



History News

ISSUE 374 | OCTOBER 2024



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What's on at RHSV

Where possible we offer all our events as hybrid: both in our premises at 239 A'Beckett St, Melbourne and via Zoom. Information on booking tickets to all our events can be found on our website.

THE DRIVE-IN LANDSCAPE OF THE LUCKY COUNTRY

Date: Tuesday 1 October

Time: 2pm – 3pm

Cost: Free

Event type: Zoom only

Speaker: Professor Graeme Davison

The National Archives of Australia (NAA) and RHSV are proud to co-present this event with eminent historian, Professor Graeme Davison.

Professor Davison, in response to the NAA's current exhibition, *Reception this way: motels – a sentimental journey with Tim Ross*, will discuss the motel which was the most popular of a suite of American inspired innovations. They transformed Australia's towns and suburbs in the 1950s and 60s: the drive-in cinema, the service station, the drive-in bottle shop and hotel, the carport and the drive-in shopping centre. In his book, *The Australian Ugliness*, architect Robin Boyd decried the excesses of what he dubbed 'Austerica' but also hoped to civilise the form. Meanwhile ordinary Australians simply enjoyed the new possibilities of travel, leisure and convenience which the car and the drive-in world offered.

See pages 8-9 for more information on *NAA: Architecture in the Archives: Early Melbourne Motels*

BOOK LAUNCH. THE STORY OF MELBOURNE'S LANES: ESSENTIAL BUT UNPLANNED.

Date: Thursday 3 October

Time: 5:30pm – 7pm

Cost: FREE

Event type: in person only

Launched by: Professor Robert Adams AM, multi award-winning architect

and urban designer

Musical performance by:

Lee 'Sonnyboy' Morgan

Thirty years ago, then RHSV President Historian Weston Bate, launched a book, *Essential but Unplanned: The Story of Melbourne's Lanes* which quickly became a classic. To honour the centenary of Weston's birth, the RHSV and State Library of Victoria is re-publishing this book with an additional and new second half to bring the story to 2024. Andy May has written two extra chapters, there are updated indexes to lanes and their names by Nicole Davis, 140 gorgeous colour photographs in the new half and a bold contemporary design by Marianna Berek-Lewis. It is a must-have book for those who love Melbourne's history. This enormous project has been overseen, appropriately by our current President, Richard Broome, with assistance from co-editors Andy May, Nicole Davis and Helen Stitt.



MURDER IN PUNCH LANE: A CONVERSATION

Date: Thursday 10 October

Time: 5:30pm for 6pm – 7pm lecture

Cost: \$10 | \$20

Event type: hybrid in person and on Zoom

Speakers: Jane Sullivan and Andrew Lemon

We are delighted to host this conversation between author Jane Sullivan and historian/author Dr Andrew Lemon to mark the publication of Jane's book, *Murder in Punch Lane*.

Inspired by real events and people, *Murder in Punch Lane* is a dark and gripping crime novel which maps the sins and secrets of nineteenth-century Melbourne.

Jane Sullivan is an author and literary journalist who loves books and has always written about them.

GRAVE MATTERS: USING CEMETERIES AS A RESEARCH TOOL. SEMINAR

Date: Saturday 12 October

Time: 9am – 4pm, full day seminar

Cost: \$65 / \$85 includes lunch and morning tea

Event type: in person only

This full day seminar is co-presented by the Royal Historical Society of Victoria and the Genealogical Society of Victoria. Discover the hidden stories in Victoria's cemetery records when you join us for this enlightening seminar where leading experts will reveal how cemetery records can be a treasure trove for local and family historians. Learn techniques to deepen your research and unearth fascinating stories about the past. Explore the past and enrich your research with insights gleaned from cemeteries. Whether you are a seasoned historian or just starting your journey, this seminar is an invaluable opportunity to enhance your research skills and connect with a community of history enthusiasts.

'What's on' is continued
on pages 14 and 15



History News

History News is the bi-monthly newsletter of the RHSV ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA INC.

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Publications Committee as directed by our Terms of Reference.

COVER IMAGE: Former Bryant & May Industrial Complex, 560 Church Street, Richmond (photo from Victorian Heritage Database), see pages 4-5 'Heritage Report'

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President's report

Apart from my family and friends, the two great passions in my life are history and not the city of my birth, Sydney, but the city of my adoption and my own family: Melbourne.

My passion for history has played out in many ways since I retired from La Trobe University twelve years ago, including the books I have written since then, and especially in my work for the Royal Historical Society of Victoria and the *Victorian Historical Journal*.

Therefore, it was very pleasing that Her Excellency Professor Margaret Gardner AC, the Governor of Victoria and our Patron in Chief, was so generous as to hold a reception on 22 August at Government House to celebrate the 115th anniversary of our foundation as a society in 1909. We had a wonderful gathering of friends and supporters to celebrate with us. The Governor and the Honourable Sonya Kilkenny MP, Minister of Planning, both gave generous speeches which highlighted the importance of the RHSV to the history and culture of Melbourne and Victoria.

In my reply I took inspiration from my report in the August *History News*. I said that unlike the Roman god Janus, who had two faces to look to beginnings and transitions, the RHSV had to look five ways: to the past, the present and future, but also to look inward on itself and outwards to society. In this way we would survive for another century and more. My speech will be reprinted in the December issue of the *Victorian Historical Journal*.

As I said, the other passion I have is for my adopted city of Melbourne. As I approach it while driving from the north and the west, or by train from the east, its skyline always creates a pleasurable response

in me of a homecoming. It has been my privilege to head three volunteer teams producing three RHSV books on our great city: *Remembering Melbourne* (2016, 2017), *Melbourne's Twenty Decades* (2019) and now *The Story of Melbourne's Lanes* (2024). The latter is about to land on Melbourne's docks and will be launched at the RHSV on Thursday 3 October by the celebrated Heritage planner Professor Rob Adams. For more information see 'What's on', page 2 of this newsletter and the RHSV website. These books are important, and not only for the future, but the now. We can never know the totality of any city, even the one in which we live a life, for we only take certain tracks through a city in our working and leisure lives. But through books such as these, we can visit our city in its past and its present, and experience many areas of it we could never cover closely on foot or even discursively by car. These three books allow us to view our city in new ways: street by street and suburb by suburb; decade by decade; and now lane by lane. The *Story of Melbourne's Lanes* reveals the past and present histories of our amazing lanes, explaining their creation, history and rise to iconic status. The Governor of Victoria received the first copy of the Lanes book printed and landed by plane in this state, but there are more about to land for all Victorians to enjoy. It is a magnificent book full of history to delight, containing nine easily digestible chapters, over 300 black & white and coloured images, all captioned. It also has twenty deeply researched pages of lists of lane name roots, and the origin and fate of each lane.

Purchasing one will enhance your knowledge of the power of Melbourne's places and help propel the RHSV into the future.

Richard Broome AM

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■ [Gardens and tennis courts at Bryant & May, Richmond] [ca. 1927]
 SLV https://find.slv.vic.gov.au/permalink/61SLV_INST/156d4cp/alma9916547883607636

■ Developer's render of proposed development viewed from the back. Note the efforts to camouflage the visual impact of the proposed towers by colouring them light and by hiding the right-hand tower behind the trees which the artist has imagined. (Source: Lovell Chen Heritage Impact Statement in developer's submission.)

Heritage report: celebrating 50 years of the Victorian Heritage Register

The RHSV, in conjunction with the Heritage Council Victoria, will present an evening on the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR), 5:30–7:00 on Wednesday, 30 October, in the Drill Hall. Put the date in your diary. Speakers will include Graeme Davison, well known to RHSV members and a scintillating historian, and someone with extensive experience of the Heritage Council and of the creation and evolution of the Register. The evening will offer insight into the history and functioning of the Register, which should be of interest to all concerned with preserving our heritage. [See page 14 for more information on this event.]

We tend to think that listing on the VHR ensures protection for a site. Sadly, this has not been the case for the iconic Bryant & May complex in Richmond. Heritage Victoria refused a permit for a huge development, putting two towers of 12 and 13 stories on the north and northwest of the Bryant & May site. We fought hard against this proposal: see <https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/heritage-matters-rhsv-heritage-committee/current-advocacy-projects/threat-to-richmonds-industrial-heritage/>; as did the National Trust (<https://www.trustadvocate.org.au/national-trust-defends-landmark-richmond-heritage/>). Heritage Victoria refused a permit. Subsequently the developer asked the Minister for Planning to call in the proposal and approve it as a 'priority project'. We have just received the permit issued by Heritage Victoria based on the Minister's direction. The Minister has reduced the towers by four levels, but otherwise has waved it through. As a 'priority project', it will be exempt from local planning controls and there will be no opportunity for community submissions.

If you've ever walked down Church Street, Richmond, you will have noticed the Bryant & May Complex. You probably admired the lovely clocktower in the adjoining building to the rear.

It's a superb Edwardian (1909) factory complex designed by the leading Melbourne architect of the day, William Pitt. It is now a treasured landmark for local residents as well as train travellers and visitors to Melbourne. As the VHR states, the 'Former Bryant & May Industrial Complex... is of historical significance as evidence of the development of industry in Melbourne from the early 20th century' and 'as a rare surviving example of modern factory conditions and amenities' reflecting the 'Quaker principles of the original English founders'. Deputy Chair of the Heritage Committee, Judith Smart, who prepared our submission opposing this development, points out that these principles were evident in the owners' provision of recreational and restaurant amenities for workers and a pleasant working environment. Unlike many heritage buildings, the complex is largely intact and not submerged by nearby development. The tennis courts, the clock tower, and the kitchen and dining hall, all examples of the founders' philosophy, are still extant.

