



History News

ISSUE 375 | DECEMBER 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.

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 +3 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.

We are putting together a wonderful program of distinguished lectures, tours, workshops and exhibitions for 2025.

Some dates for your 2025 diary:

TUESDAY 25 FEBRUARY: Billibellary Indigenous History Lecture delivered by Professor Barry Judd

TUESDAY 27 MAY: The Weston Bate Oration delivered by Emeritus Professor Graeme Davison AO, 'Melbourne from the Air'

WEDNESDAY 16 JULY: The Paul Mullaly History + Law lecture delivered by Professor Kate Auty

EXHIBITION YARRA BIRRARUNG: ARTISTS, WRITERS AND THE RIVER

Date: Until July 2025

Time: Mon – Fri, 9am – 5pm

Cost: FREE

Event type: in person only

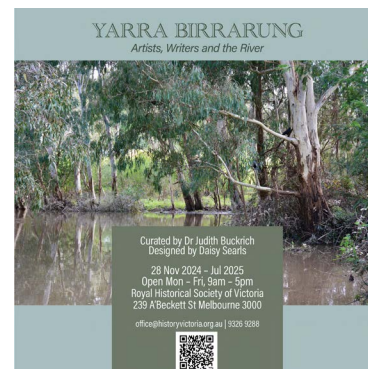
Yarra Birrarung: Artists, Writers and the River, curated by Dr Judith Buckrich, examines life on the Yarra through the lens of artists and writers. The exhibition explores how life has flourished on the river, including recreation, industry and land use, as well as infrastructure, natural history and 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. From the Heidelberg School to the MCG, the river has been a centre of Australian arts and culture for decades.

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Professional Back of Book Indexer
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History News

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EXECUTIVE OFFICER Rosemary Cameron
COLLECTIONS MANAGER & VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR Jillian Hiscock
COLLECTIONS OFFICER Helen Stitt
MARKETING CO-ORDINATOR Sean Reynolds
BOOKKEEPER Kristen Adnams

ADMINISTRATION OFFICER Chelsea Pinkard
ARCHIVES MANAGER Cathy Dodson
ARCHIVES OFFICER Bronte Laffin-Vines
VCHA OFFICER Susannah Beardsell
EVENTS ASSISTANT Johnny Yuen

History House 239 A'Beckett Street
Melbourne 3000
Office & Library Hours:
Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm
P: 9326 9288 W: www.historyvictoria.org.au
Email: office@historyvictoria.org.au
ABN 36 520 675 471 Registration No. A2529

President's report

In 1984 in the preface to my book *Arriving*, I began: 'Books like icebergs are supported by much that is hidden from view'.

This holds true for all books and is doubly so for the RHSV's new book *The Story of Melbourne's Lanes* (2024) with five authors, including the late Weston Bate who wrote and led the 1994 first edition.

Weston's book was called *Essential but Unplanned. The Story of Melbourne's Lanes*. It was a brilliant title, as it encapsulated in three words why the lanes existed. However, it was a bit obscure to the casual scan on a bookshelf or website, so we reversed it for the new reimagined 2024 book.

The new book is a triumph of volunteering, which is at the core of our community history movement. It is also core to RHSV values which is to disseminate knowledge of Victoria's past, and especially of Melbourne's CBD - the RHSV's backyard. The four new authors, and Weston of course, are volunteers. So too are the eight people who re-digitised the text, and who helped Helen Stitt our Images Curator to find the original 120 black & white images spread over 20 repositories. The 18 members of the Hawthorn U3A Camara Club who photographed every lane in the CBD are volunteers. They are donors too, presenting us with 3,000 colour images, including the 150 chosen for the book. Our previous wonderful publications, *Remembering Melbourne 1850-1960* (2016) and *Melbourne's Twenty Decades* (2019), were also created by community history volunteers. Over a hundred people in the case of the former and over 20 for the latter book.

Volunteering is a high human value. It is true that volunteers gain satisfaction from what they do and learn new things in the process and acquire new skills. They also learn about themselves. But essentially volunteering is a selfless act and one that helps connect us to others. Its value is far greater than any product it creates.

The Story of Melbourne's Lanes was probably the most complicated of all the books I have written or been part of. It has so many segments. And so many tasks were needed to re-create a 30-year-old book and reimagining the larger 2024 companion. But it was a most rewarding task, for it was history work created with others. I am sure that while we live and breathe, Nicole, Andy, Helen and I will remember this project, and the iceberg of help it represents. Many copyright holders allowed us free use of their images, including street artists. The State Library Victoria and its images staff were also very generous, which is why we made the State Library a co-publisher. Others, including donors, contributed to the final product.

Icebergs sound awfully cold, although I have not set foot on one to know. The communal effort and support for this book parallels an iceberg's massive underwater support, but is replete with human warm, not an icy form. And icebergs melt but the memory of this project will endure.

If you would like to own *The Story of Melbourne's Lanes* or give it as a gift, please visit our Drill Hall or our website historyvictoria.org.au

Richard Broome AM

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Heritage report: 'Hong Kong without the View'? Victoria after the Planning Revolution

Two years ago, Emeritus Professor Michael Buxton, Environment and Planning at the School of Global, Urban and Social Studies, RMIT University, warned that Melbourne risked becoming 'Hong Kong without the view', a collection of soulless high-rise buildings without heritage. What has made Melbourne marvellous is its heritage. Heritage gives neighbourhoods soul and character, and provides focal points and perspectives.

The Victorian government has made a succession of announcements for revolutionary changes to the state planning system, in regional centres as in Melbourne. They would radically simplify approvals in many cases, remove rights to object or appeal, and encourage medium- and high-rise building in a radius of 800 to 1600 metres around rail stations and designated Activity Centres.

At a meeting last year, Planning Minister Sonya Kirkenny reassured the RHSV that the Heritage Overlay and Register would continue to apply as they do now. But amidst Halloween comments on Instagram, the Premier caricatured opponents of her plans as 'Blockers' against 'Builders', Liberal Party members who will 'weaponise heritage overlays to keep you out forever'.

Currently, proposals to alter or develop sites on the Victorian Heritage Register require approval from Heritage Victoria. For sites under the Heritage Overlay, the responsible authority, usually the relevant Council, has to weigh up the loss of heritage against the desirability of a

proposal in a public process in which the public can participate. If the developer is unhappy with the initial decision, they can and usually do appeal to VCAT, where there is another public process.

Most residential Heritage Overlay areas are covered by the Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ), which usually limits building to two storeys. This is consistent with heritage sites and which includes aims of 'neighbourhood character' and 'heritage'. The government is proposing a new 'Walkable Catchment Zone' (WCZ), which will extend 800 metres from railway stations and from the perimeter of Major Activity Centres (MAC). All told, instead of the NRZ, much of Melbourne and regional centres will be covered by the WCZ or the MAC, calling for six-storey development potentially in conflict with the Heritage Overlay. Indeed, heritage is now missing from the new aim, which is to foster much higher density housing.

The most important proposals will go straight to the Minister: in reality to a planner in her department or a 'development facilitation' program designed to 'fast track' developments. Applications will be listed on the website and the decision will appear there, but the process will be opaque. Other proposals will go to Council CEOs rather than elected councillors. And even if Council makes the decision, the dice will be loaded.

In theory, for the WCZ or MAC, places on the Heritage Register will be exempt from additional development. For sites on the Heritage Overlay, 50 per cent will be assumed to be available for development. How would that work? How and where would 50 per cent of six-storey buildings fit alongside heritage sites?

The government's plans bear a remarkable similarity to views proposed by a new player in planning debates: YIMBY (Yes In My Backyard) Melbourne. They claim to



YIMBYs protest against 'setback' architectural designs. Setbacks can allow greater sunlight to reach streets and the lower floors of buildings and well as creating space between apartments or offices in neighbouring buildings.

Image: Trevor Pratt Setback High-Rise with Exterior Elevators and Internal Atrium with Parabolic Profile, Antonio Sant'Elia, 1914. Guggenheim Museum <https://www.flickr.com/photos/trevorpatt/16958605657/in/photostream/>



Top: Urban Design Forum president Katherine Sundermann at the Hopkins Street bridge, Joseph Road Precinct, Footscray (Age, 25 September 2024).

Right: Melbourne: a city losing its heritage characteristics.

Image: Bart Walus 'High Rise Buildings under blue sky'

<https://www.pexels.com/photo/high-rise-buildings-under-blue-sky-10992816/>

be a grassroots movement, but they also call themselves the Melbourne Chapter of the 'Center for New Liberalism', a US free market think tank. Their public positions are aligned with developers' goals: free the market, that is developers, from planning restrictions, especially from heritage restrictions, and suddenly home building will take off!

