



# History NEWS

Issue No. 326  
September/October 2016  
Royal Historical Society  
of Victoria

HISTORY WEEK 2016  
16 - 23 OCTOBER



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

|  |   |
|--|---|
| President's Report .....   | 2 |
| Emerging Historians 2016 .....                                   | 2 |
| Birthday honours to heritage<br>volunteers .....                 | 3 |
| Unveiling of historical monument at<br>Malmsbury Reservoir ..... | 4 |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| A mighty achievement .....                       | 5 |
| Books Received .....                             | 6 |
| A local history map .....                        | 7 |
| Local Government & Cultural<br>Collections ..... | 8 |

|                                  |    |
|----------------------------------|----|
| Historic home demolished .....   | 8  |
| Around the Societies .....       | 9  |
| The Melbourne Mansion Pt 2 ..... | 11 |



## President's Report

There have been important developments at the RHSV in the last few weeks.

First, we have received a letter from the Minister for Planning formally inviting us to enter into arrangements for the RHSV to take over the Drill Hall as a Committee of Management. The government will undertake as yet unspecified work on the building prior to handover, and we are required to provide a business plan and other material. The details of the amount of work that will be done to the building have not yet been specified, and the long-term financial implications for the RHSV are as yet unclear, but there are ongoing discussions.

The RHSV will establish a Drill Hall Management Committee as a Council Committee to undertake the negotiations and arrangements. We will also take steps to ensure that the other current tenants in the building are appropriately catered for.

Many of these matters have been discussed at a special Vision Day on 23 July for the Council, staff and a few invited participants. This gave us a far clearer idea of how we view the future of the RHSV and our use of the Drill Hall.

Members will be kept informed of these matters in future *History News* reports.

We are very pleased to announce that the RHSV is to receive \$84,315 p.a. for the four years 2017-2020 through the Organisations Investment Program under Creative State. Our thanks to the government and congratulations to Kate Prinsley and all those involved in preparing the application.

A sad announcement is that Catherine Andrews has resigned as the RHSV Ambassador because of the demand of the many activities with which she is involved. On behalf of the Council of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, I thanked her for having worked with us as the inaugural RHSV Ambassador, and especially for her invaluable assistance in moving towards long-term tenure in the Drill Hall. We greatly appreciated the talk that she gave at the opening of the highly successful MacRobertson Exhibition, and her presentation of the Judges' Special Award to Emeritus Professor Graeme Davison at the 2015 Victorian Community History Awards. We wish her all the very best and hope that she will continue to support the RHSV and attend some of our events.

Don Garden

President

## Emerging Historians 2016

The annual joint RHSV and PHA (Vic) Emerging Historians evening offers a glimpse of the breadth of historical research carried out by Victorian postgraduate historians.

This year the event, held on a wintry 19 July evening at the Drill Hall, showcased the work of PhD candidates, Emma Gleadhill and Volkhard Wehner. Our two speakers continued the tradition of illustrating the diverse ways in which historians can continue to peel back the layers of historical sources and methods to gain new insights into the past.



Travel memoirs and diaries and material culture in the form of surviving travel souvenirs were principal sources of PHA (Vic)'s Emma Gleadhill's research. Emma, who has only recently submitted her PhD thesis at Monash University, used her research into the lives of late eighteenth century female British tourists to challenge the conventional idea that the 'grand tour' of the continent was the preserve of young upper class British men. Focussing on the case studies of Lady Elizabeth Holland and Lady Anna Miller, Emma illustrated how the choice of travel souvenirs and the strategic use of these souvenirs in their salons on their return to Britain, enabled both women to carve out places for themselves in Britain's social, cultural and political circles and to achieve recognition, of sorts, amongst scientific and cultural elites.

Volkhard Wehner, the RHSV's candidate for the evening, is currently completing his PhD at the University of Melbourne. His presentation brought us closer in time and place to home as he discussed the impact of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871 on Victoria's German community. Indeed, Volkhard's thesis was that there was no German community to speak of before the Franco-Prussian war, despite the fact that the 1850s had brought three waves of German settlers to Victoria. They remained a scattered and diverse community until the news of the outbreak of war between France and Prussia reached the colony. Volkhard focussed particularly on the role of Carl Muecke, a South Australian Lutheran pastor and newspaper publisher who moved to Victoria at this time and began publishing the *Australische Deutsche Zeitung*. The newspaper became the primary disseminator of information about the war in Victoria, assisting Muecke in his aim to encourage 'self-awareness and cultural pride' amongst Victorians of German descent.

As with previous Emerging Historians evenings, both presenters not only shared aspects and discoveries of their research in stimulating ways, but also reminded us of the universal themes that link discoveries from our past to circumstances of our present. Volkhard's discussion of the effects of far-flung conflicts on Australians and, particularly, on a cultural minority within the community struck a chord in a week when an anti-Muslim immigration senator-elect was challenged by members of the Australian Muslim community on national television. Emma's discussion of the cachet to be gained from the judicious collection and display of cultural souvenirs also seemed remarkably apt as the streets of Melbourne seemed to be awash with *Pokemon-Go* catchers earning points by catching virtual creatures.

Jill Barnard

### Cover:

**Photo title: Brighton Beach Baths c 1954**

Photographer: Edward Hayes

Image courtesy of Bayside Library Service

## History NEWS



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# Birthday honours to heritage volunteers

The RHSV is delighted that two of our amazing community history and heritage volunteers, Phyllis Boyd from the Gisborne & Mount Macedon Districts Historical Society and Pat Grainger, the Secretary of the Port Melbourne Historical and Preservation Society, were awarded Order of Australia medals in the Queen's Birthday honours. – Don Garden reports.



**Phyllis Boyd OAM**

Photo by Ian Boyd; courtesy the Boyd family.

## PHYLLIS BOYD OAM

Phyllis and her husband Ian have been major contributors to the promotion of history and heritage and their local community, through many organisations for about thirty years.

Phyllis was Secretary of the Mount Macedon History Group from 1987-1992, and was influential in its amalgamation with the Gisborne Society. She continued as Secretary of the amalgamated Society until 1996 and was then elected President, holding the position until 2015. She is currently Vice President. Phyllis has produced the society's newsletters since 1989 and has been involved in a number of publications. As research coordinator, she assists with inquiries and runs heritage walks and talks to schools and other groups.

A major achievement following the societies' amalgamation was to work with the Council to secure the 1858 Gisborne Court House for G&MMDHS premises. Funding was sought by her from Federal, State and local Government agencies to restore the buildings in the Court House precinct. They are now opened daily as a Sound & Light exhibit and a static museum.

Phyllis led the Society in the creation of the Gisborne Pioneer Park in 1996, using a LEAP unemployment scheme. The Park now contains more than 130 plaques to honour pioneers of the district.

