



The Society and its Members acknowledge the traditional landowners, the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nations and their Elders
Past and Present.

Plenty News & Views

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July 2026

President: Kerry Fitzmaurice

Vice President: Helen Zull

Secretary: Annemarie Webb

Treasurer: Anne Hullett

Newsletter: Kerry Jones

A Word from our Vice President...

Welcome to our 2026 Winter newsletter or perhaps we should call it our recipe edition. It is certainly a change for me being in Victoria over Winter. We have generally headed off in our caravan by now searching for a warmer place. Hopefully some projects on the home front will be completed over the coming months and some further interviews completed for the Historical Society.

I have started sorting through the books that the society has and came across 'The Silver Poplar.' This book is written by Edmond Smith who arrived at The Sutherland Homes as a six-year-old and spent the next eleven years of his life there. After reading this I dug out a newspaper article that I have included in the newsletter. It is about a Plenty family and their experience with the Sutherland Homes This and other books on local histories are stored in the Historical Church and available to borrow.

**Don't forget to vote for the
Plenty Rotunda in
Pick My Park!**



Details on how
to vote are in
the newsletter.

The May Biggest Morning Tea was a financial and social success that hopefully will be even bigger and better next year. We have raised over \$1000.

Sadly, we have lost several long-standing residents of Plenty since our last newsletter. Tributes to these residents will appear in this and our next newsletter.

The Historical Society in conjunction with the Plenty Community Hall Committee have applied for a Pick-My-Park grant through the State Government. This grant would finish off the very bland and uninspiring space we currently have.

The proposal includes a small rotunda that will complement the Community Hall and the Historic Church, landscaping and planting and

Forthcoming Events

11 November 2026

Remembrance Day at the Plenty Memorial Gates

A special day of tribute to those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

28 November 2026

Open Day at the Church

Come along and see the Society's extensive collection of resources.

A word from our Vice President

Continued...

installation of the Plenty Primary School bell and time capsule. Information signs about the history of Plenty will be incorporated in the rotunda. We have progressed to stage 2 in this grant progress. This stage and the success of our application is reliant on community voting. To gain this grant we will need to reach far and wide for votes.

I hope you enjoy our newsletter, please feel free to share it with your family and friends.

Helen Zull

Vice President

OFFICIAL

PLENTY COMMUNITY NEEDS YOUR VOTE!

PICK MY PARK PLENTY ROTUNDA

 **HELP IMPROVE PLENTY - CAST YOUR VOTE**

Plenty Hall Committee and Plenty Historical Society have teamed up to enter the Pick My Park competition for funding.

 A heritage style rotunda including landscaping, time capsule and school bell is proposed for the Plenty Heritage Park site.

 **Vote between 20 June 2026 and 3 August 2026 for the Plenty Rotunda**

HOW TO VOTE:

-  Scan the QR code.
-  Scroll down and click on Northern – Banyule, Whittlesea, Nillumbik, Hume, Merri-bek, Darebin, Mitchell.
-  Scroll down and click on 'M-Q' under 'The A-Z of park projects by suburb in Melbourne's Northern Region'
-  Click on 'Plenty – Rotunda and memorial cairn in Plenty Heritage Park' and vote (then vote for 2 other parks)

SCAN THE QR CODE



 <https://engage.vic.gov.au/pick-my-park>

YOUR VOTE CAN HELP MAKE THIS A REALITY!

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY!

The Biggest Morning Tea - 2026

Our Biggest Morning Tea was once again a successful and enjoyable event. Ten past and present Plenty residents partook of a delicious morning tea and a good chat and chance to catch up on present days events and some past events in Plenty.

I am pleased to share that all together we have raised over \$1000 for this very worthwhile cause that affects each and every one of us. Thank you to those who attended and family and friends who generously donated online.



Attendees were asked to bring a teacup that had a special story behind it. We all enjoyed listening to these stories and admiring the china.



Nutty Chicken Ribbon Sandwiches

- * 15 slices of grain bread
- * 90g softened butter
- * 1.5 cups of finely chopped cooked chicken
- * 1 stick of celery
- * 1.5 tablespoons of sour cream
- * 2 tablespoons of mayonnaise
- * 1.5 tablespoons of sour cream
- a third of a cup of chopped pistachios

Method:

Spread one side of each bread slice with butter.

