




# History NEWS

Issue No. 322 Feb-March 2015

Royal Historical Society of Victoria

**SPECIAL LUNCHTIME  
CELEBRATION EVENT**  
50 years since *The Land  
Boomers* – see page 15



RHSV partners with the  
Supreme Court of Victoria  
to produce the Court's first history

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## OBITUARY

**Doug Gunn (1935-2015)**

Doug Gunn died a few days before Christmas 2015. Doug was a long-time and loyal member of the RHSV. He was the member every voluntary organisation dreams of: the sort who will stay with you, renew each year, respond with interest to every event. He was not the sort who wanted to join the committees or call the shots or be chief organiser, or ask the really tricky question of the guest speaker, or court controversy – at least not in our organisation. He just wanted to be there. He was fascinated by history – by Victoria's history, by local history in particular – and he always wanted to learn more. That is the reason why the RHSV and local historical societies exist, and he wanted to be part of that.

Doug was a member of several community organisations. When I came to preside over our monthly evening lectures at the RHSV, Doug became conspicuous to me by being inconspicuous. Only after some time did I learn of the special effort he made to travel in by bus and train from Millgrove (near Warburton) to attend these events. I'd find myself looking out for the cloth cap and the small, stocky figure. G'day Doug! I would know at least we had an audience for our guest speaker.

Doug was the first to arrive, and would take the chance to browse through the new books in the bookshop to add to his own large collection. In recent months, when the cloth cap was missing from the gathering more often than not, we realised his health was deteriorating. He and I would usually have a brief conversation which often turned to his great interest in the history of the Upper Yarra Valley, or of Coburg where he grew up, or the Mechanics' Institutes, or railways. Doug had a wide range of quirky knowledge and a wry, tolerant sense of humour.

Nobody who was born in Australia in the 1930s, as Doug was, grew up without the shadow of war, past and future, and of the Depression. It was said at his funeral that he had joined the local athletics club, the Coburg Harriers, because they had hot showers, not available in his own family's modest home. Doug, like many others, saw membership in local historical societies and in the RHSV as an effective means for local communities to work in concert for a common goal. Marilyn Moore of the Coburg Historical Society told me that Doug had not missed an Annual General Meeting of the RHSV in forty-three years, and he was just as loyal at Coburg.

So I want to say thanks to Doug for being there, for supporting our work and our events. We mourn something now lost for ever: the knowledge, the insights, the understanding of connections that were particular to Doug, all that specialist local history knowledge which he now takes with him. So that's the grief. But to encourage, to enthuse those of us who remain behind, to continue to have our curiosity, to continue to tell our stories, to continue to listen and learn from the stories of others – that's Doug's enduring legacy.

Andrew Lemon. 22 December 2015

**John Hulskamp:** As we go to press, the RHSV has learned with sadness of the death on 29 January 2016 of John Hulskamp, our honorary treasurer from 2008-2012.

# History NEWS



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## From the Editor's Desk

Welcome to 2016 and to a special bumper issue of *History News*. We had so much to squeeze in that we've gone for 16 pages, a luxury we can't usually afford.

This issue features our triple-headed collaboration with the Supreme Court of Victoria. Vice-President Richard Broome, who has been working with project leader Dr Simon Smith, explains the project. We hope that many members will come out for the Exhibition, to be opened by the Governor, and to the Conference, which will feature the Chief Justice. The book itself will be a treasure of Victorian history. A pre-order form is enclosed with this issue.

We also feature a substantial article by our President, Don Garden, on the saga of the Kew house in which Gough Whitlam was born. This piece presents the many difficult issues involved in this case. It's important for us to understand such issues as we seek to preserve the past and enhance the amenity of our environment. We will be pursuing this theme in coming issues. Please let me know of any preservation issues and we'll try to follow them up.

Finally, we devote space to the important address given by Professor Shurlee Swain at the Victorian Community History Awards last October. Members will find this talk of great interest in their work as historians.

We will be carrying stories of the work of VCHA winners. And we will also carry more stories of inspiring work by our local history societies. I hope *History News* can be a useful and thought-provoking read for our societies and our members. You are the backbone of history and preservation in Victoria. Keep up the good work in 2016 and send me your thoughts and stories.

Charles Sowerwine

Saturday, 23 January 2016

## Included with this issue

History Week Banner Grant Application Form (see p.15 and insert)

Brochure and Advance Purchase Form for *Judging for the People: A Social History of the Supreme Court in Victoria 1841-2016*, edited by Dr Simon Smith (see pp. 4-5).

Brochure and Application Form for RHSV Conference, *Judging for the People: Honouring 175 years of the Supreme Court in Victoria* (see pp. 4-5).

# National Heritage listing of Burke & Wills sites

On 22 January, the Minister for the Environment, the Hon. Greg Hunt, announced that a cluster of five sites on Cooper Creek were being included on the National Heritage List. The RHSV applauds this move by the Minister and the Australian Heritage Council.

The event was held at the Royal Society of Victoria (RSV), in the very room where the bodies of Burke and Wills lay in state after being brought back from central Australia. Readers will have noted the RSV's building on La Trobe Street in Melbourne. It opened in 1859, though the present exterior was completed ten years later.

The RSV was founded in 1859 by the merger of three learned societies. One of its first acts was to finance the Burke and Wills expedition to cross Australia from south to north. The expedition has become legendary in our national history. It is a manifestation of the wealth and ambitions of post gold rush Melbourne and Victoria.

The expedition set out from Royal Park on 20 August 1860, watched by some 15,000 spectators. It was dogged by mistakes and misadventures. Seven men died. Of the advance party only John King survived. He was saved by the Yandruwandha people who sheltered and fed him. There is now strong evidence that he fathered a girl while living among them.

The National Heritage listing comprises five important sites along the banks of the Cooper Creek, near Innamincka, that represent the key events of the Burke and



**The National Heritage listing comprises five important sites along the banks of the Cooper Creek, near Innamincka, including the Dig Tree, pictured above, where expedition members buried supplies and left markings and messages for each other.**

Wills Expedition and for perhaps the first time officially recognise the role of the Yandruwandha.

These are: the Dig Tree, where expedition members buried supplies and left markings and messages for each other; Burke's Tree where his body was found; Wills' site where his body was found; Howitt's site which was a base for the rescue party; and King's site in the area where he was looked after and found.

The Burke, Wills, King and Yandruwandha National Heritage Place is the 104th place included in the National Heritage List.

For more information visit: [www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/national-heritage-list](http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/national-heritage-list)



**RSV's building on La Trobe Street in Melbourne. It opened in 1859, though the present exterior was completed 10 years later.**

**Front cover:** Portrait of William Meek (1810-1850), unknown UK artist, c. 1836. Courtesy Meek's great great granddaughter, Margaret Curran, who has donated the portrait to the State Library of Victoria. It is not available for the RHSV Exhibition, 'Judging for the People: Honouring 175 Years of the Supreme Court in Victoria'.

Meek was the first Attorney (Solicitor) to practise in the Port Phillip colony, opening his rooms in October 1838. He was the first superior court and later Supreme Court lawyer. He was active in the establishment of the MCC and the Melbourne Club. (see pp. 4-5).

**Back Cover:** Exterior of Whitlam House before sale in 2013. Note the modifications, which became an issue when its preservation was discussed, see page 7.

## Australia Day Honours for RHSV Leaders

We are delighted to announce that, on Australia Day, two RHSV Councillors have received Honours.

RHSV President Don Garden, was awarded the Order of Australia Medal 'for service to community history and heritage preservation organisations'.

RHSV Councillor Jane Carolan was awarded the Order of Australia Medal 'for service to the community as an historian, archivist and author'.

These awards reflect great credit on Don and Jane and on all the local history societies and historians whose work supports the RHSV's efforts to keep the past alive for future Victorians. Congratulations Don and Jane!

## History News Schedule for 2016

This issue of *History News* has been delayed and will appear on 8<sup>th</sup> February. For the rest of the year, we will aim to produce *History News* on the following dates: 1<sup>st</sup> April, 1<sup>st</sup> June, 15 July, 1<sup>st</sup> October, 15 November. Deadline for copy will be three weeks before.

Former RHSV V-P Dr Simon Smith is leading a project of which we're especially proud: *Judging for the People: A Social History of the Supreme Court in Victoria 1841-2016*, the first full history of the Supreme Court of Victoria in its social and political context. In conjunction with publication of the book, the RHSV will hold an Exhibition: 'Judging for the People', which opens on Friday 8 April, followed by a Conference the next day of the same title.

RHSV V-P Emeritus Professor Richard Broome, part of the project team led by Dr Smith, outlines the project.