Following local government amalgamations, in 1995 Phyllis was fundamental in the formation of an umbrella group of history and heritage groups in the new Shire, the Macedon Ranges Heritage Council, and has been Secretary or President ever since (President for nine years). As well as these, Phyllis manages the monthly Gisborne Olde Time Market, which has raised more than \$600,000 for the community since 2002. She has been founder and President since its formation ten years ago of the volunteer group that publishes the monthly *GREAT Gisborne Gazette*, which includes a history page provided by Phyllis &/or Ian.

Phyllis was an inaugural member of the Macedon Branch of the National Trust and served on the committee for more than 20 years, and as Treasurer, Publicity Officer or Secretary for more than 15 years.

It is appropriate that such extraordinary work for the Gisborne and Mount Macedon communities and their history and heritage has been awarded with an OAM.



**Pat Grainger OAM**

Photo by John Kirby; courtesy Port Melbourne Historical and Preservation Society.

## PAT GRAINGER OAM

Pat Grainger has devoted over thirty years to Port Melbourne's community history and heritage. Since she bought a home in Port Melbourne in 1982 she has become involved in many local projects and campaigns. She was Co-ordinator of the 'Vintage Port Worth Preserving' oral history project in 1990-91, was a member of the National Trust W-Class Tram Committee and was part of the National Trust and community campaigns to save the railway and heritage features of Port Melbourne. In 1993 Pat was announced as Citizen of the Year by the Port Melbourne City Council.

In that same year Pat was a founding member of the Port Melbourne Historical and Preservation Society and has been a major force in the group ever since. She was Treasurer 1993-95 and has been the Secretary since 1996. Her drive and commitment have been instrumental in building an impressive volunteer Society. The quality of the Society's collection, publications, events and exhibitions is of the highest order, and it has been acknowledged that Pat's commitment is phenomenal and has been instrumental in the Society's success and longevity.

Pat's graphic design skills have contributed to a professionalism in the Society's activities that has been recognised in the awards that the Society has received over the years. She created a series of annual 'Back to Port' exhibitions for Port Melbourne Festivals from 1999 – 2002, and 'Women of Port Melbourne' in 2005, 'Fisher Folk of Fishermans Bend' in 2006, 'Navy in Port' in 2008, and 'The English Church at Sandridge' in 2014. She has also written several publications about Port Melbourne and early Melbourne and has been a recipient of Victorian Community History Awards on three occasions.

Pat has been a representative on the South Metropolitan Group of Historical Societies since 1996, and a member of the City of Port Phillip Heritage Advisory Committee and Heritage Recognition Committee.

It is fitting that such wonderful community service has been recognised by an OAM.



**Above: Malmsbury Reservoir under construction, 1866.**

**Left: Reservoir viewed from the eastern side.**

Photo by State Rivers and Water Supply Commission photographer; courtesy State Library of Victoria.



**The unveiling. Jeff Rigby (Coliban Water), Ian Thomas (Life Member, Malmsbury Historical Society), Emma Shore (representing private donors) and Betty Young (Life Member, Malmsbury Historical Society).** Photo by Rod Andrews; courtesy the photographer.

## Unveiling of historical monument at Malmsbury Reservoir

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the ‘turning the first sod’ for the Malmsbury Reservoir, on 12 June 1866.

Malmsbury Historical Society arranged with Coliban Water for a monument commemorating this anniversary to be installed in the reservoir recreation area. Funds were donated by the society, by Coliban Water and by private donors. Coliban Water carried out the landscaping around the monument.

The unveiling ceremony took place on Saturday 18 June. We had a wonderful turnout of over 50 people. A ‘fresh’ southerly breeze reminded us that we were in Malmsbury in mid-winter, and increased our respect for the workers on the site 150 years ago. Their enthusiasm for the ‘hotels’ which sprang up around their camp is quite understandable, even after only an hour in such conditions. But it didn’t rain, and we had the occasional patch of sunshine.

Coliban Water was represented by their managing director, Jeff Rigby, who described the role of the reservoir in the Coliban system, along with Steve Healy, Manager Raw Water Resources, and Bruce Duncan, Manager Headworks.

Dr Geoff Russell, author of *Water for Gold*, gave an entertaining talk on the historical background and created a lively picture of the dramatic events surrounding the birth of the reservoir. The actual unveiling was carried out by Betty Young, Emma Shore, Ian Thomas and Jeff Rigby.

### The Significance of the Monument

Straight lines across the landscape do not exist in nature. Prior to the gold rushes in the 1850s, there were none in this area. Then, in the space of a few years, European

immigrants imposed first the railway line and its viaduct, then the dam and its channel.

The consequences of these were very different for the two peoples of the time – the Indigenous peoples resident there for 40,000 years and the recently arrived Europeans. For the first time ever, the flow of the Coliban River was artificially stopped. To the Aboriginal people, this must have been astonishing, both in the effect on the river and the life it supported, and in trying to understand why it was done. Gold held no significance for them. But the Bendigo and Mt Alexander goldfields now had an assured supply of clean water, and they could flourish. As the gold gradually dwindled, the water from here was used, and continues to be used, for agriculture and domestic supplies.

The installation hopes to convey the impact of an engineered, geometric structure imposed onto an undulating, natural landscape. The base stone was chosen for its similarity to half of the valley here. The model of the dam and the two cut sides of the base stone contrast with the natural surface and two natural sides of the base. It is also intended to demonstrate the skills of the stonemason and the use of Malmsbury bluestone, which was so important in the early European years, and the results of which you can see all around Malmsbury.

The dam is shown in section to show that it is not just a pile of earth, but that the critical element is hidden from view inside it. This is the ‘puddle clay’ core, which is the actual waterproof barrier, created by working specially selected clay with water by passing horses and drays across it, then ramming it. The rest of the earth fill supports the core.

The monument is intended to be viewed from the western side to show how it relates to the actual landscape. The best place to see



**Monument from the western side.** Photo by Rod Andrews; courtesy the photographer.



**Reservoir viewed from the eastern side.** Photo by State Rivers and Water Supply Commission photographer; courtesy State Library of Victoria.



**Monument from the eastern side.** Photo by Rod Andrews; courtesy the photographer.

how the dam fits into the landscape is on the terraced rise to the south of the monument, almost along the centreline of the dam. This spot also gives an excellent view of the body of water behind the dam.

*Rod Andrew*

Treasurer and newsletter editor, Malmsbury Historical Society

rod@excellentlyexpressed.com.au

*This is a slightly edited version of the speech which Robert Illig made on behalf of the Stawell Historical Society in accepting the Museums Australia (Victoria) Archival Survival Award for Volunteer-Run Museums in a ceremony at State Library Victoria on the evening of 14<sup>th</sup> July.*



**The interior of the new building with members of the Stawell Historical Society.**  
Photo by Carol Anne Jones; courtesy of Stawell Historical Society.

