



# NEWSLETTER

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## Tom Ferris - Guest Speaker "The Williamstown Racecourse"

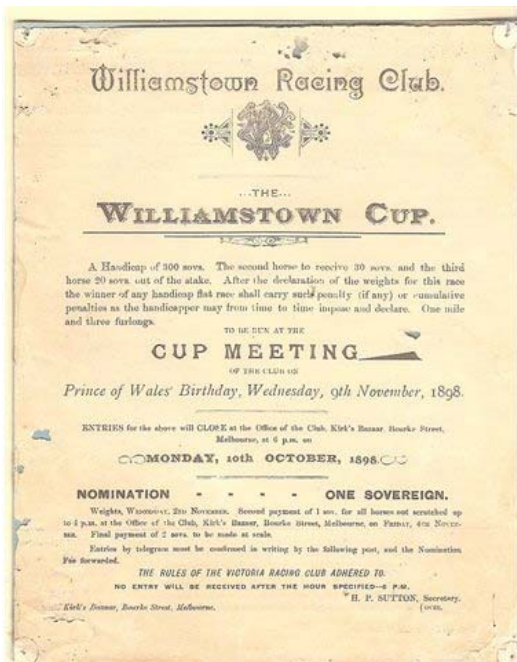


Members and Guests in attendance at the General Meeting held in the Homestead on Tuesday 21st February were privileged to hear a discussion led by Tom Ferris regarding the early history of the founding and operations of the Williamstown Racecourse.

Tom is a member of the Williamstown Historical Society and a former Vice President of that group, he has a long held interest and passion for the history of the Williamstown Racecourse, its Jockeys, Trainers, Stewards and various officials involved in its foundation and general on course racing activities during the period it was an operational course.

It was pointed out the major part that the Racecourse played in the early days of horse racing in the Melbourne area, the early construction of a totaliser, the crowds that attended, the quality of the Jockeys and Horses that raced at the track including the mighty Phar Lap.

The discussion was illustrated by slides and the information passed on by Tom, indicated the depth of his knowledge about this Racecourse now lost from the area, but one which should always be remembered for the part it played in Melbourne's early racing history.



Left : Advance notice of the 1899 Williamstown Cup meeting  
Below:

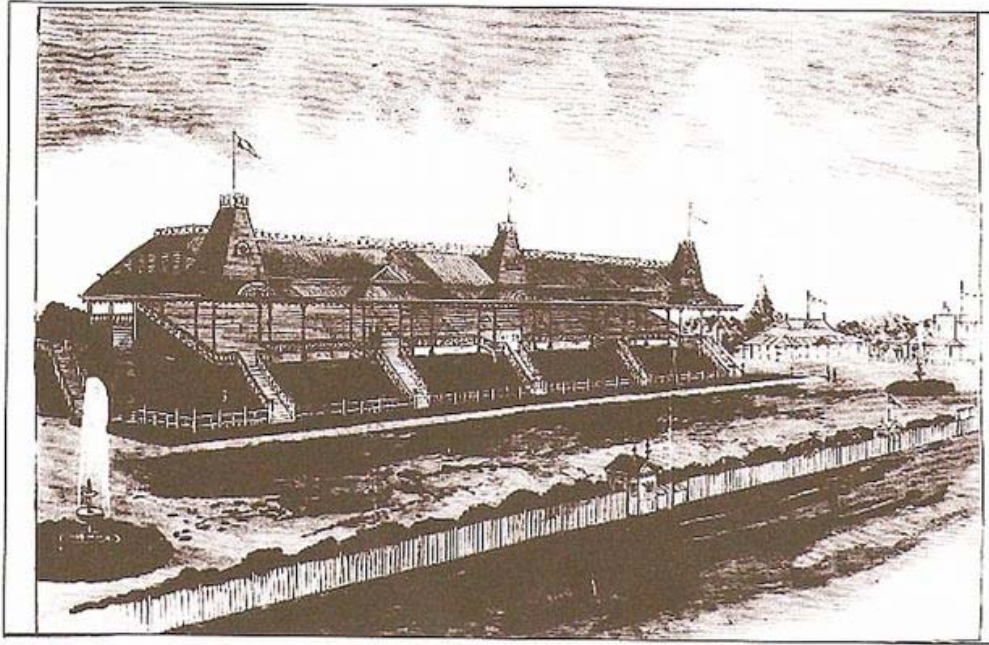
Phar Lap wins the Underwood Stakes at Williamstown 25th August 1931



