Altona Laverton Historical Society Inc.
PO Box 236 Altona 3018

NEWSLETTER

A Time to Reflect, and a Time to Celebrate

Kim Reilly, President

At this time of year, I am reminded on the celebration of Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is the time to give thanks or express gratitude for blessings, such as family, friends, and what you have achieved. At its core it has three principles. The first is ***Gratitude*** for the good things in life, the second is ***Gathering*** or the coming together to show appreciation for one another, and the third is ***Reflection*** or to acknowledge the gains both big and sums up 2025 for the historical society and our volunteers.

Our members embraced both the Heritage Festival and Open House Melbourne events which brought a lot of new people to the Homestead and to Hobsons Bay. It amazes us how so many of our visitors are from outside Hobsons Bay which shows what a great place Hobsons Bay is to visit. Our Open House event attracted over 130 visitors on one day, and the weather that day was less than ideal. We also enjoyed visits from several other Historical Societies, U3A groups, walking clubs, Retirement Villages from across Melbourne and many local school groups.

We have partnered with several local groups including Seabreeze Quilters, Altona Rotary, Dramawerkz Youth Theatre, Laverton Bowls Club and Altona U3A in their projects and it is always great to share the Homestead and history of our local area. To all our volunteers this year would not have been the success that it has been without you. The committee and I thank you for your knowledge, your time, but most importantly, the enthusiasm that you bring to every event we do and to everyone who comes into the Homestead. We could not do what we do without you and so we say a very big thank you and please take time out over Christmas and spend time with your family and friends. Our industries volunteers: Marlene, Lyn, Jasmin, Lynda, Sharen, Julie, Maria, Elaine, Adam, Graeme Kerss, Jim, Ann, Siobhan and Tamsan without you we could not have achieved as much as we have over the past year.

I join our committee in wishing you all a safe and joyful Festive Season, spend time relaxing with your families and friends, and enjoy a well-earned rest, before returning refreshed in late January 2026. Next year is looking as exciting as the last half of this year as we wrap up existing projects and begin our journey on new ones.

Training at the Altona Army Camp

By Graeme Reilly

Stories and artefacts arrive at the Historical Society in a variety of ways. Families donate records from prominent residents, some through non-related research and then there are times when you receive an email from out of nowhere asking if you would like an image of their relative who trained at the Altona Army Camp in late 1916. Without a hesitation, we said yes, and a week later the original photo, below, arrived in the mail. On the reverse it was noted that the relative, Neil Jobling, was in the back row, fourth from the left, the group represented the 51st Signal Troop and the image was taken September/October 1916.

forward by the then Prime Minster, William (Billy) Hughes. The referendum, in October 1916, did not get up, losing narrowly by a margin of 48.4% to 51.6%. Whilst the referendum was being debated, the Altona camp was being used to train members of the Citizen Forces, the pre-war Army Reserve which required young men, over the age of 18 to join and attend military training. There were exceptions for those outside of major cities and larger towns. There was also an intake of new recruits into the Australian Imperial Force, and we believe approximately 42 new recruits enlisted, at Altona, whilst the camp was active[1].

The photo shows the troop positioned amongst a cluster of tents that, other than the YMCA Hall, made up the Altona camp. The camp was established in 1916 to take in the anticipated influx of recruits that would be called up under conscription that was being put

So, the question this image presents is - who was Neil Jobling and why was this young man, from the district of Kerang, in north-central Victoria, undertaking Citizen Forces' training at Altona.

[1] Research undertaken with WW1 records from National Archives of Australia noting enlistment at Altona.

Neil August Jobling was born on 24 October 1896, in the township of Macorna, Victoria. Neil was the tenth of fifteen children born to parents John Jobling and Ida Marie Jobling (nee Schreck). John had migrated to Australia, as a child, from England in 1863 whilst Ida, who was born in Victoria, came from parents who had migrated from Prussia and Germany. Macorna is a rural township located about 22 km south-east of Kerang and 85 km north of Bendigo where much of the land is used for dairy farming. When Neil was born the population was 140 people with the Jobling family making up almost 10% of that population.