While the proposed development does not threaten the heritage buildings themselves and includes sweeteners promising preservation and restoration works, these are negated by the bulk and height of the two proposed towers. At 12 and 13 levels, one in the form of an ultra-contemporary wedge, they would have created a wall to the north and northwest of the site, overwhelming the main buildings, isolating them from their

surroundings, and obscuring views and sightlines of Bryant & May's two most iconic landmarks: the clock tower and the chimney stack, which are now clearly visible to passers-by.

We believe that protecting heritage sites also involves protecting the immediate surrounds and the airspace above them. Otherwise they become hidden, isolated islands in a forest of high-rise buildings. Our submission to Heritage Victoria argued that the new buildings should be no higher than the main heritage buildings and that their design and the materials used should respond to those buildings rather than detract from and dominate them.

Now that the Minister has overruled Heritage Victoria on this iconic site, other developers are requesting that the Minister override Heritage Victoria on their projects. Another project, which we had successfully opposed, has now been called in by the Minister: the Victorian Railways No. 2 Goods Shed, once the longest building in the southern hemisphere.

The Minister is preparing to revamp the planning system, giving her immense powers. She has promised to respect heritage in the future, but the case of Bryant & May does not encourage faith in her assurances. Watch this space. In the meantime, it is too late for the Bryant & May complex. After a century offering a welcoming heart of Church Street, it will be dwarfed and indeed hidden from the north under a pile of uninspiring high-rise.

Charles Sowerwine
 Chair, Heritage Committee
 5 September 2024



Locations with botanical names: part one

Boronia

The suburb of Boronia was named in 1915 by prominent local horticulturalist A.E. Chandler, Shire Councillor (1902-1935) and MLC (1919-1935). In her splendidly detailed *Story of the Dandenongs: 1838-1958* (1959) Helen Coulson describes Chandler as being 'justly regarded as the "father" of Boronia'. Coulson added: 'in May 1915, the then Fern Tree Gully Shire Council asked Chandler to select a name for the district, then regarded as part of Bayswater, near the railway crossing between Bayswater and Lower Fern Tree Gully ... Chandler chose the name "Boronia" because of the many acres of this sweet-smelling shrub then growing in his nursery'. (pgs 207-8)

Box Hill

Box Hill's origins as a township date from 1 February 1861, with the opening of the Post Office. The locals met at the home of Mr Silas Padgham, the first postmaster on a salary of £10 per year, and drew lots for the name of the village. Mr Padgham himself was successful with his nomination of 'Box Hill'. He was born in Dorking, Surrey in England, at the foot of Box Hill, a renowned beautiful area in the Surrey hills. In his Golden Jubilee history, *Box Hill* (1978), Andrew Lemon wrote, 'However inappropriate it was to name a crude bush settlement in Victoria after his park-like English hill, it was a pretty name, a nostalgic link, and may well have represented a hope that one day this Australian landscape would be transformed in something like the one he left behind'. (p 30)

■ Chandler Boronia and Daffodil Farm Gully c. early 1950s, showing retention of pine tree windbreaks immediately adjacent to existing Koolunga Reserve, east of Shirley Court (Bill Ireland)

Stewards of Koolunga, Connection to the history of the Chandler Boronia & Daffodil Farm at Koolunga Reserve

<https://savekoolunga.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Koolunga-Daffodil-Farm-history-web.pdf>

Clematis

Clematis is a village at the end of Wellington Road in the southern Dandenong Ranges. Puffing Billy runs through it and the Cardina Reservoir consumes its southern regions. The area was first settled in the 1860s. The most prominent of the local pioneering families in this district, then called Paradise Valley, were the O'Connors who built the hotel, initially called Eden House, later Paradise Hotel. In 1907 Alexander Ramsay, MLA for Williamstown, bought land north of the station and formed a track to it, which he named 'Clematis Tourist Roast, to attract buyers for the land's subdivision. Subsequently this track was given its present name, Edenmont Road. Because of Paradise's name clash with another Victorian town, a public meeting was convened in 1921, and the new name 'Clematis' was adopted in response to the prolific growth of the plant in the area.

Ferntree Gully

The first general land settlement in the district took place in the mid 1850s. One of the settlers being Thomas Dobson, who in 1854 made a bark hut his home in the present National Park, calling it Lightwood Gully. Austrian landscape painter Eugene von Guerard, who stayed with the Dobson family for some months in 1857, painted an enchanting local scene and named his picture 'Ferntree Gully in the Dandenong Ranges'. This name has endured. Fern Tree Gully became a township in 1886 and the railway from Ringwood was opened in 1889, the same year in which the Shire of Fern Tree Gully was created.

Gerry Robinson

■ **Top:** Box Hill Post Office, [1917-1930]

SLV https://find.slv.vic.gov.au/permalink/61SLV_INST/156d4cp/alma9917058113607636

Middle: view of Boronia, Vic

Rose Stereograph Co. [c1920-1954]

SLV https://find.slv.vic.gov.au/permalink/61SLV_INST/1sev8ar/alma9917690103607636

Bottom: Guérard, Eugen von, Ferntree Gully, Dandenong Ranges (Eugene von Guerard's Australian landscapes)

SLV https://find.slv.vic.gov.au/permalink/61SLV_INST/156d4cp/alma9916452213607636



HSSC report: awarding and rewarding history all round

This is the fifth HSSC article of recent times to take up the theme of attracting more visitors, members and volunteers which, in turn, will boost the pool of likely leaders in local historical societies. The focus this month is on overt and subtle ways of bringing attention to excellence in historical work in the present-day and with a positive long-term view into the future. Five strategies follow.

1. Entries are now open for the Victorian Community History Awards. While many readers probably know this fact, HSSC members continue to be surprised to learn that some individuals and societies think their work is not good enough to submit – when clearly it is. While humility is a delightful quality, there is more to be gained by everyone in history communities, especially with regard to Victoria's history, if new research is made known to all who enjoy and work in the field, professionally

or voluntarily. The benefits include societies and individuals gaining public attention, possibly more sales and very likely community attention which can have further positive outcomes.

HSSC strongly recommends that you take time to explore the website, consider the category in which your work might be entered, and enter before 5pm Wednesday 2 October. All parts of an application must be received by RHSV by that time and date. If not possible for

2024, then you should consider entering in 2025. Indeed, the criteria and what you learn from others' work via the following link might help your crafting of future work, whether or not you intend to enter. Victoria's local and family history enthusiasts will, however, hope that you do enter: <https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/victorian-community-history-awards-2024/>

2. Many individuals and families interested in local and family history have links with their local schools, and perhaps local tertiary institutions. Past HSSC articles have reported on the valuable pro-history opportunities as well as relationships some communities have already forged. But a separate special step is to actively inquire as to the year levels at which the local schools' teachers and students, or similar in tertiary education settings, are undertaking the most and best work in Australian history, and offer awards.

Ask the educators early in the year to look out for the best students or, better still, to promote that an award, or maybe more than one, will be offered at year's end, then to nominate their best students for Australian history prizes. Ideally, the prize(s) should be offered at a speech night or similar where there is a wider audience for greater public profiling.

If giving a book, ensure that a bookplate or similar can be given to the awardee, ideally for pasting inside the front cover so it does not become lost over time. The award of a book might be one that the society has published, or one acquired through the RHSV History Victoria bookshop, or a gift certificate. The bookplate will provide a written enduring reminder to the awardee of why they received the prize, and presented by whom. The History Victoria bookshop site proudly declares that it is 'promoting and specializing in the history of Victoria'. Many wonderful publications, including some that have won or been commended in VCHA, mentioned above, can be found here: <https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/bookshop/>

If you do not already have relationships with local school or tertiary groups, establish them now. Investigate the entities' websites for names to email or to request to speak to when you call reception or a switchboard. Most entities will be pleased to partner with you in an award.

3. Building on the above, alert your local council and local State and Federal ministers and shadow ministers to

the awards you have presented to local students. A reality is that some councils and other jurisdictions offer their own awards to community groups such as yours that are positively, often voluntarily, encouraging interest in Victoria's and Australia's history. A reality, too, is that the above parties value opportunities to be photographed and promoted publicly, all the more with young people and in good news stories. Here, there are many winners. Foremost history is alive and well in your local community.

4. Are there civic and other awards promoted in your community, not ostensibly for history, but which might be commandeered by your knowledge and skills to become so? All up, this article is encouraging you to not be humble or afraid, as two excellent members of the RHSV community known to this author have demonstrated. They have applied for grants and awards multiple times, including those 'left-of-field' to history topics. While not always being successful, they have avowedly been more successful than not; their achievements have been truly breath-taking.

Rather than starting from scratch each time, they have built repeatedly on their past applications and wordings, refining them to meet new criteria. They have also included in their applications their receipt of past awards. Their impressive listings have increased their chances of success; and their lists of successes has continued to grow. As one of the ever-positive RHSV members has said, 'What's the worst that can happen? You don't get the award.'