The Supreme Court c. 1900. RHSV Archives, PC-0343

# RHSV partners with the Supreme Court of Victoria to produce the Court's first history



**Redmond Barry as Acting Chief Justice, *The Weekly Times*, Oct. 25, 1873. Barry was appointed a Justice of the Supreme Court upon its creation in 1852.**

**Barry was never appointed Chief Justice. Although he is Victoria's most famous nineteenth-century judge, legal historians attribute little importance to his role on the Supreme Court. RHSV Archives ART-0348.006.**

In common law systems, setting up what is called a 'superior court' is a major step in creating an independent state with its own judiciary. This is a court which has unlimited jurisdiction in civil and criminal cases unlike lower courts, whose jurisdiction is limited to a specific locality and/or to certain types of cases. Usually a superior court is a court of appeal. The Supreme Court of Victoria was established in 1852 as Victoria's superior court, but the story of the Supreme Court goes back to the first superior court in Melbourne, Port Phillip (later Victoria), opened by Judge Walpole Willis on 12 April 1841. This is one of the most significant dates in the early constitutional and social history of Victoria. Indeed, it is a landmark in the development of our state as an independent polity.

The history of the Supreme Court is also a history of the legal practitioners who appeared there, beginning with William Meek (1810-1850), whose portrait appears on our cover. Meek had trained and practised as a solicitor before leaving the UK. He was the first solicitor to practise in the Port Phillip colony, opening his rooms in October 1838, and the first to appear in the superior court when it opened.

With the decision to have a Supreme Court came the decision to build a court building worthy of the prospering colony. The splendid neo-classical building which now houses the Supreme Court of Victoria is part of a complex known as the Melbourne Law Courts, located at 192 William Street, Melbourne. The Law Courts are an outstanding example of the grand public buildings made possible by the gold rush and Melbourne's sense of being a new world city of great significance. Construction began in 1874 and the buildings were opened in 1882. The Law Courts were designed in 1873 by Alfred Louis Smith (1830-1907) and Arthur Ebdon Johnson (1859-95). Both were highly trained architects in the United Kingdom lured to Melbourne by the chance to design grand buildings financed by Victorian prosperity. They became partners to compete for the Supreme Court project. Smith and Johnson later designed the Athenaeum Theatre and the Eastern Hill Fire Station. The grandest space in the building is the Library, which will be the venue for the book launch.

This April, the RHSV will celebrate the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the first superior court in Victoria with three related events organised by former RHSV Vice-President Smith and an

RHSV team, in a fruitful partnership with the Supreme Court of Victoria: an exhibition and a conference, both under the title 'Judging for the People: Honouring 175 years of the Supreme Court in Victoria', and the first commissioned history of the Supreme Court, 'Judging for the People: A Social History of the Supreme Court in Victoria 1841-2016'.

On Friday 8 April (5.30 for 6.00), our Patron, the Hon. Linda Dessau, Governor of Victoria, will launch the exhibition, 'Judging for the People: Honouring 175 years of the Supreme Court in Victoria'. On Saturday, 9 April, 'Judging for the People', the conference, will be held at the Victoria University City Campus, 283 Queens Street, Melbourne, from 9.30 to 4.00 (registration from 8.45am). Entrance with lunch provided is \$60, RHSV members \$50, students \$30 (limited to the first 20 students who respond). The Chief Justice Warren will give the annual RHSV Augustus Wolskel lecture on that day. Further details will be published on the RHSV website early in 2016.

Dr Simon Smith initiated this history project, with the support of the RHSV team, assembling a group of legal and history scholars acting *pro bono*. Publication of this beautifully illustrated work has been made possible through the support of the legal profession, in particular the Legal Services Board, the Law Institute, the Victorian Bar and five of the state's oldest continuously operating law firms.



View of the Supreme Court Dome from the rear

The Chief Justice, the Honourable Marilyn Warren, will launch this history on Tuesday afternoon 12 April 2016, in the beautiful Supreme Court Library. Unfortunately, this event will be by invitation only.

The beautifully designed hardback book containing thirteen chapters and many illustrations will be on sale at all three events for \$50 (RRP \$60). An advance purchase form is included with this issue of *History News*.

Richard Broome

#### FRIDAY 8 APRIL EXHIBITION LAUNCH

The Hon. Linda Dessau, Governor of Victoria, will launch 'Judging for the People: Honouring 175 years of the Supreme Court in Victoria', an RHSV Exhibition.

**Time:** 5.30pm for 6pm

**Venue:** RHSV, Drill Hall,  
239 A'Beckett Street, Melbourne

**Cost:** Free

**RSVP essential** – Thursday 31 March  
[office@historyvictoria.org.au](mailto:office@historyvictoria.org.au) or  
9326 9288

#### SATURDAY, 9 APRIL CONFERENCE

'*Judging for the People*'

Victoria University City Campus,  
283 Queens Street, Melbourne  
9.30am to 4pm  
(registration from 8.45am).

Entrance with lunch provided is \$60, RHSV members \$50, students \$30 (limited to the first 20 students who respond).

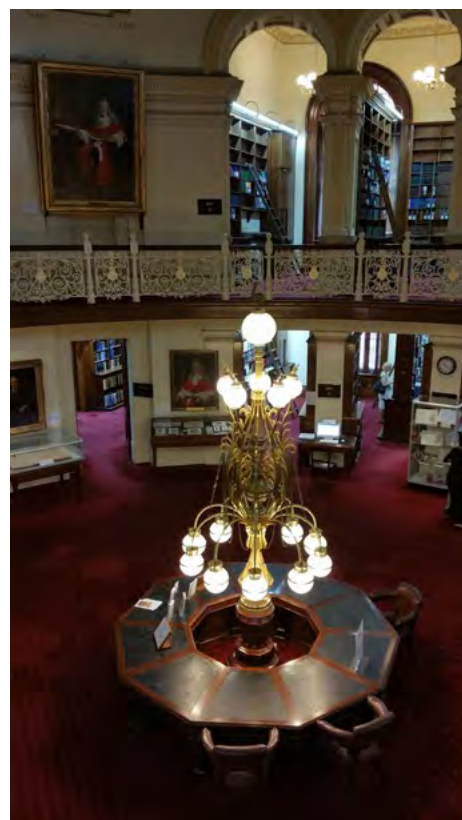
The Chief Justice Marilyn Warren will give the annual RHSV Augustus Wolskel lecture on that day.

Booking form included. Bookings and payments can be made directly online by clicking on: [www.trybooking.com/178916](http://www.trybooking.com/178916)

#### TUESDAY 12 APRIL BOOK LAUNCH

The Chief Justice, the Honourable Marilyn Warren, will launch *Judging for the People: A Social History of the Supreme Court in Victoria 1841-2016*.

**Venue:** Supreme Court Library  
By invitation only



The beautiful Supreme Court Library, venue for the launch of *Judging for the People*

The grandest space in the Supreme Court building is the Library, which will be the venue for the book launch.



Cover of *Judging for the People*

RHSV President Don Garden is also Vice President of the Kew Historical Society, so he has had a box seat for the dramatic Whitlam House Saga. This drama throws up all sorts of complexities and complications in preservation issues. We might wish things were simpler, but if we want to succeed in preserving what remains of our heritage, we must understand the issues. Let Don be our guide through this sorry tale.

# 'Ngara' The Whitlam House

## *How not to protect heritage*

RHSV members are likely to be aware of the controversy in 2014-15 over the fate of the house in which Gough Whitlam was born, 'Ngara' in Rowland Street, Kew. They may also be aware that it has been an object lesson on how not to handle heritage.

As we all know, mounting population pressures have joined with interest from overseas investors and developers to transform Melbourne. Many of our older houses are being torn down and replaced with large modern homes or apartment buildings. As a resident of Kew, I can vouch for the surprise of finding a bare block where only a few days before there was a family home, often a gracious Victorian or Edwardian one.

One of the seldom-recognised elements in the loss of older homes has been the peculiar and complex Australian foreign investment requirements. (Press reports have suggested a foreign buyer of the Whitlam house, but the person's status is unclear.) FIRB guidelines specify that temporary residents and overseas buyers can only purchase an older dwelling if it is unliveable and if they intend to 'increase Australia's housing stock'. Essentially this means demolishing an existing dwelling and replacing it with at least two new dwellings.

Unfortunately, confusion over the nature of these requirements, deliberate evasion by some buyers and poor Commonwealth administration have seen a number of quality and liveable homes demolished, particularly in Melbourne and Sydney.

'Ngara' was built in 1915 for Gough Whitlam's parents by his grandfather, and Gough was born there on 11 July 1916, reputedly on the kitchen table. His residence was brief: his father, a Commonwealth public servant, was transferred to Sydney in early 1918.

