

# VICTORIAN HISTORICAL JOURNAL



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ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA

VICTORIAN  
HISTORICAL  
JOURNAL



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Front Cover: Alfred and Ellen Waugh arrive at the Amsterdam Town Hall with Uiver bronze statuette for presentation to the burgemeester of Amsterdam, Willem de Vlucht, 15 August 1935, published in *De Telegraaf*, 16 August 1935, p. 3 (Courtesy AlburyCity Collection)



**CREATIVE  
VICTORIA**



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VOLUME 89, NUMBER 2  
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## ARTICLES

- Introduction 205  
*Judith Smart and Richard Broome*
- Joan Hunt and the Local History Movement in Victoria 209  
*Bill Russell*
- History and Heritage: The Inaugural Weston Bate Oration 214  
*Stuart Macintyre*
- The Uiver: Memory Creation, Loss and Recovery 227  
*Noel Jackling*
- Turning the Screw: The 1916 Victorian Campaign for Conscriptioin 253  
*John Lack*
- Melba's Gift Book: Fund-raising, Propaganda and Australian Identity in  
World War I 283  
*Lucy Bracey*
- A Place of Hope? Family Life and Post-war Refugee Experience in Somers  
Migrant Holding Centre 304  
*Sandra Sutcliffe*
- Amelia Carey White—Her Book, Her Life: Victoria, October 1852 to November 1859 325  
*Marion Amies*

## HISTORICAL NOTES

- Dendy's Brighton Plan: Questions, Conjectures and Insights 347  
*Mike Scott*
- Joseph Raleigh: 'a new course of life' and Some Street Names 360  
*John Daniels*

## REVIEWS

Pompey Elliott at War: In His Own Words. By Ross McMullin <i>Lucas Jordan</i>	371
Stealth Raiders: A Few Daring Men in 1918. By Lucas Jordan <i>Carolyn Holbrook</i>	373
La Trobe: Traveller, Writer, Governor. By John Barnes <i>Richard Broome</i>	376
From the Margins to the Mainstream: The Domestic Violence Services Movement in Victoria, Australia, 1974–2016. By Jacqui Theobald and Suellen Murray with Judith Smart <i>Shurlee Swain</i>	378
Returning the Kulkyne. By John Burch <i>Richard Broome</i>	381
Can You Hear the Sea? My Grandmother’s Story. By Brenda Niall <i>Marian Quartly</i>	383
Understanding Our Natural World: The Field Naturalists Club of Victoria 1880–2015. By Gary Presland <i>Andrea Gaynor</i>	385
Cazaly: The Legend. By Robert Allen The Game of Their Lives. By Nick Richardson <i>Peter Burke</i>	387
‘A Secondary Education for All’?: A History of State Secondary Schooling in Victoria. By John Andrews and Deborah Towns <i>Cheryl Griffin</i>	391
Granville Stapylton Australia Felix 1836: Second in Command to Major Mitchell. By Gregory C. Eccleston <i>John Burch</i>	393
Notes on Contributors	396
About the Royal Historical Society of Victoria	400
Guidelines for Contributors	401



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To honour John D. Adams (1935–2015) FRHSV, Councillor (1966–2005), and to use his bequest of \$10,000 to the RHSV in an appropriate manner, the RHSV has created a biennial prize. Since John Adams, a lecturer in Librarianship at RMIT for 27 years, was also the honorary indexer of the *Victorian Historical Journal*, indexing it for the years 1954–2013, the prize will be for the best article or historical note in the journal over a two-year period, commencing with Issues 287–290 (2017 and 2018).

The following terms apply to the prize:

- This biennial prize will be awarded for the best article or historical note on Victorian history in the four *VHJ* issues over two calendar years, beginning 2017–18.
- The prize will be awarded for an article or historical note that illuminates a significant element of Victoria's history, is clearly and succinctly written, and is researched from original material.
- Members of the RHSV Publications Committee are ineligible for the award.
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- A short list of five articles will be compiled by the *VHJ* editors active in the prize period.
- Short-listing will occur at the end of each two-year period, beginning in December 2018.
- Two judges will be chosen by the Publications Committee from academic and community historians and will report to the Committee by the following April.
- The John Adams Prize will be presented biennially at the RHSV AGM following its judging and will be announced in the ensuing June issues of the *VHJ* and *History News*.

Richard Broome, Chair, RHSV Publications Committee

## Introduction

*Judith Smart and Richard Broome*

The articles in this issue of the *Victorian Historical Journal* span heritage and memory, patriotic fundraising and the pro-conscription campaign during World War I, post-World War II refugee experiences, and the recollections of a regimental officer's wife in the 1850s. Two historical notes focus on early Melbourne—one on 1840s businessman and merchant Joseph Raleigh, the other on Brighton's unique street plan of 1841. We pay special homage, too, to Dr Joan Hunt and her major contribution to community history.

We begin with Bill Russell's tribute to Dr Hunt, delivered at her memorial service in Ballarat on 20 September this year, and emphasising her key role in the local heritage and community history movements throughout Victoria. While Joan's main focus was the Ballarat and Central Highlands region, she also 'travelled from one end of the state to the other, organising meetings and seminars, talking and communicating, and providing a backbone of good relations among hundreds if not thousands of heritage-minded people across Victoria'. She is irreplaceable but her memory and legacy will endure.

The RHSV was privileged this year to hear Professor Stuart Macintyre deliver the society's Inaugural Weston Bate Oration, published here as 'History and Heritage'. Since 2015 Professor Macintyre has chaired Victoria's Heritage Council, the body responsible for adding places to the state's Heritage Register working in conjunction with Heritage Victoria, a branch of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. His focus for this lecture was the limitations of the Heritage Council's powers in relation to local heritage. He also noted 'the disparity between resources available for places on the VHR and those included in local heritage overlays'; 'the need for greater capacity at the local level'; and the desirability of 'a review of the arrangements for local heritage'. Public surveys, he noted, have identified the preservation of local buildings and landmarks as the major popular heritage concern.

In his article on 'The Uiver', Noel Jackling explores the process of 'Memory Creation, Loss and Recovery' arising from the role of the Albury community in ensuring the safe landing and extraction from

mud of a Dutch DC-2 aeroplane, known as the 'Uiver' or 'Stork', in the early morning of 24 October 1934. Jackling traces the ensuing relationship between Albury and Amsterdam as both cities raised funds for and exchanged memorials. He also follows the fading from memory of these events and the loss of the memorial statuettes themselves in subsequent decades, until his own interest in the original story prompted him to seek out and recover the lost objects. In doing so he restored a sense of shared cultural heritage between an Australian rural community and the Netherlands.

The next two articles deal with aspects of pro-war patriotic activism in Victoria during the First World War. John Lack, in 'Turning the Screw: The 1916 Victorian Campaign for Conscription', seeks to redress the lack of detailed research into the pro-conscription crusade by tracking the extensive municipal activism evident throughout the state from early 1916 and the involvement of the Australian Natives' Association in the campaign at both local and state levels. Lucy Bracey's article, 'Melba's Gift Book: Fundraising, Propaganda and Australian Identity in World War I', is also concerned with pro-war propaganda, specifically the role of Nellie Melba in mobilising Australian writers and artists to assist the war effort by contributing items to a gift book, a commonly used means of raising funds. Bracey goes on to examine the practicalities of creating the gift book and organising its publication and sales, as well as discussing the insights it provides into largely conservative forms of national identity and purpose.

Sandra Sutcliffe presents a positive view of the treatment of post-war Displaced Persons in Australia, contrary to some other historians. In her article 'A Place of Hope? Family Life and Post-war Refugee Experience in Somers Migrant Holding Centre', Sutcliffe argues from oral and archival evidence that those who came as family groups were generally treated kindly in a form of 'constrained compassion'. This stance by government helped families adjust to a new way of life in a secure and pleasant environment while their menfolk worked for two years in assigned employment near enough to visit at weekends.

The final article, by Marion Amies, expands on her previous work, which established Amelia Carey White, the wife of a 40th Regiment officer, as the author of *Social Life and Manners in Australia: Being Notes of Eight Years Experience*, focusing on Victoria from 1852 to late 1859. Amies details here some events and issues of importance to Amelia,

relates previously untold parts of her story and looks briefly at Amelia's life after the family returned to Ireland.

The 'Historical Notes' section of the journal begins with Mike Scott's analysis of and reflections on the Brighton Estate plan prepared by H.B. Foot for Henry Dendy in the earliest years of Victoria's settlement. Scott poses questions, posits conjectures, and offers a few insights, into the rationale and execution of the plan. He argues that it has 'several unusual characteristics' that 'render it unique in the history of Victoria's town planning', with 'its skewed grid and a formal design of semi-circular crescents'. In the second note, John Daniels further pursues his interest in undiscovered, untold early Melbourne history in an examination of the career of Joseph Raleigh, whose business and social interests made a significant contribution to Melbourne's development between his arrival in 1843 and his death in 1852.

Finally, the reviews section of the journal contains discussions of eleven new books ranging in subject matter from World War I to field naturalists, domestic violence services, Mallee history, secondary schools and football. These works and the range of articles and notes included in this issue of the journal reflect the depth and breadth of current research into Victoria's past. We hope you enjoy reading and reflecting on them.



