



NATIONAL TRUST

Mornington Peninsula Branch Newsletter Winter - 2007

April 1st saw the Mornington Peninsula Branch celebrate its 22nd Birthday. The Branch paid tribute to the many tireless and dedicated National Trust Members who have carried on the business of Branch and Committee continuously for 22 years, and until recently without permanent headquarters.

Fortune shone upon the Branch last year when it secured The Hutch at The Briars property in Mt Martha as a permanent home. The Hutch was brought to the site from the U.K. by Alexander Balcombe in 1846 and has recently undergone conservation work as part of the broader Conservation Management Plan being implemented by the Shire at The Briars historic property. Through the generosity of the a'Beckett family, descendants of Alexander Balcombe, the National Trust and the Shire jointly own the Homestead, The Hutch, and a small acreage surrounding the homestead, whilst the remainder of the property is owned by the Shire. Now that the Branch has a home, boxes of records have come to light and the serious business of archiving 22 years of records and memorabilia has begun.



The Briars Homestead and The Hutch before and after recent conservation work. March 2007

Issues covered by the Branch are quite diverse and it has been kept busy representing heritage aspects on many different levels. Some of the successful outcomes are: Mornington Main Street and Esplanade Civic Precinct, which removes the individual Heritage Overlay from some buildings in the area but now includes the **whole precinct** bound by Esplanade, Drake, Ross, Queen and Vancouver Streets in the Heritage Overlay; The Trust has classified No. 818 Esplanade, Mornington (which incorporates Mills Cottage and was the holiday house of Sir Bernard Heinze) and the Branch is supporting the placement of this building on the Shire's **permanent** Heritage Overlay; the Branch was instrumental in protecting the house *Marina* and its adjacent Japanese Tea House from demolition and the Branch has proposed that Heritage Victoria place the Tea House on the Victorian Heritage Overlay.

The Branch also

- Actively defended the Green Wedge rally at Main Ridge by objecting to the proposed Chateau Elan development.
- Supported the Shire in its intention to retain the Mt Eliza Woodlands lot sizes.
- Objected vigorously to the application to realign the boundaries on the Norman Lodge and Ansett properties in Mt Eliza.

Keeping in touch with broad local issues the Branch is represented by committee members on the Pt Nepean Focus Group, Endeavour Fern Gully, Collins Settlement Advisory Group, Local History Network, Ranelagh Residents Association and Devil Bend Advisory Group.

Winter Social Events

11th July members and friends were regaled with *Grave Stories of the Queen Victoria Market* by Trust Historian Dr Celestina Sagazio. Celestina, always a drawcard with her thorough knowledge, entertaining stories and commitment to heritage certainly 'warmed the spirits' of the audience.

Next Event 8th August

Luncheon in The Edwardian Room at The Briars commencing 12.00noon

Local raconteur extraordinaire and senior guide at The Briars, Shirley Murley, invites members to come and be... ***At home with the Balcombes*** – one of the Peninsula's earliest settler families with fascinating historical and artistic connections. \$18 Trust members Bookings–Secretary **5988 9853**

Branch Meets at The Hutch 2nd Wednesday of the month, except December and January at 4.00pm.
Enquiries welcome – President 5989 2550 – Secretary 5988 9853