youthful and successful teams.

The Numurkah club has 'A' and 'B' grade sides in the Murray Valley Cricket Association while Numurkah Youth Club has 'A', 'C', and junior sides in the Shepparton Cricket Association.

#### TENNIS

Numurkah Lawn Tennis Club originated with four earthen courts on the site of the present St Andrew's tennis courts. It was not until 1929 that the club moved to the park and merged with the Park Tennis Club which had four courts just south of the Melville Street bridge.

In 1947, the major move to lawn courts was undertaken on the present site. Voluntary labor saw courts constructed and grassed progressively and the club now has 18 grassed courts with an additional three asphalt courts.

As well as members of the lawn club, many teams throughout the district

also compete in Numurkah and District Tennis Association with hundreds of players competing in seven grades. The lawn club also competes in the Goulburn Valley Association and the Murray Valley Grass Court Competition.

#### SWIMMING

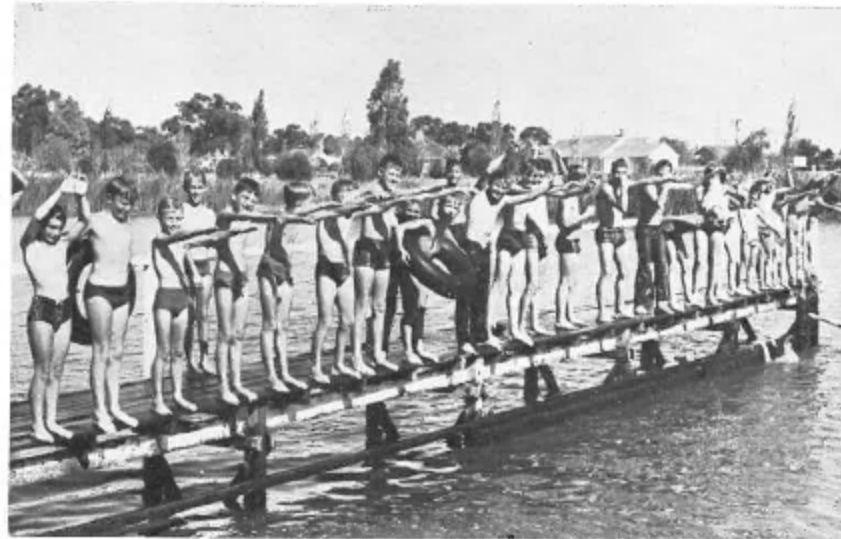
Numurkah's swimming club first began with a meeting in the Mechanics Institute (now Heard Bros.) in 1930. Mr J. C. Martin was elected president while vice-president was Mr Gerald Heard who was later secretary for several years.

The meeting decided to prepare the area for the swimming pool on the north side of the creek just east of Melville Street. This remained the pool site until 1968 when the Ray Denman Memorial Pool was opened.

Numurkah Amateur Swimming Club has become a strong organisation in recent years and its swimmers have gained prominence not only in Goulburn Valley swimming competition, but also at State competition.

#### BOWLS

Numurkah Bowling Club was formed in 1909 and the first greens were situated on area of land on the north side of Quinn Street between Melville and Meiklejohn Streets.



A LAST SWIM IN THE OLD POOL. A. J. Pumpa, Photo.



WUNGHNU CRICKET TEAM

This remained the venue until 1951 when the club moved to its present site adjacent to the tennis courts. The club now boasts three excellent greens and a large membership of members and associates.

The first president was Dr H. Spence who held the position for five terms. One of the greatest achievements of a member on the administrative side of the club was Mr F. A. Guenther's 18 years as president, 17 years in succession.

Mr Peter Bau has been club champion five times since 1951 and this is another fine achievement.

#### ATHLETICS

In the field of athletics, Numurkah can boast a Stawell Gift winner in Mr Chris Knox. Athletics in the district are now conducted by Murray Goulburn Amateur Athletic Club based at Strathmerton and drawing its members from surrounding towns.

#### GOLF

Only a brief history of golfing at

Numurkah is available. The first golf course was sited either side of the Broken Creek commencing where the caravan park is now.

The original course continued over the creek and golfers crossed the creek by a swing-bridge which crossed near where the Guide Hall is now.