**Joan Hunt**

We remember and celebrate a very special, loved and valued member of our various communities.

## Joan Hunt and the Local History Movement in Victoria<sup>\*</sup>

*Bill Russell*

I am very pleased to have the opportunity today to pay tribute to Joan Hunt. Joan was a great friend and a versatile, talented, warm, open and friendly person: a pleasure to know. And a tower of strength to local heritage in all its forms.

I met Joan on the Council of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria during a period when I served as president and she as vice president, with the particular attached role of convenor of the History Victoria Support Group. As anyone who has been on a committee knows (and we've all been on one or two of them), it makes a big difference to have people on it who are open-minded, positive and constructive. It makes committee work a pleasure not a pain. Joan was always that positive sort of person—a valuable contributor to decision making, a person confident to challenge when mistakes were about to be made, and one who delivered her own contribution above and beyond what could be expected.

This peculiarly named History Victoria Support Group was a case in point. The RHSV is not just another historical society; it is also a peak group, with 340 affiliated societies coming from every part of Victoria and quite a few specialist groups. Establishing a constructive relationship between them and the peak body has not always been a successful venture—sometimes the affiliates have been disappointed or, dare I say it, disaffected. Sometimes the peak body has not quite known what to do with its affiliates.

Joan did know what to do about this. She knew and loved local history, having had grandfathers who plied her with tales of the past, one from the bush at Alexandra and the other who had been a gripman on the Melbourne cable tram system.<sup>1</sup> She had run, belonged to and had helped establish, a range of historical and genealogical societies.

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\* This appreciation of Joan Hunt's contribution to community history was presented on the occasion of the celebration of Joan's life held in the Ballarat Mechanics' Institute on 20 September 2018.

She lived in the regions and was a born teacher and communicator. As early as 1973 she had been secretary of Dandenong Historical Society. That year, Joan and husband Gary moved to Smythesdale, where Joan taught at Ross Creek State School No. 803 until 1991, using innovative psycho-linguistic methods to teach children writing, listening and literacy skills. She also wrote the local history, *Forest and Field: A History of Ross Creek 1840–1990*.<sup>2</sup> And she taught Japanese to pupils at three other local schools as well!

Joan subsequently became president of Ballarat Historical Society and a long-serving chair of the Ballarat and District Genealogical Society, as well as co-founding (with Peter Mansfield) the Central Highlands Historical Association. She had also helped in the founding of societies at Avoca,<sup>3</sup> Ballan, Linton, Beaufort and Woody Yaloak. The last-mentioned society achieved, under her influence, the incredible figure of 400 members, while saving and repurposing the Smythesdale court house as a museum and historical workshop.<sup>4</sup> In addition, Joan had served eighteen years on the Smythesdale Cemetery Trust. And her Churchill Fellowship, awarded in 1988 and focused on research in Britain, had been all about how to run local societies, including, specifically, how such groups could best relate to peak bodies. How lucky were we in the RHSV to have a person with this depth of knowledge navigating our developing relationships with local societies?

So Joan, abetted by her partner in crime Lenore Frost, set about creating an entirely new model of cooperation, and the words ‘Support Group’ hardly hint at the scope of what she attempted and achieved. She knew that local societies wanted access to help in doing their job as effectively as possible—whether it was in relation to acquiring and managing their collections, managing new digital technologies, dealing with governance issues within their committees or among their members, or publishing new local histories and finding aids. Joan travelled from one end of the state to the other, organising meetings and seminars, talking and communicating, and providing a backbone of good relations among hundreds if not thousands of heritage-minded people across Victoria. To others, the task might have been like herding cats, given the diversity of people, organisations, interests and issues. But Joan applied her ability, credibility, communications skills and warmth. It was pure magic and appreciated by all.

Local historical societies at the time to which I refer—about a decade ago—were playing a very important role in communities, especially those that had lost some of their identity in the course of local government amalgamations. I mentioned that there were then some 285 locally based historical societies affiliated to the RHSV, and this is a significant number when you realise that the number of pre-amalgamation local councils was 210. When these 210 councils were cut back to just 78 in the amalgamation process, many towns lost their local leadership groups, often being left with just one representative to a council headquartered in some altogether different community. Local historical societies in many cases became central to the identity of smaller towns, and Joan knew small towns because she studied them, their anatomy, their history and their mechanics—whether it be Smythesdale, Scarsdale, Skipton and Linton, or simply Piggoreet.

As a person with ancestors linked to Smythesdale, Burrumbeet, Middle Creek, Beaufort, Learmonth and Creswick, I had (and have) great sympathy with these leanings. Often my partner Liz and I would spend time visiting such places. There's nothing better than a snatched visit to Timor, Raglan, Lexton or Majorca. But one afternoon Liz said, 'let's go to Piggoreet!' Such a suggestion can hardly be ignored. We cruised around looking for Piggoreet and eventually found nothing more than a neatly painted sign that just said, 'Piggoreet'. The mystery was intense, and it was solved later.

At about this time, we commenced attending the Burrumbeet Cup, held every year for the last 124 years on New Year's Day. It's a great outing, where we have a marquee, and every year Joan and Gary were stalwart attendees. Sometimes it has been so hot that I have had to empty the ice buckets over our party's heads; at other times it has been wet enough to bog a duck. Always, though, Joan and Gary have been there, and at dinner afterwards at the restaurant on Lake Wendouree. It just won't be the same without Joan, who always brought our diverse companions together with her interested and interesting conversation.

In one such conversation there arose the mystery of Piggoreet, where it had gone, and why the sign was there. Of course, this was the 64-dollar question; Joan explained her extraordinary research into Piggoreet and disclosed the fact that it was she who had arranged for the mysterious sign to be erected. Perhaps Joan's visits in 1988 to long-disappeared mediaeval villages in Leicestershire had helped her

to recognise the historical importance that can attach to places where human structures have long since vanished.

At length, Joan's interest in furthering her expertise in local history resolved into a plan to live for a time in England, where she obtained an Advanced Diploma in Local History from Oxford University, on a path that led later to her doctorate on topics that included Piggoreet, using methods that were innovative. This Oxford project led to her stepping down from the RHSV Council—or rather not seeking re-election. I followed suit the same day, also believing that new blood in the governance team can sometimes help organisations to progress. Joan and Gary's decision to spend time living in an English village was characteristically innovative and courageous, but they did it. I think the time in Oxford fitted Joan's talents as both teacher and researcher. It reminded me of Chaucer's description in the *Canterbury Tales* of the clerk from Oxenford—'Gladly would he lerne, and gladly teche'. Joan too had that combination of gladness in learning and teaching. One of her past pupils, now living in Spain, wrote this last week:<sup>5</sup>

What a blessed start to school life—stories by the open fire in the old school house. You would take us for long walks teaching us about the local flora. We discovered writing with you through creative writing—you even taught us how to make our own hard-cover books. I still have the first book I wrote with you—about my family and I in Ross Creek ... You instilled in us a love of history, history of our surroundings, history of our beginnings. You were a truly remarkable woman, a truly remarkable teacher. Great teachers leave wonderful legacies, magical memories, they nurture gifts and passions in people—you were one of those teachers.

Joan's skills were widely appreciated and marked. The list of awards and honours is indicative. She was awarded a Churchill Fellowship in 1988, a Graduate Diploma of Education in Literacy from Charles Sturt University in 1992, a Fellowship of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria in 2008,<sup>6</sup> Life Membership of the Ballarat and District Genealogical Society in 2009, the Victorian Museums Award in 2009, an Advanced Diploma in Local History from the University of Oxford in 2012, an Award of Merit from the Federation of Australian Historical Societies in 2014, and then her Doctorate from Federation University in 2016.

But, in a way, these were just the icing on the cake. Joan had so many social, personal and intellectual skills, and such personal warmth, that external recognition was hardly needed because she was so well appreciated by all who knew and associated with her in any of her diverse roles. We are celebrating today a very special, loved and valued member of our various communities. Rest in peace in Piggoreet, Joan.

## Notes

- 1 'Joan's Dance with History', *Ballarat Courier*, 30 January 1993.
- 2 Joan Hunt, *Forest and Field: A History of Ross Creek 1840–1990*, Ballarat, Jim Crow, 1990.
- 3 *Ballarat Courier*, 12 May 1984.
- 4 *Woody Yaloak Herald*, September 2003.
- 5 Nina Purdey, of Barcelona, Spain, writing in the Age 'Guestbook', on line.
- 6 RHSV, Report from the 97th Annual General Meeting, 2008.

## History and Heritage: The Inaugural Weston Bate Oration<sup>1</sup>

*Stuart Macintyre\**

It is an honour to be invited to deliver an oration that commemorates Weston Bate, a distinguished historian who made such an important contribution to the Royal Historical Society of Victoria and to the public appreciation of history and heritage. His histories of Brighton, Ballarat, schools and golf clubs were all imbued with an attachment to locality and an awareness of the way the trained historian can enrich the understanding of local history.