## A mighty achievement

I would firstly like to thank Museums Australia, Victoria for making the Victorian Museum awards possible and particularly as a recipient of this award.

In 2008, our Society became the beneficiary of a \$100,000 bequest from Mr. Stewart Bradley who lived in Stawell in his early years, but resided in Melbourne for most of his life. He was long term member of our Society and a regular visitor to Stawell, particularly to our headquarters.

Around 2009 Stawell Historical Society identified the need to upgrade its existing premises that housed its facilities and storage areas of historical objects and information. At that time the Society was operating out of the Old Court House which was built in 1860. The committee resolved to apply to the Northern Grampians Shire Council for assistance in applying for a Government grant to assist in the construction of a purpose built building to be situated adjacent to the Old Court House.

The application to the Shire Council was unsuccessful for about four years but following persistent approaches by the Society, the Shire announced in 2014 that funding for a multi-purpose building had been obtained, consisting of \$500,000 from the Government, \$400,000 from the Northern Grampians Shire and \$100,000 from Stawell Historical Society.

The new building has now enabled the Society to look forward to many years of

excellent working conditions with large storage rooms, and enables the Society to make much better use of the Old Court House by converting it to a much needed Stawell Museum.

The new building consists of a Research and Cataloguing Centre and two store-rooms, one of which is atmospherically controlled, and the other houses thousands of donated photographs and museum items.

The relocation has freed up the Old Court House to make it primarily a museum instead of an over-crowded shared building. Our Society has already established museum displays depicting Stawell's past and Stawell's long mining history, and these displays can be changed from time to time. Our Society now has a thirty-year lease over its share of the new building and the Old Court building, at a rental of \$1.00 per year.

Stawell Historical Society is proud of achieving its main goal, a requirement of our Business Plan in the 2013 Re-Accreditation process. Our objective was "to work towards the completion of a purpose built building to house administration and secure the best possible storage facilities." In recognising its future needs, and its continuous lobbying of Council over many years, the Society has succeeded in turning the \$100,000 bequest to the Society into a \$1,000,000 multi-purpose building of which includes not only the Society's magnificent work area, but also a community gallery and a



**Robert Illig receiving the Archival Survival Award for Volunteer-Run Museums from Angela Henrickson of Archival Survival.**

Photo by Simon Fox, Deakin University; courtesy of Museums Australia (Victoria).

meeting room for Stawell Lions Club, with shared kitchen and toilet facilities.

So finally, reflecting over the last 10 years, if Wendy Melbourne, our cataloguer, had not used a throw-away line in a conversation with Stewart Bradley in 2006, when she said "We need a wealthy benefactor", the Society would not be the beneficiary of \$100,000. This legacy gave the Society the impetus to achieve what it has today.

Also if our member Jim Melbourne had not persisted in lobbying the Northern Grampians Shire we might still be located in the overcrowded 155-year-old Court House building.

We consider that the new building is a great achievement for an organisation that is staffed solely by volunteers.

Thank you.

*Robert Illig*

Stawell Historical Society



**The new facility.**

Photo by Carol Anne Jones; courtesy of Stawell Historical Society.

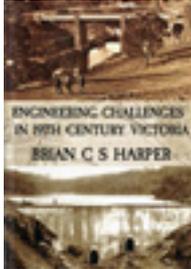


**Books received:** Authors, publishers and Historical Societies are invited to contribute books to the RHSV for the library and for consideration for inclusion in Books Received.

### Engineering Challenges in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Victoria

Brian CS Harper, b-harper@bigpond.com 2016, pp.v + 256. ISBN 9780994457508.

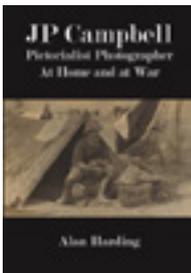
Victoria's economic development in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century necessitated engineers tackling problems in an unfamiliar environment. The first generation were British-trained bringing to the colony techniques and skills that were being used by civil engineers in a variety of infrastructure projects. Victoria provided new challenges that required new answers. This book analyses six major feats of these colonial engineers: the Bendigo Railway Line, the Coliban Water Scheme; the design and construction of the Lower Stony Creek Dam, the first Saltwater River Bridge and the Taradale Viaduct. Their pioneering inventiveness is a reminder of the wealth of talent that came to Victoria and left its mark in structures that we take for granted. It brings a little recognised perspective to our understandings of colonial society.



### JP Campbell: Pictorialist Photographer At Home and War

Alan Harding, www.connorcourt.com 2015, pp. xviii + 329, \$39-95. ISBN 9781925138825.

Frank Hurley and Hubert Wilkins are the best-known World War I photographers. This book charts the life of James Pinkerton Campbell (1865-1935) including his superb AIF photos taken after he joined the Light Horse in late 1914, went to Gallipoli and was wounded at the Nek, and later became an official war photographer in the Middle East. Before the war he practised intermittently as a professional photographer working with the Vallan Studio in Mansfield and later with the Commonwealth Department of External Affairs. After the war he documented the SEC developments at Yallourn. The author has not only re-discovered a significant war photographer but also a body of work that encompassed a continuing interest and passion for photography as an art medium. The clear text is complemented by some 163 images. A very valuable analytical biography of a largely forgotten photographer.



### The Major, The life of a Gallipoli & Western Front survivor, HWH Seager MC

Michael Seager (ed.), Michael Seager, 2015, pp. xxii + 466. ISBN 9780646935386.

This work is a tribute by a loving son to his father. It comprises a collection of letters and diary entries that were rescued from a clean up of his father's papers after his death. The Seagers were a farming family in Gippsland before moving to South Australia where Harold started paid work. He was a teller in the Bank of Australasia at the time of his enlistment. The letters and diary entries track his military career before and during the Great War. He was already a captain at the outbreak of war and embarked with the AIF in February 1915, serving on Gallipoli from May until September. His later war included bouts of illness, a short time in Malta and England, then Egypt, back to England and then the Western Front where he was awarded the Military Cross at Noreuil, promoted to major, wounded and sent back to Australia via England early in 1918. He later returned to England and administered repatriation of troops after the end of the war. The fragmentary material contains much of interest about the home front as well Harold's war.



### Judging For The People, A Social History of the Supreme Court in Victoria 1841-2016

Simon Smith (ed.), Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2016, pp. xxvii + 308. ISBN 9781760292270.