Later owners undertook internal and external modifications, and in 2013 the beautifully presented, 'modest Federation villa' was bought by a 'Chinese investor' who planned to replace it with a single large residence. Boroondara City Council consented to the demolition, apparently



**Above: Interior of 'Ngara' before sale in 2013.**

without understanding the house's heritage. A few locals began to campaign to delay demolition and once the Council was made aware of the home's heritage, it explored options for protection. However, work began clearing the garden and preparing the home for destruction in October 2014. When Gough coincidentally died on 21 October, the demolition was delayed and a public campaign was mounted to save it.

After initially refusing to intervene, but perhaps partly because an election was approaching and he wanted to remove a controversial issue, Planning Minister Matthew Guy requested that the Heritage Council place an interim protection order on the home.

There are several complex heritage issues here. One is the administrative division of heritage into local, state and national significance and responsibility. Under existing definitions, 'Ngara' is probably not of **state** significance. Architecturally, it is not distinctive and it has been modified. Historically, Gough's connection with 'Ngara' was brief and not of great cultural heritage importance for Victoria. One might think it of great cultural heritage importance for the Commonwealth, but the Commonwealth's defined responsibility

is limited to properties of 'outstanding national significance', of which only a few over 100 have been identified and listed by the Australian Heritage Council. 'Ngara' clearly does not fall into that category.

Local significance is another matter, and here Boroondara had a role to play, to decide whether the property deserved the protection of a local heritage overlay. However, once again Gough's limited period of residence and the home's lack of distinctive architecture and subsequent alterations made its listing and somewhat controversial. Besides, in a conservative and property-rich suburb, the rights of property owners to do what they like with their property was often declared to override heritage considerations.

Once the Heritage Council had served its interim protection order, the issue turned into a prolonged saga. The election on 29 November 2014 brought a new Planning Minister, Richard Wynne, who faced mounting public and political interest in the future of 'Ngara'. But in January 2015 the Heritage Council of Victoria accepted the recommendation of its Executive Director that the home was not worthy of state protection.

In a complex chain of events, Minister Wynne appointed a planning panel to assess a new Boroondara heritage overlay proposal that included 'Ngara'. Its report in mid-2015 led to the Heritage Council agreeing that the home should not be included in the Heritage Register.

In October 2015 Boroondara removed its own interim heritage overlay but in the face of public outcry a full meeting of Council in November, with a new mayor in the chair, voted to give 'Ngara' heritage overlay protection. At the time of writing, that heritage overlay is waiting for the Planning Minister's approval.

A number of lessons can be learned from this ongoing saga. First, there have been long delays involving confusion, indecision and reversed decisions. On that level I feel sympathy for the owner, for whom the experience must have been trying as well as



**Above: 'Ngara' in 2015. There are signs that it has been broken into and vandalised. It is in danger of becoming yet another example of demolition by neglect. See back cover for exterior in 2013.**

costly. One assumes that there are lawyers beavering away somewhere, preparing very large compensation claims against someone – Boroondara City Council, the state government? There needs to be streamlining, clarification and above all consistency in the heritage system to avoid such long delays in determining a building's fate. More than two years is not satisfactory for anyone – or for the state of the building.

Second, whether it applies fully in this case or not, there is a clear need to modify or at least properly to enforce the Commonwealth's investment regulations, so that liveable and heritage-significant suburban homes and streetscapes are protected from compulsory and inappropriate demolition.

Third, there is also a clear need for the Commonwealth to develop guidelines for recognising the status and specifying the protection of former Prime Ministers' homes. In Britain, such buildings are usually recognised, protected and display plaques. We are not good at such things in Australia. Only six PM homes in Victoria have been recognised. These include two listed by Heritage Victoria (Alfred Deakin's holiday home at Point Lonsdale and Stanley Bruce's Frankston home) and two listed by Boroondara (Billy Hughes and Bob Menzies).

But recognition is uneven, identification is unclear and there are no guidelines as to under what circumstances a property qualifies for protection and/or how they should be recognised. It is understood that the Heritage Branch of the Commonwealth is looking into the matter.

What is the future of 'Ngara'? As matters stand, it cannot legally be demolished, but it is not in a serviceable state, as the illustration shows. 'Ngara' looks neglected. There are signs that it has been broken into and vandalised. It is in danger of becoming

yet another example of demolition by neglect. Ideally the Boroondara Council or a community group will acquire it and restore it as a community asset. The Kew Historical Society is just one body that could put it to good use.

*Don Garden*

Sources: 'Ngara', *Gough Whitlam Birthplace*, Context Pty Ltd, Boroondara City Council; [Maurice Gauder, Claire Houssard and David Ormond], 'Foreign Investment in Residential Real Estate', *Reserve Bank of Australia Bulletin*, June Quarter 2014; Commonwealth Bank, <https://www.mywealth.commbank.com.au/property/how-does-foreign-investment-in-australian-residential-property-w-infocus201507>, accessed 29 Dec 2015; Assessment of Heritage Significance and Executive Director Recommendation to the Heritage Council, 19 December 2014, Hermes no 196606, Heritage Victoria; *The Age*, 24 October 2014, 21 October 2015; *Domain*, 28 November 2015, p. 9.

## Holsworth Local Heritage Trust

### APPLICATIONS OPEN 1 MARCH

The Holsworth Local Heritage Trust, invites applications for grants from not-for-profit organisations such as historical societies, clubs, schools and museums in regional and rural Victoria.

The Trust is interested in supporting enthusiastic community groups and organisations with a true interest in heritage preservation and appreciation, and in the enhancement of community life.

### ABOUT THE GRANT

Grants of up to \$2,000 are available for the publication of any specific or general local history or natural history in rural and regional Victoria. The grant is intended for small organisations with an interest in publishing works of historical value, even where the organisation has little or no experience in publishing. Joint projects encompassing several groups or annual/special edited journals incorporating submitted historical articles from a wider community are encouraged.

### APPLICATIONS

Applicants are required to submit a proposal including details of the intended date of publication. It is expected that considerable research will already have been undertaken before applying.

### APPLICATION DEADLINES

Open 1 March. Close 31 July

<http://www.historyvictoria.org.au/holsworth-local-heritage-trust>

Further information from RHSV website or phone 9326 9288.

### NOTICE TO RHSV MEMBERS SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING TO PRESENT A SPECIAL RESOLUTION

**TUESDAY 15 MARCH 2016, 5.40 pm**

**AT THE DRILL HALL PRIOR TO THE LECTURE**

The RHSV wishes to expand the RHSV Council to include up to two non-metropolitan councillors who will represent country members and affiliated societies.

At a Special General Meeting on Tuesday 15 March at 5.40 pm, to be held in conjunction with the monthly lecture, the following Special Resolution will be presented, to add a fifth clause to Section 53 of the RHSV Constitution, Election of Ordinary Members.

(5) The Council may co-opt a further 2 extra members to the Council who live in non-metropolitan regions and represent country members and affiliated non-metropolitan historical societies. Their term of office may be determined by the Council.

To be accepted, a quorum of at least 20 members is required, and the Resolution must be passed by at least three quarters of those present, whether by person or proxy (see item 34 of the Constitution on Proxies).

The full Constitution may be found on the RHSV website or a copy may be requested by telephoning the office on 9326 9288.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The RHSV had a big year in 2015, stimulated by steady growth in our many functions. We look forward to an even bigger year in 2016. As well as our usual programme, including the Victorian Community History Awards and History Week, we have a number of special events planned.

Two highlights will be the publication of major books that the RHSV was commissioned to write/prepare. The first is a history of the Victorian Supreme Court: *Judging for the People: A Social History of the Supreme Court in Victoria 1841-2016*. This major work will be launched in April, in conjunction with an exhibition at the RHSV's Drill Hall and a conference.

Later in the year we will complete *Remembering Melbourne*, a collection of photographs of pre-1960 Melbourne and its inner suburbs, compiled from images in the collections of the RHSV and of a number of local historical societies. Text and captions are being provided by the societies and RHSV volunteers.

The volunteer effort in both of these publications has been immense. About 100 people have contributed their time and expertise. This is a demonstration of the enthusiasm for history and the rich community contribution that is being made to our history and heritage.

The emphasis of these projects is on Melbourne. Both are part of the RHSV's role as the historical society of Melbourne. We are trying to develop that role further by linking with the mounting number of residents in the CBD.

In 2016 we also plan to look very much towards and develop relationships with our non-metropolitan societies and members. We will again be providing three History Victoria Support Group seminar days: Birchip (21 May), Mornington Peninsula (25 June) and Rochester (20 August).