Weston overlapped with my father at school, and in wartime service in Britain with the RAAF. I overlapped with him at the University of Melbourne, but it was many years later that he told me how he became a historian. He undertook his degree after demobilisation as an ex-serviceman through the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme, and the scheme's liaison officer at the University of Melbourne advised him he should undertake a course in commerce. Weston was not an easy man to deflect. He was determined on an arts degree, and Max Crawford, Kathleen Fitzpatrick and John O'Brien confirmed his love of history. He was also one of the earliest academic historians in Australia to take up local history, with an MA thesis in the early 1950s on the first twenty years of Brighton, and he was particularly conscious of the conflicting expectations that can arise when the trained expert enters the domain of shared memory and traditions. 'I have exalted the standing of local history in my own mind', he wrote to a fellow practitioner, 'to a level I can't possibly maintain. How can one enter all the multitudinous facets of local life with the authority one's training ... suggests one should have?'<sup>2</sup>

Especially in his two volumes on Ballarat as well as in a shorter survey of the Victorian gold rushes, Weston also conveyed a pride in this state's civic traditions. Richard Broome has described him as a 'Victorian patriot', and so he was, though I am reminded of the response of his contemporary Geoffrey Serle when so described: 'Nonsense; I'm a Hawthorn man and an Australian, and that's good enough for me.'<sup>3</sup> And,

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\* Professor Stuart Macintyre has been chair of the Victorian Heritage Council since 2015.

like Geoffrey Serle, Weston was also an enabler of heritage. He served on the Museums Advisory Board, helped create the Maritime Museums Association, served as president of the RHSV and initiated Victoria's History Week. He was closely associated with the notable venture of Sovereign Hill and fought often for the conservation of places at risk.

In this lecture I take up the way that local attachments create a particular kind of appreciation of heritage, of the things from the past that we treasure and wish to keep and pass on to subsequent generations. Heritage in this sense consists of familiar landmarks that are dear to us, but also of the neighbourhood in which they are located, the ambience they create and the patterns of activity they support—both the physical fabric and a whole way of life.

What provision is made for the preservation of heritage? I should first explain the formal distinction between 'natural' and 'cultural' heritage. The first consists of elements of the natural environment that have aesthetic, scientific, historic and social significance or other values for future generations. Cultural heritage denotes those elements that have been created by human activity. Awkwardly, but understandably, Australia also recognises Indigenous heritage as a special category.

There are four classifications of heritage significance: world, national, state and local. Nineteen Australian places of cultural and natural heritage are included in the World Heritage list maintained by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The cultural heritage inclusions are dominated by convict sites such as Port Arthur and Hyde Park Barracks but include the Sydney Opera House and Melbourne's Royal Exhibition Building.<sup>4</sup> Then there are 119 places on the National Heritage Register deemed of national significance by the Australian Heritage Council, and they encompass natural, cultural and Indigenous heritage. Twenty-six of these places are Victorian, and they include the Indigenous eel traps of Lake Condah, Coranderrk, the Abbotsford Convent and Murtoa stick shed, Flemington Race Course and the Melbourne Cricket Ground (which is noteworthy since none of the physical fabric is more than 30 years old).<sup>5</sup>

Victoria distinguishes the arrangements for natural heritage, Indigenous heritage (which is the responsibility of the state's Aboriginal Heritage Council) and cultural heritage. The places of cultural heritage ('places' being the generic term), which are listed on the Victorian Heritage Register, include buildings and other structures such as bridges

and bandstands, waterworks and fire towers, memorials and cemeteries; signs (including the Nylex clock on a silo of the Richmond Maltings and Little Audrey, the skipping girl in Abbotsford); trees, parks, gardens and landscapes; archaeological sites, shipwrecks and (as a separate category) objects. There are currently some 2,400 places on the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR), about 850 of them in public hands and the rest privately owned.<sup>6</sup> Finally, there are heritage places categorised as of local significance. As part of their planning responsibilities, all municipalities operate heritage overlays on places and precincts of heritage significance. We do not know how many places are covered in heritage overlays; around 150,000 is a conservative estimate.

This classification of world, national, state and local heritage implies a hierarchy of significance, a few at the top and a great many at the bottom. If heritage places are held in trust for future generations, then the Exhibition Building is regarded as possessing qualities that need to be retained for all people of all countries, and the underground car park at the University of Melbourne is deemed of value for all Victorians. Yet it is the arrangements for protection of places on local heritage overlays that generate most attention, anxiety and, all too often, the greatest exasperation. Several times a week the members of the Heritage Council receive a compilation of news items on heritage in the Victorian media, stemming from the metropolitan, suburban and regional press with a sprinkling of radio coverage. The number of such reports often runs to 30 and more, and the overwhelming majority concerns local places.

Significance, then, is no guide to attachment. The one is a measure of importance and rests on the assumption that you can make an informed judgment about the degree of heritage significance according to objective criteria. The other is an emotion, a feeling of personal connection to some place or object because of its associations with cherished memories. There is little point in telling nominators of a school shelter-shed that it has little architectural merit and that there are dozens of similar vintage. They want to keep theirs.

In one of his illuminating analyses of how we understand and treat heritage, Graeme Davison observed that the loss of so many churches raised particularly strong passions in the closing years of the last century—and added that Australians exert a great deal of energy to prevent the demolition of places of worship they no longer attend.<sup>7</sup> This was especially true after the formation of the Uniting Church in 1977,

when Methodists, Presbyterians and Congregationalists came together; for all their ecumenicism, local congregations with family roots in their own place of worship were loath to see their particular church made redundant. The same might be said of pubs. Suburban hotels are at risk precisely because of changed drinking habits; yet an announcement that a local watering hole is to be demolished for an apartment tower brings protest from those who have long since ceased to frequent it. At a further remove, any threat to a rural railway station is a lightning rod for protest in country towns, even though the railway service was lost many years ago. Nostalgia is manifestly a powerful force in popular attachment to heritage, the prospect of loss (even a symbolic loss in the case of the railway) a trigger for action.

Last year the Heritage Council of Victoria commissioned a feasibility study for a new state heritage strategy—the last of them ran from 2006 to 2010 and was accompanied by a substantial injection of support and resources, including the funding of local government heritage advisers. As part of our feasibility study, an online survey, non-virtual interviews, and workshops were conducted with stakeholders; they confirmed that local heritage is the most common concern. I will elaborate the reasons that were given but note for the moment that most arise from the fact that the arrangements for the conservation and management of places considered of state significance differ so markedly from the arrangements for local heritage. More than this, there is a very low level of understanding of the differences and their consequences. The operation of our heritage system is, I suggest, one of Victoria's best-kept secrets, and one that creates both frustration and vexation.

Let me try to sketch the arrangements. The Heritage Council is an independent, statutory body with clearly defined powers. It is responsible for adding places to the state's Heritage Register. Anyone can nominate a place, and the recommendation that it should be added to the register is publicly advertised. If there are objections, the council holds a public hearing, with all submissions shared among the parties and procedures designed to ensure impartiality and openness. Our decisions are final, subject only to appeal to the Supreme Court on procedural grounds, and they are enforceable. They come with a clear statement of significance and specify what can and cannot be done to the place. The Heritage Council is supported in its work by a secretariat of five officers and works in conjunction with Heritage Victoria, a branch of the Department of

Environment, Land, Water and Planning, which has some 30 officers and is responsible for administering the Heritage Act. Heritage Victoria prepares assessments for registration, and it also determines applications for permits to undertake work on registered places. Should the owner dispute a permit decision, the Heritage Council holds a hearing to adjudicate.

Now consider the arrangements for local heritage. Most of the 150,000 or so places have been identified by municipal heritage studies. These studies are typically conducted for the local council by an expert consultant, but many of them were done twenty or more years ago. There is provision for the National Trust, historical societies or other interested parties to nominate additional places of potential significance that are then assessed and can be added to the municipality's planning scheme. An assessment report usually includes a history and description of the place, with a statement of significance. Should the owner wish to demolish or alter a place on an overlay, s/he can apply for a permit, which is determined by the relevant local council's officers according to planning guidelines, but the level of heritage expertise varies among council planning departments. Moreover, planning policies require a number of matters to be considered, and there is no requirement that heritage considerations must prevail. There is recourse from a local government determination to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal, but, with legal representation increasingly common among developers and councils, that can be an expensive exercise for residents and community groups contesting a major development project.

You will not be surprised, then, that among the matters of concern identified in our feasibility study were: the disparity between resources available for places on the VHR and those included in heritage overlays; the incomplete municipal heritage studies and schedules; increasing urban density along with rural depopulation; and the need for greater capacity at the local level, and for closer interaction between local government and local owners.<sup>8</sup> It is not uncommon for residents seeking to preserve their neighbourhood amenity to make a nomination to the state register, and to feel thwarted when they discover that our decision has to be based strictly on assessment of the heritage values at that level.

Section 12 of the *Heritage Act 2017* lays down the assessment criteria used to determine cultural heritage significance for inclusion in the

Victorian Heritage Register. As implemented by the Heritage Council, a nominated place has to satisfy at least one of eight criteria. These are:

- importance to the course or pattern of Victoria's cultural history;
- possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history;
- potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history;
- importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places or objects;
- importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics;
- importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period;
- strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons;
- special association with the life or works of a person, or group of person, of importance in Victoria's history.

