



History NEWS

Issue No. 325

July 2016

Royal Historical Society
of Victoria



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President's Report

At the time of writing the federal election has not taken place, but the results will be known by the time you read this message. You may be asking yourself how important the election is for Victorian history and heritage. The answer, in short, is **very** important.

In recent years there has been a contraction of the Commonwealth's role in heritage. Under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) a clearer distinction was drawn between national, state and local heritage, with the Commonwealth ceasing most responsibility apart from World Heritage, a new National Heritage List and government-owned properties on the Commonwealth Heritage List.

In conjunction with this, the Australian Heritage Commission was closed down and a much more limited Australian Heritage Council took its place. Its main focus has been processing properties nominated for the National Heritage List. In recent years the Council has suffered profoundly, as part of the Environment Department, from deep cutbacks.

In more recent times, through its 'one stop shop' policy, the Commonwealth has delegated many of its remnant environment and heritage powers to state regimes.

Of particular interest to historical societies was the replacement of the Grants for Voluntary Environment, Sustainability and Heritage Organisations with a new scheme which would have continued small grants to community organisations such as historical societies. However, this scheme was essentially abandoned when a High Court case, the Williams or Chaplains case, ruled that the Commonwealth had limited powers to make grants to community groups. A legislative fix is possible, but has not been attempted.

A few months ago the Commonwealth issued the Australian Heritage Strategy, a blueprint for the future that includes a National Heritage Lottery that has the potential to pump millions of dollars into the heritage sector.

The Federation of Australian Historical Societies recently asked the Coalition, Labor and Greens for their position on a number of key heritage issues, and these show why Commonwealth heritage action is important to us. They include:

- Bipartisan support for the Australian Heritage Strategy.
- Bipartisan support for the introduction of a National Heritage Lottery.
- Bipartisan support for the Parliamentary Friends of History & Heritage.
- Stronger and clearer Heritage protection regimes, with the Commonwealth providing leadership.
- Rebuilding of community heritage support and funding.
- Improved resourcing of the Commonwealth's Heritage Division and the Australian Heritage Council.
- Improved public education and participation in history and heritage matters, and recognition of their significance to Australia as a nation.

Don Garden



Tribute to our long-serving staff

It was with some sense of guilt that I realised recently that two of our staff have been with us for more than 10 years, but we have not recognised that milestone or their contribution to the Society.

As the RHSV Annual Report emphasised, the last year or so has been perhaps the most successful period in the Society's history. That has in no small part been due to the efforts of our Executive Officer, Kate Prinsley, and our Office Manager, Geradine Horgan. The increased activity at the RHSV has thrown a good deal of extra work on them. Fortunately, their years of running the Society and their institutional knowledge have enabled them to encompass the higher demands.

Geradine Horgan completed an Economics degree at Monash University, majoring in economics and statistics, and then worked for a period as a research assistant in the Economics Department. She left the workforce to raise her family, but undertook voluntary work in kindergartens, schools, local sporting clubs and other community groups, usually as treasurer.

Ged returned to work, part-time as a bookkeeper, while undertaking courses to upgrade her accounting and computer skills. This gave her the background to commence work at the RHSV in 2003 as the bookkeeper and receptionist. Fortunately she found the RHSV amenable and interesting, especially her interaction with the great diversity of people who contact the Society. Over the years her responsibilities have grown and as Office Manager she is a vital and stable force in the Society. Ged is the person that most people first encounter when they walk through the door.

Away from the RHSV, Ged enjoys history, walking, music, reading, the beach and the company of her family (including husband, Geoff!) & friends.

Our Executive Officer, Kate Prinsley, has a BA (Hons) from the University of Melbourne and a Grad Dip in Museum Studies from Deakin University. After her studies, Kate moved to England where she was appointed inaugural Director of the Florence Nightingale Museum in London.

Continued on page 8

History NEWS



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Essendon Historical Society devastated by fire

As this edition of *History News* is being completed, a major fire at the Moonee Ponds Courthouse has just been extinguished. It is the home of the Essendon Historical Society.

It appears that most damage has been in the roof and the former court chamber. It is not yet clear how far the historical society rooms and collection has been impacted, but there is some optimism that the damage is not great.

The building is government-owned but run by the Society as a Committee of Management. It is understood to be fully insured. The Society's collection and equipment are insured through the RHSV scheme.

The Public Record Office and Blue Shield Australia have moved to assist the Society in the preservation and conservation of parts of the collection that may be damaged but salvagable.



Fire has destroyed the roof of the building.

Picture: Hamish Blair



The building's roof was badly damaged.

Picture: Hamish Blair



Essendon Historical Society president Bob Chalmers says he is shattered.

Picture: Hamish Blair

Images courtesy of the *Herald Sun*.

RHSV AGM was a Big Hit!

The Annual Meeting of the RHSV on 17 May was enlivened by some welcome recognitions and a fine after-event speaker, Professor Marilyn Lake. The night was notable too for the sad absence of Doug Gunn who had not missed an AGM for decades until his recent death.

Awards of Merit were presented to Susan Thompson of the Lilydale Historical Society (*in absentia*) and to Michael Moore of the Fitzroy Historical Society for his outstanding and dedicated work for the Fitzroy Historical Society. Distinguished Service Awards were presented to: David Thompson for his important work in many capacities at the RHSV including in managing exhibitions, especially the highly successful 'Nailcan to Knighthood'; to the Honourable Paul Mullally for his meticulous work to bring the Judge Walpole Willis Port Phillip casebooks to life, now on our RHSV website as a digital archive – our first such effort! Also John Gillespie, our publications designer, was honoured for his great service over many years on *History News*, the *VHJ*, History Week banners and other digital work, much of it delivered *pro bono*. Richard Broome was made a fellow of the RHSV.