"We see heritage overlays as an overwhelmingly bad policy," said Jonathan O'Brien, Lead Organiser of YIMBY Melbourne'. (Age 14 April 2023) YIMBY have 'declared war on setbacks' as well as on heritage. They want to 'abolish upper-level setback controls for buildings under 20 storeys, and remove all references to "visual bulk" within the planning scheme'. Imagine narrow streets with six-storey buildings going straight up from the footpath line.

Our friends at *Brunswick Residents Network News* checked out the YIMBYs in their October 2024 Newsletter. They found extensive links to developers, who appear to be the group's main if not only source of funding. Whatever their funding, YIMBY Melbourne reflects developers' views.

YIMBY and developers say the problem is that it's too hard to get permits. Is it? Under the existing planning system, a record 127,792 building permits were issued in 2021, though permits fell during the pandemic. For buildings on the Victorian Heritage Register, Heritage Victoria approves over 95 per cent of applications to modify or demolish. For local permits, Councils approve 90 per cent of applications and VCAT approves 70 per cent of those that developers appeal after Councils reject them. (de Boer,

2022 February 2, *The Property Tribune*) The problem isn't getting permits.

The problem is getting developers to build once they obtain permits. The cause of that problem is developers' land banking: holding onto land without building, often after obtaining a permit, waiting for value to rise and then on-selling the land with the permit. In the Melbourne CBD alone, 'there are active permits for almost 100 sites which have not been acted on—118 residential buildings and 22,000 apartments where work has not begun'. (Millar and Dexter, 2023 June, 24 Age)

If the problem is not permits being blocked, why smash planning restrictions? Developers love being freed of restrictions. It makes for greater profits. But it has led to disastrous outcomes, as in Docklands, Southbank or, more recently, Footscray's Joseph Road Precinct: 'the streets are windswept and devoid of trees. Some roads remain unsealed and footpaths unfinished, the ground levels are largely lifeless, and several blocks still sit idle'. (Aubrey, 2024 September 25, *The Age*) That is where the government's plans will lead if they are not revised to take account of heritage.

The RHSV is not opposed to intensive development. We have long argued that heritage can be the keystone for development. We need vibrant urban neighbourhoods where increasing density is supported by good design that fits in with existing heritage to create neighbourhoods with focus and character. As we move to intensify development, maintaining heritage becomes more important. New building can be more intense, but it needs to respect existing heritage fabric. Discredited neo-liberal

ideas of doing away with planning and heritage favour short-term profit with disastrous results for quality, safety and neighbourhood character.

The RHSV calls on the government to restore heritage as one of the aims of residential zones, including the new WCZ. Planning for new neighbourhoods should start on the basis of existing heritage, showing how it will be incorporated into and shape the renewal. And there must be community engagement and transparency in the planning process. If bureaucrats or Council CEOs make the decisions in secret, the result will be more Joseph Road Precincts. Until these issues are addressed, the RHSV will strongly oppose the government's plan. If the government ensures that heritage is taken properly into account, we will be pleased to support the plan.

This concerns members across Victoria, at least as much in regional centres as in Melbourne. We urge all our members and indeed all Victorians to demand that the government revise its planning proposals so they preserve and build on what makes Melbourne marvellous and our regions unique.

Charles Sowerwine with Ian Wight

Wednesday, 6 November 2024

For further reading:

Center for new liberalism (nd) 'The Age: look out Melbourne NIMBYS, the YIMBYS are here' <https://cnliberalism.org/posts/look-out-melbourne-nimbys-the-yimbys-are-here>

YIMBY 'People-led. Grassroots. For housing abundance.' <https://www.yimby.melbourne/>



HSSC report: Local councils and shires: How they might help you find new members and leaders

Local elections have recently concluded; signs with QR codes on street poles have disappeared and 'how to' vote' cards are no longer in letterboxes. But the recent flurry of activity prompted several members of HSSC to contemplate what could be made of this in favour of historical societies.

Locating candidates for your recent elections who stood on platforms of history and heritage

In my own ward, not all candidates provided self-promotions so overtly, but I searched online for any of their public statements that might include a 'dot-point' at least – ideally more than that – about preserving and promoting my local area's historical and heritage 'character'.

My definition of 'character' includes a combination of factors that make my area unique: areas of remnant indigenous vegetation, including Indigenous historic sites, as well as parks established over a century ago. In support of those outdoor features, my definition values councillors determined to prioritise the eradication of weeds, to prevent the trampling of middens, cliffs and dunes, and to call

out 'tree vandals' living in locations with 'bay views'. But the definition further includes built heritage reflecting different architectural types as far back as the 1850s, with many examples still in good condition and with gardens not only agreeable to walk past but providing what we all need to breathe – cool air. The definition, thus, includes opposition to development for profit where, increasingly in my area, the only evidence that some streets were established decades ago is the established indigenous or introduced trees softening high-rise apartment walls up to the footpaths.

I share the above because, in my own ward, 15 candidates were running for one position, and, in the adjacent ward, 18 were running. This meant to me that 14 in my own ward and 17 in another would not be elected. Given these statistics and



■ Some of Victoria's history network leaders at a HSSC workshop day

the fact that several societies around me, and many Victoria- and Australia-wide, are actively looking for volunteers sympathetic to causes of 'environmental and built history and heritage', I decided to read the statements of every candidate for every ward in my local council area. Only several said anything in line with my definition of the area's character, and not all of those candidates could have secured positions on council (still not known at the time of writing this article). Thus, my recommendation to several historical society colleagues and at the HSSC Melbourne/Zoom 18 October professional learning day has already been to *actively approach, as soon as possible, the successful as well as unsuccessful 'history and heritage' advocates; to warmly invite them to enliven their spoken commitment by volunteering at local societies with their pleasant communities of 'like minds'.*

Maximising the potential of a local council or shire's power to reach many local people

Reflecting on the power of councils and shires prompted consideration of further partnership possibilities.

Some of Victoria's historical societies have enjoyed mutually beneficial long-term relationships with their council or shire. HSSC members have heard in recent years of councils and shires generously:

- promoting the existence of historical societies on their websites
- promoting society events, exhibitions, publications, awards and anniversaries by the same means, or social media, or in council/shire news letterbox drops
- formatting societies' print or digital newsletters and, in some cases, providing everything necessary for digital or print-posted circulation
- sponsoring, if not wholly producing, items that can be sold or distributed by societies, such as books of photographs of significant existing historical sites, architectural trails, even jigsaw puzzles of significant sites as a means to encouraging younger people's engagement
- including societies in heritage tourism promotions, be it by advice given at a town's Information Centre or in other publicity
- assuming the 'event management' of societies for professional learning and networking days sponsored partially or wholly by the council or shire
- advertising that the society is actively looking for new members, volunteers and leaders, not necessarily with historical knowledge, but perhaps with financial and administrative skills to offer. In some very effective instances, there have even been promotions with direct links to position descriptions.

The cost to any related society is often, simply, that, at the relevant time *and* in its annual report, it gratefully acknowledges the support of the council or shire and perhaps names the individual councillors and staff who have supported it. *Clearly, there are many positive possibilities to pursue.*

Concluding 2024 and welcoming 2025

HSSC members have greatly enjoyed their interactions with historical societies and history-devoted individuals across Victoria.

The members have fielded inquiries, dispensed advice and advised as to where historical societies or other advice can be found, and have sought to write reports and articles including such advice. Where practicable, they have attended network AGMs, provided speakers and accepted invitations to significant events.

They have also taken the lead in 2024 with four events incorporating workshops and lectures to support members and interested others. One event was in partnership with the excellent team at Mortlake & District Historical Society, another with similar enthusiasts at Leongatha Historical Society and another in Melbourne, with the latter also available by Zoom. The fourth was the special and inaugural Network leaders' event in Melbourne which brought together and rewarded leaders from the length and breadth of Victoria. In this latter case, the leaders, who, in some cases, lived many hours apart and in vastly different geographical locales, learned that there is often more similarity than difference in the challenges and triumphs. Historical site visits or separate social opportunities also accompanied the above programs. The emphasis on all four days was sharing strategies for success.

Sincere thanks must be given to the members of HSSC who worked for you across 2024: Glenda Beckley, Richard Broome, Rosemary Cameron, George Fernando, Don Garden, Pauline Hitchins, Jacque Hocking, Helen Laffin, Craige Proctor, Jane Turton and Peter Yule.

HSSC now invites offers from societies who might wish to host events in 2025 and beyond. Its members also wish all History devotees the best in 2025 and for many years to come. Thank *you* for your important work in preserving and promoting diverse facets of Victoria's and wider Australia's history and heritage.