Neil's early life and education would have been in Macorna and at the local primary school but showing potential and an interest in furthering his education, he moved to Melbourne and attended the Melbourne High School where after graduation his studies took him into teaching. His elder brother, Frank Henry Jobling, was also a teacher which may have influenced Neil in his career choice.

He was appointed to his first teaching position, in March 1914, at the Middle Park Primary School. This event explains why he was a member of the Citizen Forces and why it was with the 51st Battalion (51st Signal Troop). Firstly, Neil was now eighteen years of age and working/living in the inner suburb of Middle Park where the 51st Battalion Citizen Force met and trained[2]. Neil was therefore expected to be a part of this battalion of the Citizen Force. 'Training in Earnest – Altona Bay Camp', reported in the Argus newspaper (4 September 1916) reported that the annual camp of the Australian citizen forces had begun and that the 51st Battalion would be amongst those training at the Altona camp later that month. Hence the photo being taken and the inclusion of Neil August Jobling.

Neil remained at the Middle Park Primary School July of 1917, at which date he transferred to the school at Muckatah, south of the border town of Cobram. This move would have put on end to his required Citizen Forces training and meant that he would not enlist into the Australian Imperial Force of the Great War.

But while Neil did not enlist, his brothers Frank Henry Jobling, George Ernest Jobling and Ralph Jobling did, with George and Ralph enlisting and serving together. Frank Jobling was also a teacher at the end of the war he returned to teaching. George Jobling returned to the Kerang district and gained[3] 600 acres of land and entered wheat farming. Ralph also entered the family business of farming in the Kerang district.

Neil Jobling remained in teaching until he resigned in January 1929. He made the decision that he would also take up farming and returned to his hometown of Macorna where he acquired property and commenced farming.

In 1932, Neil married Elsa Hannah Cleggett, and they had one daughter, Merle Jobling. Neil remained in farming until his passing in August 1987 and he is interred within the Kerang Cemetery, as are several of the Jobling family.

The photo was given to us by the daughter of Merle Jobling, and Neil August Jobling was her grandfather. It has been an interesting exercise establishing quite an amount of the background of the Jobling family, which is more extensive than this short story.

Is there any other connection between the Jobling's and Altona? Well, there just might be because Neil's brother Frank Henry Jobling married into the Parham family, which is well connected with Altona for many years, and Frank did live and work around the Footscray/Yarraville area.

[2] Age (Melbourne) 27 June 1913, page 11

[3] George was provided land under the Soldier Settlement Act.

Time Capsule: Altona, 100 Years Ago (1925)

ELECTRICITY SCHEMES.

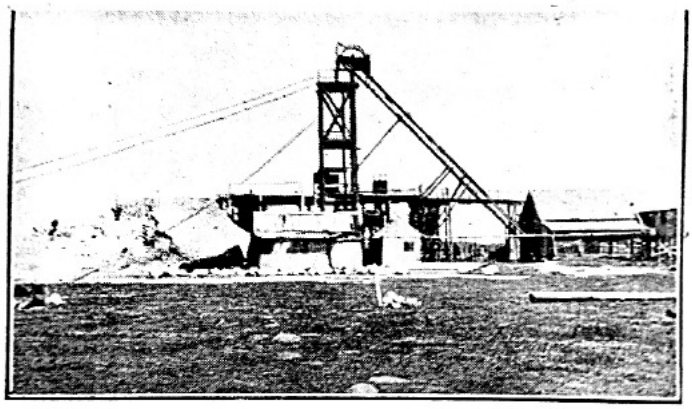
Yallourn and Altona.

In a letter from a correspondent published in "The Age" yesterday the suggestion was made that the Altona brown coal deposit should be utilised instead of extending the Yallourn scheme. It was stated that samples of the Altona coal contained only 30 per cent. of moisture, as compared with 65 per cent. at Yallourn.