How does one deal with 175 years of an institution, in this case the Victorian Supreme Court? There are formal necessities in the text: photos of chief justices, lists of judges and other court officers but the overall thrust is contained in the series of essays that are a social history – in a sense this is Victorian social history told through various prisms of the court. The book's elegant appearance is a credit to all concerned and its production under the auspices of the RHSV something to notice and commend as can be seen in the previous issue of *History News*. Readers will have favourites among the 13 pieces written by different authors covered in sections on the establishment of the court, people of the court and the court at work. Jane Carolan's essay puts 'a human face' on the workings of the Court according to Andrew Lemon's wide-ranging conclusion, that itself does much to bring its diverse parts together. There is enough discussion in five chronologically arranged essays to follow the

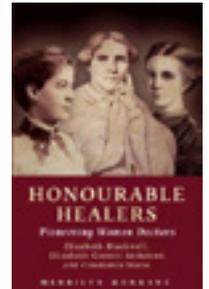


development of Victoria's legal and judicial system but each gives much more, as do the essays on the court at work focusing on divorce law, the Victorian circuit, capital crimes, forensic medicine and the press.

### Honourable Healers, Pioneering Women Doctors, Elizabeth Blackwell. Elizabeth Garrett Anderson and Constance Stone

Merrilyn Murnane, Australian Scholarly Publishing, Melbourne, 2015, pp. xvi + 225, \$30. ISBN 9781923333053.

Constance Stone is of particular interest in Victorian history. Her struggle to gain medical qualifications to practise in Victoria came before the acceptance of female students in the University of Melbourne medical school. The author links



Stone to two remarkable pioneers, Elizabeth Blackwell and Elizabeth Garrett. Both were English women whose struggles for women's health and women's participation in medicine from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century led not only to wider acceptance of women for medical training and practice but also for the creation of hospitals for women staffed by women, Blackwell in New York and Garrett in London. Blackwell was a mentor to Garrett as was Garrett to Stone when after medical studies in North America she went to the London School of Medicine for Women founded by Garrett. By the time Stone returned to Melbourne in 1889 not only did she obtain registration but she was soon joined by a succession of women graduates from the University of Melbourne that had been admitted from 1887 onwards. These included her sister Clara and totalled 14 by 1895. It was this group that pushed by Constance Stone established a hospital run by women for women in Melbourne in 1896 that became the Queen Victoria Hospital, a remarkably successful and important creation as well as a fitting response to problems experienced by women doctors as well as women. It was very much in the tradition of Blackwell and Garrett. This admirable story of the struggle for the participation of women in medicine and more generally the campaigns for women's rights is well told by the author, herself a 'lady doctor' in debt to her mentors and those who preceded them.

# The local history map

The passion for history and heritage in Victoria is alive and well. Graeme Davison provides an insight into its increasing popularity.

Since the Second World War the institutions of civil society have been in steep decline. People, it seems, just don't join churches, trade unions and political parties anymore. Perhaps they are too busy, or rely on more passive forms of activity like cafes, cinemas, museums and sports arenas, to fill their leisure time. Yet remarkably those years have also been the heyday of Victorian local history. While churches, football clubs, supermarkets and municipalities have been merging, downsizing or dying, history and heritage, it seems, have prospered as never before. Only twenty of the 323 historical associations affiliated with the RHSV were founded before 1960, and only 84 (26 per cent) before 1970; all the rest are creations of the past 45 years. Here, in response to the editor's invitation, are some reflections and speculations on that list.

From the late nineteenth century, older residents began to form associations to celebrate their communities' achievements by listing notable pioneers of the district and preserving historical records. As Helen Doyle notes in a penetrating study of popular historical activity in Victoria, the first historical societies often sprang up in towns that were declining rather than growing. Sometimes they were founded after 'back-tos' when old residents returned to relieve the town's better days. The goldfields, the first communities to feel the impact of population decline, were also the first to establish societies, like Castlemaine's Pioneers (1880), to preserve their history. Forty years before the foundation of Ballarat's Historical Society (1933) its Australian Historical Record Society (1896) was 'preserving records relating to the gold-mining era and later civic development'. Bendigo's Historical Society (1935), founded two years after Ballarat's, had more ambitious aims, including a museum, investigations of local topography, marking places of historical interest, compiling a register of early residents of the town and a study of 'the aboriginal races and their history'. In more recently settled parts of the state, the passing of the pioneer generation, and the conscious shift from memory to history, did not occur until the early twentieth century. 'It would be a good idea to establish a historical society as the deaths

of the older people of the district removed events held in their memory', a supporter of a Horsham Historical Society (1956) observed in 1951.

The first postwar societies began in towns and suburbs with strong connections to the early history of the colony like Geelong (1944), Colac (1950), Williamstown (1956), Kyneton (1951), Kew (1958) and Camperdown (1960). From twelve in the 1950s, the number of societies increased rapidly during the 1960s, peaking in 1965 (13). Of the 72 formed during the decade, the majority (59) were in non-metropolitan Victoria where many communities were feeling the impact of radio, telephones, television and the motor car on local autonomy. The wool and wheat booms of the 1950s had been good times for rural Victoria, but in the 1960s the shift of population to the metropolis accelerated. Sometimes the founding of a new society was stimulated by the publication of a local history, such as Weston Bate's *Brighton* (1963) or Geoffrey Blainey's *Camberwell* (1963, society formed 1964) or the effort to conserve a local landmark. Surprisingly, the rate of growth declined slightly in the 1970s (49), a decade when heritage consciousness, symbolized by the passage of the state's first heritage legislation, also grew strongly. In the countryside and outer suburbs, local history often preceded heritage effort, while in the inner city it was often the other way about. The formation of historical societies in Richmond (1972), Prahran (1974), Brunswick (1985), Fitzroy (1986), Port Melbourne (1993) and Carlton (2007) followed only after a decade of heritage struggles by residents' associations. History, on the whole, was older folks' business, heritage often a cause for younger professionals. By the 1980s and 90s, some societies adopted the titles 'historical and conservation' or 'historical and genealogical' and preferred the more informal titles 'group' 'centre', 'project' or 'friends'.

In the 1970s and 1980s history often became a weapon for community defence. In my own suburb, Surrey Hills, the 'History Nook' was formed in response to the threat of a 1978 road diversion that would have split the neighbourhood

in two. Many local historical societies enjoyed the patronage of municipal councils, which often provided room for meeting and libraries. The round of council amalgamations initiated by the Kennett Government in the 1990s weakened the nexus between local history and local government: but instead of merging along with their local councils, the historical societies became more localised, perhaps in defence of identities and interests in danger of being swamped by larger sub-metropolitan ones. Boroondara, once home to Kew (1958), Camberwell (1963) and Hawthorn (1974) societies, now boasts Surrey Hills (1978), Canterbury (1986) and Balwyn (2008) societies as well. In country Victoria newer societies were more likely to omit the phrase 'and District' from their titles.