Richard Broome and Mike Moore at RHSV AGM Tuesday 17 May 2016

Certificates of Appreciation were given to the team behind *Remembering Melbourne* due out in November, and to Lenore Frost for her magnificent work designing and managing our successful History Victoria Bookshop.

The Annual Report can be found at: www.historyvictoria.org.au/publications/annual-report, and Annual Reports can be mailed to you on request: phone 9326 9288 .

After the meeting closed, Marilyn Lake (University of Melbourne) spoke passionately on the Soldier Settlement Scheme in Victoria after WW1. Professor Lake argued that it was a 'reckless scheme' committing often inexperienced individuals to farms that were too small and too over-capitalised in an era of falling farm prices. The failure rate of the

The Full Council of the RHSV for 2016 is:

President: Don Garden

Vice-President: Richard Broome

Treasurer: Robert Barnes

Hon. Sec.: Carole Woods

HVSG Convenor: George Fernando

Ordinary Members:

Rosalie Triolo

Elisabeth Jackson

Margaret Anderson

Judith Smart

Charles Sowerwine

Jim Dixon

Alleyn Hockley

Jane Carolan

scheme was over seventy per cent, with many walking off their farms leaving financial and psychological damage in their wake. Her lecture resonated particularly with the country members present.

HISTORY WEEK 2016

Get ready to dive into Victoria's history this History Week

The 9th annual *History Week* will be held this year from the 16-23rd October and is shaping up to be a fascinating week of exploration.

Last year saw over 400 things to do around the state to celebrate the Week, and we encourage historical societies, museums and libraries to host a history event that showcases your activities.

Collectively *History Week* demonstrates the vibrancy of local history around the state. It highlights the enormous amount of work undertaken by volunteers and paid staff to make Victoria's history accessible. Every year the range of activities and number of participants grows and we thank you – and encourage you to get planning for this year.

The marketing campaign for *History Week* this year features this stunning image of the Brighton Beach Baths, reproduced with permission from the Bayside Library Service.

The image was snapped by photographer Edward Hayes c. 1954 and features John Marshall, Wendy Byrne, Alan Trickey and Kerry Lemon. John Marshall was a champion swimmer who later married Wendy Byrne. Alan Trickey was the son of Councillor Trickey one time Mayor of Brighton. The photographer Edward Hayes appears to have been commissioned by Brighton Council in 1954 to take a series of photos.

The photo will appear in *Remembering Melbourne* – the publication currently being produced by the RHSV and featuring collections of 20 suburban historical societies – to be launched in November.

History Week is generously supported by the Vera Moore Foundation.



If you are planning a history related event during 16-23 October 2016 and would like it included on the official *History Week* calendar, you can register your event online at www.historyweek.org.au

WORKING HISTORY

Historians of all persuasions are invited to attend the 'Working History' conference to be held over two days (19-20 August 2016) at Graduate House, Carlton, Melbourne.

The conference, presented by PHA (Vic) and Professional Historians Australia, includes a diverse range of presentations and panel sessions.

We have two excellent guest speakers lined up – Dr Lisa Murray, City of Sydney Historian and Associate Professor Tim Sherratt, known to many through his work with the National Library and University of Canberra. Both speakers are outstanding history practitioners, bringing interesting ideas and perspectives to their work.

Our program includes papers looking at the 'what now', 'how to' 'who for' and 'where to' of history and heritage. Lightning talks will offer bursts of digestible information exploring challenges in history practice and scholarship. In addition, digital presentations and posters will provide an opportunity to look at topic areas in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

We will conclude the program with a 'Provocation': a roundtable session giving everyone the opportunity to discuss issues facing the history profession.

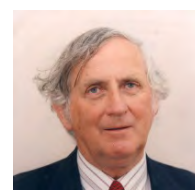
As a lead-in to the conference, we recommend the 'Making Public Histories' seminar on Thursday evening (18 August). PHA (Vic) has

collaborated with the History Council of Victoria, the State Library of Victoria and Monash University to bring you this event. The seminar looks at *The Role of History Today: in our cities, our institutions and our communities*. Speakers will be Lisa Murray, Chris Johnston and Andrew May, with Seamus O'Hanlon chairing.

All details about the conference and associated events are available on the PHA (Vic) website. Register now to ensure your place.



An event recently added to our program, and one which we are thrilled to announce, is a 'Conversation' featuring Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Blainey and Catherine Andrews (professional historian, RHSV Ambassador and special friend of PHA Vic)





Judy Gittus at work cataloguing photos onto Victorian Collections



Cataloguing volunteer Gaye Cleeland inspects a fold-out map book



Volunteers Cherry McFee and Elaine Alexander catalogue photos onto worksheets

Phillip Island & District Historical Society Cataloguing

As with many community volunteer-run museums, the Phillip Island & District Historical Society (est.1967) started the 1980s with no cataloguing having been undertaken. A register had been kept by an early member c.1970. The first tentative entry was: "1. Debentures, corresp, etc, from the formation of the library 1928". But there were no catalogue sheets to go with the entry.

In 1982 the Ministry for the Arts was obviously concerned that many holders of community collections had little idea not only of what was in their collections, but of the significance of the objects. The Ministry wrote to societies informing them that "the museum resource service of the ministry for the arts is currently providing a cataloguing service to small museums throughout Victoria." Roger Trudgeon subsequently came to give a collections workshop.

Sally Robins was appointed in the mid-1980s to the Ministry for the Arts to mentor the various community collecting bodies in cataloguing. She catalogued a number of items for the society (the first being an old clay pipe) and helped set up the system of hard copy cataloguing for the society's cataloguing volunteers to follow. A group of volunteers took up the challenge and catalogued many items before moving on.