'More in time',

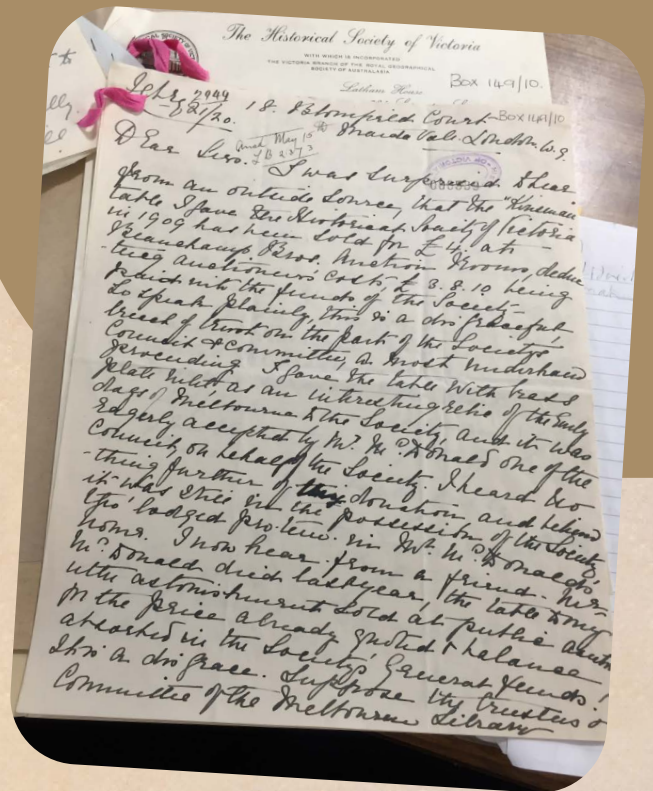
Rosalie Triolo

Chair: HSSC



W. B. Latimer

145 SMITH ST,
FITZROY.



■ William B Latimer (photographer)
W B Latimer Photo Art Studio (publisher)
Reverend Nathaniel Kinsman c. 1880
Courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery of
Australia

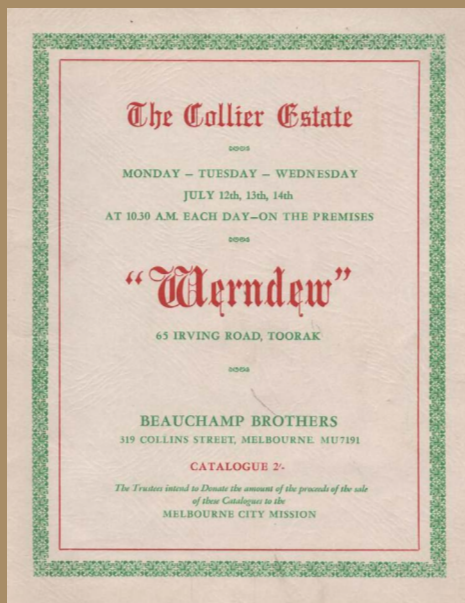
Of gift horses and mouths ... the sorry saga of Matilda Lidwill's donation of the 'Kinsman' table

Matilda Lidwill of Armadale joined the HSV on 30 September 1909, one of the first women to do so. She was also one of the earliest donors to the Historical Society of Victoria (HSV), former name of the RHSV, and her donations of a framed steel engraving of early Daylesford and a pedestal table are noted in the first minutes of the HSV Council held on 14 July 1909.

The Society's early correspondence and Council minutes indicate that on the

eve of Matilda's departure for London in mid-1909, she had also donated old photographs, including photos of actors Gustavius Brooke, Jefferson and Julia Matthews, Ballarat East Town Hall as well as an old map of Victoria. Other gifts included a cup and saucer with views of old Melbourne on them and a box made of native woods. Matilda wrote, 'My father was wrecked off the coast there and bought this box from a lighthouse keeper and his assistant'.

In September 1909 Matilda left Australia for England but continued her interest in the HSV. In early 1915 the first signs of disquiet are evident in a letter she wrote to the Society querying the absence of her gift of the 'Kinsman' table from a list of items in the HSV's collection. Told that it had been placed in the home of Alexander Cameron Macdonald, a Council member, she was indignant: 'it makes one very indisposed to give anything further', she wrote.



■ Beauchamp Bros. catalogue (1954)
Bendigo Historical Society Inc.
<https://victoriancollections.net.au/items/6684d58216337b271b28fb9d>

The situation deteriorated. A series of irate letters written in 1916 from Matilda's London Maida Vale home outlined her objection: 'gifts should not be kept in private homes', she lamented. 'If I had known this would be the destination of the Irish table, I should never have given it to the Society.'

Matilda resigned on 13 December 1916. Looking at the HSV Council minutes, one can almost hear the collective sigh of relief from the distance of 115 years.

But the saga was not over.

Even from distant London, Matilda Lidwill learned of the sale of the 'Kinsman' table. In September 1918 she wrote saying she had heard from 'an outside source' that the 'Kinsman' table she donated in 1909 had sold for £4 at Beauchamp Bros Auction Rooms and after fees, £3-8-10 was put in the Society's bank account. Very specific and detailed information; was her source from within the HSV, perhaps? Matilda saw the sale as a 'disgraceful breach of trust on the part of the Society's Council and Committee, a most underhand proceeding'. A friend had told her that Macdonald had died the previous year and the table was sold after his death. Outraged, she wanted the £3-8-10 raised by its sale sent to her or else she would go to the press, she threatened.

In a discussion relating to its move to new premises and the sale of surplus material, the HSV Council minutes for October 1918 reveal that this 'round topped table, associated with the many marriages performed by the late Nathaniel Kinsman, which had been presented to the Society some years ago by Miss M F Lidwill, had been left in the custody of Mr A C Macdonald' and that on his death his daughter had asked the HSV to take it back. There being no room in their new quarters, the Honorary Secretary of the

day, A W Greig, had organised its sale, an action endorsed by Council. Nevertheless, they finally conceded and in May 1920 decided to pay Miss Lidwill the money she had requested.

There endeth the saga ...

So, who was Miss M F Lidwill?

Matilda Florance Lidwill (1867-1945) was the daughter of Irishman Robert Atkins Lidwill and his English wife Mary Jane Florance nee Cowen. Her parents married at Christ Church, South Yarra in 1866 and Matilda was born at their home on The Esplanade, Williamstown. The family travelled to London in 1874, where her brother Mark was born while they were living at Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. They later lived in comfortable circumstances in Kensington, London, until 1894 when they returned to the Melbourne suburb of Armadale.

Matilda's mother died in July 1898 and the inventory of her estate shows that she owned all the furniture in the family home, including a round table, then valued at £1. There is no way of knowing whether this was the 'Kinsman' table, but it is likely. More to the point, Mary Lidwill left everything to her children, so the table was theirs to dispose of as they chose.

Matilda's brother Mark, who went on to be a Sydney-based medical pioneer in cardiology and anaesthesia, married there in 1906, leaving his sister and father at the Armadale home. So, when their father, late of Fifth Battalion Royal Munster Fusiliers, died in January 1909, the household effects were disposed of by Matilda, including her donations to the embryonic Historical Society of Victoria.

After settling in Maida Vale in 1909, Matilda remained in England for the rest of her life. A brief glimpse, including a photograph, of her is found in the Jersey

Occupation Registration Cards, made out in 1941 during the Nazi occupation, at 'Chez Moi', in St Helier, Jersey in 1941. So we know she lived through hard times in the last years of her life. She died on Jersey on 10 October 1945 aged 74.

And the 'Kinsman' table?

Nathaniel Kinsman (1823-1898) came to Victoria in the late 1840s and set up as a dealer in second-hand furniture at Fitzroy. He was also a lay preacher who seceded from the Church of England and established the Victorian Free Church of England. Although not ordained, he was permitted to perform marriage ceremonies and became known as 'The Marrying Parson'. He is reputed to have officiated at over 7,000 marriage ceremonies from the 1860s until his death in 1898.

Not always scrupulous in confirming the legitimacy of the information given to him by prospective brides and grooms, an obituary in the *Weekly Times* (5 March 1898) noted that he 'walked out of his shop into his private parlour, and by the simple act of crossing the mat was transformed into the priest. The couples, mostly extremely young, and sometimes extremely old, seated themselves on the well-worn sofa ... and the whole thing was over in a very few minutes.' Kinsman saw the transaction 'purely as a matter of business', we are told.

And where were these couples married - at the 'Kinsman' table, we are led to believe 'yes'.

And that is how Matilda Lidwill, her 'Kinsman' table and the Historical Society of Victoria are connected.

Cheryl Griffin

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 February 2025 issue, please send details to office@historyvictoria.org.au by 28 December 2024.