While old, middle class suburbs may have led the local historical movement in the 1960s, its subsequent spread defies age, class or regional lines. There are long-established societies in relatively 'new' working class or lower middle suburbs like Moorabbin (1960), Altona (1961), Chelsea (1963) and Mordialloc (1963), while history did not arrive in some well-established suburbs, like Malvern (1973), Hawthorn (1974) East Melbourne (1999) for another decade or two. The reproduction rate of historical societies, which peaked in the 1960s, stabilized in the 1970s and 80s and slowed in the 1990s (40 additions) and noughties (28). By then, it was hard to find a town or suburb without its own historical society, although some no doubt are more vigorously alive than others.

## References

For further discussion of these issues see my 'Community: The Uses of Local History' in *The Use and Abuse of Australian History*, Allen and Unwin 2000; 'Fifty Years of Victorian Local History', *Victorian Historical Journal*, Vol. 84, No. 1, June 2013, pp. 120-138. and Helen Doyle, 'Local history and decline in country Victoria' in Graeme Davison and Marc Brodie (eds.), *Struggle Country: The Rural Ideal in Twentieth Century Australia*, Monash University Publishing 2005.

Graeme Davison



## Local Government & Cultural Collections

There are at least 43 million artefacts or artworks in the 1000 or more collections that make up Victoria's 'Distributed State Collection', according to a recent report on Local Government and Cultural Collections. That is a very large number of cultural objects. A 'critical segment' of this collection is apparently managed by the 79 local councils surveyed by Museums Australia (Victoria) for this report, although we are not told what this amounts to in actual collection size. Local collections range across a wide spectrum of cultural material, from fine art to natural history, from Aboriginal cultural material to the artefacts of diverse settler societies, and the challenges local councils face in caring for them vary accordingly. This report aims to provide the evidence base for recommendations to improve the management of these collections into the future. As such it should be welcomed.

For those of us working with historical collections this latest report contains few surprises. Responses from the council officers surveyed confirm that local government invests most of its limited resources in the management of art collections. Although about half also manage local history collections, most do so by providing indirect assistance

to voluntary community groups. This ranges from (relatively few) paid staff members, to the (much more common) provision of premises for local history or local museum collections. Some councils also provide assistance with utilities costs or building maintenance.

The problems identified for the long-term care of these collections is depressingly familiar. It has been highlighted by every enquiry into the wider museum/collections sector since the Pigott Report in 1975. Issues include the provision of appropriate training, succession planning in volunteer organisations, and access to expert advice, but it is probably summed up by the general frustration at the 'lack of external funding available to community collecting groups'. By comparison with the funding sources available to fund art projects, the funding sources for anything associated with history are woefully meagre.

Let's hope that this report can begin to redress the balance a bit.

*Margaret Anderson*

*Margaret is a past Chair of the Council of Australian Museum Directors, and CEO of History SA. She is currently Manager of Old Treasury Building and an RHSV Councillor.*

## Historic home demolished

Another historic home demolished: Forres, 3 Edward Street, Kew, on Thursday 28 July 2016 (report in that day's *Herald-Sun*). The Director of Heritage Victoria had recommended against inclusion on the state register in 2005; this assessment had apparently not been updated or challenged.

Forres was a Federation style mansion once typical of many Melbourne suburbs but now an endangered species. The RHSV has repeatedly called for a more proactive planning system, which includes heritage with aspects of neighbourhood character and provides state protection for historic precincts. Now, unless a building is of 'statewide significance', its only protection will be a Council Heritage Overlay. These are very weak and generally don't include streetscape and open space issues; Forres was set on a splendid garden with great canopy trees and a lawn tennis court.

By a sad coincidence, the Forres site lies just around the corner from the rubble of the Whitlam House, demolished two months earlier (on Friday, 13 May; see *History News*, February 2016). As all too often, no architectural features were recycled. Locals saved some Wunderlich terracotta roof tiles, as they had done two months earlier with some Marseille terra cotta roof tiles from the Whitlam House.

No application for a planning permit has yet been submitted. Will Forres be replaced by a Mc Mansion in French Chateau or faux Georgian?

*Charles Soverwine, based on reporting by Julianne Bell, Protector of Public Lands (jbell5@bigpond.com for further information)*



Forres, 3 Edward Street, Kew, 29 July 2016. Photo Protectors of Public Lands

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FROM THE CASTLEMAINE DIGGINGS TO TOORAK

FROM APPLES ... TO COFFEE

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## AROUND THE SOCIETIES

Societies are welcome to submit an article/event of around 50 words, or send your newsletter to us and we will write up 50 words or so for you twice per year.

For the 15 November 2016 issue, please send details to:

office@historyvictoria.org.au

by 17 October 2016.

Volunteer *Helen Boak* on behalf of the History Victoria Support Group.

**ANGLESEA:** We are fortunate that Keith Cecil made cutting books of all *Geelong Advertisers*. He cut out any article pertaining to Anglesea. His family donated these books dating back over 100 years to the Historical Society. They are filed for research by anyone who wishes to use them.

**BELLARINE:** We recently celebrated our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 1976 – 2016. The original public meeting was held in Drysdale with 60 interested people. In 1977 the Shire granted us exclusive use of the Court House for a Museum and we are still here. If you have any additions for us contact: pie23513@bigpond.net.au .

**BENDIGO:** You are welcome to attend our Monthly Meeting on October 7, to be held at the Bendigo TAFE Theatre at 2pm. The speaker will be Val Beckwith on “Bendigo Chinese”. While you’re in Bendigo come in to Specimen Cottage for a chat and a cup of afternoon tea – you will find us in Hargreaves Street.

**BOOROONDARA (KEW):** A date for the Diary: reserve the date October 26, 2016. We are celebrating our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and invite all past and present members to celebrate with us at a special dinner. Don Garden will be our speaker. For further information contact info@fobkc.org .

**BRUNSWICK:** The Community History Group are hosting a talk on ‘The Steam Rail Story’ by Michael McGlade on Saturday 3 December from 1.30pm to 3.30pm. Further information is available from Francesca at the Brunswick Community History Group on 9387 1194. Ian Douglas will speak on “An Armchair Tour of the Shrine of Remembrance” on 5 November.

**CAMPERDOWN:** Excellent signs explaining our historical buildings and monuments are going up around the town. Start your information gathering at the Clock Tower in the centre of Camperdown. The signs have also received lots of views as we have posted them on Facebook as well. A great initiative.