In 1993 regional curator Elizabeth Downes came from the South Eastern Historical Association to restart the society's cataloguing efforts. The society's committee decided to catalogue the collection digitally in 2001. The treasurer, Judy Gittus, undertook the task of data entry from the hard copy catalogue sheets, and continues the data entry to this day.

Meanwhile the photograph collection was bulging out of the containers in which it was stored, and none of it had been catalogued. In 2011 a Public Records Office of Victoria grant allowed the society to start cataloguing the photo collection. A suitable applicant was paid from the grant money to catalogue the photos, and in the course of a few months catalogued several hundred photos onto worksheets.

After the good start she had made on cataloguing the photos, the society decided an all-out effort should be made to finish this major task. An article was written for the local paper calling for volunteers. Several volunteers responded and have been working as a team for the past five years on cataloguing the photos. They meet at the museum every second Friday for two hours and catalogue onto worksheets from the Museums Australia Small Museums Cataloguing Manual.

The digital cataloguing system was satisfactory except for the fact that the necessary upgrades were an unacceptable expense for the society. Museums Australia Victoria came to the rescue with the Victorian Collections free online cataloguing program – victoriancollections.net.au. The problem of what to do with the thousand entries sitting on our original digital program was overcome when VC enabled the uploading of databases. Judy was able to convert the digital entries into Excel, and the VC technician was able to do a bulk upload on our newly created Victorian Collections page. The low-cost training provided to VC users was an added bonus.

Judy committed to uploading all of the hard copy worksheet information onto Victorian Collections, and she spends approximately two hours per day on cataloguing. In that time, she can scan photographs and upload both the scans and the hard copy information for about eight photos. Over 900 photos have been catalogued online. The cataloguing team and Judy have done such a great job that the society has been nominated by the Victorian Collections team for an award in the volunteer museum category in the forthcoming Museum Australia Victoria state awards. Fingers crossed!

Why do the volunteers catalogue photos for hours a month? Elaine says: "Because I love to see how familiar areas looked so many years ago, and to ensure that all items donated are properly accounted for". Cherry says that in cataloguing, "all of the history of the object or photo comes to light, making each item so much more significant".

Christine Grayden

RHSV announces upcoming cataloguing software

The RHSV as a constituent member of the Federation of Australian Historical Societies welcomes the GLAM peak bodies research to develop a national strategic framework and tool kit to support digital access to Australia's cultural collections. This project has been funded by a Catalyst grant. It has particular relevance as the aim of the project is to investigate the support required from smaller collections, such as historical societies. For further information about this project go to:

<http://camd.org.au/catalyst-funding/>

We are hoping in coming weeks to be able to recommend to all societies a software package that will facilitate cataloguing and digitisation of collections and will be harvestable by Trove.

To assist us in this work, the RHSV is keen to hear about your software experiences and other cataloguing projects: Please contact kateprinsley@historyvictoria.org.au

How do you move a museum – and keep it up to date?

How do you move a museum? This was the Foster & District Historical Society's problem 40 years ago. The town's 86 year-old post office – its oldest surviving commercial building – was about to be replaced by a modern supermarket and, with much fund-raising and a generous donation from a local landowner, the Society acquired the building and moved it 200 metres down Main Street to land leased from the Shire.



FoBS 48.2 – Moving the Post Office building on site.



Since that move, the Museum has grown, other buildings have been added – an old school, farm cottage, Lasseter's working boat from Corner Inlet and farm equipment. Rooms have been converted to provide more space for permanent and temporary exhibitions and the ever changing technology required to support the research, cataloguing and display activities of the Society has been installed and updated.

The result is a museum that attracts many visitors to the town and to the South Gippsland area from around the country and overseas – in 2014/15 over 1,700 visitors came. The museum is very much part of the community – it is the focal point for many local activities and events – and the Society is responsible for the historical interpretation boards and plaques around Foster.

Foster was a gold town – gold was discovered in Stockyard Creek, just opposite the museum. After the gold, came the cream – it is now an important dairy farming and tourist town. All of these aspects are reflected in the permanent exhibitions throughout the buildings, along with photographs and information about all of the towns and people in the old Shire of South Gippsland. Recent renovations have allowed the Museum to develop temporary exhibitions – up to a year each – focussing on particular aspects or events, which in turn provide additional material for incorporation into the permanent display. Exhibitions looking at the dairy industry, one-teacher schools, life in the 1950s, the role of Wilsons Promontory in WW2, including commando training, and the contribution made by the community in WW1 have provided a constantly changing display to attract visitors, community involvement and additional historical information and artefacts. A number of these exhibitions have been recognised, with short-listings in the Museum Australia and the Royal Historical Society of Victoria's Community History awards.

The current exhibition "Road to the Prom" looks at the development of Wilsons Prom as a tourist area in the 1950s and 60s, and at the soldier settlement community at Yanakie,

including oral interviews with many of the original settlers and their families.

The Society and its members have produced a number of publications on the local history including "Prom Country – a history" which provided an overview of the geological, natural and the early Aboriginal histories of the area followed by pioneer stories.

As always, volunteers are the heart of the small country museums. Keeping and recording the collection, answering enquiries, keeping the museum and its grounds maintained, manning the desk on opening days and preparing for the exhibitions can only be done if the Society has willing workers. Foster has the added bonus of a member who makes scale models of the buildings past and present, including a brick-for-brick model of the Wilsons Prom lighthouse and a model of the town centre as it was in the 1940s and 50s.

The Museum was one of the earliest small country museums to receive accreditation over 20 years ago, and it has consistently received accreditation even as the bar was raised. With its temperature-controlled vault, the Museum is also a registered Place of Deposit (POD), which ensures that its more valuable artefacts can be properly maintained. It is a facility for many of the town's organisations to store their records.