We are also planning at least one more of the VERY successful seminar days on writing local history that have been held by Dr Rosalie Triolo. The place and date are yet to be announced, but we will probably head to the north-west this time.

On page 7 of this newsletter is a notice about a proposed change to the RHSV Constitution that will be presented as a Special Resolution before the 15 March lecture (by our 'star' Weston Bate). The Council wishes to create two co-opted Council positions for non-metropolitan members, who can ensure that country members and interests are appropriately represented in the RHSV. To assist these country Councillors to attend, the Council has voted a sum to help cover their travel and accommodation costs.

Congratulations to all RHSV members and societies on the excellent work done in 2015. I look forward to seeing the results of their labour come to further fruition in 2016.

Don Garden

# How to conceptualise and understand the problems society wants to forget

*In the December issue of History News, we reported on the inspirational VCHA ceremony held on 19 October last year, but space did not permit including the address given by Shurlee Swain, Professor of Humanities at Australian Catholic University and a world leader in studies of health, abuse, maternity and infanticide. Her many important studies include Born in hope : the early years of the Family Court of Australia (2012), The Market in Babies: Stories of Australian Adoption (2013; with Marian Quartly and Denise Cuthbert) and 'Giving Voice to Narratives of Institutional Sex Abuse' (Australian Feminist Law Journal, 2015). Readers will be fascinated, as was the audience, by her mental mapping of such phenomena, but beyond this she shows us how to conceptualise and understand the problems society wants to forget. Here is the address in full.*

## Shurlee Swain's Address at Victorian Community History Awards

It is a pleasure to have the opportunity of speaking here today as a part of me has always had a fondness for local history - a fondness not always encouraged in the measures that govern the lives of historians working in academia today. My first book was a history of an institution three blocks away from my home and it is a pursuit to which I am tempted to return as I look towards retirement.

At a theoretical level historians talk about the spatial turn, a shift in focus from the key people and events that occupied our attention to look instead (or as well) at the spaces in which they were located. In a sense, apart from an early preoccupation with documenting the lives of pioneering families, local historians have always been concerned about place, writing a history of the environments in which we live, work and socialise. In a reverse of the process which so enlivens archaeology on television, where computers are used to recreate past cities and other settlements from their ruins, local historians excel at stripping back the multiple layers of the world we see around us to uncover what went before. Through this process we all develop mental maps which enable us, in traversing our area of interest, to live simultaneously in the present and the past.

There was a moment, shortly after the *Encyclopedia of Melbourne* went on its final trip to the publisher, that I felt that I knew every street, alleyway and even cobblestone of the city. As editors, Andy May and I not only produced a significant part of the content, but we also had to read and re-read every contribution and, finally, several times, read the encyclopedia as a whole. This process gave us access to multiple mental maps: the city as experienced by women,

children, businessmen, workers and seekers of leisure, and the various ethnic groups which have made it their home, to name but a few. However, these complex and overlapping maps have long since faded and like everyone else I depend on the website or the print volume to reclaim this knowledge. Hence, what I want to share with you today is a selection of the mental maps that some of my other research projects have left in my head, mental maps which, for me, make every journey a research trip (but can be disarming if not disturbing to my fellow travellers).

My fascination with data mapping began with my doctoral research when I attempted to use the primitive tools then available to plot the homes of those who received and supplied charitable relief in 1890s Melbourne. What emerged was a micro mapping of poverty no longer associated with broad suburbs but with streets, alleys and back lanes within suburbs. While some of these concentrations have disappeared through the slum reclamation programs of the 1950s and 60s, other street names remain, even if the areas have been subject to gentrification or commercial development. Celestial avenue off Exploration lane is now largely occupied by the backs of surrounding office buildings, but in my mind it remains a location that child rescuers liked to depict as the heart of 'Darkest Melbourne', a place where only the bravest of social explorers was prepared to go.

When I moved on to study the history of single mothers a new set of mental maps emerged. The more benign involved an attempt to map the places where babies were taken in to nurse. This process provided, amongst other things, a new insight into



the operations of the Neglected Children's Department which, from its depot in Royal Park, recruited a small army of women in the adjoining suburbs who could take at short notice one of the many very young babies who came into its care. Some of these women functioned as wet nurses, but most used the various forms of alternative feeding then available in an often-fraught attempt to keep the babies alive. What mapping cannot show is how the practice actually worked in the absence of telephones and other forms of communication but, given that the Department was not averse to using its more trusted older boys to perform other duties, I like to imagine them fanning out across the nearby suburbs to tell the foster mothers that their services were needed.

A second and more macabre map emerged from this study, one plotting the locations of dead and abandoned babies in Melbourne. Rather than the press generalisation of riverbanks, alleyways and sewers, the map discloses a more purposive pattern, with abandonments predominantly in public places, which to me is an indication of the mother's wish that the baby be safely found. The location of corpses was more secretive, but with an element of convenience - inside the fence of the University for example, located between an area of Melbourne in which private lying-in establishments and cheap boarding houses which were prepared to accept pregnant single women abounded (clustered as they were around the Lying-in hospital) and the Melbourne General Cemetery (where indeed some bodies were found as if the mothers were looking for a burial on consecrated ground but without the formalities of a funeral). This is a mental map that can be quite disturbing, and is perhaps not one to be shared with people taking a pleasant afternoon stroll.

Arising out of the history of adoption project, conducted jointly with Marian Quartly and Denise Cuthbert, I am currently using the resources available through Trove to construct a database of adoption advertisements that appeared in Australian newspapers. The database (which is still

growing) currently has over 25,000 entries dating from 1842 through to 1955, a sizeable proportion of which give details of the location of the advertiser, in some cases down to the level of the contact address. At its most basic level this information enables me to startle travel companions with such throwaway lines as 'this was good baby farming (although I would prefer to call it baby trading) territory here' probably disturbing their sleep for some time to come. But I suspect that when I get to map this data somehow it will cluster in ways that would support an argument for another way of understanding the city, the concept of the gynaeocentric zone: the area(s) of the city which deal with the unwanted products of women's bodies. Like Melbourne, most cities have such a zone centred on their major public maternity hospital, with small businesses offering abortions, cheap accommodation for expectant mothers, lying-in homes, and accommodation and placing out facilities for babies. Given that single motherhood is no respecter of class, most of the larger cities seem to have developed a second smaller zone in a more genteel suburb where discrete private or church-run maternity home provided a similar range of services.

In overseeing the historical research that enabled the creation of the Find & Connect web resource as part of the Federal Government's response to Forgotten Australians and former child migrants, I have also developed an encyclopaedic knowledge of the location of institutions providing out of home care for children in Australia since 1788. This provides another mental map with the potential to disrupt one's tourism, particularly when constructed in conjunction with the narratives of the 'care' that was delivered within them. Although most of those that remain have been converted to other uses, or reverted to the grand houses which they originally were, it is hard to look at them without the other awareness of the sites of refuge and the sites of torture which many of them contained, and to support the care leavers who are fighting to have some remnants of their experience incorporated

into any planned redevelopments. I could go on to detail the trials and tribulations we have faced in trying to transform this mental map into a digitised form on the Find & Connect site, but time is running short so perhaps the best I can say is that it remains an aim for the future.

However, I hope that this short talk has helped you to reflect on the mental maps you all carry as a result of your ventures in local history. Many of you may have mastered the tools now available to us to transform these maps into a digital and hence shareable form, but even those who have not followed this path have, through their research, contributed to the creation of a detailed and multi-layered history of the past of the places on which they have focused and that is what we are celebrating today.

HISTORY VICTORIA SUPPORT GROUP  
SEMINAR SATURDAY 19 MARCH  
RHSV 239 A'Beckett Street Melbourne

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10.00am – 3.15pm

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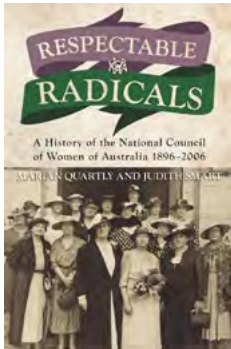


**Books received:** Authors, publishers and historical societies are invited to contribute books to the RSHV for the library and for consideration for inclusion in Books Received..

**Respectable Radicals, A History of the National Council of Women of Australia 1896-2006**

Marian Quartly and Judith Smart, Monash University Publishing in conjunction with the National Council of Women of Australia, 2015, pp. xiv + 497. \$39-95. ISBN 9781922235947.