You will note that some of these criteria refer to cultural history and one to Victoria's history *tout court*. Cultural history here has an anthropological meaning, signifying the forms of collective behaviour that incorporate social structure, knowledge, beliefs and practices, and which are passed down from one generation to the next. Artefacts or physical remains provide expressive evidence of a culture, with an acknowledgment that it is both durable and dynamic—a somewhat more demanding understanding than that used by all kinds of organisations, from banks to football clubs, where culture is no more than fashionable jargon used by management as a panacea for problems that resist rectification.

Historians are generally familiar with culture in the anthropological sense, as they are with the contextual nature of cultural interpretation. But I am struck by the way that popular discussion commonly assumes that heritage is intrinsic to a place, requiring only a discerning eye and well-informed mind for its inherent qualities to be recognised and its status determined. Academic discussion proceeds from the starting point that heritage values are attributed to a place on the basis of specific kinds of knowledge, understanding and judgment. Lay discussion allows for no such agnosticism.

Graeme Davison makes a similar point in his seminal essay on what makes a building historic. He observes that architects feel quite

comfortable in applying the criteria for aesthetic importance or the creative or technical achievements at a particular period. They can classify a building's style, assess its qualities, and grade it according to a scale of relative excellence, whereas the historians' judgment is contingent. We judge a building in relation to its context in social, political or intellectual history, or the way it contributes to a more critical understanding of the past.<sup>9</sup>

Some cultural theorists go further. They see a radical disjunction between history and heritage. In their view, heritage is an all-pervasive aspect of contemporary life whereby traces of the past are assembled and held up as a mirror to the present as a way of dealing with the uncertainties of the future. The impulse is attributed to the constant change that is a condition of modernity and the faltering belief that change is beneficial. Such is the speed and scale of technological, social and environmental disruption that we are confronted by a constant cycle of economic, political, humanitarian and environmental emergencies. Postmodernity provides no reassurance of linear progress or confidence that we can plan and determine the future; it is haunted by the idea of uncertainty, rupture and loss of things held dear.<sup>10</sup>

Heritage, these theorists argue, is not a thing but a set of attitudes and relationships to various objects, places and practices that are thought to connect us to the past. They see it as an omnipresent cultural phenomenon that has expanded in meaning to encompass almost everything. It is caught up in the production of local, regional and national identities as a way of asserting their distinctive character, and it is also part of an all-pervasive global phenomenon, governed by a universal language and conducted by professional practitioners whose work is authorised by the state.<sup>11</sup> It is also a political idea that overrides property rights and yet is part of the production of value. Think of the way in which obsolete industrial sites are remade into the experience economy. Harbour precincts, from Salamanca Place to Fremantle, Melbourne's Docklands and the Woolloomooloo Finger Wharf, incorporate remnants of their past working life into retail outlets, cafés and coffee lounges, and in doing so they follow the course of similar redevelopments in North America and Europe.

Cultural critics are not alone in questioning heritage's preoccupation with a usable past. Many of you will be familiar with the work of David Lowenthal, the historian and geographer, whose book *The Past is a*

*Foreign Country* (1985) was followed by a sharper criticism of *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (1996). Lowenthal contrasted the obligation of historians to study the past in its own terms, and the principles of objectivity and detachment that guide the discipline, with the partisan, sentimental, shallow and often mendacious character of heritage's treatment of the past. 'Heritage and history', he argued, 'rely on antithetical modes of persuasion. History seeks to convince by truth and succumbs to falsehood. Heritage exaggerates and omits, candidly invents and frankly forgets, and thrives on ignorance and error'. Graeme Davison has expressed reservations about this dichotomy, pointing out that historians are hardly the detached observers that Lowenthal claims.<sup>12</sup>

Given my position as chair of the Heritage Council, you will understand my resistance to the accusation of exaggeration, omission and invention. If many forms of heritage, commercial as well as popular, are unconstrained by historical warrant, and some forms of state-sponsored heritage play fast and loose with veracity (I think, for example of the recently invented tradition of the Battle for Australia in 1942<sup>13</sup>), the branch of official heritage that provides legal protection to places and objects is bound by carefully documented historical evidence.

Heritage Victoria prepares a detailed submission for any place that is nominated for addition to the Victorian Historical Register, which typically includes details of its creation, ownership and uses. Our hearings consider submissions that provide additional information. There are times, I confess, when the statement of significance that accompanies registration seems to me to pay insufficient attention to historical context, and I think that Heritage Victoria would benefit by restoring the post of historian to its staff, which was a casualty of budgetary constraints, but if you browse the VHR you will generally find a robust account of the provenance of each place.

Historians are involved with heritage as advocates, consultants, council members and commentators; they also provide us with an understanding of the origins and trajectory of the heritage phenomenon. In doing so they provide a closer, more nuanced account of the impulse to keep elements of the past than blanket explanations based on modernity and postmodernity, and they are more attentive to how heritage works in particular national and institutional settings. I will endeavour to sketch such an historical perspective in very bold strokes in order to clarify how heritage has been treated here in Victoria.

Use of the past to convey a sense of destiny for the future is by no means a recent phenomenon: the Romans venerated the heritage of ancient Greece; Charlemagne sought to restore the forms of the Roman Empire; the Renaissance revived classical learning and values; antiquarianism flourished in the early modern period. The emergence of a distinctive heritage sensibility in nineteenth-century Europe drew on the Romantic movement's attachment to place and the emergence of ethno-nationalism, where the nation was defined as a shared heritage of ancestry, language and culture—an understanding, incidentally, that in turn shaped the discipline of history as the German historians of the early nineteenth century, who codified the discipline, responded to Herder's idea of nations formed through a deep association of place and time.

This idea of heritage was much more than a pastiche of fragments of the past, though it incorporated monuments and buildings as well as museums and archives. The idea that there were things of national importance to be held in trust for and by the people first found expression in Revolutionary France. Nor was the new concern for heritage a retreat into nostalgia. William Morris's insistence that ancient buildings must be protected from restoration affirmed his socialist commitment to an organic society purged of capitalist exploitation and the degradation of labour. Gilbert Scott, the great architectural restorer, practised Gothic revivalism as an expression of ecclesiastical authority and social hierarchy; and the early movements for heritage conservation in North America as well as Europe placed particular value on the great estates of the landed class, with buildings and landscape set at a distance from the ravages of industrialisation.

Attention to built heritage broadened subsequently from castles, medieval churches and country houses to take in the mills and factories, the great engineering works of the nineteenth century, civic buildings and a much wider range of other structures. In accordance with democratic expectations, heritage moved from the oldest, biggest and best to recognise the full range of human experience. The expectation that heritage should be fully representative can be seen in one of the registration criteria used by the Heritage Council: 'strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons'.

Australia came late to the legal protection of built heritage. It was the Whitlam government that embraced the UNESCO Convention for the Protection of World Cultural and National Heritage (1972) and

subsequently passed the *Australian Heritage Commission Act 1975*. The states introduced their own protections, Victoria through the creation of the Historic Buildings Council in 1974 and other states following with heritage councils. Until then the conservation of buildings had relied on the efforts of advocates and non-government organisations such as the National Trust, which began in Australia in New South Wales in 1945 and (as in the United Kingdom) had statutory recognition.

The impulse for the National Trust in Australia was the rapid change to Australian cities following the Second World War. The plans prepared during the war by the Commonwealth Housing Commission identified a backlog of 300,000 dwellings and as many more in the late 1940s and early 1950s to accommodate the planned population increase. Of the 300,000 immediately needed, 100,000 were to replace houses deemed unfit for habitation. The planners were strongly influenced by the slum abolition movement that arose in the aftermath of the inter-war Depression. The Commonwealth government's intention was that at least half of the new dwellings should be provided in housing estates for public tenants with a full range of services, and to that end made its financial assistance contingent on comprehensive town planning. Such plans would rationalise the metropolitan layout with functional zoning to replace the higgledy-piggledy tangle of inner-city neighbourhoods, just as the public housing program would replace decrepit squalor with modernist order and efficiency.<sup>14</sup>

As it happens, public housing made up less than a fifth of post-war construction, while the planning schemes adopted by the principal cities proved much less rigorous than the Commonwealth Housing Commission intended. Even so, changes of this order and ethos motivated the concern to preserve old buildings; thus activists in New South Wales prevailed on the state government to authorise the creation of a trust. The impulse to protect and keep heritage commonly springs from a threat to its survival. Tom Griffiths has argued that waves of nostalgia arose in Victoria in the 1850s and the closing decades of the nineteenth century. The gold rush engulfed the early pastoral society of the 1850s. The building boom of Marvellous Melbourne remade the city, and the crash that followed triggered new anxieties of loss. He sees these seasons of memory as generational; those whose lives span the change feel strangers in their own land and seek to affirm fading traditions against the newcomers. The affirmation has taken different forms. In the 1850s

there was the Old Colonists' Association; at the end of the nineteenth century the ageing members of the gold-rush generation felt a need to set down accounts of the past before it was lost. The Royal Historical Society of Victoria is one result of that urge.<sup>15</sup>

Beyond such activities, however, there was the challenge of finding heritage in a settler society. In nineteenth-century Australia the novelty of the European presence and the absence of ancient monuments was commonly thought to foreclose the possibility of an authentic national culture. So too with attachment to place. Declining mining towns came to feel they had a past that needed to be kept, but Melbourne usually looked forward. What was there to conserve in a city that was so new, was constantly being remade, and proclaimed its pride in progress? Tom Griffiths' book, *Hunters and Collectors*, suggests that colonial Australians put down their roots more through forms of natural than cultural history. There was government protection of the natural environment long before similar arrangements for buildings.