BRIGHTON CEMETORIANS: 2025 events include: 16 February Walk; 16 March Walk; 11 April Flag Commemoration; 13 April Anzac Walk; 29 April Flags down; May Law Week Walk; Sun 22 June 20 years of Brighton Cemeterians celebration; 10 August AGM; 10 October 170th Anniversary of the First Recorded Burial of Joanne Manson 7 months old; October 19 Walk; 7 November Flag Commemoration; 16 November Remembrance Walk; 17 November Flags down; 7 December Christmas Lunch.

brightoncemeterians.org.au

EAST MELBOURNE: This year we marked the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Society, and we celebrated this at our Annual General Meeting on 16 October. The Society was founded with the aim of researching, documenting and preserving the history of our local area. It has been very successful in that aim. We have succeeded in building a strong and growing membership over the years and are fortunate that we have many early members still actively involved. It is fitting that in July we had the launch of the two books covering different aspects of the history of Yarra Park school, a project driven by Ian Hind and assisted by Sylvia Black and Tim Holland, with both books being important and high-quality examples of the recording of the history of the area.

emhs.org.au

FRIENDS OF CHELTENHAM CEMETERY: Our great news is that the Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust has generously given The Cheltenham Friends group permission to use the beautiful old house at the Pioneer cemetery as our headquarters. The original building was an administration building for the Caretaker and was never really intended as a house. Our group is very grateful and appreciative of the Trust in allowing us to reside in the house and take care of it. SMCT have been more than generous in their agreement, making sure the house was clean, and everything was in good working order. Our group would like to give our heartfelt thanks to the SMCT. We have been able to mostly furnish the house due to the generosity of members from the

Mordialloc District Historical Society, and the family of the late Dianne Jacka.

www.focrc.org



FRIENDS OF KASTELLORIZO: Oxi Day, also referred to as the "Day of No", is an important part of modern Greek history celebrated annually on October 28. It marks the day when the Greek prime minister rejected an ultimatum given by the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini during World War II in 1940 demanding free passage for troops to occupy unspecified 'strategic sites' within Greek territory. After a church service, the Lyceum of Kavalla joined the Lyceum of Kastellorizo and marched with school students, the army and admiral. There was a wreath laying ceremony at the Monument of the Unknown Soldier followed by dancing and singing to commemorate this significant moment in history.

www.kastellorizo.com

FRIENDS OF WESTGARTH TOWN: 2025 will mark the 175th anniversary of the arrival of the barque *Pribislaw* in Australia in February 1850, and Westgarthtown's establishment in March 1850. A program of events to celebrate these significant milestones is now being planned, commencing with Descendants' Day on Sunday 2 March 2025. Further details will be provided as soon as they become available.

westgarthtown.org.au

HASTINGS WESTERNPORT: Used Stamps: Thank you for the donations of stamps which Rotary sells to raise money for charity. Stamps need a good margin of envelope around to prevent damage. Damaged stamps or with a pen mark across them have no value. Please place stamps in the Suggestions Box in the museum kitchen, post to WPHS at 7

Marine Parade, Hastings, 3915 or give to a committee member. We are always in need of volunteers, and we especially need more help for roster duty when the Museum is open on a Sunday 2-4pm. If you have talent or enthusiasm for gardening, maintenance, research, administration or facilitating visits to the Museum, we will welcome your assistance. The "Work Days" are now most Mondays and Thursdays 10am-2pm where you will find committee members either in the Museum or Harry's House.

facebook.com/HWPHS1973



KINGLAKE: Discover Kinglake Heritage Centre at 1055 Whittlesea-Kinglake Road, Kinglake West. Open Sundays: winter hours 12-3pm and summer hours 12-4pm. Whether you take one of our guided tours or just wander about and explore on your own, we guarantee you will enjoy stepping back in time with us and learning about Kinglake and its rich history. Group bookings by appointment. Two dollars per person donation appreciated.

kinglakehistoricalsociety.com

KOO WEE RUP SWAMP: While visiting Koo Wee Rup, you might want to check out our new mural showcasing the original K-class steam train that came through town and the abundance of the potato production from the region. It's on The Avenue of Honour, at the back of the Woolworths building, facing the railway line. For images see

facebook.com/kooweerupswamphistory

MALDON MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES: A great Christmas gift idea for history loving friends and family. Maldon Museum 2025 calendars are now available at the Museum on Wednesdays and Sundays, or the newsagents, or by phoning 0427 752 598. Two sizes: large (A4) \$15.00 or Small (A5) \$8.00. The cover features a photograph of a D. R. Drape watercolour of the Atlas Public Crushing Works c1862. Each month has a unique photograph from the Association's photograph collection.

facebook.com/profile.php?id=100057499207961



MALMSBURY: The Malmsbury Historical Society is grateful for the support of the fund-raising activity held at the September Farmer's Market. We are delighted to be on the radar and are very thankful for their support and all the kind people who purchased a raffle ticket.

facebook.com/profile.php?id=100066272694419



MIDDLE PARK AND ALBERT PARK: Our four free self-guided walks are available from the City of Port Phillip Libraries, the Emerald Hill Heritage Centre and various community centres throughout the city. The walks include: Woodcraft in Middle Park Architecture, timber commonly replaced cast iron after 1895, up to about 1925, the period which most Middle Park houses were built; Churches Past and Present, many buildings were once churches, built between 1891 and 1928; From Shops to Cafes, this walk will take you back in time and show you the types of shops which once dominated the Armstrong Street shopping precinct which once provided shops which supplied the daily needs of Middle Park families; Historic Industries, this walk a number of the once thriving small industries which were often tucked away in the back streets some of which remain but have been converted into homes, and others have been demolished. middleparkandalbertparkhistory.org.au/walks

MORWELL: We had our last gathering of members for the year recently, which was well attended and included good discussions. Recent visits to the rooms included Maryvale Probus, Masonic Lodge and Morwell Bowling Club board. In addition, we are seeing more people coming to our Open Days which is great. The Committee have decided to retain our 'Step Back in Time' cafe for Open Days and will review this mid 2025. Our successful Bunnings BBQ on 19 October saw nearly \$1000 into Club funds to assist with our operational costs. Thanks to members for their support of the BBQ and Cafe. The Society will close for December and January, giving our hard workers a well-earned rest.

facebook.com/morwellhistoricalsociety

PORT FAIRY: The Society have recently published two new books. They are hot off the press and are currently ready for sale. The first, *The Cure of Many Ill's* by Heather Sheard, chronicles the first hundred years of the history of the Port Fairy Hospital. It retails for \$25 a copy and \$35 a copy with postage. Also available is the third instalment of the *Memories of a Port Fairy Childhood*. This one retails for \$8 a copy and \$12 for a copy to be posted to you. Both of these books would make great Christmas presents. They are available for sale at the Museum in Gipps Street Port Fairy or can be posted by ordering through FB messenger or on the PFHS

email:
pfhsmuseumandarchives@gmail.com
facebook.com/PortFairyHistoricalSociety



SANDRINGHAM: We have a new logo which we will be using on all our official correspondence and media. The design updates our image and presents an interpretation of a recognisable and important Bayside icon. The new logo will be used on the signs for the Castlefield Estate which will, hopefully, give us a new audience. We have also made changes to the website, both the public and the member only pages: adding new photos, updating information. We have also managed to keep warm during winter by engaging in lots of physical exercise, namely undertaking a big reorganisation of the rooms, and endeavouring to give ourselves more space for 'entertaining', but primarily, for welcoming visitors who

have queries. The result is pleasing, and we encourage you to come and visit us and have a cup of tea!

sandringhamhistorical.org.au



WARRANTYTE: The Society was established over 48 years ago by a band of volunteers dedicated to preserving and displaying the history of Warrandyte. Our museum is housed in the former Warrandyte Post Office at 111 Yarra Street, which operated from 1876 to 1972. Left empty it was severely damaged by fire. Following its restoration 1985 to 1988 it became the Society's home and museum. The museum devotes a room to gold discovery and its influence on the development of the town. The Aboriginal Room contains a history of the Wurundjeri people and their relationship with the area. Other rooms are used for special exhibits designed to showcase Warrandyte to residents and visitors. The museum is open on Saturday and Sunday from 1:30-4:30pm.

whsoc.org.au



WOADY YALOOK: Smythesdale Country Market will be at the historic police precinct, Heales Street, Smythesdale on 21 December 2024, 9am-1pm. All profits go to WYHS Inc. If you have a few hours available to help or are interested in the hire of a stall site, call Bill: 0409 145 267. If you have items of historic interest, reminiscences or queries you would like circulated among the Society membership, please send to the below email address, attention 'newsletter editor'. We are sure everyone would like to share your reminiscences.

Email:
info@wyhs.org.au or
wyhs.org.au

Windows on history: Croton Hurst's commemorative window

In 19th century Victoria, the first stained glass was imported, mainly from Britain, but with a smaller number of windows coming from Europe, the majority of those from Germany. In the 20th century, the Bavarian company, Franz Xavier Zettler, supplied many church windows, but the firm's first export to Australia was probably one commissioned for a Melbourne mansion in about 1880, a rare non-ecclesiastical example from this firm.