5. My final recommendation here seeks your indulgence with two stories of my own.

As a government secondary school History teacher, I regularly expressly and quietly declared to my best students that they had a future in History. I also offered my own class awards, quietly, in addition to what my schools offered publicly at the end of the year.

After leaving schools, I was fortunate as an important part of my work to be able to visit all school types, Victoria-wide, facilitating the development of specialist teachers of History and engaging in excellent conversations with mentor teachers. I was often introduced as someone from Monash University who had 'come to observe a History class at X School', so as not to put the spotlight unduly on the pre-service teacher, although some students were not so easily fooled.

From the back corner of a room, apart from watching the pre-service teacher at work, I would watch the students. No matter the school type, I can honestly say that there was at least one student, indeed, always more than one but always 'that standout one', who would stand out as asking intelligent questions, answering those from the pre-service teacher or proceeding well with whatever was the task at hand. I was some years into the role when I realised, I was missing opportunities to sow a strong seed with the students I was still encountering. What a shame I had not thought to do the following earlier.

Upon being genuinely impressed by what I had seen of that one or more stand out students and after the bell had gone, I would do my best to catch any achiever before they left the room and after other students had. Without putting a spotlight unduly on them (to prevent any bullying) I would say sincerely and with a smile that I thought their questions or answers were excellent. I would say, 'I don't know if anyone has told you, but I think you have a future in History'.

I may well have been the first person, outside of their circle of family members or teachers, to speak those words so directly and in such a way. Even if not, any recipient was taken completely by surprise and, without exception said 'thank you' and often, themselves, departed smiling. Moreover, I could tell as they scuttled down the corridor to their next class or locker that I had given them something extra in their day to think about.

Long-term and hopeful view, indeed. I cannot know if any recipients gave more effort to their studies in History. I cannot know if they won awards or pursued careers in History. I cannot know if they developed a lifetime interest in it. But I do believe I increased the chances of all these outcomes. And HSSC encourages you to applaud and reward anyone you encounter doing wonderful things with and for Victoria's and Australia's history. Additional outcomes just might be more visitors, members, volunteers and leaders associated with our historical societies.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss approaching and working with schools, do contact me via the email address below.

More in time,

Rosalie Triolo

Chair: HSSC

Email: hssc@historyvictoria.org.au



■ The Pan American Motel, St Kilda. Photograph by Cliff Bottomley, 1959. NAA: A1200, L33799 [11782448]

NAA: architecture in the archives: early Melbourne motels

Reception this Way: motels – a sentimental journey with Tim Ross is the latest National Archives of Australia touring exhibition at the Victorian NAA Centre in North Melbourne. This exhibition features motels from across Australia, including several early examples from Melbourne.

In a land where the car provided the ultimate freedom to hit the road and explore, it is no surprise that Australians wholeheartedly embraced the American concept of the motel. When motels began springing up in the 1950s, they represented a new, stylish and sophisticated way to travel.

Victoria's first motel was the Oakleigh Motel, opened in 1957. Entrepreneur Cyril Lewis was inspired by American motels he had stayed in. Lewis designed the Oakleigh Motel himself, with the assistance of local draftsman James Millar.

By 1959, there were five motels in the Melbourne metropolitan area, including the Pan American in St Kilda. Conveniently for the guests, Shell opened a petrol station right in front of the motel.

Built in 1960, the California Motel in Hawthorn aimed to capture the poolside glamour of the "Golden State". It had all the hallmarks of a motel, including onsite parking, sporting facilities and in later years, themed rooms.

Designed by Theodore Berman in 1961, the Motel Parkroyal in Royal Parade Parkville was Australia's first triple storey motel. It was also the first motel in Australia with a passenger lift, ice cube dispensers and vending machines. As an added bonus, the swimming pool was heated.

Opened in 1962, the John Batman Motor Inn was a luxury multistorey motel in Queens Road, Melbourne. Designed by modernist architect Robin Boyd, each

floor had its own colour scheme. The penthouse, where the Rolling Stones stayed during their 1965 Australian tour, was decorated in black and white.

Reception this way draws extensively on photographs in the national archival collection, including from the Australian News and Information Bureau and the Trade Publicity Division of the Department of Trade and Industry.

Reception this way is on display at the Victorian Archives Centre, 99 Shiel Street North Melbourne until 27 October. Open Monday to Friday and the second and last Saturdays of the month, 10am- 4:30pm.

Emily Hobson and Patrick Ferry,
National Archives of Australia

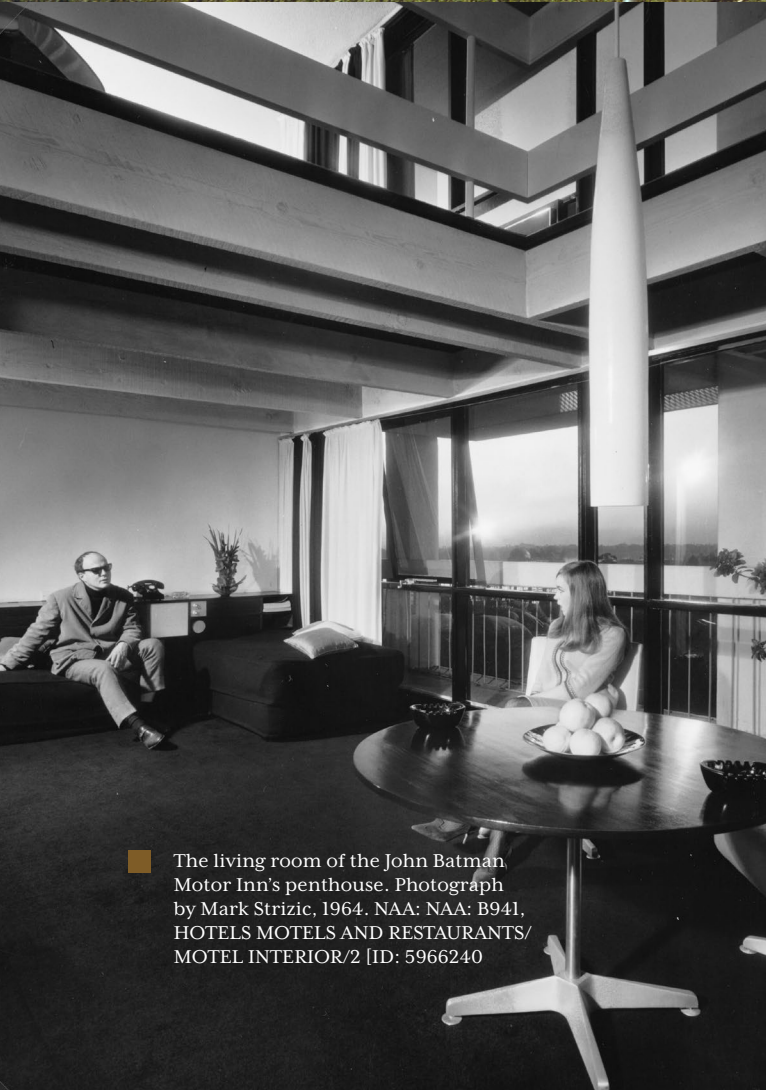
Emily Hobson is acting State Manager, Public Engagement Victoria at National Archives of Australia. Patrick Ferry is a project manager with National Archives.



■ The California Motel, Hawthorn c. 1964. NAA: B942. HOTELS - MOTELS & RESTAURANTS [3] [id: 30766249]



■ The Motel Parkroyal in Parkville, 1962. NAA: B941. HOTELS MOTELS RESTUARANTS/POOLS/2 [id: 5971447]



■ The living room of the John Batman Motor Inn's penthouse. Photograph by Mark Strizic, 1964. NAA: NAA: B941. HOTELS MOTELS AND RESTAURANTS/ MOTEL INTERIOR/2 [ID: 5966240]



■ The Oakleigh Motel, Princes Highway Oakleigh, 1959. NAA: A1500, K4341 [Item ID: 4746672]

Around the societies

Prepared by volunteer Glenda Beckley on behalf of the Historical Societies Support Committee.

We welcome societies to submit an article or event details of around 50 words or email your newsletter to us and we will write up around 50 words for you around twice per year. If your Society has a logo you would like attached to your information, please send along a high-resolution image. For the December 2024 issue, please send details to office@historyvictoria.org.au by 16 October 2024.

BOX HILL: 20 October: guest speaker Dr Alexandra Roginski will talk about phrenology: the study of the shape of people's skulls. This subject was a long-discredited but popular past-time from the 19th century and well into the 20th. Learn about its adherents and practitioners from prize-winning author and historian Dr Alex Roginski. 17 November: In lieu of our usual general meeting, the Society will have a stall at the Whitehorse Spring Festival, held in and around the Round in Nunawading. For all the info relating to Heritage Week, see the Creative Whitehorse webpage at <https://www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/things-do/festivals-and-events/spring-festival>

CASTLEMAINE: Upcoming events at The Former Courthouse, 7 Goldsmith Crescent, Castlemaine: 26 October commencing at 1pm, History at the Courthouse. In celebration of History Month, we're showcasing some of the Society's most cherished pieces. Join us for a leisurely afternoon at the Courthouse, where you can admire CHSI's interesting historical items and enjoy a delightful Afternoon Tea on the garden terrace. Saturday, entry by donation; 16 November, get into the festive spirit with our Victorian Era Christmas Decorations Workshop. Join Gail Reynolds to explore new skills and craft your own history-inspired decorations to take home and cherish. Time TBA.

[facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064354342619](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064354342619)

CHELSEA: November 2024 Exhibition: Our next exhibition at the courthouse, will be Friday 22 November to Sunday 24 November 2024, and will look at the "sporting heroes" who began their careers in the sports clubs of the City of Chelsea. We are currently collating information for the display.

[facebook.com/groups/1264258216996125](https://www.facebook.com/groups/1264258216996125)

CORNISH ASSOCIATION: Special Lunch on Wednesday 13 November at 12:30pm, an in-person activity only. We have arranged a luncheon get together at the Royal Yacht Club of Victoria at Williamstown and plan

to show a movie about the *Spirit of Mystery* voyage. As many CAV Members know, on the 9 of March 2009 a small boat 'The Spirit of Mystery' made its way, essentially under sail, from Cornwall to Williamstown. Pete Goss and the crew of the *Spirit of Mystery* arrived after a five-month journey. As a result, the Cornish Association of Victoria provided for a plaque mounted at the RYCV to commemorate the journey. If you can attend, please confirm your booking in advance by letting Ken Peak know at pkicons29@bigpond.com. Bookings for this exceptional event are essential and confirmation will be required by Monday 14 October.

cornishvic.org.au/index.html



CRESSY AND DISTRICT: Our mission, since inception in 1987, has been to preserve and promote the history of Cressy and the surrounding districts. In May 2024 we celebrated the completion of a significant Public Art Project titled 'Our Story' on the Cressy Water Tower. Renowned artist Tim Bowtell's expertise and skill has brought to life four murals which capture key aspects of our history, the Woody Yallock River where Cressy was founded, a steam train surrounded by a wheat crop symbolising our strong railway history, coupled with our rich agricultural district, and two vintage aircraft, a Hawker Demon and a Spitfire, which represent the Cressy RAAF Base in WW2. It is a testament to our local history and is becoming a tourist site and a significant landmark, being 60 feet high (18 metres), to passing traffic along the Hamilton Highway and Colac-Ballarat Road. Along with our History Centre, in our first bluestone Presbyterian Church built in 1862, and the redeveloped Cressy RAAF Base, our small rural town certainly is promoting our local history. Our History Centre is open the first Sunday of each month, 2-4pm except July, August, December, January. It now appears on the Australian Silo Art Trail. Further information and photos:

www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61555258231241



HEIDELBERG: Our new exhibition 'Back to School' is now open at the Museum on the corner of Jika Street and Park Lane, opposite Heidelberg Park on Sundays between 2-5pm. We have 73 schools, former and current, listed in our exhibition database, which can be viewed in the courtroom. There are also many interesting exhibits showing what classrooms were like "back in the day" along with old textbooks and other teaching aids. The exhibition will be open for the rest of the year and is well worth a look.

www.heidelberghistoricalsociety.com.au



HORSHAM: Upcoming guest speakers: Wednesday 9 October 7pm Kevin Hutchinson 'Hutchinsons arrive in Nurrabiel 1875'; Wednesday 13 November 7pm Jim Heard 'Early Days in the Wimmera'. Wednesday 11 December will be our Christmas Breakup at the Mechanics Institute Building, Society Room, 33 Pynsent Street Horsham.

LEONGATHA: The Shingler Memorial Dinner/lecture is on 19 October at the Leongatha RSL commencing at 6:30pm. A two-course meal will be followed by our guest speaker. Award winning author Katherine Kovacic will be speaking on serial killer Arnold Soderman. In the 1930s Soderman was responsible for the death of four girls including two from our local area. Tickets are available from the Society \$45 for members and \$50 for non-members.

Email leongathahistory@gmail.com or see [facebook.com/LeongathaHistoricalSociety](https://www.facebook.com/LeongathaHistoricalSociety)

MALVERN: We organise walks, talks, children's puzzles, pamphlets, and newsletters. We have published award-winning books and brochures, produced photos for displays, designed plaques, and provided guest speakers and guides for schools and community groups. Our newsletter, *Local History News – Keeping Stonnington's History Alive!* is produced bi-monthly and the Society is active on social media. Malvern Historical Society welcomes volunteers and invites them to be part of the activities. The Society maintains strong links with the Stonnington History Centre and the community.

<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~malvern/>



MT EVELYN: Group members are interested in the collection, preservation, research, writing and publication of all aspects of history relating to our town. We hold displays at local events and provide speakers and information on request. Our newsletter, *Things Past*, is published monthly. We hold committee meetings on the third Monday evening of even-numbered months. In odd-numbered months we have guest speakers or activities on the third Saturday afternoon. Meetings and events are held at the RSL Hall, *Hardy House*, 49 Birmingham Road, Mt Evelyn, unless otherwise advised. Visitors are welcome at meetings and lectures.

[facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/MtEvelynHistoryGroup2016/)

[MtEvelynHistoryGroup2016/](https://www.facebook.com/MtEvelynHistoryGroup2016/)



PORT PHILLIP PIONEERS: At 2pm Saturday 9 November, speaker: Fred Cahir on 'They Rescued Us: Aboriginal heroes on Country'. Fred Cahir, an associate professor in Australia history, will illuminate the story of how thousands

of colonists were rescued by Aboriginal people from life threatening bush fires, floods and shipwrecks, and from being lost in the bush. Fred's presentation, and latest book, pays tribute to our First Nations people's knowledge, mercy, and heroic courage; which they freely offered to the invaders occupying their Country. Venue: Wesley Hall, St. Andrew's Uniting Church, 253A Burke Road (cnr Malvern Road), Gardiner. Visitors welcome. Doors open 1:30pm. \$2 entry includes refreshments. Our meetings generally end around 4pm.

portphillippioneersgroup.org.au



RED CLIFFS: Red Cliffs is on the Murray River near Mildura in NW Victoria. It has a colourful history from its beginnings as a soldier settlement to the vibrantly diverse community it is today. Named for the spectacular Murray River red cliffs, the land was famously cleared by a massive one-of-a-kind tractor called Big Lizzie. We are based in the old Red Cliffs Court House building, which we run as a museum. It is usually open the first Sunday of the month between 10am-12pm, and by arrangement. Come and explore Red Cliffs' history through various historical items, photographs, newspaper articles, books, maps, and other memorabilia. We also have books about the district for sale. We hold meetings on the 4th Tuesday of every month, with a theme or guest speaker. Visitors are always welcome. Visit our Facebook page at

[facebook.com/redcliffshistory](https://www.facebook.com/redcliffshistory)

or visit our website at

redcliffshistory.wordpress.com

RICHMOND, BURNLEY AND CREMORNE: Our upcoming events cover the many changes in the development of our wider community. These are all to be held at *Studio One*, 15 Barnett Way, Richmond, at the rear of the old GTV 9 site, Bendigo Street, Richmond. 6 October 2pm, 'The villages of Richmond' Chris McConville and Robert Pascoe are urban historians whose passion for cities around the

world has led them to investigate the ways immigrants made their own place in neighbourhoods; 10 November 2pm, AGM and Ian Hind will speak on the Yarra Park State School and the lost Honour Board.

[facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/RichmondBurnleyHistoricalSociety)

[RichmondBurnleyHistoricalSociety](https://www.facebook.com/RichmondBurnleyHistoricalSociety)



RINGWOOD: All meetings are on the 4th Wednesday at 7:30pm at North Ringwood Community House, 35 Tortice Drive, Ringwood North. A raffle will be drawn at the conclusion of supper to assist our fundraising. Upcoming meetings feature: October, Val Polley, The Koornong School in Warrandyte; November, Russ Haines, Women Movers and Shakers of Early 1880s-1920s.

[rmhaines5.wixsite.com/](https://www.wixsite.com/rmhaines5)

[ringwoodheritage](https://www.wixsite.com/rmhaines5/ringwoodheritage)

WONTHAGGI: The society is the custodian of the town and district's mining, social and cultural heritage. Local newspapers, documents and manuscripts, photographs, maps, local histories, oral histories and objects all make up our archives. The historic former Wonthaggi railway station building is both a museum and home to the society. The Railway Station Museum, built in Queen Anne style of Hoffman brick and rough casting, was completed in 1912. The building ceased to operate as a train station in 1978. The Goods Shed, now the home of Bass Coast Artists Society, the Haulage Crane, the Station Master's residence, now *Mitchell House* and Wonthaggi Neighbourhood Centre, and some railway residences along Murray Street are all in the precinct. Open Saturdays 10am-2pm (winter 11am-1pm).

wonthaggihistoricalsociety.org.au





Left: West Melbourne Presbyterian Church c1872

Windows on history: Murdoch remembered

It is not too often that the minister or priest of a church is commemorated in stained glass, but at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Camberwell, two remarkably fine examples of the art recognise the ministry of the Reverend Patrick Murdoch M.A. (1850-1940). The windows were made almost seven decades apart, designed in very different styles for different churches and different times, but installed in the same year, 1936. In another unusual twist, the 'memorials' were unveiled when the Reverend Murdoch was well and truly alive and an honoured guest at the window dedication ceremonies.