Because of impending development in the area, the club eventually moved to the old racecourse site commencing with a nine-hole course.

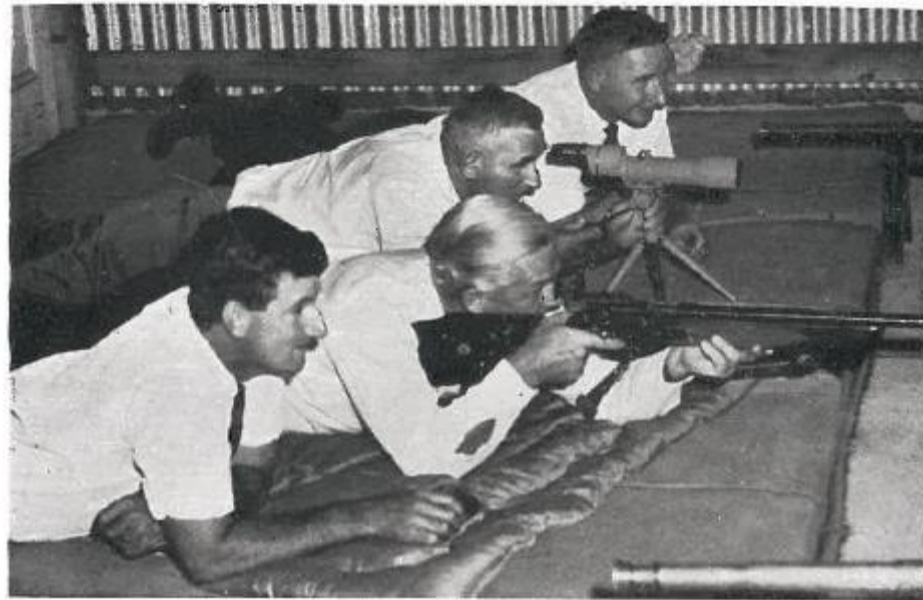
Development has increased greatly in the past six years and an eighteen-hole course is now available. An underground watering system keeps nine holes in good condition for summer golf.

The club has broadened in recent years and has installed bowling greens which help keep the club active all year round. It has bowling teams in lawn and carpet associations.

The club was opened in April 1963 and a licence was obtained.



UNVEILING OF PLAQUE AT NEW SWIMMING POOL BY THE HON. HAMER, M.L.C.  
A. J. Pumpa, Photo



OPENING OF SMALL BORE CLUB BY MR. G. MOSS, M.L.A.



# The Performing Arts

Almost from the beginning of its history Numurkah and district have been interested in the Arts.

In the early 1880's a Harmonic Society was formed and later a dramatic club, a band and an orchestra. Although at times these organisations have lapsed through lack of leadership, there was always enthusiasm to start again when someone came along who was prepared to lead. Many of the same people were members of different societies which must have created difficulties at times but it is natural that special talent would be in great demand. Some of the early conductors were E. Nightingale, J. Sutton-Crow (of the orchestra) and "Papa" Meichel of the band.

Other well known names in the local musical world in the last century were, Pollock, Fowler, Newton, Fraser Selleck and Teare. In the dramatic field were found Salas, Glenny Draper,



THREE LOCAL DASHERS AT BACK TO NUMURKAH 1922.

Richards, Schlitz, Sinclair and G. Russell.

The names of the organisations changed sometimes as they were restarted and the Harmonic Society became the Choral Union, a choir of 30 voices, then later the Numurkah Choir with 50 voices and some of the descendants of these

groups were to be found in Miss Margaret Smith's Choral Society and later still in Numurkah Singers.

The Dramatic Club produced about two plays a year when they started and in 1886 took one production to Shepparton. People in the surrounding districts would drive into see the performances which were held on moonlight nights and Nathalia usually had some enthusiasts prepared to drive the 15 miles to see one of the local programs.

The number and variety of companies on the road was surprising. When a company would run a season of seven nights in a town the size of Numurkah with a population of about 900 people and change their production each night, there must have been some poor houses and as these companies sometimes appeared in the same week or within a week of one another there can't always have been a profit.

The companies that were well known were sure of a good reception and the press carefully reviewed each performance and was sufficiently critical and knowledgeable to arouse interest and to educate their readers on what to look for in subject and technique.