Combine chicken, celery, sour cream, mayonnaise and nuts in a bowl, mix well.

Spread five slices of bread with half the chicken mixture, top with buttered bread, buttered side down.

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Spread with remaining chicken mixture and top with buttered bread, buttered side down.

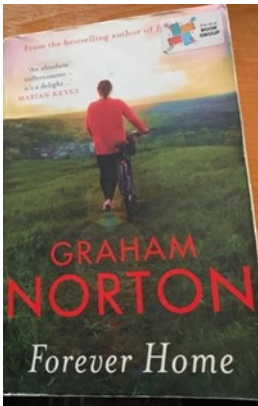
Cut crusts from sandwiches and cut sandwiches into thirds and then cut each third in half.

Can be made three hours ahead. Storage - covered in fridge. Suitable to freeze.



The Plenty Historical Society

BOOK CLUB



The Plenty Historical Society Book Club started in March 2022 with a group of local women (most who did not know each other) and a handful of women from farther afield. Most of us had never been a member of a book club (nobody would let us join), but all are avid readers.

Book clubs can be a bit cliquey and very often not open to new members. Our book club is neither of these. We source our books through the Yarra Plenty library. This month I asked would somebody please write up something about the group for the newsletter. Thank you, Maureen, for this piece.

Helen Zull



Our Book Club meets on the second Tuesday of every month in the Plenty Historic Church, ostensibly to discuss a book. In reality, it's a highly successful social gathering cleverly disguised as a literary event.

With around ten regular members, we spend some time talking about the chosen book but also cover a wide range of important topics including travel plans, family updates, local gossip, recipes, and occasionally whose turn it is to choose the next book. Remarkably, most of us even manage to finish reading at least some of the book.

What started as a shared love of reading has grown into a group of genuine friendships. New members are warmly welcomed, opinions are respected (even the wrong ones), and there's always plenty of laughter. The discussions are lively, the company is excellent, and the books provide a convenient excuse to get together each month.

If you're looking for a serious literary analysis group, this may not be for you. If you're looking for good books, great company, and an evening that leaves you smiling, you'll fit right in.

Maureen Turner



Books, Books and more Books!

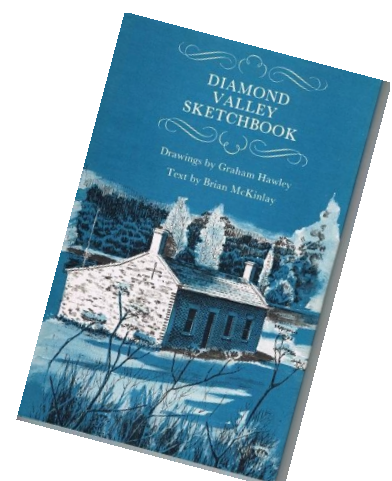
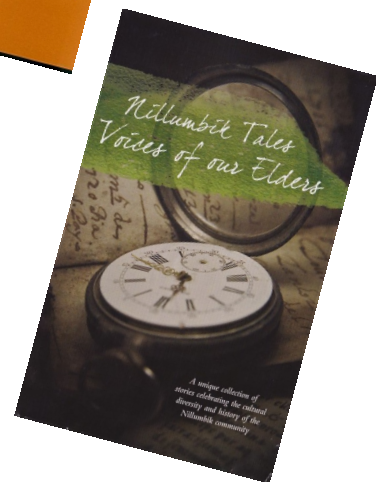
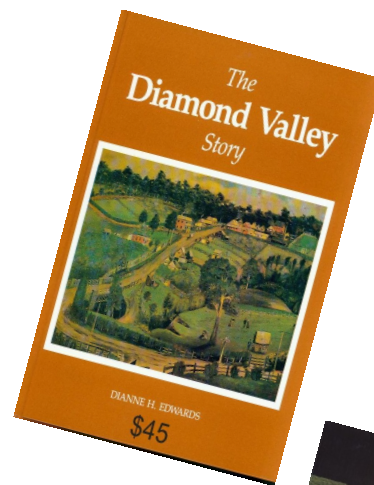
The Plenty Historical Society has a huge range of resources including an extensive library of books related to the history of the general area. These books are available for members and community members to borrow.