Patrick John Murdoch was born at Pitsligo, Aberdeenshire, Scotland, the eldest of fourteen children born to Helen née Garden and the Reverend James Murdoch (1818-1884), a minister of the Free Church of Scotland. After completing his higher degree, Patrick followed his father's calling and was ordained in 1878, marrying another 'child of the manse', Annie Brown (1856-1945) in 1882.

In 1884, Murdoch received a call from the distant West Melbourne Presbyterian Church, where the pulpit had been vacant for two years. The prospective incumbent may have been unaware that the congregation had declined as the population of West Melbourne became more commercialised and successful merchants and businessmen moved to the growing suburbs of Kew, Toorak and Hawthorn. It was undoubtedly a momentous decision to accept a pulpit across the world, nevertheless the couple left the manse in Cruden to sail to Melbourne with eight other Murdoch family members: Patrick's parents, four of his

younger siblings, and their own two tiny children, George and Helen.

Within days of the family's arrival in Port Philip Bay, the Reverend Murdoch was inducted into his new pastorate, and on the following Sunday, 12 October 1884, he delivered two 'excellent discourses' to his new congregation. His father, probably the 'J Murdoch' listed among many clergy at the induction, died 'in his 66th year' only weeks later.

This personal loss was followed by the birth of a second son to the young Murdochs, when Keith arrived in 1885. It also marked the beginning of a period of renewal for the Presbyterians of West Melbourne, as their young pastor brought new enthusiasm to his role by starting new fellowship organisations, especially for young people, paying off debt, and building a permanent church hall among many other achievements. Regrettably for this city congregation, Murdoch accepted the call from Trinity Presbyterian Church in suburban Camberwell, a congregation which was barely two years old and with less than 50 communicants. Despite many challenges of the decades to come, not the least of which were two periods of economic depression separated by war, the deaths of three of his six sons and periods of ill-health, the Reverend Murdoch would lead the Camberwell church for more than forty years.

One of Murdoch's tasks was the building of the brick and freestone church which still stands today. It opened in 1906, albeit without its tower, spire and later additions. It was an ambitious design, and the tight budget meant the original windows were plain, but in 1920 glass artist William Montgomery was commissioned for a significant three-light stained glass 'Soldiers' Window' to honour the 137 Camberwell's Presbyterians who served in World War I (WWI). Among those men who returned were two younger sons



Far Left: Mathieson and Gibson's Murdoch window, 1936

Top: St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Box Hill

Left: Patrick John Murdoch (1850-1940)

of the minister, Ivon (aka Ivan) Murdoch MC and Bar, and Alan Murdoch MC.

Trinity's fiftieth anniversary in 1935 was a significant cause for celebration and seems to have provided the impetus for several stained-glass installations. At the dedication of the three-light 'Jubilee Window' which embodied symbols of the Trinity and the Presbyterian faith, it was announced that Sir Keith and Lady Elisabeth Murdoch had decided to provide another three-light window for the church to recognise the Reverend Murdoch's long and illustrious ministry. At the dedication on 2 February 1936, the Reverend R Wilson Macauley noted that this was not a newly-designed window but was 'renovated' from glass formerly installed in the Presbyterian Church at West Melbourne.

The bluestone West Melbourne church, designed by Smith & Watts and built in 1866-67, had been dismantled and re-erected for the St Andrew's Presbyterian congregation at Box Hill in the previous year, 1935. The original stained glass windows designed and made by Ferguson & Urie of North Melbourne were also re-erected at Box Hill but, with the nave shortened by one bay, surplus glass panels provided the material for a reconfigured window for the Camberwell installation.

It was an inspired addition that linked Murdoch's ministry, not only across his two Melbourne incumbencies, but also to Box Hill where he laid the foundation for the re-erected St Andrew's church on 27 April 1935.

The original West Melbourne windows ranged from simple diamond quarries with coloured borders to more elaborate geometric forms and delicately painted background quarries. The nave windows were double-height, three-lights, with texts and emblems set into six-sided shapes within them and finished with tracery insets across the low arch at the top. To fit the shorter three-light window opening at Trinity, skilful restoration was needed: the outer lights, with background chevrons, were cut down from nave windows while the central light was compiled from surplus two-light windows. No inscription was added, but this was fully rectified in the second 'Murdoch' window which was 'erected with love and thanksgiving' by his children Helen, Sir Keith, Ivon and Alan and recognised his devotion to faith 'through a long life' and ministry at Trinity for 41 years.

This second 'memorial' to Murdoch was designed in a figurative style. It pictured the *Sermon on the Mount*, with Christ seated prominently in the central of the three

lights with groups of women, children and disciples in the flanking lights and the Sea of Galilee in the background. The window was designed and made by Mathieson & Gibson in Melbourne, which had tenuous connections with the church. Mathieson & Gibson designed and made the School's Memorial Hall windows in 1930; William Mathieson's partner, David Gibson, was the senior glass-painter for Trinity's Soldiers' Window.

The two windows bookend the ministry of the Reverend Murdoch, from colonial Melbourne to beyond WWI, when he was officially minister emeritus. Much of his Australian journey is forgotten today, including his service as Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria (1898) and of the Presbyterian Church of Australia (1905) and even being charged with contempt of court, an interesting story for another time, which caused him to spend a night in jail. The Reverend Patrick John Murdoch, worthy forefather of the Murdoch clan, deserves greater recognition beyond his faith, church and district.

Dr Bronwyn Hughes OAM

Images of windows courtesy of Ray J Brown

What's on at RHSV

continued from page 2

Where possible we offer all our events as hybrid: both in our premises at 239 A'Beckett St, Melbourne and via Zoom. Information on booking tickets to all our events can be found on our website.

YOUR HISTORICAL SOCIETY: STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS. AN HSSC SEMINAR, MELBOURNE

Date: Friday 18 October
Time: 9am – 3:15pm
Cost: \$35 | \$55 includes lunch
and morning tea
Event type: in person

RHSV's Historical Societies Support Committee (HSSC) is delighted to offer a bumper professional learning event in person at our home in the Drill Hall and globally by Zoom.

The program offers an exciting and practical selection of popular sessions from recent years:

New visitors, members, volunteers, leaders: Positive approaches to finding all presented by Rosalie Triolo

Going for grants: Helpful hints presented by Graham Goulding OAM

'Requiem for the newsletter'? Does the newsletter still have a role in the social media world? Presented by Craige Proctor

Creating engaging events presented by Rosemary Cameron

Also included are an optional Flagstaff Gardens walking tour and an introduction to the RHSV Collection.

EMERGING HISTORIANS

Date: Tuesday 22 October
Time: 5:30pm for 6pm – 7pm lecture
Cost: \$10 | \$20
Event type: hybrid in person
and on Zoom

Speakers: Dr Mia Martin Hobbs, Dr Aleksander Potocnik, Dr Nicolette Snowden and Dr Hannay Viney

Each year the Professional Historians Association of Australia Vic & Tas, in partnership with the RHSV, ask four 'emerging' historians about their work. In 2024 we've asked these historians to reflect on how the spoken word has influenced *their* history. We will be taken back to WWI and German Officer Erwin Rommel, the hidden stories of Australian soldiers in the Vietnam war and the way voice tone can change completely the meaning of the written word. Andrew Lemon (RHSV) and Sophie Couchman (PHA) will be our MCs for the evening.



BOOK LAUNCH: MELBOURNE GHOST SIGNS

Date: Tuesday 29 October
Time: 5:30pm – 7pm
Cost: FREE
Event type: in person only

A beguiling photographic collection of the faded signs and half-hidden logos of Melbourne, revealing the historic tales, both big and small, of this ever-changing city. From the gold-rush years to the Swinging Sixties, from Robur Tea to Tarax soft drinks, this city can never settle. In a process of continual renewal, old buildings are incorporated into new, both uncovering and obscuring snippets of history. Ghost signs provide hints to our common heritage, ready to be picked up by the keen eye and quick shutter.

Sean Reynolds, a transplanted American, first became fascinated by these old signs while walking in Yarraville and Footscray with his young daughter during their daily lockdown outings. He loved the hand-painted letters, the intricate glasswork, and the old factories marketing brands he'd never heard of before: big names like Uncle Tobys and Four'n Twenty, but also smaller ones, but no less important, like 'Miss Watson's Motor Garage' or the 'St Kilda Coffee Palace'.

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER

Date: Wednesday 30 October
Time: 5:30pm refreshments for
6pm event
Cost: FREE
Event type: hybrid in person
and on Zoom

Speakers: Graeme Davison, Marina Jansen, Steve Campbell-Wright and Charles Sowerwine

The RHSV, in partnership with the Heritage Council Victoria, celebrates 50

years of the Victorian Heritage Register in 2024. The event will offer insight into the history and functioning of the Register, which will be of interest to all concerned with preserving our heritage. In 1974, after years of campaigning by Victorian heritage conservation activists, the first buildings were included in the Victorian Historic Buildings Register to protect them for current and future generations. The Historic Buildings Register eventually became what we know today as the Victorian Heritage Register.