When questioned on the matter yesterday officers of the Electricity Commission did not comment on the moisture question. They stated, however, that the main objection to the Altona was the 72 feet of overburden, compared with 33 feet at Yallourn. In addition it was considered that the formation of the coal at Altona would lead to internal combustion fire, especially as only underground mining was possible. Reference was made to the report of the advisory committee on brown coal in 1917, in which it was stated that the then cost per ton of winning coal would be 6/3 at Altona and 2/3 at Morwell. It was also pointed out in the report, however, that the cost of transmitting power from Altona would be almost negligible. The total annual cost of Altona was estimated at £251,000, compared with £210,000 for Yallourn.

It was stated yesterday that the committee's estimate of the power requirements for 1925, 97,500 kilowatts, was approximately correct, and it was pointed out that all estimates in the report were based on the assumption that raw brown coal with over 40 per cent of moisture would be consumed in the boilers.

National Library of Australia



The brown coal mine, situated over unlimited supplies of coal, offers cheap fuel to factory

Even up to 1925 and beyond, the debate went on as to whether Altona or Yallourn's coal would produce electricity to meet Melbourne's need. While the quality of the coal from Altona appeared to be of better quality the electricity commissioners however, believed that Altona's underground mining, with the connected potential dangers of spontaneous combustion and pressure from artesian water, more than offset the advantages of its closeness to Melbourne and unlimited supplies of cooling water from the bay.

Morwell/Yallourn on the other hand had an abundance of coal, and its open-cut mining costs were claimed to be among the lowest in the world.

Age (Melbourne) 28 August 1925, page 8

Family Research, It All Starts with You

Have you ever thought about starting your family history, but you just don't where to begin? Well, it's not that hard to get started and you don't need to initially invest in joining up to Family Research organisations or purchasing family tree software straight away. This is the first of a series of articles we intend publishing on family research. In fact, a lot of the hints and tips we will include can be used in any research.

A systematic approach is to work backwards starting with yourself. It is best to work from what you know to what you don't know, one person at a time, then one generation back at a time. Do not skip generations and do not guess dates, places or names. To start with, the simplest way is to use paper family charts or a chart saved in a word processing software. Also, I personally keep research notes where I record more detail about each event that I have recorded and where I located the evidence that verifies each event.

If you need a copy of a family chart, we have one that we use within the historical society that we are only too happy to share, just email us via our website.

Let's get started. First, write down your full name, date and place of birth, if you are married, when and where that occurred, your spouse's name, and their date and place of birth. Then record where you sourced the data from, and if from a physical copy, then scan these and store them on your computer or a portable hard drive or cloud drive. **Hint**: label your files in a way that you can easily identify what they are and who they belong to, which could be for example – Smith_Bernard_b1945_birth certificate.

Once you have all your details recorded on a chart, move to your parents and their dates and places of birth, marriage and, if it is the case, date and place of death and burial. If you know of any other key events, for example war service, migration to or from Australia search for these records as well. Start with your father and then your mother. If you are not sure about an any details, then simply leave the form blank. Avoid guessing and supplying incorrect information, and if a family member provides you with this information make sure that they have evidence to back it up.

Digitise any records family members give you as you will need them when you start loading them onto sites like Ancestry, Family Search, Find My Past etc or purchase family tree software, but we will get to those later.

Every date and place that you list on your chart you need to record or cite where you located those details. **Hint**: Believe me, sometime down the track someone is going to have a different date or place for a birth, marriage or death and you will want to know that your research is sound and factual and be able to locate it. Remember, this is your research, so don't just take other people's

research as being correct. But do interview relatives and record their conversations so you can go back over these later. Also have a set of questions prepared before you start your interview.

After completing your parents and those of your spouse, move to your grandparents. Then repeat this for your partner and their grandparents. Remember not to bite off too much early on and just doing the above would mean researching 14 people without covering siblings, aunts, uncles etc. Also, during this time, you will still be discovering new records, places, and sites for finding answers to the gaps on your chart. As well, you will be transcribing your research notes, filing images and documents, and trying to validate differing information provided by various sources and/or people.