Just one of the many interesting books is this fascinating book about life at the Sutherland Homes. *'It is 1948, Edmond arrives as a frightened six year old at the Sutherland Homes for neglected children. He is to live there for the next eleven years...*



Other books available to borrow...

- ♦ Wild Wood Days at Panton Hill
- ♦ Victorian historical journals
- ♦ Nillumbik Tales – Voice of our Elders
- ♦ Our Eltham – Artistic Recollections
- ♦ As I Recall – a Collection of Stories – Country to Suburbia
- ♦ The Diamond Valley Story
- ♦ Diamond Valley Sketch Book
- ♦ Sutherland Home School
- ♦ Bulla Bulla – History of the shire of Bulla
- ♦ Victorian Tales – extracts from Community History awards
- ♦ Passengers on the Journey – 1950s tales about baby Boomers and others
- ♦ A Pioneer Family on the Murray River
- ♦ A Community Portrait – Lifetimes in the City of Whittlesea
- ♦ Templestowe – a folk history
- ♦ Eltham Inhabitants
- ♦ The Australian Experience in the Plenty Valley
- ♦ Greensborough and Greenhills
- ♦ A Boy of the Old Brigade – short story by Joseph Furphy
- ♦ Where the Dead Men Lie – tales of graves, pioneers and old bush pubs
- ♦ St Andrews
- ♦ Kangaroo Ground
- ♦ Centenary Year Book Yarrambat
- ♦ Centenary Book Plenty



Memories of Sutherland Homes

Prompted by the book, *'The Silver Poplar'*, our Vice President, Helen, found this newspaper article among our archives. Max Lierse, a long time resident of Plenty reminisces about his memories of Sutherland Homes.

news extra



Left: Max and Laraine Lierse. 033LP321

Below: a photo of Max and his brother Erik and sister Marie, and a group of girls at Sutherland Homes, July 1949.

Memories of Sutherland

MAX LIERSE still has fond memories of his time at Sutherland Homes, despite his painful entry to the child welfare institution home.

Max, his elder sister Marie and younger brother Erik lived on a market garden at Plenty with their parents before their mother died suddenly in 1942.

Forced by his need to keep working to support the family, and fuelled by a strong desire for his children to remain together, Bernard Lierse passed his children into the care of the nearby Sutherland Homes.

"People offered to help Dad after Mum died, but he wanted to keep us together, and that was one way he could do it," Mr Lierse said.

Despite the separation, the Lierse children did not want for contact with their father.

They would spend every Sunday away from the home, attending the Plenty Methodist Church and Sunday school and eating dinner with their dad, before returning to the home in the evening.

"He was great," Mr Lierse said of his father. "He used to take produce to the Victoria Market, and on the way back he would stop in with a big watermelon or something for all the kids to

share. We always felt a bit more fortunate than some of the other kids. Some of the others never even got birthday cards."

Mr Lierse remembered with warmth his time at Sutherland Homes, but also recalled the strict discipline.

"They were fairly strict, but I don't think that did any of us any harm in later life," he said.

"We used to get up and make our beds, we'd milk the cows, work in the vegie garden, separate the milk and do the dishes — and we used big pots, too, so it was hard work.

"There was a real routine there. You knew what you had to do, and you did it. My sister remembers having to clean 40 pairs of shoes, or scrubbing down the front veranda."

Mr Lierse said he and his sister used to enjoy milk ice blocks — fresh milk from the property frozen as a cool treat for the children.

He also remembered the support of local Freemasons, who arranged outings and activities for the children. The 50-year association of the lodge with the Sutherland Homes site will end when it closes next month.

The Lierse children returned to their father's care in

1946, when he was able to hire a live-in housekeeper to assist with day-to-day tasks.

Max Lierse remained on the farm with his father for many years, at one stage turning down a lucrative junior position with a bank to help his father after an injury prevented him from working the farm alone. Mr Lierse Jr later married Laraine, and they had three children.

Laraine, for 25 years a kindergarten assistant at Apollo Parkways Pre-School until her retirement in 1997, also had contact with many children from Sutherland Homes. The couple became "holiday hosts" to children for weekends, birthdays and holiday times.