The curator of the latest exhibition Dr Cheryl Glowery said at the opening "Local history is important if we are to understand our place, where we live. It is also an organic form of history, with many points of view, different memories, new stories emerging."

The Foster Museum is a proud repository of many of those memories. Museum curator Jennifer Jones is clear – "we are the custodians of the collection, not the owners and we have a responsibility to those communities we represent."

The Historical Society meets monthly – details of the meetings and other activities can be found on www.promcountryhistory.org.au

And how do you move a museum? Carefully and very slowly on the back of a low-loader.

Jennifer Jones

Curator, Foster & District Historical Society Inc

In 2014/15 over 1,700 visitors came. The museum is very much part of the community – it is the focal point for many local activities and events.

THE MELBOURNE MANSION (Part 1)

We tend to think of nineteenth century Melbourne as a boom town, remarkable for its wealth and for its mansions. And in a sense that is true, but we need to keep this in perspective. Not only have we nothing to compare with the great country houses of the English nobility: we have nothing to compare with the wealthier suburbs of London, Manchester or Glasgow, where you find street after street of houses which would rate as mansions by Melbourne standards. An even more relevant comparison can be made with the mansions built in Buenos Aires towards 1900 by the Argentine meat barons, direct competitors of Australian entrepreneurs, whose fortunes were built upon the frozen meat trade inaugurated by Australia. They were far larger than their Melbourne equivalents and staffed by scores of servants.

I can accept some of the blame for our inflated views because I have used the term in my *Melbourne Mansions Data Base*, used online by many RHSV researchers. But in that case it is simply a shorthand to refer to those Melbourne houses which are larger and more interesting than the average.

Early Melbourne had no gentry in the English sense. There were some people of genteel origins or pretensions, but almost everyone, as Paul de Serville has pointed out, was here to make money, not to spend it. I start with Anthony and Katherine Beale, who were more or less genteel in origin, but had little money and seventeen children. They settled in what is now South Fitzroy in 1839, having bought a prefabricated wooden house, and spent their first night with umbrellas over their bed to keep themselves dry.

In this context J F Lyon Campbell was an exception. He was a man of genteel origins and independent means, and it is not entirely clear why he came to Melbourne at all. His house in Abbotsford, 'Campbellfield,' or 'Yarra Cottage', was built in 1839 to the design of Robert Russell. It was a simple late Regency house in appearance, but of substantial proportions, and it was to be the prototype for countless suburban mansions to follow.

The plan shows the drawing room and dining room at the front, flanking a central passage, as was to be the norm. But while guests could pass from one to the other across the passage, there were additional doors at the rear of each room by which servants could enter without crossing the path of the gentry. The kitchen was semi-isolated at the rear, and reached by way of a well-ventilated lobby, so as to avoid cooking smells reaching the reception

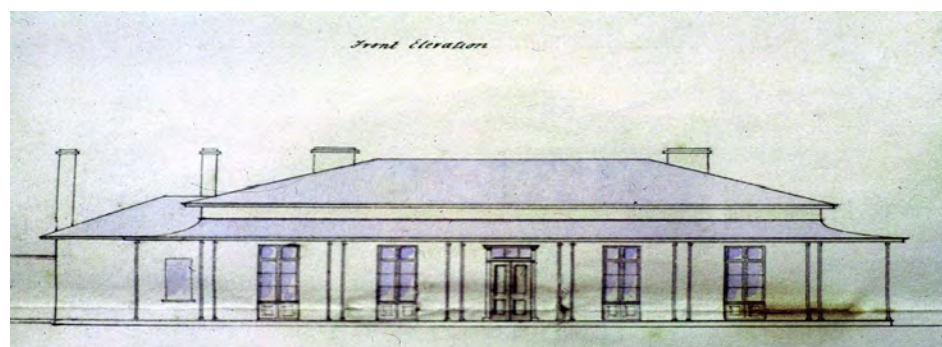
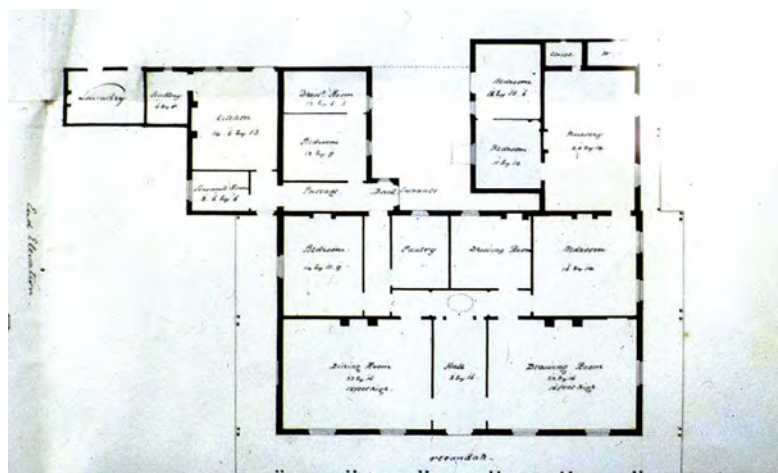
rooms. In other cases the servants might have to cross a covered way totally open to the exterior. It was rare in the city for the kitchen to be completely detached, though common enough in the country where fire was a greater threat. The privy was at the other back corner of this plan, and could be reached from a bedroom by passing out the front door, across the front and down the side verandah, and passing briefly through the open air. But of course one did not do that. One used a chamber pot or commode in the bedroom.