Hint: don't accept anything as being correct unless you can verify it on three documents. I remember holding my great-great-grandfather's marriage registration which stated that he was thirty-four and therefore born in 1827. This didn't fit with other information that I had, and I must have spent close on six months going back over my research trying to work our why I couldn't move forward. Eventually, we solved the mystery and discovered he had given a false age on his marriage registration, and he was forty-three years old. Which leads me to lessons learnt from examining Birth, Marriage and Death certificates and the information they contain. My thoughts are that Birth Certificates are the most accurate as both parents are there providing their information about them, you and the place, date and details of the birth and so can generally be considered as reliable. Marriage, well I thought reliable until I saw my great-great-grandfather's and now know there is room for error. Death certificates, well it really depends on who is providing the information and how close they are to the deceased. It is also a sad and stressful time so there is more potential for error. So, check details against obituaries, cemetery records, probate records, newspapers and other family members.

Having said that about death certificates, starting with death records is often where I will begin, when researching a member of my family tree. Probate and cemetery records provide a great deal about other family members and dates of life events. But you do need to reference them to other documents. Obituaries can be a rich insight providing great details about family and the person's life, achievements, and involvement within their community. Older obituaries can also provide details of when a person arrived in Australia.

Birth, death and marriage (BDM) records are generally the first kind of family records you'll discover when you start looking into your ancestors. By using these records, you can form a chain linking one generation of your family to the previous and one branch of your family to another. You will probably spend a significant amount of time tracking down BDM records as you do your family history research.

BDM records, in Australia, are controlled on a State-by-State basis, and each is different in what level and dates of information they will make available. Sometimes you will need to order/purchase a certificate because the registration and information on the search is just not enough. This can become a costly exercise to purchase certificates in every case, so I generally only do this only when it is necessary for me to break through a research brick wall and I have not been able to find the details elsewhere. If there is another way of gaining

a certificate or information, I will use that first.

Utilise local libraries and historical societies who will also have local records, but they can also provide you with free access to sites such as Ancestry and Family Search etc. This is a great way to try before you buy a membership. Librarians are also a great source of knowledge relating to what records they have available to guide your research and how to search them. Libraries and their archives can hold an array of documents in a variety of formats including online, print and microfilm. **Hint**: The State Library of Victoria and the National Library of Australia are free to join, and you can log into many of their databases from the comfort of your home. Check these out and ask about the many databases that they have available.

Local historical societies have expert knowledge in different aspects of family history and offer ongoing research support. Many societies provide workshops covering research technics and record searching. They can also guide you through the little quirks that you will encounter. One of your ancestors may have been known by a 'preferred name' which sometimes can change from document to document. Names like Ellen become Helen or Nellie, James becomes Jim, and sometimes their second name becomes their preferred name.

Other records to consider on your research journey include war or military service records, employment records such as military, police, teaching and the medical profession. Newspaper articles come into their own. It is a great way of understanding who your relatives really were and how they fitted into their community, jobs they did, sporting achievements and sometimes tragedies that befell them.

Electoral or voter rolls can reveal when your relatives lived and when, who lived with or near them, and their occupation.

You might just uncover a missing piece of the puzzle, about their life in a newspaper article that solves your family mystery. Lesson five, obituaries – these can reveal so much about your relatives, the longer and more detailed they are the more respected and valued they were to their local community. They can reveal when they came to Australia, did they move States, what they did, the organisations they belonged to and their contribution to the local community. Obituaries can also reveal details and names of other relatives, including children and siblings.

Visiting grave sites and reading the headstones and plaques can also provide so much more information that can help build your research. Some will give you both the full date of birth and death, some may list children's names.

Always remember, a solid research plan is the key to making many research breakthroughs and knocking down those brick walls that pop up between you and your ancestor's records. Our second article, within this newsletter will cover that very topic. Never be afraid to seek assistance from other researchers, we all have had times during our research journey where we have been stumped before finding that vital clue that has enabled us to move forward.

Please feel free to drop into the Altona Homestead during our open days and chat with us about any your family research challenges.