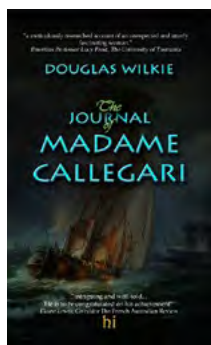
A very substantial history of mainstream Australian feminism through the NCW from its inception in New South Wales following North American models. The photos for most of this period show lots of women in hats and gloves, certainly from respectable society but all with the radical idea that women should be equal to men. It dominated as the peak body for representation of women to Australian governments throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and had strong global connections through the International Council of Women. Meticulously researched and lucidly written, the text navigates massive social changes to which the NCW adapted. Their persistent vision survived despite setbacks and arguments about other ways and feminisms. There is much to reward any reader who has an interest in Australian women's history and those women who made it in past generations, including many who participated in Victoria.



**The Journal of Madame Callegari, The True Story Behind Alexandre Dumas's 1855 Journal de madame Giovanni**

Douglas Wilkie, Historia Incognita, 2015, pp. 410. ISBN 9781320395878.

The author convincingly shows that Madame Giovanni, the author of Alexandre Dumas's publication of her journal, was not a fictional character but Madame Callegari whose travels took her away from Paris from 1843 to 1853. Convicted in



London, sent to Van Dieman's Land, she briefly visited Melbourne in 1848 and 1849. The journal is mostly about

Van Dieman's Land, and then the South Pacific, California and Mexico where her 'adventures' took her after serving her sentence. Wilkie has reconstructed Callegari's life and rewritten her journal in the first person in what he shows to be soundly based historical method and not fictional imaginings. The journal first translated into English in 1944 is not well-known and the author has not only revealed its content but also taken his reader on a fascinating trail of historical detection.

**The War At Home, The Centenary History of Australia and the Great War, Volume 4**

John Connor, Peter Stanley and Peter Yule, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2015, pp. xiii + 284. ISBN 9780195576788.

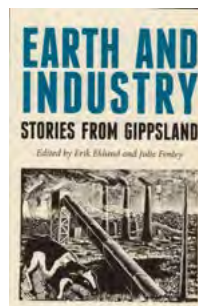
This volume is one of five published by OUP for the centenary of the Great War. It deals with the Home Front. The others cover the war in the air, the war and the Ottoman Empire, the war with Germany and the AIF. The series aims to 'bring fresh questions and perspectives' to the issues to 'an interested general audience'. Its predecessors of course include the 12 volume official history and its companion 3 medical volumes for which Bean was the driving force. It has three sections: economy written by Peter Yule; politics by John Connor; and society by Peter Stanley. There are extensive bibliographical essays and endnotes that show the enormous scholarly output that there has been and is continuing. Much of this output has been in theses and articles that have not been circulated widely in an area where military history usually dominates book publishing often with yet more accounts of well-covered battles or of biographies of generals. This fine contribution deserves to be widely read.



**Earth and Industry, Stories From Gippsland**

Erik Eklund and Julie Fenley (eds), Monash University Publishing, 2015, pp. xxxiii + 323, \$29-95. ISBN 9781922235046.

This skilfully edited book comprises 16 papers originally given at conferences hosted by the Monash Centre for Gippsland Studies in 2010 and 2011. So much of the writing and commentary on Gippsland has



focused on the sometimes turbulent history of the Latrobe Valley coal industry. The book is headed and concluded by substantial editors' discussions of many aspects of the practice and purpose of environmental history and their presence in the diverse range of topics covered by the articles: historical geography; forest conservation and activism; attitudes to Nature including early bushwalking; European practices and attitudes to land; Aboriginal associations with country; fishing; and tourism. The editors suggest that the articles address three themes; the possibilities of future research; the activities of governments and the participation of citizens and interest groups; and the relationship between technology, socio-economics and the environment. The book amply demonstrates the importance of regional histories in examining the environment. It tells much about Gippsland history but also provides an enlightening perspective on environmental history through its editing and insightful articles by established writers like Jane Lennon, Meredith Fletcher, and Charles Fahey and many emerging historians including Sarah Mirams, Ruth Ford and David Harris.

**Catch And Kill, The Politics of Power**

Joel Deane, University of Queensland Press, 2015, pp. 357, \$32-95. ISBN 9780702249808.

Deane was a press secretary and speechwriter for key ALP leaders in Victoria in the period of the party's recovery from the 1992 election and triumph in the Bracks/Brumby years. He has written an analytical narrative

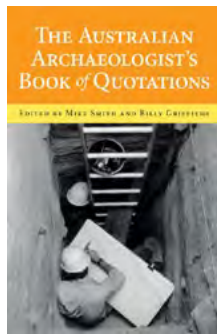


of the ways in which power was used to gain office and to govern and then lost at the 2010 election with a focus on the personalities and performance of Bracks, Brumby, Thwaites and Halls in Victorian politics as well as their influence in federal politics. His position gave him insights and access to many of the key players and events of that period. He brilliantly tells a most engaging story with clarity and wit, skilfully taking the reader through the machinations of party politics. This book should be read by anyone with an interest in recent Victorian/Australian political history and more broadly in the nature of power.

### The Australian Archaeologist's Book of Quotations

Mike Smith and Billy Griffiths (eds), Monash University Publishing, 2015, pp. x + 166, \$24-95. ISBN 9781922235749.

A delightful arrangement of quotations about aspects of archaeology drawing on a very wide range of items arranged in chapters that deal with broad questions about the practice of archaeology and history, perceptions of time, place and deserts. All have a substantial Australian input. The remaining chapters collect Australian statements about Aboriginal society and the Dreaming, the role of fire and the politics of prehistory. In all, an engaging book that repays much dipping for the messages conveyed albeit briefly.



### Strive For The Highest, Sixty Year of Education at Belmont High School, 1955-2015

Jennifer J Acopian, Belmont High School, Rotherham Street, Belmont, 3716, 2015, pp. viii + 308. ISBN 9780646941240.

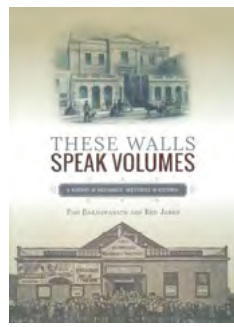
The vast expansion of State secondary education in the post-war period spawned many new high schools of which Belmont was one. Many of those schools have since been closed or amalgamated as the demographics of their areas changed. This book tells the story of how a school succeeded in establishing a reputation for innovation and success in its community through the difficult years of foundation (lack of buildings and facilities, frequent staff changes), the many occasions of political interference, the complications of curriculum changes, and the demands for student autonomy and of teacher 'militancy'. The chapters are arranged chronologically and tend to follow the pattern of many school texts by devoting space to the succession of principals and their work. It does much more than many school histories by establishing educational and social contexts for the details of all school activities. It is based on very thorough documentary research, substantial oral testimony and copious and informative photos. In all, a fine example of a school history written with verve and dedication by one of the original students of 1955.

### These Walls Speak Volumes, A History of Mechanic' Institutes in Victoria

Pam Baragwanath and Ken James, the authors, Melbourne, 2015, pp. 704.

Most of this massive volume is entries, arranged alphabetically, for the almost

1000 mechanics' institutes that have been known to exist. Each entry contains a short, informative text and usually a photographic image. In addition there are appendices on a range of issues, a comprehensive index and bibliography.



The first institute, the forerunner of the still operating Melbourne Athenaeum, was founded in 1839. Under various names, local funding and initiatives aimed at the diffusion of knowledge resulted in a vast voluntary movement for libraries and community buildings that attracted small government grants. The names of places in the list will test any reader's knowledge of Victorian settlements. Attractively produced and containing illustrations of many of the library stamps that were used and continue to be found in second hand books, this volume makes a substantial contribution to our knowledge of a significant and almost universal movement for public education.

### "Woodside" A History of "Woodside" Tylden & Fern Hill Clowes, Hanson & Maxwell Families

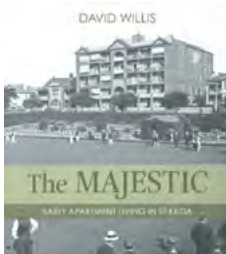
Ron Clowes (compiler), Ray M Begg Aged Care, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 2015 with addition "Around Tylden", pp.102.

A family compilation concerned with Tylden in the Trentham area where members of the Clowes family farmed and worked from the time of their arrival in the Port Phillip district in the 1840s.

### The Majestic, Early Apartment Living in St Kilda

David Willis, St Kilda Press, 2015, pp. 128, \$19-95. ISBN 9780994375605.

An elegantly presented account of the building and life of The Majestic in Fitzroy Street built in 1912, a very early apartment or flats building that has substantially survived. The author, now the owner of a Majestic apartment traces the chequered history of the massive building from its early attractiveness to people of wealth through its decline to seedy accommodation and eventual rejuvenation to its current state. The whole is set within the changing context of its suburb and discussion of the imported idea of apartment living in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and their appearance in Melbourne. The Majestic was developed by John Robert Daley, a builder and



entrepreneur, who owned and developed other properties in Fitzroy street and nearby suburbs. Superbly illustrated with a well-researched text that contributes to our understandings of Melbourne suburban living.

