

W I N T E R 2 0 1 4

# the Memory Bank

Quarterly Newsletter of the Millthorpe & District Historical Society



## The President Writes

The Millthorpe and District Historical Society 50th Anniversary Celebrations of the formation of the society, was held on the 8th May, with over 40 members attending, including three of the remaining foundation members, David Nicholas, Margaret Dowell and Peter Whiley.

The evening commenced with a barbecue, followed by the monthly meeting. Items on the agenda included the "World Premier" presentation of Ann Harrison's DVD "Millthorpe, Yesterday and Today" and a report from Peter Whiley on the historical progress of the Museum over the last 50 years. David Nicholas, foundation secretary and person responsible for the formation of the Historical Society, then gave an interesting address on the early days of the Museum, followed by the unveiling of a plaque honoring the foundation Office Bearers, Charles Kingham, president, David Nicholas secretary, and James Purser treasurer. David then cut an anniversary cake which members enjoyed for supper.

The society now looks forward to celebrating 50 years of the Golden Memories Museum in November next year, with the official opening of the Trevor Pascoe Pavilion.

Peter Whiley  
President

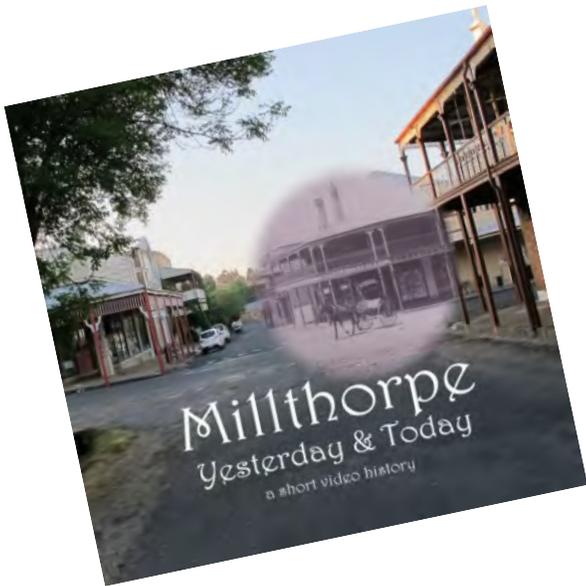


# A tight little town

## Millthorpe Celebrates Its History

A 19<sup>th</sup> century newspaper described Millthorpe as “a rising township ...a tight little town with sense of “good fellowship”.

The people of Millthorpe have always been proud of their town and their history and on the 8<sup>th</sup> of May, the Millthorpe and District Historical Society marked another milestone. The society was founded on the 8th May 1964 by a group of locals and now is celebrating its achievements over the last 50 years while preparing for the future.



The Millthorpe and District Historical Society celebrated by launching a DVD recounting Millthorpe history through early photographs and relating them to the modern National Trust listed village. The occasion was marked with a special meeting on the anniversary with special guests and a barbecue. There was also a plaque unveiled commemorating the first office bearers of the society.

The DVD – *Millthorpe: yesterday and today*, was produced by Ann Harrison, a Millthorpe resident, on behalf of the Millthorpe Village committee and the Golden Memories Millthorpe Museum. It summarises the history of Millthorpe through old photographs and newspaper reports. Not only is this a way of celebrating history, but it is hoped that sales will contribute to continued fund raising.

The Golden Memories Millthorpe Museum was opened 20<sup>th</sup> November 1965, and it is hope that next year a new pavilion will be completed for the occasion. The pavilion will be dedicated in memory of Trevor Pascoe who was the Society president for more than 20 years. He held a vision that inspired others who have worked hard to create a museum, which is now a large complex with seven buildings housing many and varied collections.