This event will be chaired by Professor Charles Sowerwine, Chair of the RHSV's Heritage Committee. Professor Graeme Davison will follow with an historic overview. Graeme Davison, well-known to RHSV members as a scintillating historian, is also someone with extensive experience of the Heritage Council and of the creation and evolution of the Register. Marina Jansen, a historian with Heritage Victoria, will explain the registration process and some of the history of the register and its enrichment program. Marina has done a deep dive on the register over the past couple of years and she is an expert on the current register. Then, we will hear from Dr Steve Campbell-Wright, Heritage Council member, who is also a cultural historian.



GWENDA D. M. JONES MEMORIAL LECTURE

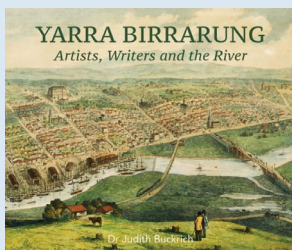
Date: Tuesday 19 November
Time: 5:30pm for 6pm – 7pm lecture
Cost: \$10 | \$20
Event type: hybrid in person and on
Zoom
Speaker: Richard Aitken

We are thrilled to launch the inaugural Gwenda D. M. Jones Memorial lecture as part of our Distinguished Lecture series.

The Jones Collection was donated to the RHSV by Gwen Jones shortly before she died, aged 98, in 2021. Gwen was an

historian and an educator who lived in Coburg, in the one house, all her life. The collection is mostly about Gwen's as well as her mother Meda, her father Ebenezer, and their family and friends. Gwen's creation, stewardship, and generosity surrounding the collection has ensured that future historians have an incredibly rich archive on which to draw.

Eminent historian, Richard Aitken will deliver the inaugural lecture, "*Orontes' adventure: introducing the Jones Collection of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria*". Richard will use Gwen's 1953-54 study tour of Britain and Europe as a springboard for discussing the Jones Collection. Richard is best known as a garden historian but he was also a friend of Gwen and her family. During COVID lockdowns Richard worked assiduously to organise and annotate the Jones Collection. His deep knowledge of Gwen and her family adds immeasurably to the value of the collection.



LAUNCH, EXHIBITION & BOOK YARRA BIRRARUNG: ARTISTS, WRITERS AND THE RIVER

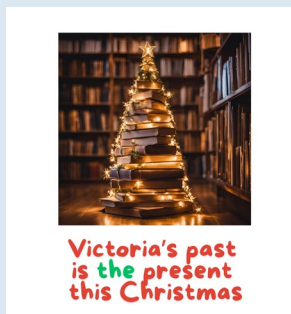
Date: Thursday 28 November

Time: 5:30pm – 7pm

Cost: FREE

Event type: in person only

Our next exhibition, *Yarra Birrarung: Artists, Writers and the River*, curated by Dr Judith Buckrich, examines life on the Yarra through the lens of artists and writers. The exhibition launch coincides with the launch of Judith's book of the same name. The exhibition explores how life has flourished on the river, including recreation, industry and land use, as well as infrastructure, natural history and social history. Despite much despoiling, our river remains the vital artery of the city and beyond to the Yarra Ranges. Just as it was the fulcrum of Wurundjeri life, it continues to inspire and fulfil our lives.



EXTENDED CHRISTMAS BOOKSHOP HOURS AND MINI SECOND-HAND BOOK FAIR

**Monday 25, Tuesday 26,
Wednesday 27 November
Time:** until 7pm

For these three days we'll extend our bookshop hours for Christmas shopping. Don't forget we'll be able to gift wrap your books. We will also have a mini-book fair of our second-hand titles from the shop and those books which haven't made it on to our website yet.



LECTURE: WHEN AUSTRALIA WAS ALMOST FRENCH

Date: Tuesday 3 December

Time: 5:30pm for 6pm – 7pm lecture

Cost: \$10

Event type: hybrid in person
and on Zoom

Speaker: Patrick Llewellyn, *Président,
Institut de recherche Nicolas Baudin,
France*

From Saint-Aloüarn, who took possession of Australia for Louis XV at Shark Bay, Western Australia, in 1772, to the scientists of the Baudin expedition who drew up a plan for Napoleon's invasion of Sydney, to Dumont d'Urville, who explored King George Sound, today's Albany, to make Western Australia a French colony, France and England have always competed for

possession of our continent. Starting with the famous painting of Lapérouse unfolding the map of his expedition in front of Louis XVI, with his hand pointing to Australia, this lecture tells the long story of this race with its many twists and turns. Sponsored by: Dominique Portet Winery

CATALOGUING CLINICS

Date: Thursday 24 October
Thursday 28 November

Time: 11am – 12noon

Cost: FREE

Event type: Zoom only

Join Jillian Hiscock, our Collections Manager, each month in this informative and easy-going Zoom forum on all aspects of cataloguing collections for historical societies.

Jillian has a different topic each month and is happy to be guided by those who attend as to what they would like covered in upcoming clinics. Bring your questions, no matter the topic. This is an interactive space where questions are encouraged. The RHSV does not endorse any particular cataloguing software, we believe it is horses for courses, and Jillian will talk about issues that impact on cataloguing whether you are using cataloguing cards or software.

GUIDED WALKING TOURS OF HISTORIC FLAGSTAFF GARDENS

Date: Every Monday (excluding
public holidays) and at other times
by arrangement

Time: 11am – 12:15pm

Cost: \$10

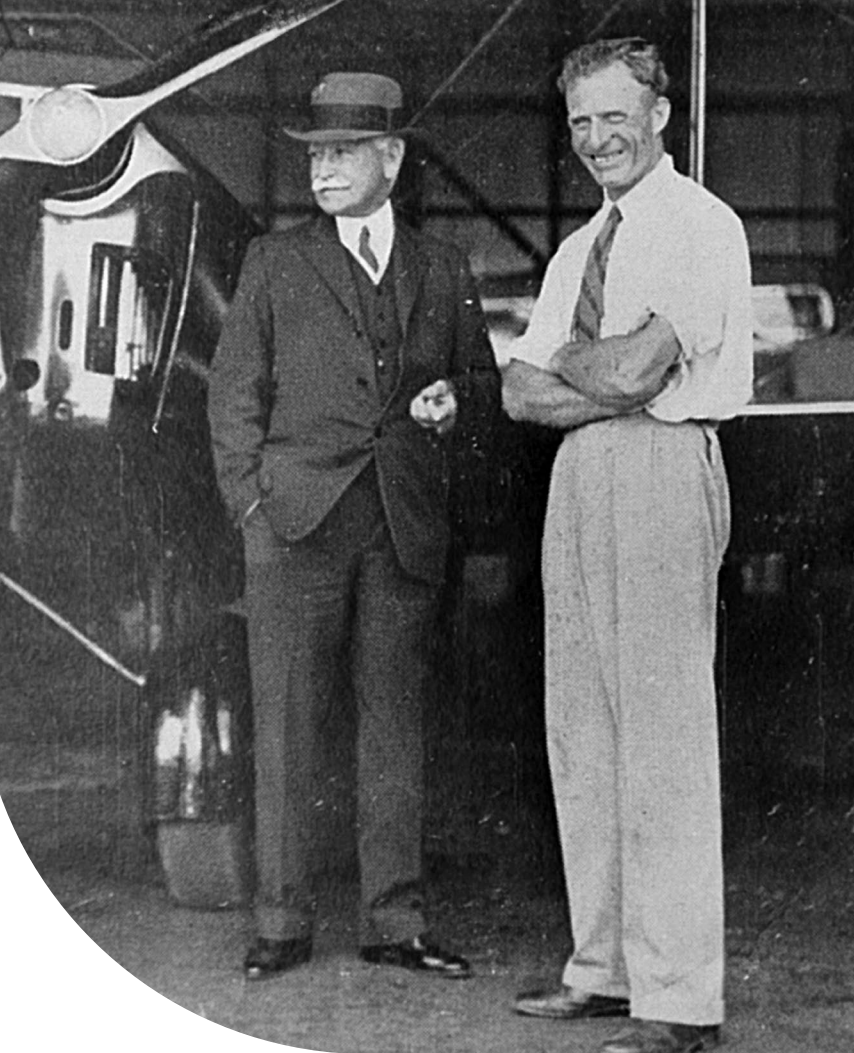
Event type: in person only

Guide: Chris Manchee

Bookings: essential on 9326 9288

| office@historyvictoria.org.au

Join expert tour guide, Chris Manchee, on a guided history walking tour through the beautiful Flagstaff Gardens, Melbourne's historic heart. Visitors will climb Flagstaff Hill to consider its place in Melbourne's topography and pre-European history as well as its early role as a burial ground, flagstaff signalling station and magnetic and meteorological observatory. An absolute 'must do' walk for understanding the history and character of Melbourne.



Macpherson Robertson and Australian aviation

October 2024 marks the 90th anniversary of the MacRobertson International Air Races from London to Melbourne in 1934, the races themselves celebrated the Centenary of the City of Melbourne. The prize money and trophy for the Air Races were provided by Sir Macpherson Robertson, owner of the well-known Melbourne confectionery manufacturer MacRobertson Steam Confectionery Works. It is thus entirely appropriate that October 2024 should also be the occasion of the admission of Sir Macpherson to the Australian Aviation Hall of Fame, to mark his contribution to the development of Australian aviation.