Time Capsule: Joy Flights at Brooklyn, 1919

In August 1918, just months prior to the end of WW1, the Australian Army made the decision to second five members of the Australian Flying Corps back to Australia to ramp up and improve the instruction at Point Cook Air Base.

By the time they got started, the fighting had ended but their work at the base continued. Aside from their work as instructors, these pilots were utilised in demonstration and promotional flights across Melbourne.

While several of these 'flights' were official engagements, it appears that the pilots, at Point Cook, had a level of latitude as to the use of the aircraft. In April 1919, aviator Captain Frank Edgar Tregilles, offered joy flights to anyone looking for adventure.

Captain Tregilles & daughter Beryl, 1919 (Weekly Times, 26 April 1919, p 50)

The Herald newspaper (19 April 1919, reported - Aeroplane flights were taken by passengers this afternoon from a paddock near the Guiding Star Hotel, on the Geelong Road (situated at Brooklyn). A "round trip," which afforded a bird's eye view of the landscape, was taken by several people, one at a time, with Captain F. E. Tregilles, pilot.

Frank Tregelles, originally from Western Australia, had joined the Australian Flying Corps at Laverton before serving in England and France. He was one of the five instructors seconded to train new pilots at Point Cook. It was reported, by the Herald, that Frank flew his two year and two-month-old daughter to and from Point Cook making her the youngest passenger to have taken a flight.

Laverton and the RAAF

Countless small towns changed when many of their young men and women went off to serve in the Great War, however few were impacted by the influx of volunteers to gather and train before embarking overseas, like Laverton did. The township of Laverton had the Point Cook air base established just five miles down the road, and its impact would be evident for many years to come, not just during the Great War period but well into the start of the current century.

In 1915 the approximate population of Laverton was between 85 to 100 people, but all that changed over the following four years with the growth in importance of the Point Cook flying school. According to National Archive records, only 19 new recruits are specifically identified as enlisting at Laverton camp, between 1915 and 1918. But was that the entire story?

Point Cook was the birthplace of the Australian Flying Corps (AFC) with its four squadrons which meant that recruits travelled to Laverton, by rail, and then reside at the Point Cook base before they embarked overseas. This meant that the population of the area swelled considerably, from time to time, before returning to its former level and then repeating the cycle again. One of those recruits noted as enlisting at Laverton was Frank Edgar Tregilles, a twenty-six-year-old mechanic from Western Australia, who arrived at Laverton around October 1916, and then left with the No. 2 Squadron in December 1916. He served with his squadron in Northern France during World War 1 before returning to Australia to be an instructor at Point Cook. Frank also served, with the RAAF during World War 2.

Planning Your Research

In our second article we will look at how to plan your research, no matter what stage your journey is at, and the benefits of following that plan.

Effective and successful (factual) family history research is the systematic and methodical study of one's ancestry over multiple generations. It is a fascinating and deeply personal journey into the past, allowing individuals to uncover their family's roots, understand their heritage, and piece together the stories of their ancestors. It is more than just a list of names, dates, and places (family chart).

Reflecting on what I have learnt during my time at ALHS and undertaking my own family research over the past twenty years, I thought it was a good to share my tips and strategies that will make your adventure into family history research that much more rewarding, successful and, most importantly, fun. So, here are my tips for researching like a professional.

1. **What or who am I researching and why?**
   Get curious. What is it that you want to achieve from your research and why? Is it that you just want to know about your ancestor's key event dates and places (e.g. birth, marriage, death etc) or do you want to discover more about certain events that happened in their life, or you wish to confirm family stories, major achievements, what was going on around them when and where they lived and worked. The answer to these questions will indicator to you when you can move on from researching a person to the next person and remember 'one step at a time' research one person before you move onto subsequent people, no matter how tempting it is. I suggest you start backwards, that is start with yourself and then work back through your parents and then grandparents.

2. **What do you already know?**
   List all the background information you know no matter how minor you think it is or whether you have proof to back it up. What you are looking to do is work out what you do know and therefore what you need to look for and need to confirm as being true about your ancestor. The more birth/death certificates etc that you have the better, but you can still find facts with or without these documents. Chat with other family members, research books of the area in which they lived and search online newspapers.