The earliest local productions of comic opera were in the early 1900's when Pinafore 1901, The Pirates of Penzance 1902, and the Mikado in 1903 were performed. Mr Les Tully was a member of the chorus of Pirates. The sets were built and painted by local craftsmen and were advertised along with the other attractions before the opening night.

Benefit concerts were frequently held and the talents of the artists were always in demand, so it is understandable that Numurkah became known as the "Singing Town".

The next period of note was pre-World War 1, when Rev Williamson was active in promoting theatricals in the town. Again the material was just waiting to be used. His forte was pantomime and he produced Cinderella, Golden Hair, and the Three Bears, (1909-1910), and also directed the orchestra of that time. Following the above were The Ranchman in 1914 and The Middies who presented a variety program.



NUMURKAH CHORAL SOCIETY, with their conductress Miss Margaret Smith

During the war a concert party who called themselves "The Girls who Stayed at Home" directed by Miss Anne McIvor played to capacity houses and left a good reputation for an attractive program. Again stage props and scenery were made by a local enthusiast (Mr E. A. Bennett) a hairdresser who was talented in this direction.

About this time an organisation known as Chatauqua which originated in America and which supplied the best in music, drama and the arts in general visited Numurkah for two seasons and introduced local audiences to some memorable performances.

First President of this movement was Mr Frank Guenther and secretary Mr Charles Trengrove.

So interested were the local people in the arts that in Baulkamaugh Church, the only building in that area to suggest a community, there ran an annual competition in music and drama for some years. The building usually housed the school and for this period the school children and their necessary school gear were moved out into a marquee set up behind the church for the duration of the competitions. The sections covered a wide range of artistic expression and competitors came from all round the area. Judges came from Melbourne and of those it is recalled that on one occasion Victor Trottman judged the elocution and Sutton-Crow the musical items. This

period was post-war and ran into the twenties.

In 1922 during the first Back to Numurkah a variety program was produced by Mrs Donald of the Farmers' Arms Hotel, who used local talent against an eastern background with some effect.

During the twenties when the town tennis club was in need of funds a variety company was formed and under the Roaring Twenties name of the "Whizbangs" presented two or three seasons between 1926-1930. These were mostly frivolous and lighthearted but a great deal of effort was put into presentation.

The advent of Miss Margaret Smith in the next decade gave music lovers a lift because the quality of her work as a conductress was a challenge that required some effort to meet. Working under her was a joy and with a choir of 50-60 voices she worked hard and eventually had some success at competitions, bringing home a much prized cup from Rutherglen, in 1935. In 1938 she produced San Marino and shortly after the second world war began the choir disbanded.

During the 30's drama also absorbed some people who under Mrs Florence Trott's direction produced several plays. She was a person who gave her talent generously and sometimes alone and sometimes with Mrs E. Parker performed interesting sketches.

An Art Club was formed in 1949 under the presidentship of Ivor Gazzard and under the guidance of the Council for Adult Education, many interesting programs were arranged, from playreading, to some lectures on various subjects and also music and folkdancing. This club functioned for some years and filled a need for people who liked many things not usually available in a country town.

During this period many fine productions were brought to Numurkah by C.A.E. and this wetted the appetite of those who loved the theatre and thus brought about that which C.A.E. hoped would happen, i.e. to foster a desire in country towns to produce their own theatre. This has taken place fairly generally and many small towns now have an annual season of plays, musical or otherwise.

In 1963 the Numurkah Singers' Company was formed and has been performing annually since that time. Although there have been changes in the membership there is a nucleus of "solid citizens" who have preserved a satisfactory continuity in the company.

During the 1960's the Messiah was produced two years running in the Town Hall, the first time by the Methodist Choir with addition of a few other enthusiasts and conducted by Miss Elizabeth Cowan. The second perform-

ance was conducted by Mr Adrian Thomas, teacher of music at the local High School. On the former occasion singers were brought from other places to sing main parts except Miss Maria McKenzie who sang the soprano part and in the second occasion the parts were taken by local and district soloists.