Even by Melbourne's modest standards a true mansion calls for two storeys and some degree of architectural pretension, and one of the first to qualify, and certainly the oldest surviving example, is John Hawdon's 'Banyule', Heidelberg, built to the design of John Gill in about 1845-6. But there were few others before the gold rushes of 1852-4 interrupted the evolution. Shortages of labour and materials meant that building almost ceased for some months

During this time some major prefabricated houses were imported, and though made of timber or iron, they were not necessarily inferior to the existing houses in the colony. William Westgarth's house, which still stands in Toorak as 'Tintern', was a very substantial plate iron building made in Glasgow in about 1854, but not completed on site until 1856. According to a Glasgow report it was to be built with the kitchen detached, 'as is usual in all warm climates', but as actually built the kitchen was in the basement, accessible from a sunken area.

The other effect of the gold rushes was to promote bluestone as a material for house building, though it is difficult at first to see why. The stone is hard and difficult to dress at the best of times, and labour was now very expensive. But basalt was available in unlimited quantities, and was far more reliable than the very poor bricks being made at the time, or the unseasoned timber from sawmills that were just beginning to re-open. Moreover, although the stone is hard to saw or dress, it is not very difficult to split for use in rock-faced work, which was the norm at the time.

The most conspicuous example is Bishops Court in Clarendon Street, East



Yarra Cottage, elevation [digitally corrected] and plan, by Robert Russell, 25 May 1839, Graham Brothers and Co. collection, University of Melbourne Archives, 1961.0014.

Melbourne, by James Blackburn (and Newsom & Blackburn), of 1850-3. The walls are of squared rubble, not really acceptable for buildings of pretension, and we may be sure that it was intended to be stuccoed. A Melbourne correspondent wrote to the *Builder* magazine in England, in 1854:

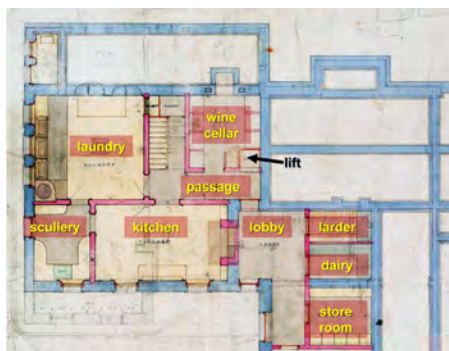
Very large three and four storied stores are being erected in all parts of the city and suburbs, and many fine stone mansions. Many a ten-roomed house I have seen let at £1,200 per annum - nothing but a plain hammer-dressed blue stone front - nothing particular about it. Building in stone is frightful [ie frightfully expensive], still there is nothing thought of it here: thousands are spent very freely.

The process of subdivision, which we tend to think of as symptomatic of the decline of the great estates, in fact took place from the earliest dates. The Beales' property, referred to above, lasted only a year before subdivision plans were prepared, in 1840. But of course subdivision was at its most frenetic in the Land Boom. The auction posters invariably showed any substantial house on or near the subdivision, so as to demonstrate just how desirable the location was. And in more than one case houses were actually built for the purpose of encouraging buyers, on the china egg principle. 'Medlow' in Warrigal Road is a surviving example, built as part of a web of dubious property dealings by the Cairncross family, which ultimately failed. The advertised plan in 1888 shows 'Major Cairncross two storey house in course of erection', which was untrue, for the house was built only in the following year and on a different site - in fact rather oddly located on what had been intended to be a street corner.

The working parts of the house - kitchen, scullery, laundry, and perhaps other rooms such as a dairy, wine cellar, meat room, silver pantry and linen press, were generally located at the rear, but at 'Rippon Lea'



Subdivision of the Bismarck Estate, Surrey Hills, auction map, Saturday 11 February 1888. State Library of Victoria. Major Cairncross's house, now 'Medlow' is shown at the corner of Boundary Road [Warrigal Road] and the Creek, not its ultimate location.



'Rippon Lea', Elsternwick, by Reed & Barnes 1868-9, the service rooms in the basement: Miles Lewis

of 1868-9, they were in the basement, connected by a goods lift to the floors they served. But this use of a basement was not efficient, and within twenty years the 'Rippon Lea' kitchen was relocated to the ground floor. (To be continued in the next issue of *History News*)

Miles Lewis

Tribute to our long-serving staff cont

In that role she led the museum towards winning the London Tourist Board/Duke of Westminster top award for Marketing, and as runner-up in the British Tourist Board Museum of the Year. She greatly enjoyed this position, and the 'global reach' of Florence Nightingale.

After returning to Australia, Kate came to the RHSV in January 2005 as our chief administrator. We were delighted to support her when she received a Churchill Fellowship in 2009 which enabled her to visit many historical societies in the United States and Britain.

Kate has enjoyed her involvement in Victoria's local history, and particularly admires the varied and expert way that historical societies work with their collections to bring local history to the community. She respects the enthusiasm and leadership shown by historical societies in working with local councils, tourism and networks to raise the profile and create community benefit from local history. She believes that volunteers in historical societies deserve recognition for their resilience and ingenuity in interpreting Victoria's history - as well as for their ability to work so hard for our state in such cold buildings!!!

Kate enjoys the RHSV because of its collection - particularly the manuscripts which she would love to have more time to explore. She finds a great sense of reward in working with our passionate voluntary workforce who bring such a range of skills. Particularly exciting to her are the outreach programs that bring benefit to the wider Victorian community, such as the Victorian Community History Awards and History Week. Her friendly welcome to members and visitors and her networking are important parts of the RHSV's face to the world.

Kate is married to Simon and has two daughters and a dog.

Congratulations and thanks from the RHSV to Ged and Kate.