### James Neilson and Isabella Gibson: Gippsland Pioneers

Heather Sjoberg, the author, h.sjoberg@hotmail.com, Darwin, 2015, pp. 176. ISBN 9781925167283.

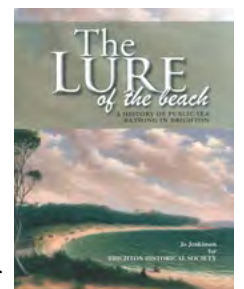
The author traces the history of her Scottish ancestors who migrated from Edinburgh in 1841 and settled in Tarraville in Gippsland where James became a successful builder and publican, before his death in 1859 using the designation 'gentleman'. The subsequent lives of the children of Isabella and James are examined in what is a well-researched family history that gathers most of its material from public sources while at the same time placing the details of their lives into contexts of the times and places in which they lived. A useful model that might well be followed by aspiring family historians that go beyond the chronicle.



### The Lure of the Beach, A History of Public Sea Bathing in Brighton

Jo Jenkinson, Brighton Historical Society, PO Box 266, Brighton 3186. pp. viii + 88. ISBN 978064694250.

The bayside beaches have long been attractive places for recreation, perhaps none more so than Brighton with its comparatively easy access by public transport from many parts of Melbourne. Early illustrations show throngs of people promenading and picnicking especially at Brighton Beach with its railway station almost on the foreshore. The attractions of the beach are dealt with in successive chapters on the development of bathing boxes and the building of baths. Attitudes to bathing generally, bathing dress, mixed bathing, dangers of swimming and lifesaving clubs, the precarious existence of baths in the face of storms and competition from indoor pools are discussed throughout. The book clearly documents changes in competitive swimming at the baths from the post-war days of Judy Joy Davies and John Marshall. An attractive book for a topic that contributes a Melbourne perspective to the importance of the beach in Australian culture.



## AROUND THE SOCIETIES

The column is compiled by volunteers Helen Boak and Lenore Frost on behalf of the History Victoria Support Group. For the 1 February 2016 issue please send forthcoming 2016 events and your newsletters to: office@historyvictoria.org.au by 16 January 2016.

**AUTRALIAN RAILWAYS:** The Newport Rail Museum continues to average 75 visitors each Saturday. We are also welcoming a considerable number of mid-week School groups. The vintage O-scale model railway is running and proving popular with visitors. Visit us in person and visit our Museum Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/NewportRailwayMuseum.

**BALLAN:** In the early years of settlement of the Beremboke area, the first farmers who colonised the district campaigned for allocation of a large, shared grazing ground called the Beremboke common. Part of the Common survives as the Water Catchment for Stoney Creek and is preserved as a reserve for native bush.

**BENALLA:** After two and a half years in a travelling exhibition with Canberra Museum 3 outfits have been returned to us. To add to our Costume Collection we have received donations of several christening gowns, a toddler's dress, a French label 1912 evening dress and many needle samplers, two dolls and a woollen lace dressing gown.

**BENDIGO:** Records from the Health Officer in the late 1800's contain details of causes of death. One particular disease 'Phthisis' killed anywhere from 13 to 27 local men every three months in the years 1880-1896. Phthisis is a disease usually acquired by someone working closely to a quartz rock face inhaling the fine quartz dust.

**CAMBERWELL:** Following "Our Lady of Victories" June article we were advised Camberwell Council used the services of either Monsignor Martin or Canon Russell Manning Clark from St John's Anglican Church for religious addition to functions - Empire Day, Anzac Day, Mayoral Ball, Naturalisation, etc. In those days the heads of the respective churches would not fraternise with the others.

**CANTERBURY:** On October 10 the book *History of the 1<sup>st</sup> Canterbury Scouts* by James Nicolas was launched. To expand on this theme we plan to have a talk on Canterbury Scouting in 2016. To obtain a copy of this interesting book detailing important scouting history please email: nigel\_pirie@hotmail.com Cost \$20 plus postage \$8.00

**CENTRAL HIGHLANDS:** Issue 102 has a very interesting article on medical problems suffered by soldiers in WW1 particularly venereal disease. The men had to wear a white armband and armed guards patrolled the perimeter of the camp. The soldiers were treated as criminals and their pay stopped. For further information contact: <https://www.facebook.com/historychha>.

**CHELTENHAM PIONEER CEMETERY:** *Where History Rests* is the fifth book published by our Friends group. Over 800 names of persons from the local community are included in the index. It is a limited print run of just 100 copies, each individually numbered. For more information, visit our on-line shop at [www.focrc.org/shop.htm](http://www.focrc.org/shop.htm).

**DANDENONG:** The Society was formed in 1963 to gather and preserve information about Dandenong's history for the benefit of future citizens. We ask people who have lived in Dandenong to donate documents, photographs, items of ephemera etc. to the society. The items may be family, business, or community group based. Email: dandhist@internode.on.net.

**DAYLESFORD:** Extract from a 1938 diary: "In the afternoon we went a walk to the Gardens, climbed the Lookout Tower which has just been completed there, & obtained a good view of all the surrounding country... The Governor, Lord Huntingfield, declared the Lookout Tower, dedicated to the Pioneers of the district officially open."

**EAST MELBOURNE:** In 1868 the Fitzroy gardens were planted transforming a waste blank space into a delightful retreat. The ground was tastefully laid out, stocked with all sorts of ornamental trees, reticulated with running water and is intersected with well-kept avenues. In 2015 improvements are a new café with vertical garden walls and a little stream nearby.

**FRANKSTON:** In 1910 the Council advised the Foreshore Committee that all swimmers were to be clad in neck-to-knee bathing suits while on the beach. Bathing costumes were not to be worn in the streets and men were to be kept away from the women's bathing boxes. And in 1960 bikinis were not to be worn in the streets!

**GEELONG:** We have a new website [www.geelonghistoricalsociety.org.au](http://www.geelonghistoricalsociety.org.au) where you can find details of upcoming lectures and guest speakers, books available for purchase and details of our Society's tours. Be sure to check it out if you are visiting the Geelong area. Contact: [admin@geelonghistoricalsociety.org.au](mailto:admin@geelonghistoricalsociety.org.au).

**GOLDFIELDS/DUNOLLY:** In 1862 when patients with no means were convalescent they were expected to help around the hospital. It was noted in the hospital board minutes that one particular inpatient Eliza Blacker worked as hard as any staff member. She stayed for 11 years as unpaid help until at 27 she married the cook and left!

**GOLF:** At the recent Golf Club Historians Forum two Museum committee members gave an interesting insight into the history and development of Barwon Heads Golf Club and its course. Founded in 1907, like a lot of golf clubs founded then fire destroyed useful historical material. Diligent research has reclaimed most of that history.

**HAMILTON:** A great community interaction project. Volunteers at our History Centre have been helping Baimbridge College students and their Standing Tall mentors with a project about the history of Hamilton. It has been a good opportunity to show some young people what the Centre can offer, as well as their mentors!

**HASTINGS:** The wearing of the Red Poppy originated when an American lady in England read Lt Col. John McCrae's poem and was inspired to hand out artificial poppies in 1918. The idea gathered force and the use of the Red Poppy expanded becoming a symbol of the British Legion in 1919 to honour the dead.

**HEALESVILLE:** The Victoria State Emergency Service began in 1950 as the Victoria Civil Defence Organisation, to act as a volunteer based civil defence agency which could quickly be activated in the event of war. Today it has become an agency of volunteers for disaster response including search and rescue and disaster and hazard management across the State.

**KEW:** A grant from the Public Records Office to digitise, print and exhibit thirty-five of our Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works maps of Kew has been received. The MMBW was formed in 1891 to map the water and sewerage requirements of Melbourne. Each of the maps is hand-coloured and are a great asset to researchers.

**KNOX:** Our Knox School Photo Collection is a unique collection of the class photos of all the schools in Knox area. Originally Upwey High School was the only secondary school in the area the alternative being travel to Box Hill or Lilydale. We have over 20,000 photographs from nearly sixty schools.

**KOROIT:** A trophy donated from the District 45s Association in 1934 prompted some research into the Forty-Fives? It is a card game that derives from an earlier Irish game called Spoil Five and similar to Maw that originated in Scotland. The object of the game is to be the first individual or team to reach 20 points.

**KORUMBURRA:** From a letter of 1898 held in our collection is a description of a fire that took everything except the families lives. The mother was expecting a baby when her just completed home was devastated by fire. The baby was born 5 days after the fire while they were living in a tent.

