

CHILDHOOD IN PORT MELBOURNE 1918-1940

Read tales and see treasures from 100 years ago!

This exhibition has been put together by Port Melbourne Historical and Preservation Society with items from their collection. They illustrate aspects of childhood in Port Melbourne between the two world wars of the last century.

Port Melbourne

There were many families struggling to feed, clothe and house themselves: at first many returned soldiers could not find work; during the 1920s the number of men required to work the modern ships was far fewer hence jobs on the wharves and at sea were reduced; at the end of the 1920s the 1928 Dock Strike put families at risk and finally the world wide depression from 1931 affected the whole country.

In spite of these conditions many people fondly recall their childhood spent during those years. The beach was the saving experience, and it was free.

Schooling

Classroom facilities were totally different; there were very few opportunities for excursions and very few pupils had limited opportunities to continue schooling beyond Grade 8 in a primary school.

Sport and Recreation

From a young age both girls and boys could join various clubs including Girl Guides and Boy Scouts, church youth clubs and many less formal groups such as the Graham Street Soccer Club

Employment

Children contributed to the family income by earning money after school and at week-ends. It was very common for them to leave school and commence full time work at 14, or even 13½.