#### NUMURKAH SINGERS

On the occasion of the Rose Festival in 1963 — the Festival committee asked Phyllis Cowan to provide an entertainment during Festival Week, and as she had a desire to attempt G. & S. she decided to try. The production decided upon was "The Pirates of Penzance" and she selected local and district people for cast and chorus.

Serious rehearsals began six weeks before the performance and with intense effort the show went on with Mrs Cowan as Musical Director. The production was so successful that the players wanted to continue and after about two weeks rest "The Mikado" was begun and performed in September 1963.

By now the players had formed into a company called the Numurkah Singers and decided to confine themselves to one production a year.

The producer of "The Pirates of Penzance" was Mrs Joyce Borshman who had moved to Numurkah that year. She had had dramatic experience but had not



NUMURKAH SINGERS ON STAGE IN THE MIKADO, 1963.





NUMURKAH SINGERS AT REHEARSAL, under Warwick Hanna, conductor. Pumpa Photo.

produced a musical before. Together, she and Mrs Cowan moulded the company into the longest playing musical company in our history, as the current production in rehearsal by the Singers is their tenth Season.

The above partnership continued for the production of two more seasons Pinafore and The Gondoliers being the next performances.

The company was fortunate to have amongst its members Warwick and Joan Hanna, who have been with the company since its inception. Warwick sang lead roles as tenor until 1965 when he replaced Mrs Cowan as Musical Director and has maintained her high standard and his work with the chorus has won praise from critics and public alike.

Other producers were Mrs Morison, Keith Lacy, Rev. D. Gibson and Lou Hamon who is now working on his third season.

From our town of 3000 persons and the district around, are drawn the cast, chorus, and supporting sections of the company for lighting, makeup,

design, publicity etc.

The company had as its first technical director, Don Moore, who set a high standard during the first six seasons for this important side of production.

On the musical side, pianists have been Gene Haugh, Adrian Thomas, Olwynne Lewis, Isobel Hodge, and Mrs Andrews (Moeroopna) and Gwen Roggiere. Miss Lewis has played for five productions and has used her String Ensemble for overtures on each occasion.

In G. and S's Patience produced in 1969, some 70 odd persons were involved which illustrates the talent and interest there are in this district for this kind of entertainment.

The aim of the company is to improve each performance, to enjoy the pastime of singing and drama, and to endeavor to produce something worthy of the district and its past record.

The company has discontinued taking productions to other centres and has found that patrons come regularly from Finley, Yarrawonga, Cobram, Nathalia, Shepparton, Kybram and other

places for the three night season. The decision to alternate G. and S. with other composers has offered an opportunity of good chorus work with Offenbach and Strauss and as the chorus is an important feature it is necessary to select this kind of production.

In the current selection of Orpheus, an interesting feature is the number of young people included. We look forward to continued activity and trust that returnees will enjoy the Singers' offering.

#### NUMURKAH TOWN BAND

Numurkah and district has been richly endowed with musical talent evidenced by the fine choral groups, church choirs, orchestras and soloists both in singing and instrumental circles.

Numurkah Town Band holds a very high place in these categories with its fine record of service to the community through many decades.

The band appears to have been in existence for about 80 years. The first

recognised bandmaster was a Mr Meichel who was not only a very fine musician, but a composer as well.

Mr Meichel also had a band at Strathmerton whose musicians frequently joined with the Numurkah members for special occasions.