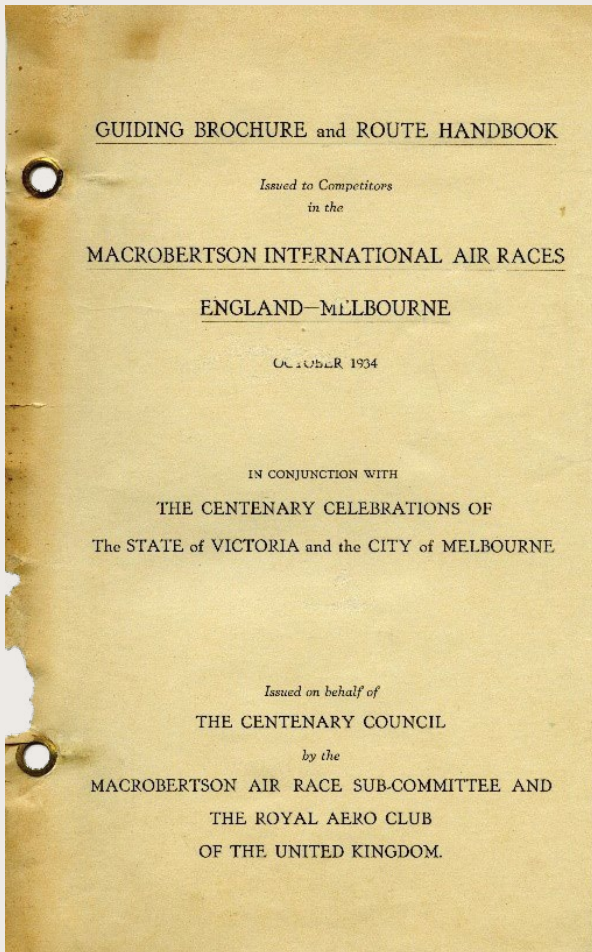
Macpherson Robertson was always fascinated by innovative technology. Examples are his early installation of telephones in his factories and his enthusiastic take-up of the importation and sale of bicycles in the 1890s. In 1902 he

purchased an early motor car for personal use, and MacRobertson's was one of the first Australian companies to use motor vehicles to transport its products. In his business he was always ready to adopt the latest machinery and techniques for the manufacture of confectionery.

It is thus of no surprise that Macpherson was attracted to aviation. When he visited Europe in 1926-27, he grasped the opportunity to use airlines on several occasions to fly between the UK and the Continent, at a time when air travel was still a novelty. Following a flight from London to Amsterdam he wrote in his diary '... no one can better enjoy the wonderful landscape [of Holland] ... than from a seat in one of the Royal Dutch Air Liners'. His flight from Brussels to London '... was a glorious experience, and I enjoyed it to the full — I am quite anxious to take a similar plane to Paris'. After his flight to Paris, he wrote, 'I rather like this mode of transport. What strikes one more than anything else ... is that there is no tedious business of changing from train to boat and back again to train, etc'.

■ **Left:** Sir Macpherson Robertson and Horrie Miller in 1934, following the formation of MacRobertson-Miller Aviation Company (RHSV Macpherson Robertson Collection)
Right: Sir Macpherson Robertson and the trophy for the 1934 Air Races (RHSV MacRobertson Air Race Collection)

Pioneer Australian aviator Horrie Miller would thus have had a favourable reception when he approached Macpherson Robertson in 1927 seeking funds to purchase an aircraft with which to start an airline. Macpherson agreed to put up £5,000 on condition that the aircraft was named Old Gold, after the famous MacRobertson's chocolate. Following the formation of MacRobertson-Miller Aviation Co. Pty Ltd an aircraft was ordered from the De Havilland Company in England. This was the De Havilland DH 61 *Canberra*, '... produced specially to the order of MacRobertson & Co. Ltd.' according to *Flight* magazine. When the aircraft was handed over in Melbourne, Macpherson was reported as saying that '... his one desire was to see commercial aeroplaning advance in keeping with the pace of Australia's development'. It was a departure for him, and he hoped it would prove a stimulus to others. Thus began what ultimately became MacRobertson-Miller Airlines, in which MacRobertson's maintained a shareholding until 1963.



■ Page from the 1934 Air Race Route Handbook (RHSV MacRobertson Air Race Collection)



He believed that the event would be more than just a race and would serve to stimulate interest in aviation and air transport worldwide.



In 1929 Sir Macpherson Robertson financed the British, Australian and New Zealand Antarctic Expedition, led by Sir Douglas Mawson. The funds provided were sufficient to purchase a De Havilland Gypsy Moth aircraft to accompany the expedition. It proved impossible for the expedition to land on the Antarctic continent, but Mawson in the Gypsy Moth was able to carry out extensive aerial surveys. As a result of these surveys, Mawson named a large area of the continent MacRobertson Land as a tribute to Sir Macpherson.

When the organisers of the 1934 Centenary Air Race from England to Melbourne approached Macpherson Robertson seeking support for the event, he responded enthusiastically. He agreed to provide £15,000 in prize money, plus a magnificent gold cup for the outright winner. He believed that the event would be more than just a race and would serve to stimulate interest in aviation and air transport worldwide. In a message to each contestant before the race Macpherson said:

“The full growth of aviation must be world-wide and the international support that the race has evoked since its inception convinces me that such a contest must help to broaden the mutual basis for friendly interchange of service and understanding between nations, quite apart from its great value in quickening the airmindedness of their people.”

With his enthusiasm for innovative technologies, his involvement in establishing a pioneer Australian airline, and his sponsorship of the Centenary Air Race, Sir Macpherson made a major contribution to the growth of aviation in Australia. Thus, his admission in October 2024, the 90th anniversary of the great air race which bears his name, to the Australian Aviation Hall of Fame is richly deserved.

David Thompson

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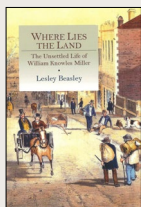
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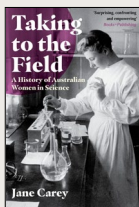
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Where Lies the Land: The unsettled life of William Knowles Miller

Lesley Beasley (2022)
PB 405pp \$30

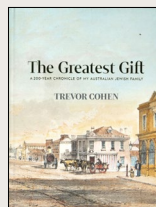
In 1852 Victoria needed someone to set up schools across their domain. William Knowles Miller seemed the perfect choice. Son of a judge, a bright young man with the gift of the gab, full of energy that even the newspapers noticed, and clearly not afraid of hard work. What could possibly go wrong? Where would it all lead? Beasley takes us on a track through 1850s Australia, from tent schools on the diggings, to politicians fighting foul in election campaigns, and mayhem in the daily news.



Taking to the Field: A history of Australian women in science

Jane Carey (2023)
PB 310pp \$34.99

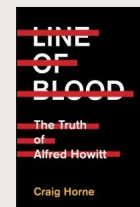
This book is the first comprehensive history of Australian women in science from the colonial period to contemporary times. This untold story shows that women have played a greater role than is commonly recognised. From the first years of colonisation, women engaged in myriad scientific endeavours, from botany to genetics to organic chemistry. Exploring some of the darker episodes of colonial science and eugenics, and the few opportunities available for women of colour, this is not a straightforward tale of progress.



The Greatest Gift: A 200 year chronicle of my Australian Jewish Family

Trevor Cohen (2022)
HC 382pp \$75

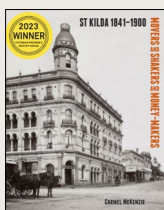
A remarkable 200-year story of a Jewish family and its uniquely Australian journey. Cohen combines a lifetime of research with his own recollections: childhood in 1940 and 1950s Melbourne, Wesley College, holidays, celebrations and his experiences growing up in his Australian-Jewish family. Cohen's vivid tales are complemented by his significant collection of memorabilia, which helps bring to life the history of European settlement in Australia, and the development of Melbourne from a settler-colony to a metropolis.



Line of Blood: The truth of Alfred Howitt

Craig Horne (2023)
PB 256pp \$34.95 \$28.00

This book tells the full story of Australia's so-called 'ablest anthropologist'; the botanist, geologist, senior public servant and explorer Alfred Howitt. It challenges the contributions of Howitt's anthropological conclusions, coupled with his social and political influences, in legitimising the murderous advance of white settlement upon the Australia landscape. For Howitt, the 'line of blood' that followed white settlement was nothing more than the iron law of replacement—whereby an 'inferior race' is inevitably usurped by a 'superior civilisation'.

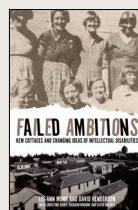


St Kilda 1841-1900: Movers and Shakers and Money-makers

Carmel McKenzie (2023)
HC 196 pp \$59.95

This captivating exposé ushers you into the exclusive cliques and mansions owned by the merchants, speculators, squatters and others of their ilk who imprinted their aspirations and values on St Kilda. Meticulously researched, featuring 185

photos and illustrations, and packed with anecdotes from primary sources, this work deftly connects events in St Kilda to a broader context, leaving readers with a rich appreciation of the way nineteenth-century St Kilda reflected—and affected—the social, political and economic history of Victoria.