**CAMBERWELL** Our guest speaker on Tuesday 25 October will be Chris Long (Film of the 19th and 20th Centuries) and on Tuesday 22 November the speaker will be Jenny Brown (Strange Tales and True from Melbourne’s History). Meetings commence at 8pm and further information can be obtained on 9885 9927 or at www.chs.org.au .

**CARISBROOK:** Long Swamp is the only deep freshwater marsh on the Moolort Plains

and is located about two kilometres east of Tullaropp Reservoir. It will be managed as a conservation reserve and be a highlight of the district. The swamp has historical significance for our indigenous people and is expected to become a haven for birds.

**CARLTON:** The latest edition of Carlton Community History Group’s newsletter (available at www.cchg.asn.au ) features details of forthcoming historical walks in Carlton. It also has a series of short articles on the sporting and recreational activities of people in Carlton in the past, including cycle racing and roller-skating as well as of course football.

**CASTLEMAINE PIONEERS:** A recent talk by the owners and renovators of “Crively” a home in Middle Hall Street exposed the gems that had been stored away when the house was “modernised!”; they have been repaired and reinstated. The other great finds were articles found hidden in walls, cupboards, under lino and in the garden.

**CHELSEA:** We recently entertained Cubs from the Districts Scout Troop with artefacts relevant to them. These included a meat safe, railway flag and lamp used to stop the trains, model of a dunny and of course the newspaper cut into squares! There were also photos of a Coolgardie safe, fire stove and other interesting information.

**CHELTENHAM CEMETERY:** Join us for our “Children of the Cemetery” Tour on Sunday, 23 October 2016 at 2pm. Sue Beazley presents on the life, illnesses and dangers children faced. The tour will be heartfelt and engaging as Sue is a sympathetic story teller. Meet inside the gate of Cheltenham Pioneer Cemetery, Charman Road, Cost: \$12 Non-members. Book: info@focrc.org

**COLLINGWOOD:** We have launched our latest online database: Notables of Collingwood. This consists of fully searchable and illustrated biographies of people from many walks of life, including early settlers Georgiana McCrae, James Simpson and John Pascoe Fawkner; artists May Vale and John Gilfillan; VC winner William Ruthven, and Australiana authority Edward Petherick. Website: collingwoodhs.org.au

**FITZROY:** During the National Trust Heritage Festival we organised a walk of significant sites in Fitzroy. The walk started on the corner of Victoria Parade and George Street where the Fitzroy Bowling Club once stood. Other sites viewed were Dr Heffernan’s house, now part of the Catholic University, Uxbridge House, Larcher’s Dairy and the Fitzroy Stadium.

**FLINDERS:** Shoreham Progress Association formed in 1948. Its purpose was to promote the welfare of the community, to improve public utilities, to obtain a public hall and library, ensure the provision of recreational facilities, to provide public dressing sheds on the beach and to protect and preserve the natural beauty of the foreshore. All items still relevant today.

**GEELONG:** Our speaker for 2 November will be Claudette Brennan on ‘The History of Sisters of Mercy in Geelong’. Lectures are held at Church of Christ Hall, 275 Latrobe Terrace, Geelong at 8 pm on the first Wednesday of the month, followed by a supper. We welcome members and the community to attend.

**GOLDFIELDS:** An unusual silver medallion has been donated to the Dunolly Museum. It is dated 1889 and was presented by the Dunolly branch of the Amalgamated Miners Association to A. Taylor. Presumed to be Alfred Taylor of Bromley, an engine driver probably at the Burnt Creek Mine. Anyone with information please contact: PO Box 50 Dunolly Vic 3472

**GOLF SOCIETY:** Golf historian John Lovell has donated 96 golf books including several club histories, significant golf magazines, and various research papers to us for research. Our next Golf Historians Forum will be held at the Royal Melbourne Golf Club on October 10; for further information contact: 0418 101 374.

**HEALESVILLE:** The Healesville Primary School is preparing to celebrate its 150th Anniversary in 2016. The original building was probably one room made of split palings including the roof, with no desks! We are sure there are many former pupils who will be interested in this event. For more information contact the historical society at www.healesvillehistorical.websyte.com.au/

**KNOX:** The photographic collection of Agnes Nestor, professional photographer and artist, has been given to Knox Historical Society. The photographs are of Ferntree Gully and large parts of Melbourne. Among the earliest photos are the scenes of the Dandenongs and riding Puffing Billy in 1923. The collection will be digitized by the State Library of Victoria for all to see.

**KOROIT:** The Moyne Shire Council recently installed picture rails for us, so we have been busy hanging many of our great photographs and certificates in our rooms. The Society’s rooms and museum at the Common School, Victoria Park in High Street are open on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday each month from 1pm to 4 pm; do come and visit.

**MECHANICS:** The preservation of Institutes around Victoria is an ongoing concern. The Williamstown Mechanics Institute and main museum is to benefit from a significant renovation project by the Hobsons Bay City Council. Given the area’s maritime, shipbuilding and military significance it holds a key Victorian heritage collection. Information: Mechanics’ Institute of Victoria , 9510 3393.

**MOE:** In April 2016 Moe City Ford closed its doors and thus marked the end of about a century of retailing new cars in Moe. If anyone has memories, photos or paperwork to share of their motoring days and the dealerships in Moe we would like to hear from you. Contact: moehist@telstra.com or Phone Rooms: 51 276 624

*continued over page*



**MORDIALLOC:** Inviting students from local schools to our museum is an important assignment taken on by our volunteers. It is a delight and a challenge and always rewarding. The students are bright with enquiring minds and display a great interest in our history. We anticipate inviting local schools to become members of our Society.

**NEWSTEAD:** We will be holding an exhibition at the recently opened old railway station in Newstead on Saturday October 29 to November 1 (Cup Day) and then the following weekend, November 5 and 6. The theme of the display is "Newstead Then and Now" Everyone invited to come and enjoy. Enquiries: 0438 771 744

**PLENTY:** If you live in the Plenty area and have an interest in history please become a member of our Historical Society. Established in 2001, we have an excellent record of achievements, a friendly team of volunteers and are looking to increase our membership. Contact: kerlan@iinet.net.au or phone 9435 9117

**RINGWOOD:** We are currently working on the ANZAC Commemorative Naming Project in conjunction with the RSL. There will be meetings to see if any parks, streets or other features can be renamed in honour of our ANZACs. This State-wide project has been instigated by the Department of Environment and Primary Industries. Contact: president@rhs.org.au

**ROCHESTER:** We are open at the Museum on Wednesday and Friday mornings 9am to 12 noon and have an interesting display as well as books for sale. The book titles range includes *Drivers of the Outback*, *Teams of the Black Soil Plains*, *Covered with Dust & Troubled with Mud*. Visitors are most welcome. Contact: 0498 058 956

**SALVATION ARMY:** "Telling Stories" is an on-going commitment to the gathering and preservation of memories of people who have been engaged in the life of the Army. The story and experiences of both soldiers and officers are sought via video and audio recordings. Members can nominate individuals who could be subjects of this project. Contact: kimberley.walsh@hotmail.com .