It was not until the early twentieth century that the sketches of architect and artist Hardy Wilson in *Old Colonial Architecture in New South Wales and Tasmania* (1924) helped establish greater appreciation of old buildings. But his preference for Georgian symmetry and nostalgia for an earlier, pastoral Australia betrayed a related problem—the usurpation of the land on which these homesteads stood. Settler heritage selects certain places and eliminates others to establish a particular kind of national narrative.

If the concern for heritage rises in periods of rapid change, how might we account for its recent fortunes? In *Trendyville*, an account of residents' campaigns to save inner suburbs from redevelopment during the 1960s and 1970s, Renate Howe, David Nicholls and Graeme Davison have drawn a contrast between the rapid changes in Sydney and Melbourne. The growth of population was not dramatically different: Sydney went from 2.1 million in 1960 to 3.2 million in 1980, Melbourne from 1.85 million to 2.8 million. High-rise office towers transformed the central business districts of both cities, but the geographical constraints of the harbour city concentrated construction in the dress circle, whereas Melbourne was able to expand outwards. The Historic Buildings Council arose from campaigns to save landmarks in Collins Street, but it was the Housing Commission of Victoria's venture into high-rise towers that triggered the battles for a number of our inner suburbs.<sup>16</sup>

Since the turn of the century Melbourne has grown far more rapidly. Over the past decade, the population has increased from 3.9 to 4.9 million and we are currently creating more than 50,000 new dwellings annually. Moreover, successive governments have pursued a policy of consolidation, so that the older practice of pushing out to the fringe is now accompanied by densification of the inner and middle suburbs. Overspill to regional towns within commuting distance has spread the pressures (Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo make up a large proportion of our media monitor files), while the aggregation of broad-acre farming causes a different but equally painful problem of depopulation in more distant settlements.

The rapid growth brings more hearings by the Heritage Council of nominations for the register and more permit appeals, with higher stakes and increasing complexity. Heritage Victoria has to assess more permit applications, and deal with a growing task of enforcement, especially to stop what is called expressively ‘demolition by neglect’. Its capacity to assess places for heritage nomination is limited. The Victorian Heritage Register is a product of accretion; it consists of places that have been nominated successfully over the past 45 years and remains heavier in the oldest, biggest and best than those illustrative of other qualities. To cite one of my own personal interests, it is light on for the austerity modernist homes of post-war reconstruction. It is also light on for some regions, notably Gippsland.

The strain on local government is far greater, however. Local government deals with more places; its powers are more limited; its expertise is uneven; its capacity for consultation, advice and assistance to owners is constrained. It falls outside the system of grants introduced by the state government in 2016 under the Living Heritage program. There are many good things happening at the local level but few ways of sharing them with other municipal councils, and limited means of bridging the gap between state and local heritage where so much of the disquiet arises. A useful first step in allaying the current concern would be to conduct a review of the arrangements for local heritage, one that will provide a clearer picture of current arrangements and suggest how they might be improved. I hope that such a review can begin soon.

## Notes

- 1 Delivered at the RHSV Annual General Meeting, 15 May 2018.
- 2 Weston Bate to Yvonne Palmer, 15 March 1953, Palmer Papers, State Library Victoria, quoted in Tom Griffiths, *Hunters and Collectors: The Antiquarian Imagination in Australia*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 217.
- 3 Richard Broome, 'Inspiring Trailblazer of Local History', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 December 2017; a modified form of Serle's declaration appears as an epigraph in John Thompson, *The Patrician and the Bloke: Geoffrey Serle and the Making of Australian History*, Canberra, Pandanus Books, 2006, p. xvii.
- 4 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list>.
- 5 Australia's National Heritage List, at [www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/national-heritage-list](http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/national-heritage-list).
- 6 Victorian Heritage Database, at <http://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au>.
- 7 Graeme Davison, *The Use and Abuse of Australian History*, Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 2000, p. 154.
- 8 Richard Mackay, 'Feasibility Study for a Victorian Heritage Strategy: Final Report, January 2018' (held by the Heritage Council).
- 9 Davison, pp. 133–4.
- 10 Rodney Harrison, *Heritage: Critical Approaches*, London, Routledge, 2012, pp. 1–4.
- 11 David C. Harvey, 'The History of Heritage', in Peter Howard and Brian Graham (eds), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity*, Burlington, VT, Ashgate, 2008, pp. 19–36.
- 12 David Lowenthal, *Possessed by the Past: The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*, New York, Free Press, 1996, p. 121, quoted by Davison, p. 120.
- 13 Peter Stanley, 'Dramatic Myth, Dull Truth: Invasion by Japan in 1942', in Craig Stockings (ed.), *Zombie Myths in Australian Military History*, Sydney, NewSouth, 2010, pp. 140–60.
- 14 Stuart Macintyre, *Australia's Boldest Experiment: War and Reconstruction in the 1940s*, Sydney, NewSouth, 2015, pp. 175–84.
- 15 Griffiths, pp. 197–9.
- 16 Renate Howe, David Nichols and Graeme Davison, *Trendyville: The Battle for Australia's Inner Cities*, Melbourne, Monash University Publishing, 2014.

# The Uiver: Memory Creation, Loss and Recovery

Noel Jackling

## Abstract

*Dramatic events—so vivid at the time—create the urge for memorialisation, often leading to fund raising and the erection of objects of memory. Yet time sometimes erodes this vividness and can even result in the loss of objects or the loss of their meaning. Recovery of what those in the past sought to commemorate is possible through historical investigation, and this process can also revive the intensity of meaning. This is one such story acted out over 84 years.*

## The Uiver Enters History

Melbourne and Victoria's Centenary Council, formed in 1931 but incorporated in September 1933 by Act of Parliament as the Centenary Celebrations Council, wanted a spectacular event by which to celebrate Victoria's and Melbourne's centenaries. It decided to hold an air race from London (RAF base at Mildenhall, 113 kilometres north of London) to Melbourne (RAAF base at Laverton, 29 kilometres south-west of Melbourne) for which it secured the sponsorship of philanthropist Sir Macpherson Robertson, known as 'the chocolate king'. In sponsoring the event, Robertson was keen for the race to 'test the possibilities of a quick, commercial aviation passenger service between England and Australia'.<sup>1</sup>

There were over 70 entrants in the MacRobertson International Centenary Air Race. Only twenty reached the start at Mildenhall at 6.30 a.m. on 20 October 1934, and of these only twelve made it to Melbourne, the last one on 15 February 1935.<sup>2</sup> One of these twenty aircraft was the KLM Royal Dutch Airlines Douglas DC-2 PH-AJU, called the 'Uiver' or 'stork'. The DC-2 was a revolutionary American standard production-line all-metal twin-engined monoplane. It was semi-monocoque in structure, meaning both the skin and supporting structure together carry the load stresses. It had a regular crew of four, pilots Captain Koene Parmentier and First Officer Jan Moll, Wireless Operator Cornelis van Brugge and Aircraft Maintenance Engineer Bouwe Prins. It carried three passengers—Roelof Domenie, Piet Gilissen and Thea Rasche—and 25,906 letters as well.<sup>3</sup> And it flew to a pre-determined schedule on a

route that included a detour to Batavia (now Jakarta) in the Netherlands East Indies (now Indonesia). All other aircraft in the race bar one were constructed of wood and fabric.

At 7.55 p.m. on 23 October 1934, when the Uiver started on the final leg of the race to Melbourne from Charleville in southern Queensland, it was in second position in the speed section of the race. The de Havilland DH-88 Comet *Grosvenor House*, a sleek, small two-seater, specially designed wood-and-fabric twin-engined racer had just reached Melbourne and won the speed section of the race. The only other all-metal aircraft in the race, a Boeing 247D captained by flamboyant but eminent aviator, entrepreneur, instructor and lion tamer, American Roscoe Turner, was some six hours behind.

The Uiver's estimated time of arrival in Melbourne was soon after midnight, but it encountered a fierce electrical storm. Wireless communications to and from the Uiver became rare and never two-way. The Uiver drifted to the east, crossed the Murray River over Albury instead of near Echuca and encountered the Victorian Alps, which it was unable to surmount. After two forays into the Alps, pilots Parmentier and Moll turned the Uiver around in a desperate effort to find an airfield at Cootamundra. Although they only got intermittent views of the ground through the clouds, they soon picked up some flashing lights and a crescent of cars lining up their headlights to illuminate a makeshift runway at what they thought could be Albury. They made two circuits over the Albury Racecourse, during which Aircraft Maintenance Engineer Prins, on cue, dropped one and soon afterwards a second parachute flare to check out the feasibility of landing. In a masterful piece of flying, Captain Parmentier negotiated the Uiver, with its powerful nose landing lights on, through a gap between two clumps of trees and safely touched down on the Albury Racecourse. The Uiver slid to a halt with its wheels deeply bogged in mud.

