

# CAULFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

38

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Editor: Gladys Vallati

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The Society meets on the third Wednesday of each month (except December and January) in the Committee Room, first floor, City Hall at 7.30p.m.

PATRON - His Worship the Mayor of Caulfield Cr. Nicholas Gold

PRESIDENT: Mrs. F.E. Campbell	523 9228
SECRETARY: Miss H. Ford	528 4140
TREASURER: Miss N. Ward	523 5308

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Unfortunately His Worship, the Mayor, Cr. Nicholas Gold was unable to be present at the twenty first Annual Meeting of the Society which was held on 15th September. The guest speaker, Captain Michael Carolin of the Port Phillip Sea Pilots, gave a most interesting talk of the history and activities of the organisation (see article on page 2 )

The Committee remains:-

President	Mrs. F. Campbell
Vice-Presidents	Miss B. Snowball Miss G. Rowe
Treasurer	Miss N. Ward
Secretary	Miss H. Ford
General Committee	Mr. A. Anderson Mr. A. Reid Mrs G. Vallati
Regional Delegates	Dr. M. Chennells Miss H. Bullock

## DO YOU KNOW???

### FROM OUR ARCHIVES

An interesting item found by our Secretary, whilst she was working in the Society's room, is a ticket to a Grand Concert held in the Queen's Hall on Friday, October 25th, 1907 in aid of funds for the EMO-CAULFIELD LADIES CRICKET CLUB. The ticket No 161 is inscribed by hand *Reserved* and initialled with the letters A.B. and the price has been increased, again with handwriting, from the ordinary price of 1s.6d. to 2/-.

**The question is :-** Does anyone know anything of this Ladies Cricket Club?

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## AN IMMIGRANT'S STORY

by Irene Capek, B.A. MBE

The following notes were written by Irene Capek, a former Councillor of the City of Caulfield. These then, are the personal recollections of a post-war immigrant family who disembarked on the 8th April, 1949 in Port Melbourne, and from that day on, lived in Caulfield.

To my shame, we hardly knew anything about life in Australia, we wanted to get as far away as possible from Europe and Australia so kindly offered us a new home.

On arrival a "welcoming agency's" representative helped us to sort out advertisements in *The Age*, for we came penniless and looked for work with accommodation. We were assisted with phone calls, fares and directions to Caulfield, where a live-in job for a married couple (children no objection) was offered. Luckily both of us, my husband too, spoke some English and our 2 year old son claimed his rights by body language.

During our first tram trip to Caulfield, we were stared at, as we were dressed in heavy winter clothes and coats, riding boots and hats, prepared for some "outback" life.

Alma Road was our destination in a 2 storey house just opposite the Church of Christ almost on the corner of Dandenong Road. We quickly assessed that, should we get the job, we would have no worries with transport facilities. Even a tram announced "St. Kilda Beach" - WHAT - near a beach too???

We were immediately accepted without too many questions, only later of course, we found out the reason. This was a family of 6 children, the youngest the same age as our Johnny. We were shown our room with shower, our son was to sleep with the family's children.

On that first day, there was nobody to tell us about working conditions in Australia and at that time - beside the Immigration Department, there were no specialised agencies, dealing with new settlers.

My job was to start cleaning the house at 6.a.m., prepare breakfast, now, for the 11 of us ... do the dishes, and start preparing and cooking dinner. I owned up, that of course, I had no idea about Australian culinary habits, and my boss was quite enchanted to be able to boast of having a central European cook... She took me with her car to shops in Glenferrie Road, to the Prahran Market and later, to Acland Street in St. Kilda, but I looked in vain for continental ingredients - there were none. So, I started to improvise initially with Paprika chicken and Goulash...there was no sweet paprika, so I used the local one, which of course, was much too hot...We then agreed, that for visitors, I could make my little sandwiches (now called *open Danish* and my boss would attend to the shopping and cooking of meats "the Australian way"...I did introduce garlic, which became more a matter of evolution, rather than revolution in the household...Whe I mentioned our food-rationing in Europe still after the war, my land-lady said "You know, that during the war we could NOT get any cream or rice!!!"

During my first weeks of labouring, besides car-trips to the shops, we had not been out of the house and I had no idea about our surroundings. My husband, a university graduate Mechanical Engineer, proved to our boss to be quite useless in the house (for their needs), and found himself an unskilled labourer's job at Holden Car Factory.

My hours were very long, often to midnight, 7 days a week, and no one to talk to about it. We thought it natural that I should have some time off, and asked the bosss, about it. She was somewhat surprised, but agreed that I could have one afternoon off on a week-day. (Unions, where were you???) I too, asked her, whether we would receive any wages, by which question she was quite genuinely shocked. She described what privileges we enjoyed, such as as nice room with shower, our laundry washed with theirs, our child playing with theirs, and food for free.



After 4 weeks "incarcerated" we went on that free afternoon to Caulfield Park where I spent my afternoon crying of fatigue...It took me many years to enter that Park again. On the 6th week I felt that things were not right, and my husband studied with me, again, the advertisements, where some wages and free time would be offered.

Nearby, just a short walk away, on Dandenong Road, a Boarding House advertised for a "live-in cook, husband/handyman, child no objection" wages 10 pounds per week - 10 pounds a week in 1949 - that was quite a nice amount.

Next day, my afternoon off, I went to "Matlock" for an interview. The boss was an ageing Miss of Irish blood, and ruled her kingdom with a firm tongue. When I told her my story about the current job, she agreed to engage us, on the spot, and we could move in any time.