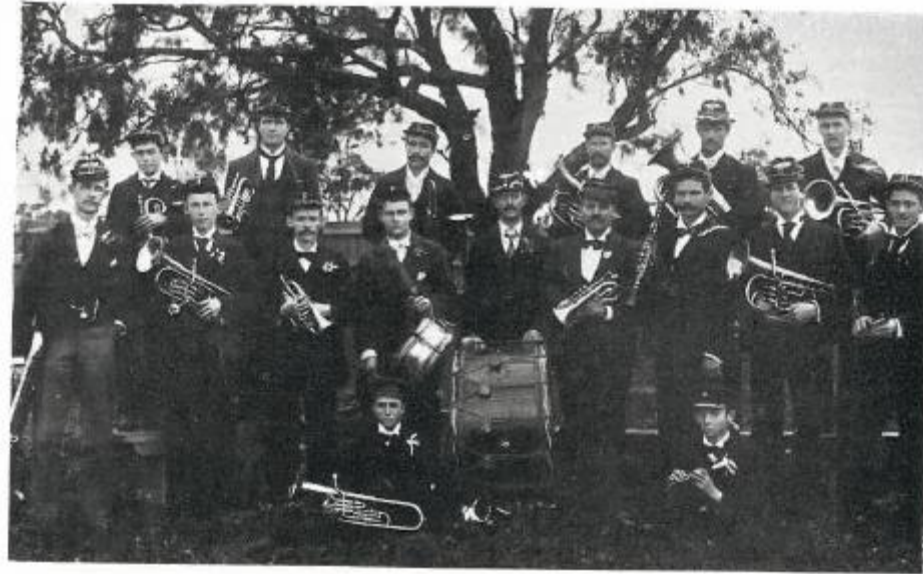
Later, Mr Ted Nightingale was bandmaster but on his retirement, it lapsed for a time and was later revived under the baton of Mr N. Hartford.

Among subsequent leaders was Mr J. T. Treacy but after he retired, there were many frequent changes in bandmasters. Some of the names remembered are Mr R. Beaman, K. Strinsby, J. Lewis, N. Kofeldt, J. Hickey, F. King, A. McPherson, A. E. Morris, C. Bennett.

Among prominent players who started their careers with the band was Mr Bob McCaskill who was later to become bandmaster of the Southern Command Band during the 1914-18 War. Mr Bill Stratton was another who com-



CHORUS OF PIRATES OF PENZANCE, 1902.



NUMURKAH TOWN BAND, about 70 years ago.

menced his career with the band. He became a member of J. C. Williamson's orchestra and was one of the few French horn players in Australia at the time.

The first band practised in an underground room adjoining the Memorial Gardens. It was built by Mr Bauld of the Royal Mail Hotel, later occupied by Mrs McCluskey.

Present bandmaster is Mr George Paterson who has been associated with the band for 40 years, many of these years as conductor. He was responsible

for training and teaching members who were later to fill the various sections in the band.

It was under Mr Paterson's leadership that the band reached perhaps its peak in 1951.

In that year, the band won the Murray Valley Championship along with three first and three second prizes. Bands competing in the competition were from Wagga, Hay, Deniliquin, Finley, Cobram, Yarrawonga, Echuca, Shepparton and Wangaratta.

## Local Brevities

### VICTORIA OLD AND NEW

1850 — A Contrast — 1912.

Printed and Published by Lake, Sons and Cowell Proprietary, 34 Queen Street.

"Numurkah, an inland post town about 135 miles north-east of Melbourne, has attained an importance which was not reckoned upon 30, much less 50 years ago. It is the starting point of coaches to Katamatite and Yarrawonga. It has a drainage scheme with settling tanks to be worked with a sewerage farm, thus keeping the Baala Creek from which it draws

its water supply, unpolluted. The area of the Shire is 765 square miles, and the population is somewhat above 8,000.

Tarax started in Numurkah during the last century in the back yard of a shop opposite Brown Corkes.

5-3-1915: Mr Frank Beaurepaire, Inspector of swimming to the Education Department visited Numurkah and gave two very fine displays at the swimming pool (settling ponds) on Monday afternoon.

29-1-1915: Wunghnu and Numur-



kah Croquet Clubs met in competition on the local court on Wednesday, victory resting with the local ladies by five points. Before the first burials in Numurkah Cemetery in 1883, the Wunghnu Cemetery was used for local interments.

5-3-1915: The Premier, Sir Alexander Peacock and Water Commissioners visited Numurkah to discuss irrigation.

14-5-1915: A deputation from the Numurkah Traders' Association waited on Com Campbell at his office on Saturday morning to ask for a definite statement on what the trust intended to do about providing water for the town.

4-2-1910: Mr R. H. Cook, teacher at Invergordon has been transferred to Wunghnu and Mr Mort Woodhouse appointed to Invergordon.

In 1890 the population of Numurkah was 2475, that of Wunghnu 1070 and of Nathalia 2315.

Carriers' Licences issued in 1892 were for tipdray, farmers dray and lorry for David Wade of Cobram and Hawkers' Licences for Cornelius McCarthy (with animals) and on foot Kitt Hang, Nathalia, and Gunda Singh Little, Melbourne.