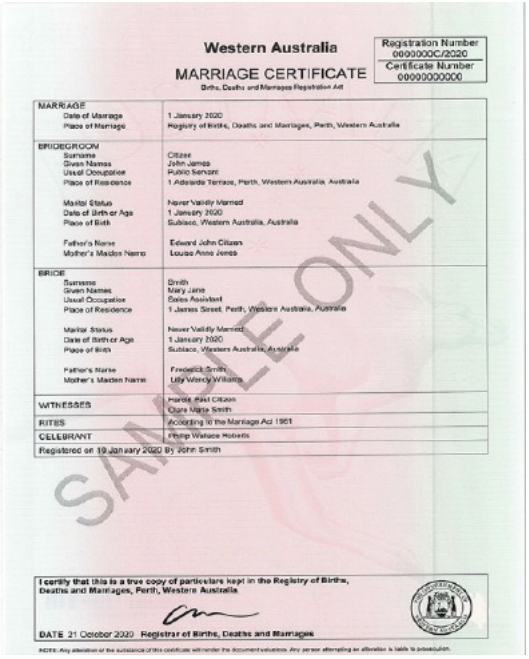
3. **Plan what you want to research and then research to your plan.**
   What I mean by this is, given what you decided that your research objective

was and what you do not already know but want to know, consider where you might find this information and what type of document will provide you that information. Set out all the things you want to find out about that one person and then search for everything about that person that will provide clues to other events and people. A key here is to not get sidetracked if you find something about another person in your tree. Simply, record it and where you found it in your notes and go back to your original person that you were researching.

4. **Research by the Factor of Three.** Firstly, when I locate a document relating to the person I am currently researching, I want to be able to confirm at least three facts on the document, e.g. name, date, location, mother/father/spouse, occupation with facts that I already know to be true. By doing this I can then accept the document into my research with a much greater level of confidence that it belongs to my ancestor. If I cannot, I do not necessarily discard it, I will note what it is and where I found it in my research notes and then move on to look for other records or documents. The other part of what I mean by the 'factor of three' is that I will look to confirm a fact in three separate documents or sources. Why, well with some documents or sources the information recorded is often taken from a relative who might know or may guesstimate what they believe is fact. So, on a death certificate, the date or year of birth or marriage might be what the children believe but they do not have the original birth or marriage certificate on hand when they completed the certificate registration. Or if you calculate a birth date from, say a WW1 enlistment record, there is no date given just the age that was given by the person which might be true or not, depending on their circumstance. Also, official sites such as Birth, Deaths and Marriage Victoria may only provide the year of registration, therefore you might need to purchase a copy of the actual birth certificate to know the actual date for certain. So, think about what vital records you want to find, and where can I access these records.

5. **Evaluate, Cite and Store Records.** So now you starting to locate and collect records, documents, and images. So how do I evaluate them and store them? To avoid repeating the same unrewarding searches on the same websites again, keep a written record of all the sources you search, the date you search them and what you find or do not find. Once you have a record, read the whole document through and check off the details with what you know about your ancestor. Can I match at least three facts on the record with what I already know to be true, and if so then you can consider the data to belong to your ancestor. Note this on your search journal, record the data against your ancestor, cite the source of the record, and then store the record (either digitally or physically). Use a storage process that will enable you to relocate the record later particularly if it relates to

more than one ancestor. Then move on to the next part of your research plan. I always look for at least three documents that will confirm as many of my research facts as possible. What I mean is, if I find the date of birth on one document, can I confirm that same date from two other sources and if not, why not.