Don Garden



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History Victoria Bookshop News

TOP SELLERS IN APRIL 2016

1st - *Judging for the People: A Social History of the Supreme Court in Victoria 1841-2016*. By Simon Smith (ed)

2nd - *Boodgery: first contact in the Mid Murray, 1820-1860*, by John Lay

3rd - *Harold Herbert: Convivial Artist*, by John Trinca

Equal 4th - *Blockbuster!: Fergus Hume and the Mystery of a Hansom Cab*, by Lucy Sussex

Equal 4th - *Eilean Giblin: a feminist between the wars*, by Patricia Clarke

Equal 4th - *Gum Trees, Lagoons & Flat Plains: A history of Yarroweyah, Koonoomoo and Yarroweyah North*, by Margaret Fleming

Equal 4th - *A Palace for a Bishop*, by J F O'Donnell

Equal 4th - *Respectable Radicals: a history of the National Council of Women of Australia*, by Marian Quartly and Judith Smart

Equal 4th - *The Majestic: Early Apartment Living in St Kilda*, by David Willis

NEW IN STORE IN APRIL

World's End: British Military Outposts in the 'Ring Fence' around Australia, 1824-1849, by Alan Powell

The Long Farewell: the perilous voyages of settlers under sail in the great migrations to Australia, 5th Ed, by Don Charlwood

Massoni – Rinaldo, Founder of Cafe Florentino & Leon: Their Legacy, by Michele Massoni-Dubuc

Supreme Court drawings on cards, by Alissa Duke

Walter Lindesay Richardson M.D.: A Victorian seeker, by Bruce Steele.

John Curtin: How he won over the media, by Caryn Coatney.

Australia's Ancient Aboriginal Past: A Global Perspective, by Murray Johnson.

The Life of John Sadleir And His Role in the Capture of Ned Kelly, by Richard M.F.S. Sadleir.

Prepared by Lenore Frost.

Victorian Community History Awards 2016

Entries opened: 1 June 2016 and close 2pm Friday 29 July 2016

Download an entry form at: <http://www.historyvictoria.org.au/programs/victorian-community-history-awards>

The Victorian Community History Awards are proudly presented by the Royal Historical Society of Victoria and the Public Record Office Victoria. The Awards celebrate the people involved in community history projects who are dedicated to telling local stories which help all Victorians to better understand their past.

The Awards Ceremony will be held on the 17th of October at the Arts Centre.

Awards are given for work across the following categories:

- Victorian Community History Award – \$5000
- Collaborative Community History Award – \$2000
- Local History Project Award – \$2000
- History Publication Award – \$2000
- Local History Small Publication Award – \$1500
- Cultural Diversity Award – \$1500
- Multimedia History Award – \$1500
- Historical Interpretation Award – \$1500
- Centenary of WW1 Award – \$1500
- History Article (Peer Reviewed) – \$500

Visit historyvictoria.org.au for more information.

SAVE THE DATE

HISTORY VICTORIA SUPPORT GROUP SEMINAR DAY SATURDAY 20 AUGUST

Echuca Historical Society


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AROUND THE SOCIETIES

We welcome Societies to submit an article/event of around 50 words or send your Newsletter to us and we will write up around 50 words for you around twice per year. For the 1st October 2016 issue, please send details to:

office@historyvictoria.org.au

by 10th September 2016

Attention Madelaine Lewis

Volunteer on behalf of the History Victoria Support Group.

AUSTRALIAN GARDEN: Upcoming Events – AGHS (Victorian Branch) Annual General Meeting 2016 and Lecture ‘Trees and Neighbours’ at Mueller Hall, Birdwood Avenue. Beginning at 6pm Monday 8th August, with guest speaker Commissioner Judy Fakes from the NSW Land and Environment Court. Victorian Branch Committee usually meets at 4pm every fourth Tuesday of the month at Birdwood Avenue, newcomers welcome.

BALNARRING: ‘Snippets from our collection’ – As the Aboriginals had no written language, the word for Balnarring must have sounded different to every white settler who heard it and tried to render it as a proper word – there seemed to be no dispute as to what it meant – ‘Camp in open place’. Some variations include: Ballanrong; Ballyrangue; Bullerong; and Ballanrong.

BRIGHTON CEMETORIANS: Upcoming Events – Sunday 7th August, Dr Rosalie Triolo, Senior Lecturer at Monash University, is giving a lecture entitled ‘Sunshine and Shadows: Victoria’s State Schools and No. 11 Australian General Hospital Caulfield, 1914-19’. Friday 10th October, 1pm, ‘Artists of the Brighton Cemetery’ Seniors’ Week Walk. This walk will explore the Boyd Dynasty and their connection to other artists buried within the Brighton Cemetery.

CASTLEMAINE: Upcoming Events – Monday 3rd October, Les Thornton will present Theatre Royal Advertising Slides (part 2). General meetings are held at the former Court House, 7 Goldsmith Crescent, Castlemaine, 7:30pm on the first Monday of each month.

ELTHAM: Recent publications by Society members – *Montmorency – The Farm on the Plenty* by Maureen Jones; contact: amjones7@bigpond.com. *Laughing Waters Road – Art, Landscape and Memory in Eltham* by Jane Woollard; contact: 9433 3359 or artsinfo@nillumbik.vic.gov.au. *A History of Saint Margaret’s Church* by Dr. Geoffrey Sandy; contact: geoff@sandy.com.au.

FRANKSTON: The Frankston HS has been asked by the Frankston City Council to participate in ‘History Day’ in Frankston. This year it will be held in September and things are in the planning stage at present; it looks like it will be a larger event than last time. Discussions are being held to produce a video on the history of the Ballam Park Homestead and the theme for this year will be Frankston’s history from 1919 – 1966.

HAWTHORN: Upcoming Events – Saturday 20th August, History Show and Tell: more great stories to hear and things to see. Saturday 3rd September at 12pm, a guided tour around the Boroondara

Cemetery with Tony Michaels. New publication – *A Glimpse of Glenferry & other writings* by Ruth Dwyer, \$20 + postage, contact: 9819 1218.