6-5-1887: Mr H. Twitt is to try a practical experiment this year of applying bone dust to a section of his land.

22-10-1886: For the first time in history of Shire a credit balance is shown.

18-1-1889: Waia has sprung up as the first calling place on the Numurkah-Nathalia railway. (The hamlet is built on the selection of Mr Moncrieff and consists of a hotel, 2 blacksmiths (Sutcliffes and Snows) a butchery (Mr Young's) a boarding house, a general store and several private dwellings. The only water supply, a dam in Mr McGranes, two miles north).

The annual muster of Barmah and Yielma state forest was the biggest yet — 6000 cattle mustered of which 5900 were claimed.

22-2-1889: Numurkah district barley shown at the Centennial exhibition secured first order of merit with grain weighing 58½ pounds beating that grown at Dookie experimental farm by half a pound. The Victorian Commissioner have requested Kilpatrick and Co. who exhibited it to send the grain to Paris exhibition.

Numurkah Standard, 1882: The average attendance at the State School is now over 90 and the Education Depart-

ment has decided to rent the Bible Christian Church until the new school is erected.

September 1885: Mrs Daniell's announces the opening of her private school in Melkjohn Street on 21-9-1885. English, Music, Singing, French, Drawing and Painting will be taught. In September the following year Mrs Cook advertises and in August 1890 she gives notice of moving to Knox Street (where Mrs Bitcon now lives) and that her terms are one guinea a term.

The first Doctor of Medicine in Numurkah, Dr O'Sullivan, combined medicine and farming. He was a great townsman and was on the committees of the Band, Agriculture Society, Rifle Club, Turf Club, Coursing Club, Dramatic Club, a Councillor, foundation member of Mechanics Institute, and Trustee of R. C. Church. He left in 1886 on account of ill health.

17-6-1887: The Numurkah Team waded to Wunghnu for a football match.

August 1888: Mr Bedwell of Ulupna put in 3000 vine cuttings of Gordo Blanco obtained from Mr Hardy's vineyard in South Australia.

10-7-1885: Native Companions still swarm in large numbers on the newly sown fields in northern districts.

The offer of the Railway Commissioners of transport to any part of the country where work is available, free of charge until such time as they are able to pay the fare was accepted on Monday by some 60 men.

30-3-1883: The first marriage ceremony that has taken place in the Roman Catholic chapel in Numurkah was celebrated on Wednesday morning, the Rev Kennedy officiating. The bridegroom was Mr William Cantlon of this town, well known as the popular manager of the grocery branch of Mr Thos. Richards store and the bride was Miss Morrison, eldest daughter of Mr J. Morrison, baker of this town.

#### LIST OF ORGANISATIONS

If any of our readers can supply missing information we shall be grateful. We found it impossible in the case of our organisations to find all data we wanted as minute books had been destroyed and records lost. We are sorry if for this reason we have overlooked anyone who has made a worthwhile contribution to our town and district.



This book is published by the Apex Club of Numurkah as a souvenir of the 1970 Back To Numurkah Celebrations.

The Club is very grateful to Mrs Hilda Morieson for her work in compiling and writing material and for her guidance and supervision of the whole project.

Thanks to the people who spent much time and energy in researching and writing the history of the organisations they represent.

Thanks also to the management and staff of the "Numurkah Leader" for assistance in compiling the material and the photographs.

The proceeds from the sale of this book will be part of the revenue of the Committee and the profits from "Back To" as a whole will be held by the Numurkah Apex Charitable Trust fund and used for projects of improvement to the town and amenities for the people.

**JOHN R. HODGE,**

President, Numurkah Apex Club,  
1969/70.

**Members of the Numurkah Apex Club who organised and conducted these 1970 Celebrations.**

President: John Hodge.  
Secretary: Robert Watters.  
Treasurer: Jim McGregor.  
Back To Committee:  
Chairman: K. Sidebottom.  
Secretary: Roger Newman.  
Treasurer: Jim McGregor.  
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John McPherson,  
Dr Graeme Hudson,

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Bernie Retallick,  
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Laurie Kennedy,  
David McCracken,  
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Len Hosking.



