

The Meddings Family and their relationship to Altona and The Homestead



LONG TIME ALTONA RESIDENTS

When reviewing some photographs in the Society collection a number of photo's were noted as having been donated to the collection by a former resident Dorothy Kessner (nee Meddings) and the Meddings Family connection with the Altona area and the Homestead in particular has been considered worthy of putting before the members and other readers of this Newsletter.

Dorothy and Husband John (J.J.) Kessner were residents of Altona and business operators in Altona and Williamstown, members of the Altona Lions Club and Lions Ladies, before retiring to Little River, and have now resided in Wyndham Vale for a number of years.

Dorothy has been spoken with and has passed on some general information regarding the association of her Grandfather, Thomas and his wife, together with her father and his brothers who were residents in the premises for a number of years.

In her book "Altona - A long View" Hargreen Publishing 1988, the author Susan Priestley states

In December 1919 the Young Mens Christian Association (YMCA) were given a short lease of the Homestead as an Industrial Hostel, where factory workers could enjoy an inexpensive holiday.

In July 1920, the YMCA was offered the Homestead and grounds for 5000 pounds.

For several years previously the Association had cooperated with W F Cuming, the head of the Yarraville Fertiliser company, Cuming Smith and Co., to provide a factory lunch canteen.

The YMCA turned the Homestead offer over to Cuming Smith and the firm agreed to its purchase as a Hostel and Holiday camp, for just over 5000 pounds.

Three kitchens and a bathroom and lavatories for campers were installed in the main house.

Others could sleep in 20 old cable trams which were brought and installed in the grounds.

The camp was very popular and was usually occupied from November to Easter.

(continued inside)

The Meddings Family (continued)

For some years Dorothy's Grandfather Thomas who was an employee of Cumings's ,together with his wife were caretakers of the premises.

By 1932 the tramcars were in a poor state and the Works Manager reported to Cumings,that with some repairs the tramcars would last the coming season but no longer.

The Cumings Smith company or "Commonwealth Fertilizers" as it had become began to look for an alternative camp site but the initiative faded with W F Cumings death in 1933.

Use of the camp then declined as fewer tramcars were habitable.

In 1935 the Altona Progress Association asked the Council to buy the property for conversion to a Hotel or Boarding House.

Two years later the purchase was concluded.

The grounds became a public park once the tramcars were cleared.



Thomas Meddings with an infant pictured in the Homestead grounds,note that the area was then fenced



Thomas Meddings and family members
are depicted at the Homestead a copy of
this photo is contained in the Society Cal-
endar for the Month of January 2011 with a
copy in the Homestead



Above - Children photographed in the Homestead grounds, no known connection to Meddings family but Tramcars are visible at rear



A Meddings family group photo on the Beach, a young Dorothy is highlighted, her father Austin is to her left

ALTONA LAVERTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

AUSTRALIA DAY

The Society had a successful day on Australia Day 2011 with a number of new ventures trialled this included invitations to a number of groups to

included Courthouses of Victoria, History of the RSL, The Sports Club and the Altona Yacht Club, The Altona Senior Citizens 50 year booklet



send representatives to sell books, postcards and similar items, this included the Williamstown Historical Society, and publications for sale



and the like.

A record number of public visitors were through the Homestead on the day.

THE MAYOR DREW THE RAFFLE

Pictured below are the Society President Peter Weaver, with Secretary Ann Cassar and member Owen Hyde together with the Mayor of the City of Hobsons Bay Cr. Michael Raffoul about to draw the winning competition entry which was a joy flight in a Tiger Moth.





The Committee of management are finalising plans for the Society regarding the Altona Beach Festival which is to be held on Saturday the 19th March in the general area of Pier Street, the Esplanade and the park areas near The Homestead.

Plans still to be finalised include :

Friday 18th

“Psychic Supper” to be held as part of the Altona Beach festival in The Homestead

Saturday 19th March

The Homestead will be open between 10 a.m and 8.30 p.m Volunteers are needed on that day to assist in the general operations around the premises on the day.

A Double Decker Bus provided by Hobsons Bay City Council and sponsored by Bendigo Bank will be available with tour guides provided by the Association

Devonshire Tea, catered for and provided by Annette Stephens will be available for purchase and consumption by visitors seeking such a service during the day.



The screening of DVD programs or slides in sections of the building is planned.

Members and friends should attend at some time during the day to ensure this is a successful day in support of the local community activities.

Member News

Passing of a former Member

It is with regret that the Society has been informed of the death of Irene Rhodes a Past President of the Society who passed away on Thursday the 27th January 2011 the Funeral service was held at Nelson Brothers Chapel on the 1st February, followed by a private cremation.

Reports for Member Information

Please remember that any reports for the general information of members should be put in writing to the Secretary so that they can be included in future Newsletters for the passing on to all members this will help to ensure that the information supplied is passed on to all in a more detailed manner than can be done in the Minutes of a Business Meeting.

50 years

The Altona Laverton Historical Society has now been in existence for 50 years and the Committee of Management has under consideration the acknowledgement of this fact during Heritage Week with the possibility of seeking out from the members or the public, photos of early Altona and Laverton, including such things as photos of long term residents, business and sporting activities and the like with some form of prize for the of the oldest or most significant photo produced, we would envisage scanning photos with the owners permission for archiving in the Society databank.



New Logo

With some excellent graphic design work by Carol Winfield a new Logo has been chosen for use by the Society on its letterheads and advertising material the Logo is shown on the front page of this newsletter

Upcoming Events - February

15th February Members Night 7.30 p.m Speaker Barry Hanson - History of the Homestead

25th February - Haunt the Homestead

March

Sunday 6th Homestead open 2-4 p.m.

Truganina Explosives Reserve open 12noon - 3 p.m

Cash Flow Report
Altona Laverton Historical Society

Cashflow for Periods Jul:2010/11 to Feb:2010/11

Opening Balance for all banks (excl. unbanked)		11,304.43
CASH IN		
1	Member Fee	615.00
10	Calendar Sales	90.00
11	Bank Interest	94.60
12	Hire of Homestead	400.00
13	Bendigo Bank Grant	3,378.43
14	Popcorn Sales	395.10
2	Book Sales	770.00
3	Admissions	1,444.75
4	Donation	20.00
5	Calendar Sales	1,835.00
6	Bleriot Dinner	2,835.00
7	Ghost Hunt	960.00
8	Post Cards	70.10
9	Dept of Justice	70.10
Total cash in		12,978.08
CASH OUT		
50	Association Membership	0.00
51	Stamps	118.65
52	Stationery	53.12
53	Misc Purchases	750.02
54	Printer Supplies	21.85
55	Photocopying	282.00
56	Laminating	1.50
57	Sandwiches	416.00
58	Bleriot Dinner Expenses	2,524.60
59	Strategic Plan Program	2,464.00
60	Refund of Member Fee	15.00
61	Petty Cash	200.00
62	Folding Chairs	3,378.43
Total cash out		10,225.17
Total cashflow for all banks		2,752.91
Calculated Closing Balance for all banks		14,057.34
Ledger Closing Balance for all banks		14,057.34