In the grand fashion of the 1880s, the three-light window was installed on the staircase at 'Croton Hurst', the fine residence of George Henry Frederick Webb (1828-1891), owner of the large estate situated on the corner of Hawthorn and Glen Eira Roads, Caulfield, at that time a largely rural outer Melbourne suburb. The original building was a modest four-room cottage and detached kitchen, but it had been extended gradually in accordance with its owner's eclectic tastes, rather than following any specific architectural style. George Webb prospered over the years, adding a distinctive tower in 1890 that reportedly held a revolving gas lantern to guide visitors to evening soirees and dances.

Melbourne's 'Boom' mansions of the 1880s regularly included stained glass which featured the northern hemisphere's four seasons, the English countryside, and characters from literature, predominantly William Shakespeare and Robert Burns. Unusually, George Webb's staircase window included no such earthly idyllic fancies, but instead evoked the past by commemorating two significant women in his life, his wife Matilda and daughter Isabella.



■ Isabella Elizabeth Webb window, courteously of 'Carolyn Warring, Urban Evolution Design'

George Henry Frederick Webb and his young wife, Matilda, arrived in Melbourne in 1852, planning only a short stay while George recovered his health before returning to England. Apparently, the couple found the climate and Melbourne to their liking and by 1854 George had taken up his former London occupation as a shorthand writer with the Victorian government. Furthermore, he enrolled among Melbourne University's first law students, keen to make his mark in the place he now called home.

While his professional life as an equity lawyer gathered pace, George's home life was dogged by the deaths of several infant children and the hospitalisation

of Matilda. In 1860, the same year that George was admitted to the bar, Matilda died of consumption at the age of 29, leaving four-year-old Isabella Elizabeth, their only surviving child. George married Sophia Sarah Agg in 1862 and their daughter, Sophie Sarah Anne, known as 'Dottie', was born the next year.

George's health remained indifferent throughout his life and, at times, it necessitated leave from his law practice. In December 1875, he travelled to Europe with his wife and eldest daughter, intending to spend a month in India on the way. In a case of poor timing, their stopover coincided with an outbreak of smallpox while the family sojourned



Justice Webb (1886, May 27). *Melbourne Punch* p11. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article174568418>

in Bombay (Mumbai) and both George and Sophia succumbed to the illness. Fortunately, Sophia suffered only mildly, but the Melbourne press reported George's condition as 'critical' and it was many weeks before he was no longer in danger. Just as her father was convalescing at last, Isabella became ill and died within a week, leaving him utterly devastated.

It is not known why George Webb selected Franz Xavier Zettler to design the window to his loved ones when many British firms were exporting to the Australian colonies, but it resulted in the installation of a unique memorial. Zettler had set up his business in 1870, having worked for the church furnishing firm, Franz Mayer & Co in Munich. After marrying Mr Mayer's daughter, Zettler took over the stained glass department under his own name, while Mayer continued their statuary and other furnishings. The Webb memorial appears to be the first window that Zettler exported to Melbourne and the prominently painted maker's name, date and royal warrant was probably a good advertisement. Maybe this promotion was successful as not long afterwards the firm was commissioned for two sets of aisle windows for the Scots' Church, Collins Street.

The central panel of the three-light window pictures Isabella, seemingly

climbing a last step, and about to be embraced by her mother, Matilda. Framed by an architectural canopy, the women are apparently meeting in heaven, with attendant angels, one on either side, each bearing a prominent scroll announcing each by name. Matilda and Isabella's facial depictions are distinctive and carefully modelled, suggesting that the glass-painter based his work on photographs.

Having made his name at the Equity Bar, George was appointed Justice Webb of the Supreme Court in 1886, where *Melbourne Punch* (27 May 1886) considered that his 'sterling legal ability, sound common sense, and strict impartiality' should make him a very good addition to the ranks of judges. This proved the case, although illness once again intervened and, after contracting severe influenza, George Webb died on 26 September 1891.

Over the decades since its first installation, the window has been damaged, possibly by the 1914 fire which destroyed the 'Croton Hurst' ballroom, billiard room and picture gallery when Dottie and her husband William Farrer Langdon (1860-1943) were in residence, or during its removal from the house in 1937 when it was moved to the Langdon's new home, 'Chota Croton', also known as 'Little Croton', in Beaumaris. An additional measure of George's grief was the commissioning of a life-sized marble

statue of Isabella, which graced 'Croton Hurst' originally and then the Beaumaris home. The Langdon family gifted it to Caulfield, now Glen Eira, Historical Society where it remains on display in the old Caulfield Town Hall.

After many years in family hands, the window was de-installed in 2018, prior to demolition of the building. Despite many years alongside the coast of Port Philip Bay, it remains remarkably fresh and is now in storage at Urban Evolution Design in East Gippsland. Clearly, it needs significant conservation and restoration to bring it back to life once again, and it deserves no less as an important small part of Australia's social and cultural history.

All that remains of the fairytale mansion, 'Croton Hurst' in Caulfield is the name it gave to an avenue, not far from the old Caulfield Town Hall but this window, and the sculpture of Isabella remain as testament to one man's loves in life and his family's wish that the two women continue to be remembered.

Dr Bronwyn Hughes OAM

With enormous thanks to Janette Agg and Caz Warring for their invaluable knowledge and assistance for this article on the 'Croton Hurst' commemorative window.



■ Dandenong State Forest at the nook, Ferny Creek, Victoria, ca. 1880, <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-144957969/view>



■ "Scotch" heather (*Calluna vulgaris*)
 Creator 'Tatters', Tatiana Gerus
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/tgerus/page50>

Locations with botanical names: part two

Heathmont. As for any district, our name is a base for the Heathmont History Group. This combination of plant and built feature is repeated many times in the names of local districts east of Melbourne. Glen Iris, Box Hill, Wattle Glen, Forest Hill, Ferntree Gully, Heatherdale, Lilydale, Briar Hill, Montrose. That the terrain is hilly has had obvious major implications for its modern history of rural orcharding, transport routes and attractive suburban residential development. That plant names are used can indicate prolific growth, sufficient to stand alone in the name, as in Boronia, Tecoma, Sassafras, Laburnum, Clematis. 'The Romance of Nomenclature' is always of historical interest and value.

Ferny Creek

Another obvious name, the ferns and the creek being derived from this wet temperate rainforest area in the Dandenong Ranges. The creek flows down from nearby Dunns Hill, which is 561 metres above sea level. Originally named One Tree Hill, the Post Office here opened in 1904. The One Tree Hill area name has been retained and is often in the news as being the end of The Thousand steps fitness climb, a Kokoda tribute. The tree ferns in the area are spectacular, the high rainfall of the Dandenongs support their growth.

Glen Iris

Wattle in the valley, ferntree in the gully, heather in the dale, is this iris in the glen? It might have been so originally, and perhaps back in the Mother Country, but this suburb Glen Iris takes its name from the large holding of solicitor J.C. Turner who in the early 1850s developed a vast property with a one and a half mile frontage to Gardiners Creek, an orchard, vineyard, stables, dairy, coach-house and a mansion named 'Glen Iris'. Turner lost his fortune as quickly as he gained it and the land was subdivided in 1861. '... and his aspirations toward gentry hood dissolved, except for donating the name of his house to the suburb of Glen Iris,' wrote Lynne Strahan in the *Private and Public Memory: a History of the City of Malvern* (1989, p4)



Top: Critten, Henry (1856) The Governor Hotham Hotel, today the Hawthorn Hotel, corner Burwood Road and William Street, Hawthorn. Shows horse drawn bus about to depart, printing on side 'Richmond to Hawthorne' and 'Princess Royal'. <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/403501>

Bottom: Kerr Brothers (c1920s) 'High Street Glen Iris today' <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/42948>

Hawthorn

Hawthorn was 'named after Lieut. Hawthorne of the frigate Phantom, visiting Port Phillip in 1852. It was spelt Hawthorne in earlier maps. (A.E. Martin in *Place names in Victoria and Tasmania*). In her authoritative history *Hawthorn Peppercorns* (1978) Gwen McWilliam discusses the origin of the name Hawthorn. She identifies two possibilities: the above one about a sailor named Hawthorne who visited Robert Hoddle just as the surveyor was seeking a name for the area he as mapping, and the other based on botany. After quite a few pages of interesting discussion, she states that, 'a botanical origin for the name is feasible'. (p30) The 'e' on the visitor's name is a problem, for right from 1852, it was not on any official documents, including those produced by Hoddle. Gwen McWilliam concludes: 'The reason Hawthorn was called Hawthorn may have been only known to Robert Hoddle, and perhaps to Albert Purchas, who drew up the plan the for little village beside the creek'. (p28)

Heatherdale

Heatherdale is little more than the road and railway station, opened on 7 September 1958, the heather being regarded as an alternative name for heath, and the dale being between two 'monts', Vermont and Heathmont.