**ST KILDA CEMETERY:** Recent information received on our "residents" includes Arthur Tilley, a soap manufacturer whose business of Tilley Soaps continues today, and Frances Higgins, a landscape gardener and honorary secretary of the United Council for Woman Suffrage. If you have a contribution to make on a relative residing in St Kilda Cemetery we welcome information. Contact: info@foskc.org .

**SUNSHINE:** May 21 was the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the passing of Sunshine's founding father and industrialist Hugh Victor McKay. As a teenager he set out to invent an implement to lessen the hardship of farming. He patented his harvester in 1885, successfully commercialising his invention. His vision for Sunshine included donations to establish the Gardens and the Presbyterian Church, and land and money to establish the Technical School.

**WARRANTYTE:** To celebrate our 40 years anniversary we held a School Poster Colouring Competition. It is a great way of involving younger members of the community in celebrating history. The High School students were asked to design outline posters for each of the different grade levels of the Primary Schools. Students in those grades then coloured the posters.

**WARRNAMBOOL:** In preparing a case for complete restoration of the Pioneers Board we need to identify the artist who painted the watercolour portraits and the lithographer who produced the Warrnambool scenes. If you have any information contact: welsford@hotmail.net.au . A professional researcher will prepare our submission for the necessary funds.

**WAVERLEY:** Do you remember a fuchsia nursery in Ferntree Gully Road opposite Kevin Street? The main nursery was in Elizabeth Street behind, customers drove up a steep drive and then turned sharp left to behold a colourful display. Does anyone know who owned it or anything else about it? Contact: PO Box 2322 Mt Waverley 3149

**WESTERN VICTORIA:** The new web site address for the group is wvahs.com.au. Within the site is a section called "Links" with some useful and interesting website links, a great initiative. There is also some teaching skills information on Parish Plans and Adoption Records in the latest newsletter; some older ones are online.

**WILLIAMSTOWN:** The Hobsons Bay Council through the Mayoral program has begun rolling out heritage street signs with the history behind the street names. The stories behind the names can be found on the Hobsons Bay website: [www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/documents/pdfs/experience-hobsons-bay/arts/street-signs-pdf-for-web.pdf](http://www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/documents/pdfs/experience-hobsons-bay/arts/street-signs-pdf-for-web.pdf) .

**WOADYYALOK:** The Smythesdale Country Market is on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of every month, except January, at the Historic Police Precinct from 9.00 am to 1 p.m. You can purchase books, bric-a-brac, sausages or Devonshire teas. The stables, lockup and gallows are open during the market. Do come and visit us. Contact: w y h s @ v i c . chariot.net.au .

**YARRA GLEN:** The speed with which our neighbourhood has changed is highlighted by recalling that until recently there were lots of paddocks in and around Yarra Glen. One hundred and fifty years after the Ryries first settled at Yering, the local population was just over 500. In the following twenty-five years it increased to over 2000. What will the latest census tell us?

## Newstead Then and Now Exhibition

mArts Hub, Newstead Railway Station

### OPENING TIMES

10 am – 4 pm

Saturday 29 October, Sunday 30 October, Monday 31 October

Tuesday 1 November, Saturday 5 November, Sunday 6 November

### OFFICIAL OPENING

5 pm Saturday 29 October

Don Garden President of RHSV will speak on the role of historical societies in our community.

The Newstead and District Historical Society has put this exhibition together. See what Newstead used to look like compared to what it is today.

Members will be available on all opening days to answer questions about the history of the area.

Booklets of the exhibition will be on sale.



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# THE MELBOURNE MANSION (Part 2)

The servants who were essential to the running of a complex household were a perennial problem because of the independent attitudes which the gold rushes had encouraged in the working classes. Many households had only female servants, or had only one or two male servants, such as a groom or gardener, who did not live in. But where both sexes lived in, an invariable principle was to keep them apart, the females in upstairs or attic rooms, and the males in a coachhouse or other detached building. Few houses had a servants' hall such as was common in England, and it seems that most used the kitchen as their common space.

Servants were summoned by a bell, which had a rotating handle connected to a wire which passed up the wall to the ceiling, where it was fixed to a crank which changed the motion into a horizontal direction, and then to another crank which took a wire down the bellboard. Here there was a row of bells of different pitch, which enabled the servant to tell which room had called, especially as the bell continued to vibrate for a time. After the 1870s the servants' bells and front door bell might be electrical rather than mechanical, working off batteries (as reticulated electricity was still in the future).

Wavenhoe, a moderately sized house in St Kilda, is a good example. Eight bells in the ground floor reception rooms were connected to the bellboard on the east side, but there were none in the upstairs bedrooms. In the drawing room and some others there were bells on either side of the fireplace, for the master and the mistress. At a later date the two manual bells in the study, at the north-west corner, were replaced with more modern electric ones.

Wavenhoe also has two header tanks in the roof space, which might seem surprising given that the house was connected from the outset to the Yan Yean water supply. But the Yan Yean supply had begun to prove inadequate during the later 1860s, not just because of the number of consumers but because businesses were operating goods lifts and other hydraulic equipment directly off mains pressure, which meant the water used each time drained away and was wasted. The pressure was better at night, and it might be possible to fill the header tank with water for use during the day, but in a two storey house on high ground it might be necessary to pump water up the tank. Many of the towers of larger mansions were not simply ornamental, for they held such tanks.

There were two major options for sanitation, the cesspit and the nightcart. The cesspit was an underground brick tank which was supposed to be lined with cement to

make it totally waterproof. The waste was collected in it and pumped out at intervals, in the case of the City of Melbourne by council contractors. Less responsible owners might build the pit with open joints, allowing the liquid component to leach out into the adjoining soil. As this liquid was not purified, as it is in a modern septic tank, it was seriously unhealthy, and in an urban situation it might find its way into neighbouring basements.

The nightcart was generally regarded as the better option. In this case the closet was built against the rear or side property boundary and provided with a hatch through which the pan could be removed and replaced from outside. This pan would become very unpleasant over time, and hence the two pan system, in which the pan was totally removed and replaced by a clean one, was much preferred.