Failed Ambitions: Kew Cottages and Changing Ideas of Intellectual Disabilities

Lee-Ann Monk and David Henderson, with Christine Bigby, Richard Broome and Katie Holmes (2023)
PB 384pp \$39.99

This history of Melbourne's Kew Children's Cottages (1887–2008) is the challenging story of an institution that failed its residents. Throughout Kew

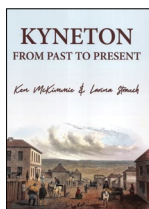
Cottages' history, a cohort of journalists, parents, activists and residents fought for and finally gained greater rights and respect. This is a moving and powerful story that deserves to be read by all policymakers so we can avoid repeating the mistakes of the past.

Books received

John Schauble

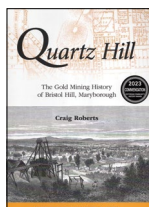
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Kyneton: From Past to Present. Ken McKimmie and Larina Strauch, Kyneton Historical Society Inc., Kyneton, 2021, pp. i-221, ISBN 9780646836430.

This unconventional history of Kyneton centres on 41 studies of significant sites around the town, using 405 images from across the years to inform the stories of the people and activities behind them. As one of the earliest places subjected to European settlement, Kyneton was already established when the discovery of gold to the north transformed it into a bustling stopover on the way to the diggings. Each study traces the site from the earliest known image to the present. This is not a comprehensive history of Kyneton, nor does it pretend to be. It is, however, deeply researched and provides intriguing insights into this central Victorian town.



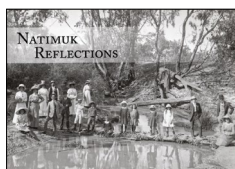
Quartz Hill. Craig Roberts, Maryborough Midlands Historical Society, Ballarat, 2022, pp. 1-110, ISBN 9780646870748.

Mining history in Victoria is a curious niche. Sometimes it is all about the mines; sometimes about locating the activity in a broader social context. This book is centred on the gold mining history of Bristol Hill in the central Victorian town of Maryborough and falls squarely into the former category. No physical remnants of the mining operations other than mullock heaps and trenches now remain, and Bristol Hill has reverted to bushland. This concise exploration of reef mining on the edge of the town traces its highs and lows. More than 10,000 ounces of gold were extracted between the 1850s and the 1910s, when gold mining became uneconomic. Commended in the 2023 Victorian Community History Awards.



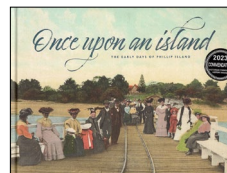
Minyip: Towards 150, 1992-2021. Minyip and District Historical Society Inc., Minyip, 2021, pp. 1-112, ISBN 9780958949590.

The peculiar choice of a 30-year block for a history of this Wimmera town reflects the need to round off the periods covered by two previous histories as the town's 150th anniversary approached. Physically familiar as the setting for fictional towns in the television series *The Flying Doctors* and the movie *The Dry*, Minyip is a town in transition. A timeline and detailed individual accounts of the town's institutions show just how much Victorian rural towns have changed. The closure of the last bank, the amalgamation of the football club with rival Murtoa, the survival struggle of the Men's Shed, the end of the agricultural show society ... have been signal moments in the town's recent history.



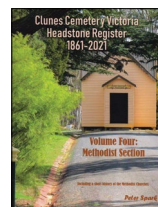
Natimuk Reflections. Keith Lockwood, Arapiles Historical Society, Natimuk, 2022, pp. 1-121, ISBN 9780646850245.

This is a gorgeous collection of images to mark the sesquicentenary of European settlement in 2022. It is centred on a treasure chest of glass-plate negatives – the Woolmer collection – found on a district farm, having been neglected for more than century. These are supplemented by some outstanding images sourced from elsewhere and supplemented by some modern depictions of life in and around this Mallee town. The startling, crisp quality of many of these stunning photographs owes much to local coach builder, Horace Woolmer, who captured life there in the very early 20th century while running a business and playing a role in many local institutions. Accompanied by some thoughtful text and a useful timeline.



Once Upon an Island. Anne Oswin, Eleanor McKay and Sarah Hudson, Chickory Publishing, Cowes, 2023, pp. 1-229, ISBN 9780646870748.

Phillip Island is a special place to so many visitors. Condensed here is such variety of natural and man-made attractions, it is little wonder that people have flocked to the island since the 19th century. Whether it be for penguins or motor racing, surfing or koalas, thousands of visits continue every year. But the island also has its own people and its own history, some of it entwined with visitors but much of it unique. Sub-titled 'The early days of Phillip Island', this book is a collection of stories. It is thoughtfully illustrated and stylishly produced. Commended in the 2023 Victorian Community History Awards.



Clunes Cemetery Victoria Headstone Register, Volume Four. Peter Spark, the author, Clunes, 2021, pp. i-295, ISBN 9780646840512.

Volumes one to three of this series encompassed the Presbyterian, Catholic and Church of England sections of the Clunes cemetery, in which there have been almost 6000 burials since it opened in 1861. This fourth volume covers the Methodist section, the final major denominational section of the cemetery, and includes a brief history Methodist worship in the town dating back to the 1850s. The cemetery is still in use, accommodating around 10 burials a year. An addendum to this volume updates the previous works. This headstone register contains a range of biographical and family data relating to those buried in marked graves; a great resource to those working on family histories or other aspects of Clunes's past.

Books received

John Schauble

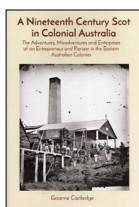
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Making a Difference 1964-2021. Pat Patt, Rotary Club of Mooroopna, Shepparton, 2022, pp. 1-120, ISBN 9780646861548.

Service clubs are ubiquitous in many Australian country towns, suburbs and cities. For the uninitiated, just what they do is often something of a mystery. Aside from networking and socialising, there is always an emphasis on fundraising. Often this is very targeted, project oriented or with an overseas dimension. And while such clubs face the same challenges as so many community organisations, the work goes on. This short history of the Rotary Club of Mooroopna traces almost 60 years of community work. The range of its activities, from supporting aged care to bushfire recovery, dozens of student exchanges, fish farming in Kenya and eye care in India is remarkable. A special insight into a community's history.



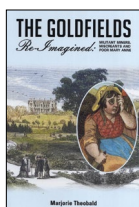
A Nineteenth Century Scot in Colonial Australia. Graeme Cartledge, Local Research Publishers, Winter Valley, 2023, pp.1-342, ISBN 9798394743856.

Robert Muir was a 19th century Scot who tapped into a series of factors which made him a pan-colonial success story of sorts. Arriving in Victoria during the gold rushes, he rose to prominence in Ballarat in the immediate aftermath of the Eureka uprising. He became involved in the evolution of local government, among other things chairing the meeting that formed the Ballarat Fire Brigade. His family had mixed fortunes in business, but it was an affair of the heart and a lawsuit for breach of promise, which prompted Muir's departure from the colony. An interesting tale.



Old Vintage Melbourne. Chris Macheras, Scribe Publications, Brunswick, 2021, pp. 1-154, ISBN 9781922310941.

There is a healthy appetite for photographic collections depicting Melbourne and Victoria in the past, from which the RHSV itself has benefitted. This collection, however, is not one of ours but stems from a passion project which began during the COVID pandemic. It started in that most contemporary of forms, an Instagram account which soon garnered 20,000 followers. Many of the photographs here will be familiar; most are drawn from the State Library of Victoria collection, accompanied by a brief note. Some are displayed with modern equivalents. All of the photos bar one are of Melbourne and suburbs, some of which would have been considered in the bush when taken. Large format with good production qualities.



The Goldfields Reimagined. Marjorie Theobald, Theobald Publications, Castlemaine, 2023, pp.1-177, ISBN 9780646885278.

Marjorie Theobald has previously authored three fine Castlemaine histories, and much beyond, and returned in retirement to the central goldfields after a professional lifetime in education. This series of vignettes follows on from two of these and tells the stories of men, women and events which shaped the earliest years of Castlemaine and district. Theobald writes in an engaging and fluid manner, whether it be about the place of employment for both her father and grandfather, the famous Thompsons foundry, the sad demise of Mary Ann Stephens, the visits of vice-royals or charlatans, bigamists and swindlers. Carefully researched, each of these episodes captures something distinctive about the goldfields, its rise and fall, its characters and visitors.



Buxton: Its Past, Present, People and Places. Julia Foletta (ed.), Buxton Progress Association, Buxton, 2023, pp. 1-320, ISBN 9780645662603.

Buxton copped a walloping during the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires and the event served as a trigger for this project, strengthened a few years later by a community reunion and by a local history group. This is a curated collection of stories. This past seen through the eyes of dozens of inhabitants captures the essence of the town's institutions, farms, timber getting, tourism, commerce and society. Buxton itself remains little more than a village, with a school, a pub, a store and a roadhouse. The community in and around it reflected in these stories reveals it was and is much more.



Weeding Between the Lines. John Dwyer, Australian Garden History Society, South Yarra, 2023, pp.1-202, ISBN 9780648390542.

As long as you're prepared to forgive the punny headline, this is a rich collection of essays on a subject which the author, a retired Queens Counsel, philosopher and qualified horticulturalist has penned upon the subject of weeds. It is at heart a work of environmental history. Published mainly in *Australian Garden History* but also elsewhere, the covidse studies reflect upon when does a weed cease to be such and become naturalised, if ever. Dwyer also has a PhD about weeds in the Victorian landscape and, as a gardener in the Dandenongs, ample practical experience. Many such plants were introduced with good intent but with disastrous results.