Editor's note: as a child attending Heatherdale State School, I walked to and from, along dirt paths with heath growing wild in spots along the unmade roads. I recall that the heather was mostly white, making the occasional sighting of a pink one seem special.

Gerry Robinson

Heathmont History Group



Judith Harley
(1929-2024)
artist, writer
and longtime
supporter of
RHSV

Judith Harley, the last surviving grandchild of Alfred and Pattie Deakin, passed away on 11 October 2024. Although widely-travelled, she lived nearly all her life close to the Deakin family home *Llanarth* in Walsh Street, South Yarra, with interludes at the Deakin beach house *Ballara*, Point Lonsdale.

The culture of politics, philanthropy and the arts which prevailed at *Llanarth* suffused the lives of Judith's parents and her own life. Judith's mother, Vera Deakin White, received the OBE for overseas service to the Australian Red Cross during World War I. Her father, Thomas "Tom" White, one of Australia's first military pilots, served in Mesopotamia (Iraq) before pursuing a political career in Australia.

Judith was born on 22 June 1929, the year her father was elected to federal parliament; in 1933 he became Minister for Trade and Customs in the Lyons government. Three-year-old Judith, who was fond of custard, cheered the elevation of her father to Minister for Trade and Custard!

Educated at Melbourne Girls Grammar School, Judith later graduated BA from the University of Melbourne. When her father was appointed High Commissioner to the UK and knighted, Judith became her mother's honorary secretary. In 1954 she married ophthalmologist Geoffrey Harley and they had three sons.

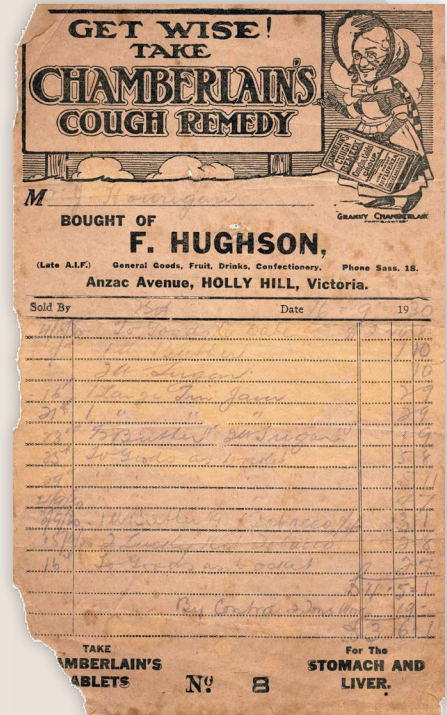
Vibrant, engaging and community-oriented, Judith engaged in various activities that included following the interests of her forebears. Pattie Deakin, philanthropist and artist, was foundation president of the Lyceum Club while Judith gained the honour of life membership. A 'colourist and expressionist artist', Judith held several of her eight solo exhibitions at the club.

Alfred Deakin was a foundation vice-president of the Historical Society of Victoria (later RHSV). Judith joined in 1967, a year after her close friend Barbara Nixon, the long-serving honorary librarian at the society, and provided much volunteer assistance. She celebrated the opening of the exhibition on her mother's Red Cross service in 2018, and two years later the society's publication of her mother's biography, *Vera Deakin and the Red Cross*.

In 1988 Judith's article 'Alfred Deakin at Home' appeared in the *Victorian Historical Journal*. Her own home abounded in hospitality and kindness and contained a large family archive. Numerous scholars and others benefitted from Judith's wealth of historical knowledge and gift for recreating the past.

Carole Woods

Vera Deakin and the Red Cross author



Left: Bill & Nell? Could this be Bill and Nell Hourigan on their wedding day 20 September 1910?

Top: Groceries: A pencil-written, Depression era-account docket from Fred Hughson's store in Ferny Creek dated September 1930 and showing the Hourigans had run up a tab of £4-5-1. Items include sugar, tins of jam, butter and tobacco. By way of "contra" in the form of 2 tonnes of wood, the bill was reduced by 19/-

A shopping bag of history

The threads of local history sometimes come in strange packages, shedding light on the stories of ordinary Victorians.

When Joe Hourigan died alone at his modest home at One Tree Hill (Ferny Creek) in 1965, he left a small bundle of papers and photographs. A neighbour salvaged these when the property was being cleared out and years later passed them onto me as "someone interested in local history" when they in turn were having a clear out.

That was at least 25 years ago, and the papers have remained largely forgotten, shelved in an already cluttered storage room, still in the shopping bag in which they arrived.

The Hourigans were working people of Irish-Catholic stock who came to the Dandenong Ranges early last century. Joe variously described his occupation as 'labourer', 'wood cutter' and later 'carpenter'. His father gave him as 'timber worker'.

In a way, the shopping bag of documents reflects the priorities of people for whom written records were considered neither essential nor important. Like so many ordinary Victorians of their time, the family left a very slight documentary footprint.

It is an eclectic collection, much of it without context: receipts from the local grocer, pay packets, rental dockets, probate papers, insurance documents, a handful of postcards, letters and

photographs. Each is a clue to a hard and frugal life in a semi-rural Arcadia in the first half of the 20th century.

Joseph "Joe" Hourigan was the son of William James Hourigan (c.1866-1935) and Ellen Hourigan, nee Hamilton (1873-1964). Bill and Nell, as they were better known, were both born in country Victoria. They married late, at South Yarra on 20 September 1910, and then moved to Western Australia for a few years, where Bill worked in the timber industry. The decision to head west was an economic one. In an unaddressed note, Bill writes about heading west or north-east: 'It is a cert I am done with Melbourne as a man could slave until he was bald headed and then not have enough to shift him out of it'.

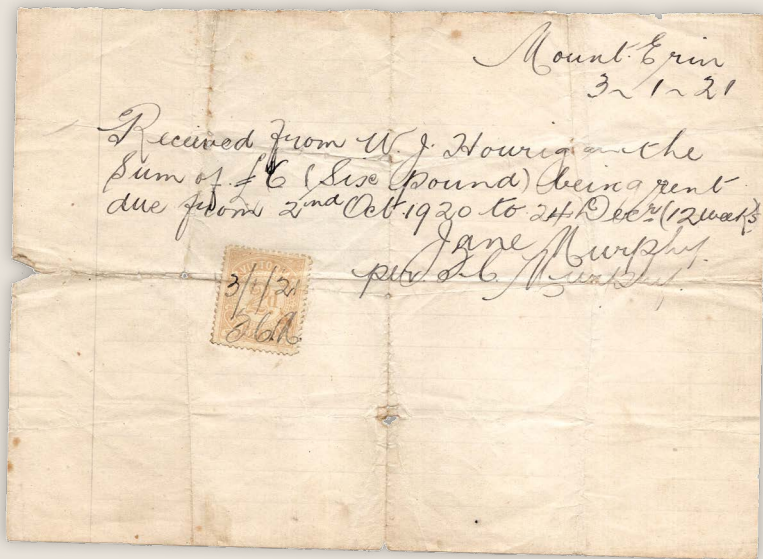
Joe's younger brother John "Jack" was born in the Perth suburb of Subiaco in 1911. Another brother, James, was born in the WA timber town of Dwellingup in 1913. Jack died in 1918 soon after the family's return to Victoria, aged six years and eight months, probably from tuberculosis. Of James, little is known other than his committal to institutional care in February 1964. He died aged 80 in special accommodation in Ballarat in 1993.

Joe's early history is harder to trace. When he died, his age was given as 57. But there is a discrepancy here. His death certificate specifies he lived for 50 years in Victoria and seven in WA. When Joe joined the army in 1942, he stated he had been born in Perth on 31 December 1906. While it was not unusual for men joining the



Top: Just think of me: An embroidered WWI postcard sent by Jack McMahon from France.

Bottom: Rent receipt: A 1921 rent receipt from Jane Murphy



services to fudge their age or origins, this would predate his parents' marriage by almost four years. With no obvious record of his birth in WA or Victoria, a possible explanation is that Joe was born "on the wrong side of the blanket" or perhaps the records were simply lost.

After their return to Victoria, the Hourigans lived in Brunswick and Carlton before moving to Tremont around 1920. They rented property from Mrs Jane Murphy, matriarch of an old pioneering family in the area, before buying into an early subdivision at One Tree Hill.

For the next 15 years, Bill and Joe, who left school after 5th Grade, scratched out a living by felling and cutting timber and roadwork contracting as the hills transitioned from agriculture to tourism. Bill did some work on the holiday homes of absentee landlords. They were not prominent in local affairs; Bill was mentioned in the local paper once in 1922 when he found a missing boy and Ellen advertised for the return of her missing cow in 1927!