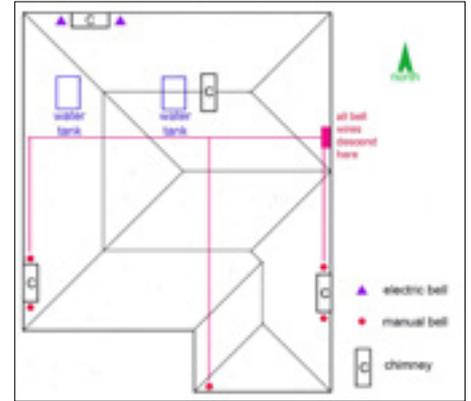
A third option was the earth closet, used largely in institutions such as hospitals, but also in some large houses such as Rippon Lea. A hopper of ashes or pulverised earth discharged a set quantity each time the pan was used. Sometimes this earth was sifted and re-used a number of times before being recycled for sale as 'patent guano' or fertiliser. There are no known surviving examples in Melbourne but, oddly, a closet and its instructions for servicing by the Melbourne nightman, Theophilus Draper, survives at Werris Creek, New South Wales (though in this location it was certainly not serviced by Draper).

Most houses in Melbourne tended to be in the Italianate or Renaissance tradition, in contrast to Sydney where many more are in Gothic or cognate styles. This can credibly be attributed to snobbery and the influence of Government House. Sydney had a Gothic Government house, whereas Melbourne's first was Toorak House, leased from private owners for Governor Hotham and his successors, and this was superseded by the present purpose-built Government House in 1878. The first was Italianate and the second was a picturesque version of the Renaissance Revival.

## Fashion was a major consideration

Of course the rich regularly altered and added to their houses, as they do today, though it was then ballrooms, billiard rooms and conservatories, not home theatres, indoor pools and gymnasiums. But much more prevalent than today was the complete makeover in form and style. Many of Melbourne's larger mansions such as the Villa Alba and Labassa contain the fossilised remnants of one or more earlier forms.

Continuing the fascinating history of Melbourne's mansions from Part 1 in the July issue of *History News*.



**D S Campbell's Victorian earth closet: patent drawing: Victorian Patent 136, Daniel Stodhart Campbell, 1864.**

A dramatic example was the house Bracknell, in Lansell Road, Toorak, built to the design of W H Ellerker & Co in 1882 for [Sir] Matthew Davies (1850-1912), solicitor, land boom banker, and Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. Within five years it was massively transformed by the architects Smith & Johnson, who replaced the verandah and balcony with arcaded loggias, added a balustraded parapet to the edge of the roof, formalised the main tower, and added a smaller clock tower. But Davies was not to enjoy it for long, as his financial affairs unravelled in 1892, and in January 1893 he was briefly imprisoned for conspiracy to defraud. In March 1893 the house was put up for sale by the mortgagees (apparently unsuccessfully). It lay vacant until it was bought by the rich widow, Mrs Silas Harding, at the end of 1894. She changed its name to 'The Towers', but enjoyed it for even less time than Davies, because she was killed in a buggy accident early in 1897. The house was demolished in 1927.

In fact the great days of the mansion had ended by 1891. Building virtually ceased for a decade, and some projects already under way were left an unfinished state, or even demolished. Edward Mitchell's Fanecourt in East Melbourne was built in 1891 to half the size originally proposed by the architect. Many houses were left vacant for years, or occupied only by a caretaker (for some reason their occupants are commonly described in directories as 'storeman'). J B Cooper writes evocatively of Valentias, built for John Mark Davies, eldest brother of Matthew:

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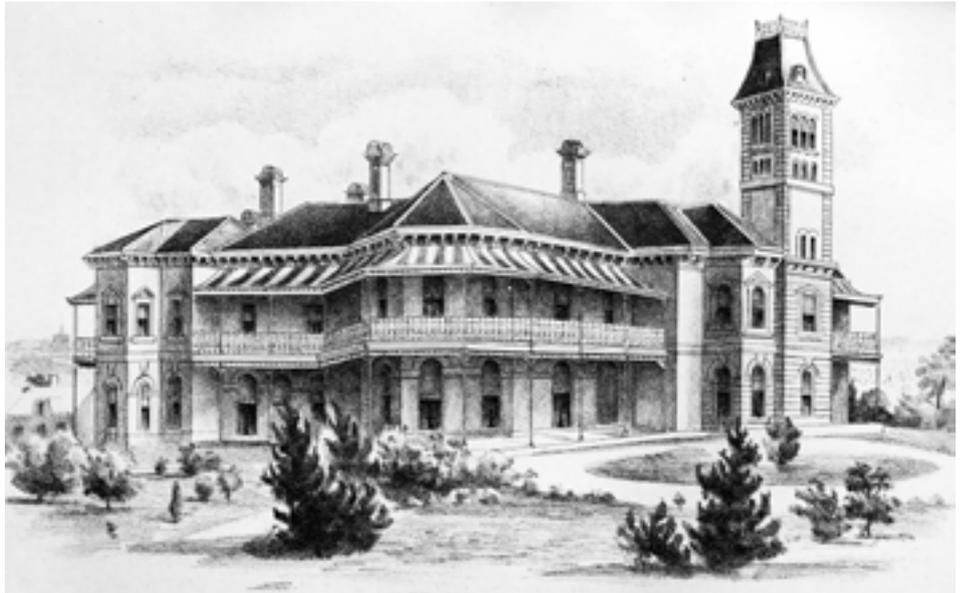
## THE MELBOURNE MANSION (Part 2)

The house ... stood in the north-east corner of a paddock overrun with heath, ericas and bracken, and enclosed by a broken and old post and rail fence. Verandahs were only half built, tiles and flags were wanted. Large rooms, lacking blinds to their windows, gaped with emptiness, their floors covered with plaster dirt, and other disorder. Apparently no one lived in the mansion, so far as we could judge from the building's desolated appearance ... Its builder [Davies] did for a time live in the back rooms that were made habitable.<sup>1</sup>

Building did ultimately resume, and examples such as 'Kildrum', St George's Road, Toorak of 1902 and 'Grong Grong', Toorak Road, of 1907, can certainly be described as mansions, but their number was far exceeded by those being demolished for subdivision, turned into boarding houses, or more substantially converted into flats. Most of them today are recalled, if at all, only in the name of a street subdivided out of their estate or a block of flats which stands on the site.

1. J B Cooper. *The History of Malvern from its First Settlement to a City* (Melbourne 1935), p 184.

*Miles Lewis.*



**'Bracknell', Lansell Rad, Toorak by W H Ellerker & Co for Matthew Davies, 1882; T W H Leavitt & W D Lilburn [eds], *The Jubilee History of Victoria and Melbourne* (2 vols, Duffus Bros, Melbourne 1888), vol I, part 4.**

**The Towers formerly Bracknell, corner of Lansell Road and St Georges Road Toorak, December 1895, watercolour with ink, Alfred Louis Smith** Courtesy State Library of Victoria H2009.198