I went happily to tell our land-lady that we had found another job, and she mentioned that we should bitterly regret leaving her... Her husband wished us well and said "one day, you too, will own a silver fox and go to the Caulfield races... He then told us, that we actually were the longest time employed in their household, as other people just stayed for a day or two...under those conditions.

By then it was the beginning of June, and quite cold and constantly raining. We asked someone, how long it would rain? The answer : from now (June) till Christmas!

Our new accommodation consisted of a room next to another staff member, but the window was broken. Our Johnny immediately caught 'flu. We asked for a nearby doctor, who soon arrived. It was Dr. MacLaren, who practised for many years in Caulfield. He came each day for one week and never charged us a penny. His son, many years later, took over the practice in Glen Huntly Road, and we were his patients till his retirement... His usual greeting was :- "And now how are the Hussites"???

In Matlock there were large but old-fashioned .

kitchens, across a huge flower and vegetable garden, quite a distance from our room. Every hour I went to see Johnny in bed and so did my husband, who was trying to master garden tools.

As a cook, I had to make lunches and dinners. Absolutely no talk about "European cooking". My first duty was to make scones and my boss said "Just read the instructions on the flour wrappings". I do not think that anybody will ever forget my creation, after which my boss claiming that she did NOT need any golf-balls, changed my job into that of waitress and maid. Simultaneously she claimed that she just could not look at my husband twirling the garden implements, and would he kindly look for another job.. "It breaks my heart to watch an engineer do garden-ing" she said.

And so, I became a waitress, at breakfast and lunch and dinner, in-between cleaning 23 (yes, twenty three) accommodation units. I had some nice clothes from home, and possibly my manners were appreciated, and soon the inhabitants of Matlock, became life-long friends.

Mainly they were single men or single ladies who lived there for years, not exactly in luxury but in good comfort, such as Mr. M. who was a bank manager, several businessmen, and ladies who preferred rented accommodation to doing their own chores. One of the tenants was Rabbi Dr. Sanger from the Liberal Synagogue, who lived there for many years. There was a huge back-yard, with garages for the tenants cars.

In the meantime, my husband took on a night shift at Holden, and in the day-time walked the streets where engineering factories were situated. It was in City Road, South Melbourne, that he saw a used machine in the window display which was a German make, and which he knew well. He asked for an interview, and was given the job of cleaning and repairing that machine - wages 7 Pounds per week. His boss of Scottish blood allowed him to ring me one day and said that is "two pence of phoning"!!!

*to be continued*



## September 13th 1900

From *Australia's Yesterdays* an article from the *Argus* and *Age*

**Town Hall, this evening 7.45 Wonderful Lime-light Lecture entitled Soldiers of the Cross by Commandant Booth.**

Behind these modest words lay the fact that Australia had produced the first religious epic and probably the world's first full length film. *Soldiers of the Cross* was a 3000 ft. film, with a cast of 600 professional and amateur actors.

It was made three years before America made *The Great Train Robbery* of 800 ft. length, which is claimed by historians as the first real movie. It was made by Major Joseph Perry then in charge of the Salvation Army's Magic Lantern Photographic Department of Melbourne,.

Most of it was filmed on a tennis court of an Army home for girls in the Melbourne suburb of Murrumbeena.

The Film cost about 600 pounds, and Perry was a master of trick photography and of crowd scenes.

The film was taken to America the next year and shown throughout that country.

Now, an honoured place awaits it in the National Film Library at Canberra, but recent searches by the Salvation Army and other interested organisations have failed to find the film.



## PORT PHILLIP SEA PILOTS

The Port Phillip Sea Pilot's Association provides an important service to the people of Victoria. It is unique in its history, structure and importance to the state. It offers an expert service to shipping in Port Phillip and Westernport bays, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The history of the Port Phillip Sea Pilots goes back to the 17th June 1839, when the first licence was granted to George Tobin by Governor Gipps of New South Wales on condition that "the

appointment must not bring any expense on the Government." The service is unique in that it is fully owned and operated by the pilots in keeping with the terms of the original appointment. Pilot services at all other major Australian ports are Government operated and it is only in recent years that moves have been made in some states to allow pilot services to operate privately as they have done so efficiently on Port Phillip for 150 years.

All Port Phillip Pilots are experienced ex-ship-masters who have gained the additional experience and qualifications needed to be granted a licence by the Marine Board of Victoria. At present there are 35 pilots including those who are also licensed for Westernport. The original pilots camped on the Beach at Queenscliff on the site of the present Pilot Station, and were taken to and from ships by 30ft. whaleboats frequently manned by convicts.

In 1851 Victoria was granted independence from New South Wales and at this time there was a spectacular increase in the number of ships due to the gold rush. A number of ships were lost at the dangerous entrance to Port Phillip mainly due to ship masters attempting to enter without a pilot and not having sufficient local knowledge of tidal and weather conditions. The Government was petitioned to take over the service and to supply a cruising pilot cutter to put pilots aboard ships at sea. The brigantine "Boomerang" was the first in 1853 and was shortly followed by "Corsair" and "Anonyma".

In 1854 there were 56 pilots and costs were escalating. The Pilot Board was formed with representatives from Commerce, the Marine Industry, Underwriters and Government members to control the pilotage fees and the pilots' remuneration. The pilots were then invited to buy the three cutters, from three companies and to take over the service on a co-operative basis.

In 1887 the Marine Board of Victoria was formed to take over the function of the Pilot Board and still exists in a similar form to this day.

*to be continued*