KORUMBURRA: Upcoming Events – The 11th September 2016 will mark the 50th Anniversary of the Historical Society and in celebration they are having an afternoon tea and lecture, beginning at 1:30pm. The speaker will be Lambis Englezos, A.O. sharing his story of discovery of Australian service men killed at the battle of Fromelles.

MALDON: Maldon Museum and Archives Association receives an Award for the Advocacy Category of the Mount Alexander Shire Heritage Awards 2016. ‘Our nominated project (2010-2015) is the documentation, interpretation and presentation of Maldon District Stories.’ Congratulations to all those involved in the project and to those who prepared the submission!

MALMSBURY: Upcoming Events – General Meeting at the Mechanics’ Institute on Wednesday 20th July at 7:30pm. Guest speaker to be announced. The State Library of Victoria is now archiving the Malmsbury Newsletter. They can be found at this web address: www.search.slv.vic.gov.au/MAIN:Everything:SLV_VOYAGER3377659. Select ‘View Online’ and the issue will be downloaded.

MARYSVILLE: The History Centre is open on Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday from 12pm to 3pm or contact 0408 514 933 after hours.

MIRBOO: Members attended the GAAHS (Gippsland Association of Affiliated Historical Societies) Annual Meeting which was held this year in Briagolong. It was a wonderful opportunity to get together with other groups and discuss common problems and hear about the past year’s achievements.

MOUNT EVELYN: Upcoming Events - ‘Lone Pine’: Marion Stott will speak on the three types of Lone Pine/Anzac trees planted in Victoria. Saturday 7th August, 1.30pm at Hardy House. The anniversary of the Battle of Lone Pine is 6th August. All committee positions will be open at the History Group AGM on Monday 15th August at 7:30pm, held at Hardy House. If you’ve ever harboured an ambition to edit a history newsletter, this is your chance.

NEPEAN: The NHS have received the Consulting Architect’s report assessing the Superintendent’s Cottage, a major heritage building at Police Point. Part of the former Quarantine Station, it was gifted by the Commonwealth to the Shire of Mornington Peninsula in 2004. It is an example of Federation architecture superimposed on an earlier house from the Colonial period. Fortunately, with its history of very good maintenance under earlier Commonwealth control, it has been assessed as capable of satisfactory rehabilitation, and of being made suitable for community uses within the next 4-5 years.

OAKLEIGH: Our meeting on Sunday August 7 will mark the 55th anniversary of the Society. Current Exhibition: Veritas: Oakleigh High School 1955-1992. This exhibition features the former Oakleigh High School. The exhibition is on display at the Monash Federation Centre, 3 Atherton Road, Oakleigh 3166.

PAYNESVILLE: The Evolution of Small Boat Radio: From a starting point of the fortuitous donation of an SSB HF radio, the team in the Paynesville Maritime Museum Display Facility have assembled a new display showing how marine radio evolved and became

a useful communication tool for leisure boaters on the Gippsland Lakes. The Display Centre is open 8:30am to 12:30pm on the second Sunday of each month.

PORT FAIRY: The 2016 Pioneer Dinner at Charlies’ on East drew 39 attendees and was enjoyed by all. The toast was proposed by Marten Syme and Lynda Tieman responded. David McInnes gave an entertaining illustrated talk on Animals at War. See more at www.historicalsociety.port-fairy.com.

PRAHAN MECHANICS’ INSTITUTE: Upcoming Events – Free Lecture for Melbourne Rare Book Week, Thursday 21st July at 6:30pm: Professor Wallace Kirsop on ‘People from Prahran and District Important to the Melbourne Book Scene’. Invitation to submit works to the 2016 Short History Prize with awards of up to \$1,000. Entries close Friday 26th August. Visit www.pmi.net.au/events/#shp for more information.

RICHMOND AND BURNLEY: Upcoming Events – Historian Lee Andrews to speak on the ‘History of Richmond Park, Yarra Boulevard and the Caretakers’s Cottage’. Sunday 9th October at 2:30pm in the Society Rooms. Congratulations to Anne Heywood on being recognised by the City of Yarra for the 2016 Volunteer Significant Achievement Award. Anne was recognised for her work in compiling and documenting the list of over 5,000 volunteers who were associated with Richmond, who enlisted to serve in World War One.

TRAFALGAR: The Max Gibson Memorial Prize 2015. Each year the Trafalgar and District Historical Society awards a prize of a \$100 book voucher to the most successful senior and junior history students in the middle and senior school. This prize is an ongoing memorial to Max Gibson, the Society’s inaugural President and generous benefactor. In 2015 the junior award went to Vilani Hang and the senior award to Nathan Somerville.

UNITING CHURCH HS: Upcoming Events – Spring Lecture, Sunday 28th August, ‘How the Church has seen Jesus’ Women Disciples’. The Uniting Church Historical Society’s Committee is sorely depleted and they are actively seeking two or three new leaders for their historic ventures.

WANGARATTA: The Wangaratta Family History Society have just received a grant from the Commonwealth Department of Social Services to update their website to allow their members to access their records online. Progress on the development of the new website will be reported to members regularly. At present the website can be viewed at www.wfhs.org.au.

WARRAGUL: The Society holds its meetings on the last Monday of each month at 7:30pm at the Old Shire Hall, 72 Queen St, Warragul. It is open to the public each Thursday from 10am to 2pm and the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month, from 2pm to 4pm

WHITEHORSE: Upcoming Events – Working Bees will be held on Saturday 3rd September and Saturday 12th November from 9:30am. The Annual General Meeting will be held at 1pm on Saturday 13th August, with special guest Ross McMullin, author of *The Remarkable Pompey Elliott*.