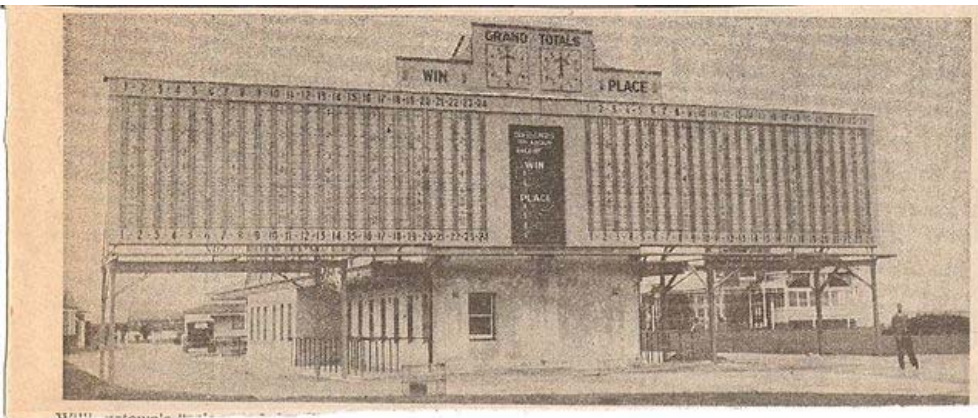
Phar Lap 1st (9.0 W. Elliot) ... Rondalina 2nd ... Wise Force 3rd ... Won by: 13/4 len ... Time: 1:42 1/2

## Williamstown Racecourse (continued)

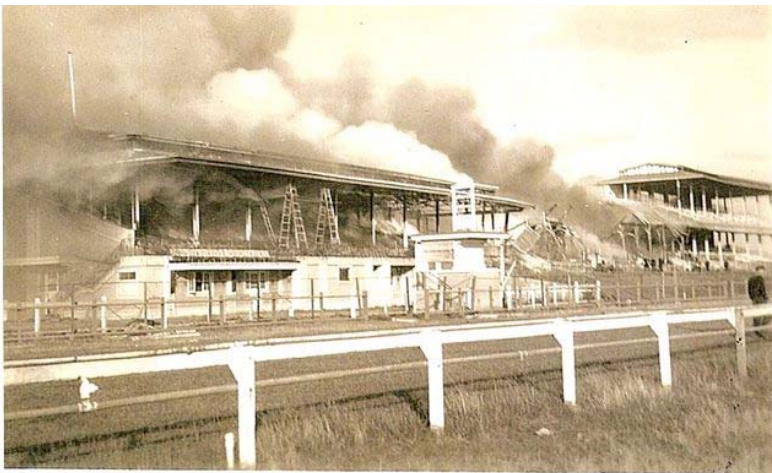
Williamstown Racing Club Grandstand 1888



THE GRAND STAND OF THE WILLIAMSTOWN RACING CLUB.



WRC Tote  
1934



The Grandstand Destroyed by Fire 1947

# Meddings Family

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## GENERAL NEWS

Walter Meddings [Wally] was born on the 15<sup>th</sup> April 1930 right where he stands in this photo. Wally and his family lived in the Altona Homestead.

A very heavily pregnant Mrs. Meddings took herself into the Royal Women's as she thought it was time, but to her dismay they sent her home. On the train back to Altona her waters broke and contractions began. Struggling to walk from the station to home she finally made it through the front door and into the living room and gave birth to Walter.