The Uiver had landed safely because of the speedy and innovative actions of many community-minded Albury citizens, especially Arthur Newnham, the ABC Radio 2CO announcer. Newnham interrupted Radio 3AR on relay at 12.55 a.m. to call on motor vehicles to go to the Albury Racecourse to illuminate a landing strip for the Uiver. Albury *Border Morning Mail* sub-editor Clifton Mott, municipal electrical engineer Lyle Ferris, and district postal inspector Reginald Turner were three other key figures in the saga. Mott contacted race headquarters at the Melbourne

Town Hall and was advised to flash the letters A-L-B-U-R-Y in Morse code to the aircraft to let the pilots know where they were. He conceived the idea of using the town's streetlights for this purpose, contacted Ferris and arranged to meet him at the Albury Post Office. Mott ran to the post office where he bumped into Turner, who knew Morse code. When Ferris arrived by car, the three of them went to the local nearby power sub-station where Ferris facilitated Turner turning the power supply on and off to get the streetlights to flash the letters A-L-B-U-R-Y. Reports differ as to the extent to which the letters were read by the Uiver pilots and the Uiver telegraphist Van Brugge. The light flashes were sometimes clear but at other times obscured as the aircraft flew in and out of cloud. Nevertheless, before coming in to land, the crew thought that the town below them was probably Albury. At 1.17 a.m., 22 minutes after Newnham broadcast his call to cars over the radio, the Uiver had landed safely.

After dawn, the crew inspected the bogged aircraft and found it to be undamaged. Could it be extracted from the mud? Could they take off and get back into the race? The ground was too sodden for tractors or horses to be used to pull the aircraft. People power was the only option. A group of men were unsuccessful in their efforts to force the aircraft backwards out of the mud by pushing the struts above the axles. The men then dug soil from under the aircraft's wheels and inserted planks in the gully they had formed. When the engines were run, the planks began to tip up in the air and were at risk of being blown into the propellers. The attempt was abandoned as too dangerous. Ropes were then tied to the aircraft's axles and the aircraft was manually dragged to drier ground. It taxied to the southern end of the racecourse and was stripped of luggage, mailbags and pantry items. With only the two pilots on board, the Uiver made a failed take-off attempt. Ropes were once more tied to the axles and the aircraft was again manually dragged to drier ground (see Image 1). At 9.55 a.m. it succeeded in taking off and was back in the race.



**Image 1: Albury people, mostly men, drag the Uiver from the mud to drier ground for takeoff, early on the morning of 24 October 1934** (Courtesy Luchtvaart-Themapark Aviodrome, Lelystad, Netherlands)

This or a similar photograph formed the basis of the scene cast in bronze as a side plate for the lower part of the Montford Albury Flight Memorial.

The Uiver flew over the race finish line at Flemington Racecourse, Melbourne, at 10.52 a.m. only two-and-a-half hours ahead of the technologically inferior all-metal Boeing 247D. It landed at the RAAF base at Laverton at 11.05 a.m. The Uiver was the second aircraft to complete the race. It came second in both the speed and handicap sections of the race, the winners in both sections being British pilots Charles W. Scott and T. Campbell Black in the de Havilland DH-88 Comet *Grosvenor House*. The British chose to accept first prize of £10,000 and the MacRobertson gold trophy in the speed section of the race, and, under race rules, were compelled to relinquish first prize of £2,000 in the handicap section. The Dutch then chose to accept the £2,000 first prize in the handicap section and relinquished second prize of £1,000 in the speed section.<sup>4</sup> In a statement made on 24 October 1934 after the arrival of the Uiver in Melbourne, Sir Macpherson Robertson said that ‘the performance of the Dutchmen went further [than the winner from Great Britain] to fulfil my intention when I gave the prize’.<sup>5</sup>

On 27 October 1934 an 'Albury Committee' was formed in Holland, which established a florin fund to raise money for a thank-you gift to the people of Albury. The maximum donation was a florin or two shillings per contributor, which at that time could buy a three-course meal in a good café. The sum of about £500 was raised, far in excess of the anticipated total.<sup>6</sup>

The Dutch speedily expressed their gratitude to the people of Albury. A delegation from Batavia came to Albury on 13 December 1934 and lavished expensive gifts on those who had helped the Uiver and its occupants survive.<sup>7</sup> Queen Wilhelmina made Albury mayor, Alfred Waugh, an Officer of the Order of Oranje-Nassau, and, on 17 December 1934, with the permission of King George V of England, Netherlands Consul-General Paul Staal invested Waugh into the Order in a public ceremony in Dean Square, Albury.<sup>8</sup>

On 21 November 1934 the Uiver returned to Schiphol Airport in triumph, but tragedy soon struck. On 2 December 1934, while over the Belgian Ardennes on a flight from Marseilles to Amsterdam, the Uiver encountered very bad weather. Twice the Uiver went out of control and dropped height, and twice the pilots Leendert Sillevius and Willem Beekman managed to regain control, though with extreme difficulty. The DC-2 had displayed poor flight characteristics in severe weather conditions.<sup>9</sup> Tragedy had been averted but only just.

A few days later, on 19 December 1934 at 3.32 a.m., the Uiver departed Schiphol Airport, Amsterdam bound for Batavia. It was carrying a crew of four, Captain Willem Beekman, First Officer Jan van Steenberg, Flight Engineer Hendrik Waalewijn and Wireless Operator Gysbert van Zadelhoff, three passengers and Christmas mail. None of those on board had been on the Uiver's flight to Melbourne. The wives of the crew were at Schiphol to farewell their husbands. After stopping at Marseilles, Rome and Athens, the Uiver reached Cairo at 10.35 p.m. on 19 December 1934, some eighteen hours after departing Schiphol. There, the local KLM representative observed how weary the pilots were. The stop at Cairo was brief, and at 11.30 p.m. they set off for Baghdad, with no weather report to warn them of the bad weather ahead. The Uiver encountered a violent thunderstorm and crashed in the Syrian Desert soon after crossing the border, most likely the one between Jordan and Iraq.<sup>10</sup> On one view the crash was at around 3.33 a.m. on 20 December 1934, some three hours after departing Cairo and

22 hours after departing Schiphol. It is thought that the pilots became disorientated, as the Uiver hit the ground apparently at normal speed while travelling almost parallel to it in the opposite direction from Baghdad. All seven people on board were killed.<sup>11</sup> It seems that the DC-2's flying capacities were inadequate for extreme air turbulence. Later this led to modifications in tail-rudder design. Just under two months after the people of Albury had saved the Uiver, the Uiver was no more.

### **Statuette Commissioned**

On the initiative of a staff member of the Albury *Border Morning Mail*, probably Clifton Mott, a meeting was held on 3 January 1935, which, in the absence of Mayor Alfred Waugh (who was on a goodwill mission to Java in the Netherlands East Indies with the president of the Albury Racing Club, Frederick Tietjens), was chaired by the deputy mayor of Albury Will Colley. A committee of ten was formed to seek funds to raise a memorial in Holland in remembrance of the Uiver.<sup>12</sup> The committee met on 9 January 1935 and inaugurated the Uiver Memorial Fund, which was to be a shilling fund seeking donations of a shilling or multiples thereof.<sup>13</sup>

The Uiver Memorial Fund Committee met again on 21 February 1935, by which time Alfred Waugh had returned from Java. He reported that he had received a letter from a committee formed of prominent citizens of Holland (the 'Albury Committee') stating that a florin fund had been established for the purpose of raising a memorial in Albury and asking if the town would accept it. Waugh informed the meeting that he had replied that Albury would gladly do so. Waugh also advised the meeting that he had communicated back to the same committee in Holland asking if a memorial for which funds were being raised in Albury would be acceptable in Holland. Waugh had received the letter from Holland on 10 December 1934 and must have deferred reply until after his return from Java, only to find that in the meantime the Uiver had crashed and the Uiver Memorial Fund had been established.<sup>14</sup>

At the same meeting, Albury banker Kenneth More suggested that a plaque should be sent to Holland in the care of the mayor on his forthcoming trip to Europe, to be placed in the City Hall at Amsterdam, the capital city of the Netherlands. He recommended that the plaque be designed by a recognised sculptor, such as Melbourne-based Paul Montford or Sydney-based Raynor Hoff.<sup>15</sup> However, Alfred Waugh informed the meeting that, while in the Netherlands East Indies, he

sensed a desire among the Dutch to forget the loss of the Uiver. Thus the proposal for the plaque to be a remembrance of the loss of the Uiver was changed to a plaque that depicted the saving of the Uiver through its safe landing at Albury. The mayor was asked to interview sculptor Paul Montford and seek his suggestions for an enduring monument.<sup>16</sup>