**LIGHT RAILWAYS:** We have a large range of railway related books on offer, from *Ghost Trains - Forgotten Railways*, *Victorian Tramway Maps*, to histories on many local railways. For a full listing contact [sales@lrssa.org.au](mailto:sales@lrssa.org.au) or look up the website: <http://www.lrssa.org.au>. We also have railway related outings to interest railway enthusiasts.

**MALMSBURY:** Our railway station is the heart of our small town, it was built in 1862 of basalt and is historically significant as one of the

earliest stations built in Victoria. The buildings are in a state of disrepair and we have written to the Minister for Public Transport including a petition of over 650 signatures requesting urgent action.

**MIDDLE PARK:** The Flora of Middle Park is an ongoing series of recording the plants used in public places, mostly along our street and examines their origin and history. This is an important project that will assist in the preservation and recording of our green spaces in times to come.

**MILITARY:** During WW11 Ireland was neutral and interned both British and German military personnel at the Curragh internment camp in County Kildare. Their guards had no ammunition in their weapons and the inmates were allowed to leave the camp for trips and drinks in different local pubs and attend social events!

**MORDIALLOC:** The Mentone Public Library celebrated its 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary earlier this year. Dr Graeme Whitehead recounted the history of the first attempts to start a library followed by years of frustration until finally in 1925 the dedicated members achieved their goal. Without the persistence of these forefathers we would not have this valuable facility.

**NARREWARREN:** Participation in activities by our members has resulted in extraordinary publicity enhancing our reputation. We have been actively sought to participate with other sections of our community. We have built a relationship with Council, local and family history groups, and the Berwick & Harkaway Cemeteries Trust, the Berwick RSL and more.

**NEWSTEAD:** We have become eligible to host job seekers undertaking voluntary work as an approved activity. We are hoping to attract volunteers who will assist us in our many and various jobs and activities required to run the Society. The volunteers will benefit by gaining an insight into Newstead's local history and hopefully become members.

**NILLUMBIK:** The first wood pavement was laid in London and was highly regarded because of its economy and durability, its traction and extreme cleanliness. In Australia wood blocks were laid in Melbourne at the intersection of Collins and Swanston Street. When properly laid and maintained hard wood blocks lasted 20 years.

**ORMOND:** Box Cottage Museum, Joyce Park, Jasper Rd, home of City of Moorabbin Historical Society. See a display of White Nighties and Sewing Notions, treadle sewing machines and sad irons. All welcome 2-4pm, 28 February & 27 March. Entry by donation. Email: moorabbinhs@gmail.com.

**PAYNESVILLE:** In October we participated in history week for the first time with "Boat builders" and "Paynesville and the Great

War". Both events were well attended and we will participate again next year. Join us on December 13 at our Open day at the Display Facility in Gilsenan Reserve from 8.30 to 12.30 to see our collection.

**PORT PHILLIP PIONEERS:** From Garryowen's *The Chronicles of Early Melbourne*: "Several hundred persons were present on the course, and order was preserved by half-a-dozen expirée convicts appointed as special constables for the purpose. Settlers rode in several mile to be "all there". The run was semi-circular with a scanty scrap of bunting fluttering as a winning post".

**PRAHRAN:** A recent book launch *Prahran and the Dismal Swamp Uncovering the Natural, Settlement and Disease Ecologies of a Suburb* reminds us of the humble beginnings of Prahran. It shows how typhoid fever came to be a major health threat from 1865 to 1895 in this suburb. Typhoid was named the worst filth disease to reach the continent.

**SANDRINGHAM:** Beaumaris Ridge Estate is being subdivided into 20 lots. We have recorded the history of this property that has been a private residence, holiday home, a Legacy home for orphaned children and then the RSL for the last 60 years. We have submitted relevant names from its history to "Vicnames" for street names in the subdivision.

**SNAKE VALLEY:** In 1904 the directors of Electric Hydraulic Company came out to see their new electric powerhouse for goldmining put into service. When the plant was turned on and water forced through the pump the nozzle swished in all directions and the directors got a ducking some of them being knocked over by the water pressure!

**ST JOHN AMBULANCE:** A new international history journal "One St John" was recently launched by the Grand Prior. The journal is the brainchild of our own Priory Historical Advisor and Priory Librarian. The journal will not be issued in print format but is downloadable free of charge from: <http://www.orderofstjohn.org> then click on News.

**UNITING CHURCH:** We have a new Synod Archives Centre at 54 Serrell St, East Malvern. It is in the rear of the hall of the Serrell Street church. Parking is available locally, the nearest tram in on Darling and Waverley Roads with the closest train being East Malvern Station. Contact: 9532 0393.

**WARRANTYTE:** A Manningham Council grant will allow refurbishment of our Blacksmith's Hut that has been stacked in pieces at the rear of the museum. Heritage carpenter Matt Jeffery will reassemble it and then refurbish the interior. The hut is on Council's Heritage List and they have been generous in ensuring its survival.

**WOADY YALOOK:** Thanks go to everyone who generously donates information and material for our Society's archival and photographic collections. We have received everything from an 1874 birth certificate, cut outs of old newspaper articles, postcards, sepia photographs, and local organisations activity programs.

**YACKANDANDAH:** Our Facebook page is up and running ready for your viewing—an exciting venture for the YDHS. We also have 2 books reduced in price *Evolution of a Family* (Kelly and Murray families) by Helen Neville (\$10 plus postage) and *Yackandandah Cricket Club, 150 years 1959–2009* by Colin Barnard. (\$5 plus postage). Email: [museum@yackandandah.com](mailto:museum@yackandandah.com).



## BASS STRAIT: The Western Approaches

Maritime Museums of Victoria  
Conference 2016

Hosted by  
Flagstaff Hill Maritime Village,  
Warrnambool  
8th – 10th April 2016

- The Indigenes Coast
  - Sealers
  - Settlers
  - Ports
  - Coastal Defence
  - Discovery
  - Whalers
  - Navigation
  - Early Steamers
  - Fishing Craft
- and more...

**Bookings:** Full details of program, speakers, tour, BBQ, dinner

*Please contact:*

Cindy Kelly,  
Flagstaff Hill,  
P.O. Box 198 Warrnambool  
Fax: (03) 55594613  
Tel: 1800 556 111  
email: [ckelly@warrnambool.vic.gov.au](mailto:ckelly@warrnambool.vic.gov.au)



**TUESDAY 16 FEBRUARY**

## LECTURE:

**The Political Philosophy of Robert Menzies**

- Speaker:** The Hon. Dr. David Kemp  
**Time:** Drinks: 5.15pm;  
 Lecture: 5.45pm  
**Venue:** Drill Hall, 239 A'Beckett Street, Melbourne  
**Cost:** Free to RHSV Members; Non-Members \$10.00

Robert Menzies was a rarity among Australian politicians in propounding a political philosophy he described as 'liberalism', embracing political institutions, policy values, and the nature of society and humanity. This political philosophy was developed during his legal training and his experience of politics, especially following the merger of the Liberal Party and the National Labor Party to become the Nationalist Party (1917-1931). He saw his philosophy as providing an alternative to the utopian socialist and anti-capitalist ideas pervading the Labor Party at the time. The main elements of this philosophy were in place by the time he became Prime Minister at the head of the United Australia Party, in 1939.

The Hon. Dr. David Kemp B.A. (Hons), LLB, Ph.D. studied law, history and politics at the University of Melbourne and political science at Yale. He taught political science at Melbourne and Monash Universities 1971-1990, publishing books and articles on voting behavior and Australian politics. He was MP for Goldstein 1990-2004, and a Cabinet Minister in the Howard Government. He currently chairs the Advisory Council for the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House, Canberra. He is a member of the Board of the Grattan Institute for Public Policy and of the Australian Heritage Council. He continues to write on Australian politics and political ideas.

**EXHIBITIONS**

Extended by popular demand:

**Nail Can to Knighthood:**

The Life of Sir Macpherson Robertson

This exhibition  
**MUST END** on  
 Friday 4 March


**MONDAY 29 FEBRUARY**

## BOOK LAUNCH:

**Railway Hotels of Australia. Volume 1: Victoria, by Scott Whitaker**

- Speakers:** Roderick Smith and Scott Whitaker  
**Time:** 1.30  
**Venue:** Drill Hall, 239 A'Beckett Street, Melbourne  
**Cost:** Free

Scott will launch the first volume of his *Railway Hotels of Australia*, the first of four volumes which will cover the history of every hotel across Australia that trades or once traded as the Railway Hotel. Scott's book details not only each Railway Hotel, but also the history and development of the town it served. On this basis, the books tell the history of the Victorian Railways and provide new perspectives on the social, economic and political history of Victoria.