Steiglitz State School No. 1487, circa 1890. Photo: W.J.P. Watson

Steiglitz State School

Fiona Gray is an architect with 20 years experience and a researcher in history and built heritage at Deakin University. She describes here dilemmas of conservation that will be familiar to many historical societies. A brief biography of Fiona can be found at www.gradwomenvic.org.au/amazing-members/

For many Australians, the idea of the ghost town conjures up notions of a remote and foreign place. And yet, just 40km north of Geelong is the town of Steiglitz, voted by *Australian National Geographic* as the fifth best ghost town in Australia. Since the 1960s the town has been recognised for what is described in its municipal planning scheme as its “intangible emptiness”.

But Steiglitz is far from empty. It is a place replete with stories dating from the boom-bust times of Victoria from the mid-1800s and the state’s early forms of settlement. It is a rare place where the history of the gold rush can be interpreted through architectural remains, remnants of an early urban fabric and the mullock heaps that have been progressively reclaimed by nature.

For me, Steiglitz is also a brief drive from work at Geelong’s Deakin University, and home. It presents a fascinating reminder of the many questions of heritage and place that surround us. Many of these questions are the subject of a research project that I am looking forward to presenting this year.

Steiglitz is significant for many reasons. It is one of the first places where both alluvial and reef gold mining occurred in the central Victorian gold rush. Quartz mining brought investment, technology, colonial government, commerce and civic

infrastructure. Today, Steiglitz comprises a small number of remnant buildings, outlines of buildings and plantings that hint at what once was there, an irregular street layout within an open area of hillside and various alluvial and deep shaft-mining sites.

Just outside the town centre, a brief and winding journey from the gravel road that forms the town’s former main road of Regent Street brings the visitor to a decaying timber building that presents many dilemmas of heritage, interpretation and conservation. State School Number 1487 was opened at New Chum, a defunct settlement near Steiglitz, in 1874. In 1880, the school was relocated to its present site just outside Steiglitz and renamed as the Steiglitz Primary School. It continued to operate as a school until 1960.

The Steiglitz Primary School is an example of Victoria’s earliest state schools, designed by renowned surveyor and architect Henry Robert Bastow. Bastow played a critical role in Victoria’s early education revolution, overseeing an unprecedented school building program after the passing of the *Education Act (1872)*. This legislation proclaimed that education should be free, secular and compulsory for all children, and with Bastow working as Chief Architect and Surveyor, 615 schools were built within five years.

Steiglitz Primary School was the first state school in town, following a series of schools built by religious groups from the 1850s. The schools followed the establishment of Steiglitz on an irregular grid pattern influenced by gold diggings and the meandering of Sutherlands Creek. The town’s population peaked at around 2,000 people in the 1880s, with the state school’s attendance booming along with the town.

The 20th century brought changes in mining practices and the decline of Steiglitz, with many buildings disappearing. Bushland has reclaimed the surrounds, further cutting off the school from the remnants of the town. This isolation and the ongoing deterioration of the building has made the former Steiglitz Primary School a fascinating case study in the dilemmas of heritage conservation.

Located on public land, the building is at risk from bushfire, vandalism and ongoing decay. Its isolation means it is rarely seen or interacted with. But while doing nothing will likely result in the building’s erasure, the question of what can or should be done is complex. It displays tensions in local planning policies, within the Burra Charter (2013) and in the politics of public land management.

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Steiglitz State School was used as Youth camp, 1978. Photo: Justin Oakley

Since the closure of the school in 1960, the site has had a variety of uses, which ceased in the 2000s. From the 1990s, there has been a succession of plans for the school site and building. Many elements of these plans that related to the building, including recommended maintenance works, have never been implemented. It appears that government funding to implement conservation plans was often not available, while community groups lacked the resources or authority to carry out maintenance works themselves.

In 2013, Back to Steiglitz, a local community group, commissioned a plan that recommended relocating the school to a site within the Steiglitz township as the only viable means to ensure its conservation. Article 9 of the Burra Charter describes relocation as being “generally unacceptable unless this is the sole practical means of ensuring its survival”, given that the physical location of a heritage place forms part of its cultural significance. And yet, the regrowth of bushland and the increasing isolation of the school site from the rest of the Steiglitz township raise questions as to the role geography plays in the cultural significance of the school site. It might be argued that moving the school into the old Steiglitz township not only better protects the building, but makes it more visible and accessible and re-establishes the school building’s link to the township.

Even if moving the building is acknowledged as a suitable solution, the same questions of resourcing, responsibility and political will that have affected the building’s upkeep still arise. Heritage buildings, like other planning objects and issues, are subject to the inertia of governance systems and politics. But the slow process of deterioration of built fabric means resourcing requirements for maintenance will continue to increase over



Disused Steiglitz State School No.1487 in poor state of repair, 2016. Photo: F. Gray

time if indeed the building survives.

The gradual decline of the school in its current location raises further questions. Is this decline through neglect a form of demolition, discouraged under the Burra Charter and the relevant municipal planning scheme, which identifies the school site as of heritage significance? In a planning sense, neglect of a heritage place does not require a planning permit and yet works to maintain or demolish a building protected under the Heritage Overlay are likely to require permits. However, the end results of neglect and demolition may end up being essentially the same.

Planning policy affecting the school site encourages “restoration, adaptation and reconstruction of heritage places in a manner that does not detract from the cultural significance of the place or area”.

Such work has proven impossible in the school’s current location. Could it be that sympathetic restoration, adaptation or even reconstruction of the school on a vacant site in the Steiglitz town centre will allow the preservation of this significant piece of cultural heritage?

The old Steiglitz Primary School raises an array of heritage questions that reverberate far beyond the township of Steiglitz. These questions of heritage and context raise further issues: how we define and assess cultural significance, and the types of maintenance or conservation approaches that might be acceptable in complex situations. I hope my ongoing research will help clarify these issues, and perhaps impact on policy and practice in this area.

Fiona Gray