Western Australia

Registration Number
0000000C/2020
Certificate Number
00000000000

MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE

Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act

MARRIAGE	
Date of Marriage	1 January 2020
Place of Marriage	Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, Perth, Western Australia
BRIDEGROOM	
Surname	Citizen
Given Names	John James
Usual Occupation	Public Servant
Place of Residence	1 Adelaide Terrace, Perth, Western Australia, Australia
Marital Status	Never Validly Married
Date of Birth or Age	1 January 2020
Place of Birth	Subiaco, Western Australia, Australia
Father's Name	Edward John Citizen
Mother's Maiden Name	Louise Anne Jones
BRIDE	
Surname	Smith
Given Names	Mary Jane
Usual Occupation	Sales Assistant
Place of Residence	1 James Street, Perth, Western Australia, Australia
Marital Status	Never Validly Married
Date of Birth or Age	1 January 2020
Place of Birth	Subiaco, Western Australia, Australia
Father's Name	Frederick Smith
Mother's Maiden Name	Lily Wendy Williams
WITNESSES	Harold Paul Citizen Clare Marie Smith
RITES	According to the Marriage Act 1961
CELEBRANT	Philip Wallace Roberts

Registered on 19 January 2020 By John Smith

SAMPLE ONLY

I certify that this is a true copy of particulars kept in the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, Perth, Western Australia

DATE 21 October 2020 Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages

NOTE: Any alteration of the substance of this certificate will render the document valueless. Any person attempting an alteration is liable to prosecution.

Courtesy: Government of Western Australia

Take the sample marriage registration document above. Do all the names match with your records? Do dates match and is the place of the wedding relatable to where your relative lived? Sometimes if ages are given, these might appear out by a year simply because of the actual date (day/month) of both the birth and marriage but if it is more than a year you need to investigate why.

6. **Regularly review your plan.** Review your progress and if you are not finding records then you might need to make an adjustment to your plan or where you are searching for information. Visit your local historical society or local or State Library. All of these have very skilled and knowledgeable people who are extremely willing to provide additional hints and sometimes have the documents are you looking for. Then? Well, when you have researched as far as you can on your initial ancestor, move to their spouse or parents and continue the process.

It may seem overwhelming at first, but do not let your research or planning intimidate you. A little practice and it will become easier to organise yourself and find more documents and details of your ancestors than you every thought possible. It is our intention to add to this article with several follow-up articles/topics that will assist you on your family research journey. These articles will appear in future editions of our newsletter, so be sure to look out for these in the coming issues.

Remember, a solid research plan is the key to making ancestral breakthroughs and knocking down those brick walls standing between you and your ancestors. Never be afraid to seek assistance from family and other researchers, we have all had points in our research that have stumped us, for a while, before we have found the vital clue that has enabled us to move forward.

We will issue more articles on Family Research in coming issues of our newsletter, however, please feel free to drop into the Altona Homestead and chat with us about any your research challenges.

NEW £35,000 SPEED TRACK TO OPEN

RECORD CROWDS EXPECTED AT ALTONA ON SUNDAY

The fastest speeds yet clocked in Australia should be recorded at the new £35,000 Altona motor racing circuit when it opens on February 21. The opening meeting will be conducted by the Harley Club of Victoria. Australia's leading motor cycle stars will compete at the meeting.

A special feature of the meeting will be a time trial race between Stan Jones, crack Australian racing car driver, and Frank Sinclair, national motor sidecar driver.

Jones will race in his Cooper Special and Sinclair on a Vincent Special. Both vehicles are capable of more than 130 mph.

It will be the first time in the world that a racing car and racing bike have competed in a time trial.

The new track, which cost £35,000, was built by well-known racing drivers Stewart and Neil Charge and is the first of its kind to be built in Australia.

They have laid more than 2¼ miles of all weather bitumen track fully enclosed by a steel safety fence. Modern sanitary conveniences have been installed and future plans provide for stands, changing rooms, fully equipped racing pits and permanent refreshment rooms.

Free parking space is available for 3000 cars.

By rail the track is only a few hundred yards from Altona and Seaholme stations. By road it is off Geelong Road near Millers Road.

Special buses direct to the track will meet every train at North Williamstown station.