After his father died in 1935, Joe stayed living with his mother and continued

labouring work before joining the army in 1942. He served three years in Australia as a private in the Ordnance Corps. After the war, he worked for some years for Cant Brothers, builders in suburban Surrey Hills.

It is hard to identify the original keeper of this modest collection of Hourigan family documents. There are fewer than a dozen letters, some from business acquaintances of Bill and Joe, one from Nell's sister and another from her brother. On balance, it was likely Nell who guarded this tiny cache of the memorable and mundane.

Two items tell us a little about Nell Hourigan. The first is a partially completed claim for the old age pension, which contains some biographical details. The second is an exercise book labelled 'Cooking Book', with handwritten recipes for how to cure bacon and hams, plum cake, ginger beer, stewed bullock's kidney, German sauce and baroness pudding. The cook book also has some handwritten nature notes dated in the early 1920s.

Perhaps the most poignant papers are a memorial card for her deceased son, Jack, along with a receipt for his funeral

expenses from the undertaker, Chas. P. Frilay of Brunswick. She also kept Jack's primary school texts: a primer, copy book and drawing book. In later years, Nell suffered from dementia and was committed to Mont Park in 1961. She died there three years later from complications following surgery at the remarkable age of 91.

Of the dozen or so photographs, all formal studio portraits, most have no identifying information. A couple are inscribed to 'Auntie Nell' from her nieces. There is a wedding photo, it is reasonable to assume is of Bill and Nell, but there is no way to be sure. A class photo of Grade 3 at Rathdowne Street Primary in 1919 is also here. The Hourigans lived locally at the time and young Joe or James is possibly in this group.

The one fully identifiable image is of John Edward McMahon (1893-1966), 1st AIF, who embarked for service overseas in August 1916. Such photographs were often circulated within the families of enlisted men. Jack McMahon was Nell's nephew and a cousin to Joe. Hailing from Tatura, he enlisted at Wangaratta and eventually served as a machine gunner. Wounded in action in France barely a month before the war ended, he returned to Australia in March 1919.

Joe Hourigan died suddenly less than a year after his mother. He was last seen alive by a neighbour around closing time at the Royal Hotel in Upper Ferntree Gully on 8 June 1965. His body was discovered by the local policemen four days later. A coronial inquest determined that he had died of natural causes.

Joe never married, and while there is some evidence of an extended family, his affairs were left to local friends to sort out. The informant on his death certificate was a neighbour. His body was identified by a police officer known to him for many years. Control of the family estate was granted to the Public Trustee in 1967.

Bill and Nell are buried together in the Ferntree Gully Cemetery nestled at the foot of the mountain they called home. So too is Joe Hourigan. All lie in unmarked graves.

Supplementary material sourced from BDM records in Victoria and WA, the PROV collection and Trove.

John Schauble

Meet RHSV archivist Bronte Laffin Vines



Bronte Laffin Vines is the newest staff member to join the Collections team, working as Archive Officer with the RHSV's Gidleigh Archivist, Cathy Dodson. Both positions have been generously funded by the Gidleigh Foundation for the next three years, enabling Bronte and Cathy to work on two large architectural heritage collections recently donated by heritage consultants and conservation architects Graeme Butler and Allan Willingham.

Bronte has the ideal characteristics of an archivist. She has broad interests, with a particular love of social and cultural history and the heritage of the built environment. She gains a lot of satisfaction from improving catalogue records to provide easier access to archival resources. She is a strong advocate for the democratisation of cultural institutions and the accessibility of collections.

Bronte also loves deeply researching people's stories. Every researcher identifies with the thrill in locating a surprise find in the records and recognising its significance. Bronte has experienced this pleasure in a recent role, identifying an interesting letter from the important Australian modernist artist and 'Angry Penguin' John Perceval (1923-2000). It was written to a nun, thanking her for writing a poem on his painting 'Christ Dining at Young and Jacksons', which he liked very much.

It is hardly surprising that Bronte has chosen a GLAMR (galleries, libraries, archives, museums and records) career path given her upbringing. Bronte's mother, Helen Laffin, is a museum curator and archivist, and her father, Gary Vines, is a leading archaeologist and heritage consultant. Museum visits were a high priority in Laffin Vines family holidays. Bronte's formal education includes a BA from La Trobe University in English, Film Studies and History. Her interest in social history and the preservation of design and technology led her to graduate degrees in Cultural Materials Conservation from the University of Melbourne and in Audiovisual Archiving from Charles Sturt University.

Bronte's work-based education broadened her horizons further and includes archaeological work helping to clean and document the 60,000-plus objects recovered from an archaeological excavation of the former Druids Hotel at 274 Russell Street, close to the Melbourne's 'Little Lon' archaeological project sites. She valued the access to primary sources that this work unearthed, documenting the lives of Little Lon dwellers with physical evidence which often contradicted the more sensationalist histories of the area. Where written accounts have often exaggerated the seediness of the Little Lon slums, going back to the 1870s accounts of 'The Vagabond', the archaeological evidence served to redress this historical disservice done to past residents of the area.

Bronte is currently working on the Melbourne CBD contents of Graeme Butler's collection. It records how much Graeme achieved in architectural documentation and conservation over more than forty years as one of Victoria's most prolific heritage architects. There is a synergy between Graeme's work and that of Bronte's father, with their mutual interests in industrial heritage and vernacular architecture. The two men share a like generosity in making their work available to the public, with the Butler Collection of 40,000-plus online photographs providing an invaluable heritage resource. The Collection also documents Graeme's role as a founding member of the Council for the Historic Environment in 1977, dedicated to raising standards in the built environment professions.

Bronte is also excited to be soon working on the complementary collection of the heritage architect Allan Willingham. Allan is a significant heritage and academic architectural historian. As a long-serving member of the Historic Buildings Council of Victoria, his career is also testimony to the growth of the heritage movement in this state and his personal commitment to architectural conservation. Both collections will provide an invaluable resource for future researchers on the built history of Victoria and the development of its heritage movement and professions.

Over the next three years at the RHSV, Bronte will also be undertaking work

on the 'Save the Brickworks' archive, documenting this community group's advocacy for the retention of the Hoffman Brickworks in Brunswick.

For over a decade, Bronte has worked across archives, museums and libraries in diverse roles which have contributed to her valuable skill set. She has worked with business, local and state governments, religious institutions, private, community and not-for-profit collections. She has also assisted academic and family history researchers. Her work has involved digitising photographic and printed materials.

Bronte has also undertaken extensive voluntary work for community radio, where she has catalogued an archive from scratch, arts festivals, and PROV, where she documented and digitised Parish plans. One volunteer activity for the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA) involved archival documentation and film digitisation for its archive of more than 1,850 short student films going back to 1966, coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the VCA Film Production course.

At the RHSV we value highly the digital and preservation skills that Bronte brings to her archival work. With the breadth of her experience, skills and interests, it's not surprising that Bronte sees her career as developing across the GLAMR sector, working in archives, museums and libraries, rather than restricting herself to one role. She enjoys the variety of opportunities and challenges the different collection types offer.

In her spare time Bronte is a self-avowed 'culture vulture', with a love of literary fiction, art, film, ballet and music. She is proficient in languages, having learnt Italian through secondary school and studied French at university. Yoga classes help fuel her irrepressible energy.

It is a great delight to have Bronte join the RHSV Collections team and we look forward to working with her over the next three years to make our newly donated Graeme Butler, Allan Willingham, Save the Brickworks and Ann Jackson collections accessible to RHSV members and the public.

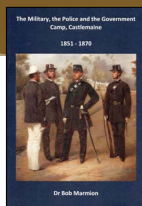
Helen Stitt
Collections Officer (Images)

Books received

John Schauble

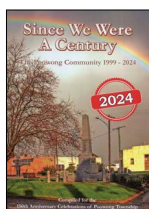
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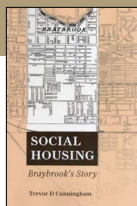
The Military, the Police and the Government Camp, Castlemaine 1851-1870. Bob Marmion, History Solutions, Drysdale, 2024, pp. 1-103, ISBN 9780645785500.

Bringing order to the chaos of the early Victorian gold rushes presented many challenges as the infant colony exploded in size. A motley assortment of police and military forces was charged with various roles: the collection of licensing fees, the maintenance of order and the policing of criminal activity. That many of the men charged with these roles were not up to the job soon became apparent. Bob Marmion has focussed on the earliest years of Castlemaine to unravel the quixotic relationship between its people and the forces that both taxed and protected.



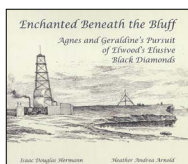
Since We Were a Century: The Poowong Community 1999-2024. Poowong Community Consultative Committee, Poowong, 2024, pp. 1-206, ISBN 9781763528116.