Wally and his family took a wander through the Homestead recently and shared many a story with us about their time in Altona.



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## ALTONA PIER VERY SUPPORTIVE OF BEACH GOERS

Our Altona Pier works wonderfully well in keeping us dry while we dangle a fishing line off the end, stand to admire our amazing sunsets or simply take a stroll to breathe in the fresh sea air, but life was not always so successful for our 124 year old seaside icon.

Werribee Shire Banner - Thursday 31 March 1932, page 3

### An Unwanted Pier REFUSED BY MINISTER ALTONA RESIDENTS' REQUEST

A pier that nobody owns and nobody wants to own is causing perturbation to residents of Altona and Werribee Shire council, who waited upon the Minister of Works (Mr. Kiernan) last week, and offered it to the Government. In polite, but exceedingly firm, language the Minister made it clear that the Government was not in the market for bridges of dubious ancestry and shaky health.

The history of the unwanted O'Brien and other speakers told the needed before the pier, which is located Beach Estate Co., which built it in 1888 bought for speculation. It was used at also. On occasions there were dense pier's length, and as some piles were safety of the public. When a seaplane cued, the pier was pronounced unfit to ribee council was unable to find funds dents were unanimous in the hope that ment, as it was really an asset to the

The Shire engineer (Mr. G.T. within recent years on foreshore imroad with adjacent metropolitan areas. be closed. If £600 were spent on piles and decking it more years.

"I realise what the pier means trict, inasmuch as it is at times a magnet said the Minister in reply, "but I should acceded to your request." The Government, he continued, had no money for such works, even if it were prepared to accept them. This was not the sort of proposal he could recommend, but he would bring it under the notice of the unemployment relief committee, which might include it on the schedule of works for next year. He advised them, however, to shoulder part of the burden themselves.

Included among the speakers were representatives of the local foreshore committee, progress association, swimming club, A.N.A. branch and A.L.P. branch.



pier is quite a romance in itself. Cr. Minister that months of search was at Altona, was traced back to the Altona in order to enable it to dispose of land one time by the Altona brown coal mine crowds all along the 440 yards of the missing apprehension was felt for the that dived into the Bay had to be resbear the weight of the parts. The Wer-to recondition the pier, and local resi-it would be taken over by the Govern-district.

Little) said £10,000 had been spent provements and in linking up Altona The pier was totally unsafe, and should

would be made fit for use for several

to the health and prosperity of the disfor large crowds of holiday makers," be failing in my duty as a Minister if I

(Let us hope in the next major works on the pier that allowance is made to replace the unsightly galva-nised piping handrails with the original feature of white painted timber.)

## The Australian Women's Weekly



The National Library Australia (NLA) has an ongoing project of digitising newspapers and periodicals so that their contents may be accessed on the internet, providing a wonderful resource for those undertaking research of all kinds. NLA has completed digitising the first 50 years of The Australian Women's Weekly, first published in June 1933, however the collection is missing a large number of editions and the NLA would appreciate assistance with locating any of these. The NLA website [www.nla.gov.au](http://www.nla.gov.au) contains a complete list of the editions they're seeking.

Many households over the years have enjoyed collecting this iconic magazine and if you suspect you may be able to help with missing editions but are not completely sure, you are welcome to come along to the Altona Homestead Museum on a Saturday morning when we will be able help you.

(Supplied by Ann Cassar)

**MINUTES**

Minutes of ALHS general meeting held 21st February 2012 at the Altona Homestead 128 Queen Street, Altona commencing 7.38pm, chaired by Peter Weaver.