★

Williamstown Chronicle, 19 February 1954, page 1

Car Racing at Altona

In 1953 a company, which included well-known racing drivers, Stewart and Neil Charge, constructed a bitumen racing circuit of about two miles. The original costing was for £20,000, but the promoters were said to have spent £35 ,000 by the time the circuit opened with a motorcycle meeting on 21 February 1954. It drew a crowd which the Age newspaper put at 10,000 spectators. The speedway was on a site at the corner of McArthurs and Millers Roads. By 1958, the Millers Road speedway site had been sold to Ensign Enterprises, who planned a brick and glass hotel of seventy-four squares. The plan catered for several bars, a beer garden and parking for five hundred cars. Originally named the Central Hotel, the new business in Millers Road finally opened in 1961. It was later renamed the Millers Inn, and at the time the only licensed hotel in Altona.

OUR COLLECTION

The historical society has begun sorting through its collection of audio tapes, videos, films and even some 4" floppy discs from a long ago computer era, to determine what further action is required to save useful data for future generations. The society has made this its major project for 2026 ensuring the preservation of our Hobsons Bay heritage.

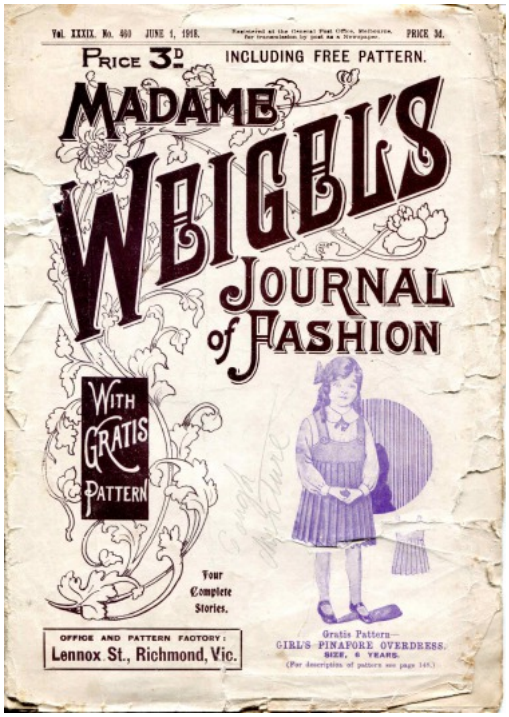
This is while we complete some other projects still on the go, such as digitising Around Laverton magazines, and cataloguing various objects donated to the society from the estate of the late Cr David Graham.

We also have a group of objects currently being worked on relating to Mobil Oil Refinery, that were donated from the estate of their past electrical supervisor, the late Ted Shields. This is particularly significant as we now watch the old refinery on the corner of Kororoit Creek and Millers Roads enter its end-of-life phase as dismantling the over 70 year old plant takes place.

We strongly urge other local groups to carry out a similar process with their own collections, in turn making sure their own story can be told. We welcome any visitors wanting to see how we go about this important work and the type of equipment we use.

Come and say hello during Tuesday and Saturday mornings as well as Devonshire Tea Sundays. Check our website for more detail on when the homestead is open and how to book your Devonshire Tea.

Madame Weigel's Journal of Fashion



The historical society has in its collection what may be considered a hidden gem by many enthusiastic sewing people out there. That is, a substantial quantity of Madame Weigel's dress making magazines complete with their accompanying paper patterns.

These were available in the period when ready made clothes for the average family to buy off the rack were almost non existent, and before the large scale production of paper patterns took over the market. We have numerous editions published from September 1910 to July 1933.

It is unfortunate this historical society has no record of where they came from, so we are unaware of any local significance. Therefore we have made a concerted effort to find out if there is any local, state or federal organisation who could be interested in adding these to their collection, only to hear they already have this field well covered.

So we would like to offer our avid readers the opportunity of putting these to good use rather than continuing to linger in their dark, lonely archive boxes in our store room. If you indeed feel you could make use of one or more, or may be you just want to look at something that was published over 100 years ago, please pop into the homestead on a Tuesday or Saturday morning when we're open, or may be come along one of the Sundays when you can also enjoy a truly scrumptious Devonshire Tea (bookings essential through our website).