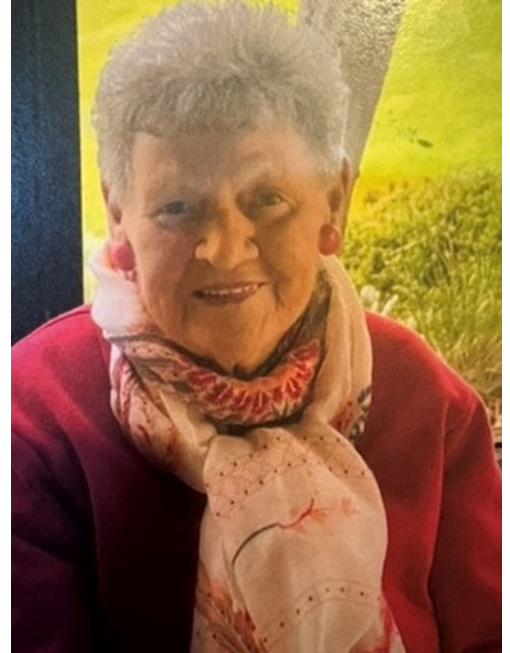


Vale - Winifred Mary (Winnie) Roberts

29 April 1936 - 28 June 2026

Winnie was an inaugural member of the Plenty Historical Society and as she did in all walks of her life, she brought an infectious enthusiasm and sense of fun to all Society activities.

Before the Society became incorporated the first group of members formed working groups to document the history of Plenty. The most active and successful of these groups was the one studying the archives of the Plenty State School. Winnie, as was the case with several of the members of that group, had attended Plenty State School. Collecting information was punctuated with personal anecdotes of school life in the 40's and 50's. Winnie was always at the heart of our activities whether it be the early Rock and Roll nights, trivia quizzes or project work. She was the Society's number one fund raiser, primarily through the Christmas raffle – who could say no to a bright smiling Winnie brandishing a book of raffle tickets; or a local business when asked, amid an animated conversation, to donate something for the hamper or a prize?



Winnie was renowned for her creative photo albums often commemorating major events such as birthdays. She also compiled a series of albums of local people which were perennially popular at Society functions; an invaluable snapshot of an era in Plenty. Winnie's contribution to Plenty Historical Society was recognized when the Executive voted to give her continuing honorary membership several years ago.

Winnie was a Plenty girl living here all her life. She was truly embedded in the Plenty community. She was a keen tennis player and a very familiar figure either riding her bike or walking, She never drove a car. No doubt her physical fitness along with a happy easy-going personality contributed to her longevity.

Winnie was also a very kind and generous person; she was a good friend to my Mum and in latter years would ride her bike doing the rounds of Plenty visiting her friends including Mum. She must have drunk several coffees as she popped in and chatted to each in turn! She always had a bright story to tell of her most recent outing with her grandchildren or trips to the footy to watch her beloved Magpies.

Winnie will live on in the hearts of all of us who were lucky enough to know her. A valued member of the Plenty community.

Kerry Fitzmaurice

Vale - Pamela Sonneman

23 November 1948 - 20 February 2026

Pam was a long-time member of The Plenty Historical Society and a valued member of the Plenty Community. Pam is remembered as a quiet, private person who got things done.

Pam passed away in February after a long battle with cancer. She was remembered at our Biggest Morning Tea in May by her friends in the Plenty craft group. The ladies said that Pam was very open about her illness and very much on the ball around her treatment.