	Detail	Action
1.	<b>Present</b> P Weaver, J Hevey, A Cassar, M Rice, E Brogan, K.Walsh, S.Walsh, J.Kirkman, J Kent, E Muller, B Hanson, P.Chamberlain, B.Dierker, O.Hyde, T.Ferris, J.Ferris, R.Ferris, Patrick, R.Blair	
2.	<b>Apologies</b> A.Briffa, B & M. Hawkins	
3	<b>Minutes of previous General meeting</b> The minutes of the 15 <sup>th</sup> November 2011 having been previously circulated were: Moved Elaine Brogan Seconded Owen Hyde that the Minutes be accepted	Carried
3.	<b>Finance</b> The Treasurer reported on the Finances and advised of the amounts currently held in the Bendigo Bank Cheque Account \$11237.35 and the Investment Account \$5734.97. Moved Owen Hyde Seconded Kim Walsh that the report be accepted.	
4.	<b>Correspondence</b> In: HBCC Shared Equipment Form (re Digital Note Taker) Public Records Office – Facility has been approved as a POD Place of Deposit) Bank Statement Term Deposit stands at \$5734.97 @ 17/2/2012 Out: Request to ATO for change of contact name for ABN purposes, Newsletters for December/January/February	
5.	<b>Reports:</b> President Peter Weaver reported on a successful Australia Day with 400 to 500 persons having passed through the Homestead on that day, \$200 having been received from Annette Stephens from the Devonshire Afternoon tea, Book Sales amounted to \$300,he advised on events forthcoming including Lantern Tours, Art in Public Places, Heritage Week, Beach Festival 10 <sup>th</sup> March. Ann Cassar advised that Mary Hubble had donated a copy of the original rules from 1961, which were used to set up the Association. Margaret Rice presented and tabled a two page report prepared by Bob Hawkins following the meeting of the Western Metropolitan Group of Historical Societies held at Deer park on the 11 <sup>th</sup> February 2012.it details the in depth reports given to that meeting on the activities of the ALHS, and also details of reports given by attending Historical Societies from Craigieburn, Keilor, Living Museum of the West, Melton,	

StAlbans, Sunshine, Elaine Brogan (FOSALH).

It was moved and seconded and carried that a \$20 donation be forwarded to the Group to assist in defraying costs. (Carried)

The next meeting of the Group will be at the TAA Museum on the 12<sup>th</sup> May.

Judith Kirkman, advised on the web site and its current state of preparation, software is available to enable scanned materials to become searchable PDF's.

Text needed to begin to fill out the web site in regard to history and activities

#### **General Business**

Barry Hanson donated to the archives a photograph of the 1956 Altona Football Club Team.

Joan Kent asked regarding a new supply of brochures.

Ethel and Joan to represent the Society in the Beach Festival Parade on 10<sup>th</sup> March.

Elaine Brogan queried the position of Life members and the payment of annual fees by them, Secretary Jim Hevey advised that this question had been addressed by a previous committee chaired by then President Bob Richardson, (9/1/2010) and it was confirmed by that committee that an annual fee would continue to be charged to Life Members otherwise the Constitution would need to be changed to allow for alteration to the existing rules.

Guest Speaker

#### **The Guest Speaker:**

For the evening was Tom Ferris, a Member of the Williamstown Historical Society, and a former Vice President of that group, who gave a talk with slide presentation of the early history and activities of the Williamstown Racecourse and its significant contribution to the early history of horse racing in Victoria.

Meeting closed 8.35 pm.

**Next General Meeting – Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2012**

# Next Meeting

**Tuesday 17th April 2012 - General meeting**

***Members please assist whenever and wherever you can especially the major event days including Beach Festival and Heritage Day***

## **March 2012**

Tuesdays 11 a.m - 2 p.m

Beach Festival - 10th March - Homestead open 10 - 6 p.m

Bus tours / set up site Friday/pull down Sunday Members assistance required

24th-Significance Workshop - Bookings needed

31st March The Homestead will be the first stop in the Art in Public Places program.

## **April 2012**

Sunday 1st Open Day

Tuesdays 11 a.m. - 2 p.m

Tuesday 17th General meeting

Heritage Week

## **May**

Sunday 6th Open Day

## **June 2012**

Sunday 3rd

Tuesdays 11 a.m. - 2 p.m

Tuesday 19th General Meeting