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www.merbeincentenary.com.au

Picnicking Back to the Future

Imagine six and half thousand people spread out in picnic mode. That was the size of the crowd at many settlers picnics held at Merbein on New Years' day from 1911 to 1955.

So pull out all those blankets and picnic sets and get ready to once again enjoy an old fashioned settlers picnic as part of the Merbein Centenary Celebrations. The Merbein Lions Club and Whiting Family Settlers Picnic will be held on Sunday 16th August, starting at 12.00pm at Kenny Park.

There is a rich history of Settlers Picnic's in Merbein. Events at these picnics included married men's and married women's races, pole vaulting, high jump, hop step and jump, stepping the chain, tossing the sheaf, women's nail driving and bowling at the cricket wicket. There were also races for children which included running, sack, potato and Siamese races, as well as the popular egg and spoon race.

In 1941 when the picnic relocated from the riverbank at the bottom of Pump Hill to Kenny Park, swimming, cricket, croquet and bowling were added to the program.

Merbein Centenary Committee member Max Whiting said "In our centenary year we feel it is appropriate to recognise the importance of this segment of Merbein's past history. This was Merbein's icon. "

Merbein Secondary School teacher Mark Avery is organising the games and races for children to participate in. So if you're keen to participate in races, there will be plenty to choose from on the day.

Entertainment on the day includes the Mildura City Band recital, Irish Dancing, fire brigade races and demonstrations, sheaf tossing, a pipe band, Scottish dancing and children's races and games.

If this all sounds like fun, the Committee encourages you to attend. For those that want to purchase food on the day, there will be an array of food outlets. This includes hotdogs, Devonshire teas, hot chips, spaghetti, steak sandwiches, sausage and bread, ice-cream, drinks and pop corn. What more could you want for a picnic?

Local Merbein girl, Lara Francis, will be coming back and singing the national anthem. Since leaving Merbein, Laura has completed a double degree in Journalism and International Studies. She is currently working at the ABC and Adelaide University. She also is studying her third year of classical voice in Bachelor of Music at the Adelaide Conservatorium.

It's a great opportunity for family or other reunions. The committee are encouraging groups get together and meet up at the picnic. Max says "We have organised a full program of some old time events with something of interest to all members of the family."

It will be great to see the old fashioned races and a chance for young and old to be involved in the activities. So bring your picnic blanket and enjoy the range of food and entertainment that will be on offer.

The picnic will be held on Sunday 16th August from 12.00pm at Kenny Park, Merbein.

For further information about the Merbein Centenary Celebrations, such the Settlers Picnic, please see the Merbein Centenary web site www.merbeincentenary.com.au

Further Enquires:

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