### **Shrine Sculptor Paul Montford**

London-born sculptor Paul Raphael Montford (1868–1938), whose work spans the period 1891 to 1938, migrated to Australia in 1923. He continued his work in Melbourne as a sculptor, most notably creating the exterior sculptural groups at Melbourne’s Shrine of Remembrance. He also sculpted other fine works that helped to transform Melbourne’s civic landscape—statues of John Wesley outside the Wesley Church in Lonsdale Street, Melbourne; Chief Justice George Higinbotham adjacent to the Treasury Building; and ‘The Court Favourite’ in the Flagstaff Gardens. Nevertheless, as the decades passed, Montford’s contribution was rarely attributed and he soon fell into relative obscurity, largely because his work played no part in the emergence of Modernism and he was born too late to contribute to the figurative art of the preceding era. Montford was a highly skilled modeller, as is evidenced by the detail and three-dimensional form of the lion and young woman in the ‘Uiver Flight Memorial’.<sup>17</sup> While the choice by the Uiver Memorial Fund Committee of Montford as its sculptor may have been made because Melbourne was more accessible to the Albury mayor than Sydney, the detailed requirements of the project in terms of depicting the racecourse scene and the symbolic figures used for Australia and Holland suited Montford’s skills.<sup>18</sup>

The ‘Albury Flight Memorial’ or Montford Uiver statuette comprises a young draped female figure representing Australia, using her outstretched right arm to symbolise protecting the Kingdom of the Netherlands represented by a rampant crowned lion. The rope held by the young woman in her left hand is symbolic of the lifeline given by Albury people to the flyers of the KLM Royal Dutch Airlines Douglas DC-2 when in distress early in the morning of 24 October 1934 (23 October in Holland). The figures of the woman and lion sit atop a base on which are inscribed the words ‘GOD SPEED’, representing Australia wishing ‘God speed’ to the departing Dutch aircraft. Underneath is a group of figures striving to pull a bogged Uiver from the mud of the Albury Racecourse (see Images 2 and 3).<sup>19</sup>



**Image 2: The 'Albury' plaster Montford Uiver statuette—note the broken right arm of the young woman (Courtesy AlburyCity Collection)**



**Image 3: Close-up of the 'Albury' plaster Montford Uiver statuette showing the Uiver being manually pulled to drier ground on the Albury Racecourse (Courtesy AlburyCity Collection)**

By 22 March 1935, £150 had been raised, a significant sum for a small town during the Great Depression, and Montford had been commissioned. Also, by then, the Uiver Memorial Fund Committee had been informed that arrangements had been made in Holland for the mayor of Albury to present the statuette to the mayor (burgemeester) of the City of Amsterdam, and for the statuette to be on display at the Amsterdam Town Hall.<sup>20</sup> It was reported that the 'plaque will comprise a field, on which will be depicted the Dutch plane and men pulling it from the sodden earth with ropes.'<sup>21</sup> It was also reported that the plaque 'will be surmounted by a lion,' a figure appearing on the Dutch coat of arms, but no further details were given.<sup>22</sup> It is clear that the consultation between Alfred Waugh and Paul Montford resulted in a change from plaque alone to a statuette in which the lion would be cast in bronze and sit atop a marble base, with a bronze plaque or plate or two affixed to the side of a marble base. At this stage there was no mention of a draped female figure with outstretched protective arm representing Australia, a feature that Montford seems to have added subsequently, consistent with his preference for symbolic figures.

During May 1935, Montford worked on his commission in the ballroom of a dilapidated villa in the Melbourne suburb of Toorak (see Image 4).<sup>23</sup> Time was tight, and in June 1935, as far as is known,

the marble base was sent to Naples with plaster mould to facilitate the casting there of the group of two figures (female figure and lion) that were to sit atop the marble base. The casting of the upper bronze part was done in Italy because of the difficulties of bronze casting in Australia where the necessary expertise was not available. Casting was possibly undertaken at the Chiurazzi foundry and was done in an alloy of copper and tin that was blue/green patinated.



**Image 4: Paul Montford (white coat) and his team and cockatoo in his Toorak studio**  
(Photograph, Henry Moore Institute Archive, Leeds)

One may be speculate that the less complex two-side plates were cast in Melbourne and affixed to the side of the marble before shipping. These were either cast in a more copper, less tin bronze mixture or possibly in brass, an alloy of copper and zinc.<sup>24</sup> When complete, the Italian foundry was to send the assembled statuette to Alfred Waugh at the Amstel Hotel in Amsterdam, in anticipation of its presentation to the Mayor of Amsterdam, Dr Willem de Vlugt.

Montford realised that, with the statuette pieces going directly to Italy from Melbourne, the people of Albury would be unable to see what he had crafted for the people of Holland, so he made a plaster statuette for Albury that replicated approximately what would become

the final bronze and marble statuette for Holland. Montford put the plaster statuette on exhibition at the Victorian Artists' Society in East Melbourne and arranged for it to be sent to Albury at the end of September 1935, just in time for Alfred and Ellen Waugh's return from their European trip. The two statuettes are of comparable dimensions and are visually similar but not identical. The height by width by depth dimensions of the plaster statuette are 615 x 380 x 195 millimetres, whilst those for the marble and bronze statuette are 640 x 360 x 180 millimetres.

### **The Mayor of Albury's Trip to Europe**

Alfred Waugh (1870–1948) was involved in the commissioning of Paul Montford to create a statuette as a gift from the people of Albury to the people of Holland, in working with Montford on the design of the statuette, and in presenting the statuette to the mayor of Amsterdam in Amsterdam. Waugh was a dominant figure in local government in Albury from 1903, when first elected, until his retirement in 1948, just three months before his death. Alfred was born in London and migrated to Australia with his parents in 1881. In 1893 he married Ellen Cockerell (1873–1956), a dressmaker, in Corowa. Alfred Waugh established a business as a butcher in Albury in 1895 and sold it in 1944, almost 50 years later.<sup>25</sup>

The Waughs were a childless couple that devoted their lives to the betterment of Albury and its people. They were much loved and admired. Alfred Waugh was involved in the introduction of sewerage and electricity, the expansion of water supply, the introduction of street construction, the building of a town hall, the establishment of Dean Square, the purchase and naming of Norieuil Park and the building of the city's war memorial. Ellen Waugh was especially involved in the establishment of an ambulance service and the building of an ambulance station and the Albury Baby Health Centre. As noted above, Alfred Waugh was first elected as an alderman in 1903 and, except for 1923 and part of 1925, served on council until May 1948, a total of 45 terms. He served Albury as its mayor on nineteen occasions, not consecutively, but for the first time in 1907 and the last in 1938.<sup>26</sup>

In 1915, Alfred Waugh developed serious issues with his right hip, possibly osteoarthritis. From that time on Ellen Waugh took an increasingly active role in their business as butchers, including cutting the meat. By 1922 Alfred was experiencing chronic pain. From 1915 to 1926 he seems to have used crutches or a walking stick, but, following an

operation in a private hospital in Corowa late in 1926, he used crutches exclusively to assist him in walking.

Albury was a key railway centre and the point at which the break of gauge between standard gauge (New South Wales) and broad gauge (Victoria) occurred. As a result, many dignitaries needed to change trains in Albury, and Alfred Waugh was keen for a civic reception to be held on each such occasion. He was involved in civic receptions for two future monarchs of England (for Prince George, Duke of Cornwall and York who became George V, and, as mayor, for Prince Albert, Duke of York who became George VI). On 22 October 1934, as mayor, he welcomed Prince Henry, Duke of Gloucester. Prince Henry was *en route* to Melbourne for the Victorian and Melbourne centenary celebrations. As part of those celebrations, on 10 November 1934, the prince presented the MacRobertson gold trophy to the pilots of the winning aircraft in the MacRobertson International Centenary Air Race (British pilots Charles W. Scott and T. Campbell Black) and a cheque for £2,000 to Anton Bakker, the Sydney-based representative of KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, for the Uiver's first prize in the handicap section of the race.<sup>27</sup>

On the evening of 23 October 1934, Alfred Waugh was in the Albury Club, almost opposite the Albury Post Office in which the 2CO studio was located, listening to the progress of the air race when the call came through for cars to proceed to the Albury Racecourse. Waugh was immediately driven to the racecourse to be with those vehicles whose lights illuminated a runway for the Uiver. After the landing, Alfred organised for the aircraft to be guarded so that the crew and passengers could proceed down town and accept hospitality at the Globe Hotel until dawn allowed inspection of the aircraft. Following the successful emergency landing, successful take-off, flight to Melbourne and heroic completion of the air race by the Uiver, Queen Wilhelmina made Alfred Waugh an Officer of the Order of Oranje-Nassau.

On 23 April 1935, Alfred and Ellen Waugh embarked on S.S. *Strathnaver* in Melbourne and 'set sail' for Europe. Alfred, as mayor of the Municipality of Albury, was a member of a delegation of 30 aldermen representing municipal councils of New South Wales at celebrations commemorating the centenary of the passing of the *Municipal Corporations (England) Act 1835* (5 & 6 William IV, c.76). This Act of Parliament, for the first time, provided for the election of town councils by local ratepayers. The celebrations were held in the City of York in June 1935.<sup>28</sup>

Following the local government centenary celebrations and some touring in England, the delegation travelled to Hitler's Germany, to Schuschnigg's Austria, and on to Mussolini's Italy before returning to London via Switzerland and France. Alfred and Ellen Waugh then embarked on their Dutch adventure. Very early on the morning of 3 August they arrived at Hoek van Holland. The ensuing train trip took them to Amsterdam, where they kept an appointment with the burgemeester of Amsterdam, Willem de Vlucht (see Image 5). The purpose of that appointment was for the mayor of Albury to present the Montford Uiver bronze and marble statuette to the mayor of Amsterdam, but the statuette had not yet arrived from Naples.<sup>29</sup>



**Image 5: Ellen and Alfred Waugh keep their appointment with Burgemeester Dr Willem de Vlucht (second from the right) on 3 August 1935. Also present is Dr K.M. Slotboom of KLM (far right) (Courtesy AlburyCity Collection)**

Dr de Vlucht is wearing a black armband in memory of his son, who was killed in an aircraft crash in April 1935. Dr de Vlucht is showing the Waughs the meeting room of the Amsterdam City Council situated in the Town Hall of Amsterdam.