## Membership

*Membership fees are due after the 30<sup>th</sup> of June. Fees are \$15. If you have not renewed your membership you are not covered for Public Liability Insurance! Please pay Rosemarie Amos (6366 3152), pay at the museum or send to PO Box 27 Millthorpe.*





## The Blacksmith by Peter Whiley

Blacksmithing arrived in Australia with the First Fleet and played an important role, shoeing the horses, building, maintaining the carts and machinery. The tasks of the blacksmith continued for around another 150 years, until the motor car and motor lorry became the preferred mode of transport.

There were up to four blacksmiths who operated their businesses in Millthorpe, and many farmers had their own forge to carry out blacksmithing tasks on their farms.

**Billy Horton** had a blacksmith shop along the Blayney Road just along from the Bank of NSW. Billy lived in Victoria St. next to the Butchers Shop and his wife carried on a business as a Ladies Hairdresser

In **1890** at the age of 13 years, **Thomas "Tom" Buesnel** was apprenticed to Billy Horton. The blacksmith's bellows in Exhibition Building at the Museum is the one on which Tom served his apprenticeship. Tom went on to operate a blacksmith shop in Orange. The museum has on display in a glass case, a full set of horse shoes made by Tom.

**Jerimah Murphy**, operated a blacksmith wheelwright business in Cargo for 16 years before coming to Millthorpe in Feb. 1900. He bought out **Mr. J. Nicholls**, who had an established business here.

Jerimah suffered a serious accident and had a leg amputated. He retired to Griffith with his wife, and his son, Ted, took over the business and carried it on until the 1950s. He employed up to 30 people, and would shoe up to 200 draught horses a week at times, as well as saddle horses and sulky horses.

When **John Burton** left school his first job was with Ted Murphy as a Striker. A strikers job was to wield a heavy hammer and strike the red hot metal to the blacksmiths instructions, shaping, bending, drawing it out as the blacksmith held the hot metal on the anvil with long handled tongs.

**Alpheus** (also known as 'Phonso') **Wenban** came to Millthorpe in the 1880s and established a coach building and blacksmithing business on the Blayney Road not far from where the railway overhead bridge is today. The Wenban Waggon was known throughout the whole of N.S.W. In the latter years he carried on only the black smithing and repair work. Alpheus' brother, David continued on with the business which thrived for many years before the advent of the motor car. He was a member of the Masonic Lodge, and was a prominent bandsman. Alpheus died in 1936 aged 77.

**Mr T Norris** was also listed as a Blacksmith & Wheelwright in Freemans Journal 29<sup>th</sup> April 1899.

# THE SAMPLER



Have you ever wondered as to how the many blocks of bluestone in the roads and gutters around our town or the walls in the handsome cottages, churches and the Good Templars Hall at the Millthorpe Museum were created?

The local stone, a basalt that originally spewed out from Mt Canobolas, surrounds Millthorpe giving rise to some pretty nuggetty outcrops and some wonderful fertile soils. The stony outcrops formed the quarries for the heavy basalt rock.

In searching for a local source of cheap building material stonemasons came upon these outcrops and set to work.

In our museum you will find a special tool called a knapping hammer. The knapping hammer was used to split the basalt into columns. The grain in the basalt was studied and a hit in the right place with this hammer would split the dense rock. With several hits in the right places a square bluestone block would be the finished result. The blocks would then be hauled to their new resting place by horse and wagon.



## Shine a light on a member

**An occasional feature about our many members and their community passion for history and the Millthorpe Museum**

### John Mason

John Mason along with his wife Marnie, have been members for 10 years. For the first 8 years he admits to being one of the worst members but with retirement has become more involved. John's particular passion is for his walking tours, leading tours through Millthorpe explaining the town's history and characters.

John's favourite object in the museum is the old dried up granny smith apple. John believes the museum's biggest challenge is the transition from management by its dwindling older members to becoming more of a commercial operation. He is amazed by the efforts of Peter and Joan Whiley and how the changes inspired by Past President Trevor Pascoe have come to fruition. John believes the greatest asset of the museum is the wonderful collection of farm related machinery and lifestyle collection. John and Marnie are very proud of the Museum's place in the village.