Scott will be introduced by well-known railway and hotel enthusiast Roderick Smith.

Further information at [www.railwayhotelsaustralia.com.au](http://www.railwayhotelsaustralia.com.au)

RSVP by Thursday 25 February to [office@historyvictoria.org.au](mailto:office@historyvictoria.org.au) or 9326 9288

**TUESDAY 15 MARCH**

## LECTURE:

**How Victoria Achieved A Grassroots Culture**

- Speaker:** Professor Weston Bate OAM  
**Time:** Drinks: 5.15; Lecture 5.45  
**Venue:** Drill Hall, 239 A'Beckett Street, Melbourne  
**Cost:** Free to RHSV Members; Non-Members \$10.00

Our unusually strong local history network may be seen as a parallel to the nineteenth century emphasis on Victoria's grassroots. Following the gold rush, that social phenomenon lay at the heart of Victorian democracy. There were rare and important interactions between economic, social and political forces.

Beneath the ferment that produced Eureka (1854), the Eight Hours' Movement (1856) and the remarkable Land Convention (1857) – supported by the democratic constitutional framework of manhood suffrage and vote by ballot – there lay the distinct grassroots ambitions of a lower middle class migrant society.

The desire to build a strong, educated and fair community produced, for instance, the Mechanics' Institutes. Like many contemporary institutions they came from a British model that was, however, transformed from their patronising attitude to enlarge the

horizons of the general public who embraced them. Hundreds of them gave people power. Democratic governments helped with grants of land and books.

Mechanics' halls (many, like Leongatha's, now inhabited by historical societies) became community centres. Under the Education Act of 1872 they were often used temporarily as schools before a massive public works program provided the buildings that still distinguish the state.

Land was a key definer and battleground. Desire for land and a home of one's own first produced goldfields' residence areas, then selection (especially Section 42 of the 1865 Act); and capitalists were to respond to the market with typically affordable quarter acre suburban subdivisions. You can see the same motivation, politically, in the rail for every farming community of the "Octopus" Act of 1883, economically doomed though it was.

Activists responded to the groundswell of the new society. WG Spence and David Temple took unionism on a new path that culminated in the world's first unskilled union, the AWU. And men like James Oddie of Ballarat put self and society together. He lent at unusually reasonable rates to land selectors and gave mightily to cultural development through the Ballarat Fine Art Gallery. Friendly Societies, Mutual Improvement Associations, and many other grassroots' platforms helped general social development.

Overarching, was the Radical Liberal political movement, driven by Professor Charles Pearson and his pupils, Alfred Deakin and Henry B Higgins in a characteristically Victorian alliance of capital and labour. It can be seen as early as 1853 – 54 in the Ballarat deep-sinkings, then in the stonemasons eight hours' achievement, as well as underpinning the common purpose of the 1880's land boom.

Clearly, there is much to explore in the grassroots theme. Just see the link between the desire of successful members of the gold generation to help unfortunate mates and the Deakinite breakthrough with Old Age pensions, leading on to Victoria's little "I" liberal political slant.

Weston Bate is an unusual grassroots man. He has taught at every level from sub-primary to PhD, and bravely used his academic training to transform despised local history. He was an athlete, an accomplished amateur footballer, intervarsity (winning) golfer, shop assistant, farmhand, and Lancaster pilot. At 91 he became C Grade champion of the Metropolitan Golf Club. A past president of RHSV, he instigated *History Week* and championed our local history network. His sixteen books include the pace-setting *A History of Brighton*, the prize-winning *Lucky City*, histories of two schools, two golf clubs, two volumes in the Museum's Photographic Archive Project and the story of Melbourne's lanes, as well as a book of poems.



**ANNOUNCING**  
**Special**  
**celebration event**

**THURSDAY 17 MARCH**

LUNCHTIME EVENT:

**A Michael Cannon Celebration: Fifty Years since *The Land Boomers***

**Time:** 12 noon – 2pm  
**Venue:** Drill Hall (ground level), 239 A'Beckett Street, Melbourne  
**Cost:** \$30 for RHSV members and Friends of the State Library; Non-Members \$40  
Includes a light sandwich lunch and refreshments.

**Bookings essential:** 9326 9288 with payment by credit card:  
[office@historyvictoria.org.au](mailto:office@historyvictoria.org.au)

The Royal Historical Society of Victoria and the Friends of the State Library of Victoria are combining to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of *The Land Boomers*, a book that changed the face of Australian historical writing.

Best-selling author, publisher, researcher, journalist, editor and historian Michael Cannon has for half a century contributed to our understanding of Victorian and Australian history. The RHSV and the Friends of the State Library of Victoria now wish to pay tribute to the author and his lifetime's work.

Join RHSV president Don Garden and the family and friends of Michael Cannon for readings from *The Land Boomers* and *The Vagabond Papers*, the writings of colonial journalist Julian Thomas, whom Michael Cannon rescued from obscurity in the 1970s.

The event will include the official launch by Assoc. Prof John Arnold (Monash University) of a special issue of *The La Trobe Journal*, the flagship publication of the Friends of the State Library. The issue features 'Researching by day, Writing by night – my fifty years as author and publisher' –from Michael Cannon's unpublished memoir. An introductory essay by Andrew Lemon discusses Cannon's contribution to the writing of history and the excitement his book aroused at the time: descendants of the boomers still wielded power in Melbourne and his revelations brought threats of censorship and libel actions. But threats did wonders for sales and *The Land Boomers* boomed.

**FRIDAY 8 APRIL**

EXHIBITION OPENING:

**'Judging for the People: Honouring 175 years of the Supreme Court in Victoria'**

to be opened by **The Governor of Victoria, the Honourable Linda Dessau AM**

**Time:** 5.30 for 6.00pm  
**Venue:** Drill Hall, 239 A'Beckett Street, Melbourne  
RSVP by Thursday 31 March: 9326 9288 or [office@historyvictoria.org.au](mailto:office@historyvictoria.org.au)

**SATURDAY 9 APRIL**

CONFERENCE:

**'Honouring 175 Years of the Supreme Court in Victoria'**

**Augustus Wolskel Lecture to be delivered by the Honourable Marilyn Warren AC QC, Chief Justice of Victoria**

**Time:** 9.00am – 4.00pm  
**Venue:** Victoria University, City Campus, 283 Queen St, Melbourne  
**Cost:** RHSV members \$50; Non-members \$60; students \$30 (limited to the first 20 students who respond).

Includes light lunch.

Conference Program and registration form included with this newsletter and available of RHSV website

[www.historyvictoria.org.au](http://www.historyvictoria.org.au)

Bookings and payments can be made directly online at

[www.trybooking.com/178916](http://www.trybooking.com/178916)

**RHSV Annual Book Sale**

The Book Sale will be held on **SATURDAY 18 JUNE**.

A Members Special Preview will be held on **THURSDAY 16 JUNE**.

**We are now accepting books.** This year we will again limit ourselves to history books only. They need not be books about Australian History; all history books are most welcome, but only history books.

Telephone 9326 9288 or email [office@historyvictoria.org.au](mailto:office@historyvictoria.org.au) to arrange for us to collect your books, or drop them in to the RHSV – there is 10 minute free parking at the front door.



**HISTORY WEEK 2016:**

**Sunday 16 October – Sunday 23 October**

**BANNER GRANTS**

More than 200 historical societies have received History Week Banner Grants since we began the programme in 2008. These are an ideal way to promote your society.

An application form is included with this issue of *History News*; it can also be downloaded at:

[www.historyvictoria.org.au/programs/history-week-banner-grant](http://www.historyvictoria.org.au/programs/history-week-banner-grant)

Applications close 27 May 2016.

*History Week* is generously supported by the Vera Moore Foundation.

**RHSV FELLOWSHIPS and AWARDS of MERIT**

Nominations for 2016 Fellowships and Awards of Merit are now being invited. The awards are a means of peer recognition within the RHSV for an outstanding contribution made to history in Victoria.

**Closing Date for Fellows Nomination .....Friday 18 March**

**Closing Date for Awards of Merit.....Friday 15 April**

Guidelines are available from Kate Prinsley: 9326 9288 or [kateprinsley@historyvictoria.org.au](mailto:kateprinsley@historyvictoria.org.au)

Nominations should be sent to the Executive Officer, RHSV, 239 A'Beckett Street, Melbourne 3000.

**Announcements will be made at the RHSV AGM on Tuesday 17 May and published in our June newsletter.**

By publicly recognising the outstanding work of volunteers in local history, we hope these awards will inspire others.