Many communities are choosing to add the last two or three decades to their local histories. A tiny community of just a few hundred people, Poowong can point to no fewer than nine previous accounts of its past, including a centenary history and another marking 125 years. This latest volume brings the record up to date in line with the locality's 150th year. It is by its nature a piecemeal account but one which details the minutiae of life in the South Gippsland town. It covers everything from the fire brigade to the abattoirs, the football club to the ploughing association and the drama of the Barbeque Shelter Extension and Community Logo Board.



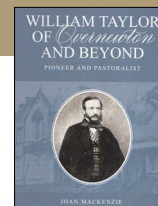
Social Housing: Braybrook's Story. Trevor D. Cunningham, Australian Scholarly Publishing, North Melbourne, 2024, pp. vii-262, ISBN 9781923068780.

This book is very timely. As Victoria faces yet another housing crisis, here is a study of a response to the post-World War II housing shortage. One of the outcomes of this was the development of the western suburb of Braybrook by the Housing Commission of Victoria, which built 2500 homes there. The suburb is wedged between the Maribyrnong River and the Sunbury railway line. This is a story of manufactured suburbia and the risks involved, of failed and inadequate infrastructure and social inequality. A creature of government, it has largely been let down by it over the past 80 years, a suburb of "broken political promises and unfulfilled future promises". A salutary tale.



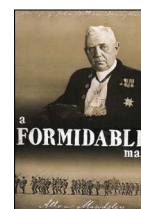
Enchanted Beneath the Bluff: Agnes & Geraldine's pursuit of Elwood's elusive black diamonds. Issac Douglas Hermann and Heather Andrea Arnold, the authors, Melbourne, 2023, pp. xi-155, ISBN 9780646845142.

This is a tale with many tendrils framed around the hunt for black coal beneath the shores of Port Phillip. It tells of Agnes Simmons and Geraldine Minet, spinsters, spiritualists, theosophists, suffragettes and middle-class women of means. While the story of drilling in 1893 for black coal at Red Bluff in the name of the Victorian Coal Mining Company may be long forgotten, it is not as unlikely as it seems given the deposits at Outtrim, Kilcunda, Wonthaggi and other sites in South Gippsland. While the Red Bluff search proved fruitless, the back stories of these two women offer some fascinating insights into Melbourne the turn of the 20th century: splendidly illustrated too.



William Taylor of Overnewton and Beyond. Joan Mackenzie, the author, Drysdale, 2023, pp. 1-178, ISBN 9780646885773.

In this intimate family history, Joan Mackenzie traces the story of her Scottish born pastoralist great-grandfather William Taylor (1818-1903). Taylor arrived in Melbourne aged 22 and proceeded to create a fortune as a pastoralist in Victoria, NSW and Queensland. He bought an extensive property along the Maribyrnong River at Keilor in 1849 and built a version of a Scottish baronial castle, 'Overnewton'. Active in colonial and local government, he acquired the sobriquet the "Father of Keilor". Overnewton, which the author first experienced as a child, stayed in the family for more than a century and still exists. Much of its land was eventually acquired by the government for closer settlement and upon it now sits suburbs.



A Formidable Man. Alan Mawdsley, Shawline Publishing, Melbourne, 2024, pp. v-198, ISBN 9781923101982.

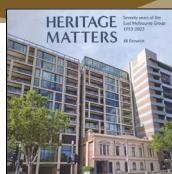
John William Springthorpe (1855-1933) was a prominent Melbourne physician in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. His life story connects him to many other well-known Melburnians of the day and to an array of interests. Springthorpe was an advocate for a range of other medical causes beyond his own influential practice of medicine. He was instrumental in the establishment of an ambulance service in Melbourne. He was also, as even his closest friends and colleagues admitted, a sometimes difficult and often uncompromising man. Allan Mawdsley is a retired psychiatrist and St John Ambulance member for more than 60 years and historian of the organisation.

Books received

John Schauble

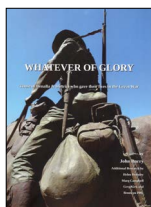
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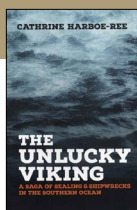
Heritage Matters: 70 years of the East Melbourne Group 1953-2023. Jill Fenwick, Anchor Books, Melbourne, 2023, pp. vi-169, ISBN 9780648835059.

East Melbourne, the small suburb bordered by Brunton Avenue, Victoria Parade, Punt Road/Hoddle Street and Spring Street, is drenched in history. It is home to many of Melbourne's most important parks, the MCG, hospitals, churches, the parliament, even the fire brigade headquarters. But is also home to a residential community and one which cares passionately about its heritage and its past. For seventy years, the East Melbourne Group has been a vigilant force for the protection and preservation of the suburb's natural and built environs. There have been some momentous losses over that time, Clivedon Mansions and St Patricks College come to mind, but also many saves. Without such champions so much might be lost.



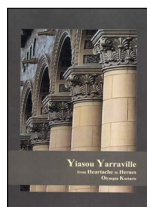
Whatever of Glory: Those of Benalla & District Who Gave Their Lives in the Great War. John Barry, the author, Benalla, 2021, pp.1-293, ISBN 9780645279702.

A recent trend has been for local communities to lay claim to 'their' war histories, of war service personnel linked to their town or suburb. Here is an account of those from Benalla in the state's north east who gave their lives during World War I. The town had a population less than 9,000 people before the war, yet more than 1,000 men and 11 women from the district volunteered to serve after the outbreak of war. Of them, around 200, including one woman, would die in battle, from disease or other war-related causes. This meticulously researched book places the Benalla volunteers in the context of their war, the battles fought and their family backgrounds.



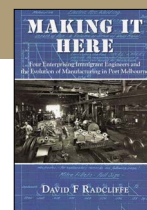
The Unlucky Viking. Cathrine Harboe-Ree, Australian Scholarly Publishing, North Melbourne, 2023, pp. vii-241, ISBN9781922952738.

Here is the second recent book highlighting the connection between Melbourne, some very intrepid Norwegians and the early exploration and exploitation of the Antarctic. Norwegian sailor Anders Harboe-Ree, grandfather of the author, was a sealer captain who was wrecked twice in Antarctic waters. After the first wreck, of the sailboat *Catherine* in 1906, Anders and two companions set forth on a 7,300-kilometre journey from the Crozet Islands to Melbourne in a whaleboat to get help. The later wreck of the steamer *Soglimt* in 1908 on the more distant Prince Edwards Island is an equally gripping tale. Through her lengthy research, the author reveals the story of a remarkably talented man and his exceptional life.



Yiasou Yarraville. Olympia Koziaris, Doublethread Australia, Maribyrnong, 2021, pp.i-283, ISBN 9780648560722.

A collection of more than twenty personal stories of the Greek diaspora from the 1950s to the 2020s and those who made their way to Yarraville in Melbourne's west. Post-war migration to Melbourne was, for many, a flight from war or poverty to a land at the other end of the earth. Each of these stories is significant, from that of filmmaker Ana Kokkinos, to cakemakers George and Anna Malamas, heavyweight wrestler Alex Iakovides and Victoria's first female Greek police officer Cally Kwas. Each tells us about place and community, family and acceptance. Tales of Victoria's recent migration history are being told before they are lost and *Yiasou Yarraville* is an important addition to that story telling.



Making it Here: Four Enterprising Immigrant Engineers and the Evolution of Manufacturing in Port Melbourne. David F. Radcliffe, PenFolk Publishing, Blackburn, 2024, pp. viii-264, ISBN 9781925467178.

Not so long ago, Port Melbourne was a significant centre of manufacturing in inner suburban Melbourne. Its engineering heyday probably dates from the 1930s, when vehicle and aircraft manufacturing became a focus of activity. This study focuses upon the lives of four mechanical engineers, Otto Schumacher, Alfred Harman, Albert Longoni and Fred David, who came from Europe and America between the 1890s and the 1930s. These men created businesses where they made things: factory equipment, winches, airplanes and cranes among them. It is not just a story of manufacture but also of family, society and even geopolitics. It is a worthy account of the place of engineering is a broader social context.



Get the Met. Jourdan Sungkar, Four Letter Press, Melbourne, 2020, pp. 1-86, ISBN 9780645769906.

This small book, focused on Melbourne train system design, will appeal not just to railway aficionados but also anyone with an interest in the city's suburban trains. It is a light read; a primer to the history and development of the system, its rolling stock and its ever-changing branding since the demise of the Victorian Railways in the 1980s. There are descriptions of the trains from the days of the red rattlers to the sleeker modern carriages and a whole section on the variety of ticketing systems tried and failed since end of over a hundred years of those little cardboard rectangles many will recall. The strength of this account is in the illustrations of trains, tickets and promotional matter.