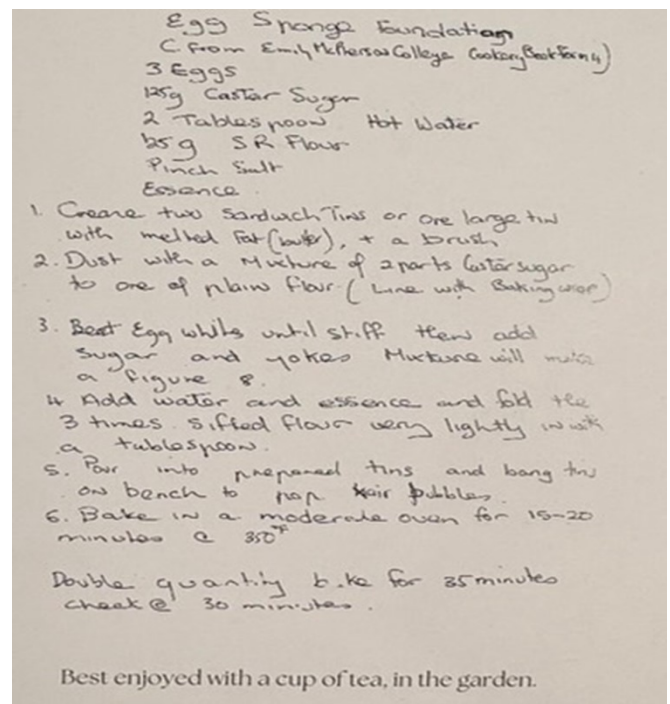


Apparently, Pam was a recycler long before it became a focus. She was loathe to throw things out and believed everything had a purpose. When she joined the craft group, she had an unfinished cardigan started by her late mother-in-law. Pam finished the cardigan and wore it herself. Pam left an unfinished scarf which members of the group have finished for Pam's husband. A large bag of wool that Pam collected is waiting to be picked up.

Pam is the mother of four children and was very involved at Plenty Primary where they attended and in the Plenty Tennis Club as a team supervisor and junior coordinator. When her children were safely in school Pam played tennis for Plenty mainly in the Diamond Valley competi-

One of the things Pam will be remembered for is her hospitality. One of the many ways she showed her love was through cooking. Pam will be missed by her family and friends in the Plenty community.

This is one of Pam's famous hand written recipes.



Vale - Karen Coulston

Passed away 20 July 2026

Karen Coulston, a long-standing member of the Plenty Historical Society, passed away on Tuesday 14th July 2026. Karen was perhaps best known in Plenty for the Hills of Plenty winery that she owned and ran with husband Laurie. Karen, a chemist, undertook a degree in wine making and became the wine maker. Their property had an interesting slice of Plenty history - in addition to the main home there is an old miner's cottage which became the cellar door for tasting days. The property sits above the Golden Stairs mine.



Karen had a keen interest in history amongst many other things; she generously opened the cottage and access to the mine entrance on their property, to members of the Society. She also donated wine for our first anniversary fund-raising BBQ and celebratory Plenty Historical Society labelled wine. Karen and Laurie were part of the working group that helped build the memorial garden surrounding the Plenty War Memorial Gates.

Karen had a wealth of knowledge of interesting local restaurants, buildings of historic significance and walks in and around the Plenty Gorge. Following Laurie's death Karen sold the property at Plenty and moved to Eltham. She was an active member and Tutor with Nillumbik U3A becoming President in 2016.



Vale - James Charles Deane

1 August 1954 - 21 June 2026



Jimmy was the youngest of the large Plenty family of John (Jack) Deane and Lillian Deane (nee Mao) consisting of two sons - John and Jimmy and eight daughters- Lorraine, Merle, Mary, Lillian, Dorothy, Beverly, Robyn and Heather

The Deane family lived at the top of the hill at the east end of Memorial Drive. They grew up in the foothills of the Plenty River and the Blue Lake in the bushland that surrounded them.

The family lived simply on acreage; they didn't have much but they made do. They lived off the land and Jimmy developed many practical skills that stood him in good stead throughout his life.

Jimmy attended Plenty Primary School. The Deane kids walked there and back every day. Apparently, Jimmy often became distracted along the way. School wasn't really his thing. Jimmy learnt the skills that he needed through his life at home and in the community. He learnt how to fish and hunt and how to build and fix things and how to look after himself.

Jimmy had to do his jobs every morning before and after school. These included feeding and watering the chickens and pigs, milking the cows, cleaning out pens, fixing whatever needed fixing as something always did. His dad and his brother John taught him how to work on cars and trucks, a skill that served him well throughout his life.

Jimmy, his brother John and Tommy Roberts trained and raced greyhounds. Jimmy's first paid job was skinning rabbits. This job was the first of many.

Jimmy's upbringing in Plenty was not a cushy one but one that obviously shaped a hardworking, resilient, cheeky and loving person.

Jimmy and his wife Chris have four children and nine grandchildren. From stories shared at his service it is a large, happy and often riotous group.

CONTRIBUTIONS:

If you would like to make a contribution to a future edition of 'Plenty News and Views', I can be contacted on:

kerry@jones.id.au or 0414861557

Thank you,

Kerry Jones—Newsletter Editor

We gratefully acknowledge the generous support and financial assistance received from Nillumbik Shire Council in the production of this newsletter.



Note: The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Plenty Historical Society or its members.