The Waughs' tour of the Netherlands lasted from 3 to 19 August and included all its then eleven provinces. On Sunday 4 August 1935, the Waughs were taken to Schiphol Airport for a tour of the below sea-level airport; their presence swelled the number of people attending the airport that day from a regular 3,000 to about 8,000. On 5 August 1935, they went to Den Haag to see the prime minister, Dr Hendrik Colijn, who recalled the wireless telephone conversation between him and Alfred Waugh from Den Haag to Melbourne soon after the Uiver had completed the Great Air Race. The assembled throng cheered the Waughs as they departed from the offices of the prime minister.<sup>30</sup> On 9 August they visited the cheese market at Alkmaar, where a crowd of about 10,000 greeted them. The couple from the provincial town of Albury on the other side of the planet—the town that had saved their aircraft and all those on board—were fêted by large numbers of people everywhere they went. The Waughs became honorary royalty.

The most significant day of the tour was 15 August 1935 when Alfred and Ellen Waugh were guests of honour at a lunch arranged by the Albury Committee at Restaurant Excelsior in the Excelsior Hotel in Amsterdam (see Image 6). The director of KLM, Albert Plesman, Miss Lunsingh Tonckens, the KLM hostess to the Waughs in Holland, and Dr K.M. Slotboom, medical officer for KLM and event manager for the Waughs' visit, were also guests. Mr Scheltama of the Albury Committee presented Alfred Waugh with a solid silver model of the Uiver and notionally presented him with a bronze Uiver plaque—notionally, because two originals had been cast, one of which had already been despatched to Albury, leaving the plaque intended for mounting on the Schiphol Airport terminal as a temporary substitute (see Images 7 and 8).<sup>31</sup> Alfred Waugh was also given a gold cup for the Albury Racing Club on whose course the Uiver had landed (see Image 9). There was even sufficient money left over for a gold-mounted whip for the jockey of the winning horse of the Netherlands Gold Cup race.<sup>32</sup> After lunch, the party adjourned to the Amsterdam Town Hall, where they were greeted by the burgemeester of Amsterdam, Dr Willem de Vlugt. The statuette had arrived earlier that day,<sup>33</sup> and a crowd was gathered outside the town hall to welcome the mayor of Albury (see front cover).<sup>34</sup> In presenting the Montford bronze and marble statuette, Alfred Waugh said:

My visit to your country, which is about to end, has been a great pleasure to Mrs Waugh and myself. The whole population of Holland has received us with the utmost cordiality. It is very evident that a strong bond of friendly feeling has been brought about by the stirring incidents of October 1934. We feel that the whole nation of Holland has conferred on us many expressions of thanks and gratitude. I have today received from Albury a magnificent gift for the people of Holland. My people, imbued with the spirit of reciprocity, requested me to ask the Burgemeester of Amsterdam to accept a memento of the Uiver's arrival in Albury.

The figures on the statuette symbolise the exploits of the people of Albury on the early morning of October 24, 1934. I hope that the people of your nation will look upon it as a small token of goodwill from their newly found friends in a far distant land. With it come the best wishes of the people of Albury.<sup>35</sup>

In acknowledgment, Willem de Vlucht said:

I accept the gift most willingly and thankfully. I admire it as a work of art and also the spirit that prompted the people of Albury to make an appropriate presentation to the city. I again wish to express my heartfelt thanks to the people who had rendered such valuable assistance on that memorable occasion when the Dutch mail plane was participating in The Great Air Race.

The people of Holland will never forget the valuable aid rendered on that occasion. All the residents of the country were waiting for news of the Uiver, when after a silence of two hours it was suddenly announced that a safe landing had been effected by the help of the Albury people. That happy event has placed the name of Albury in the history of Holland for all time. I will see that a suitable position is provided in the Town Hall to display the gift.<sup>36</sup>

Neither speech mentioned the loss of the Uiver or suggested that Albury's gift was a condolence gesture. The statuette symbolised the landing of the Uiver in Albury and was to be a monument for the people of Holland to remember Albury's rescue of the seven on board the Uiver and the aircraft itself.<sup>37</sup>



**Image 6: Albury Committee lunch at Restaurant Excelsior on 15 August 1935. Alfred Waugh is presented with silver model Uiver and other gifts** (Courtesy AlburyCity Collection)

Seated from left to right are KLM director Albert Plesman; Mrs Scheltema; Mayor A. Waugh; behind him Mrs Ellen Waugh; on the left, behind Mrs Waugh, Mr Scheltema who presented the silver Uiver to Ald. Waugh on behalf of the Albury Committee.



**Image 7: Mayor Alfred Waugh in Albury with silver model Uiver presented to him by the Albury Committee in Amsterdam on 15 August 1935** (Courtesy Luchtvaart-Themapark Aviodrome, Lelystad, Netherlands)

Waugh is wearing his Order of Oranje-Nassau medal, the medal with rosette. The silver model Uiver now hangs in the Albury LibraryMuseum.



**Image 8: The bronze Uiver plaque notionally presented in Amsterdam to Albury mayor Alfred Waugh by the Albury Committee on 15 August 1935. An identical plaque now hangs in the Albury LibraryMuseum (Courtesy AlburyCity Collection)**



**Image 9: Netherlands Gold Cup, a gift from the Albury Committee to the Albury Racing Club (Photograph, MacRobertson International Air Race Collection 1934, Rex Allison Papers, MS4792, National Library of Australia)**

The cup was presented to the winner of the Albury Gold Cup race on 22 April 1936. The prime minister of Australia, the Hon. Joseph Lyons, attended the meeting, as did T. Elink Schuurman, the consul-general for the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The present whereabouts of this cup is not known.

Alfred Waugh was keen to renew contact with those from the Uiver whom he had first met in Albury on that fateful day—24 October 1934. When in Berlin in July 1935, the Waughs dined with Uiver passenger Thea Rasche. When they arrived at the Hoek of Holland on 3 August 1935, another Uiver passenger Piet Gilissen was there to greet them, and, when they visited Schiphol Airport on 4 August 1935, they fortuitously met Uiver co-pilot Jan Moll. On 6 August 1935 they went to the Amstelveen residence of Uiver pilot Captain Koene Parmentier. On 8 August 1935, they again motored to Schiphol Airport and there met the Uiver aircraft maintenance engineer Bouwe Prins and the wireless operator Cornelis van Brugge, as well as Captain Koene Parmentier for a second time. Regrettably, they were unable to see passenger Roelof Domenie as he had returned to his work in charge of the Hollandsche Bank Unie voor Zuid Amerika in Rio de Janeiro. However, on the last day of their tour of Holland on 19 August 1935, the Waughs visited Domenie's invalid mother, Elisabeth Domenie-Mets, at a remote village on Walcheren Peninsula in Zeeland.<sup>38</sup> They then proceeded to the port of Vlissingen and boarded the channel steamer *Princess Juliana* for Harwich.<sup>39</sup>

No sooner had the Waughs reached London than they went by train to Perth, Scotland, from where they were chauffeured to Queen Wilhelmina's holiday residence at St Fillans. On 21 August 1935, the Waughs from provincial Albury had afternoon tea with the Dutch Queen. They enjoyed their audience with Her Majesty, who specially asked Alfred Waugh to convey her lasting thanks to the people of Albury for their prompt actions on the occasion of the landing of the Uiver there. Waugh promised most faithfully to do this and graciously thanked Queen Wilhelmina for making him an Officer in the Order of Oranje-Nassau. On 22 August, the Waughs reached London and embarked at Tilbury for Melbourne on *S.S. Narkunda*, arriving on 30 September 1935. After being photographed in the clothes they had worn when in audience with the Dutch Queen, they proceeded direct to Albury that evening.

### **The Fate of the Montford Plaster Uiver Statuette in Albury**

On 1 October 1935, the *Border Morning Mail* reported that 'Albury's copy of the "Uiver" statuette ... has arrived and may be seen at the Town Hall, where it is being held pending a meeting of the committee which collected subscriptions for the memorial'.<sup>40</sup> As far as is known,

the Montford 'Albury' plaster statuette was soon put on display in the chambers where Albury's aldermen held their council meetings. Also on display was the Uiver bronze plaque, which had unexpectedly arrived in Albury on 4 July 1935 and was a gift sent by the Albury Committee of Amsterdam on behalf of the people of Holland.<sup>41</sup> The solid-silver model Uiver was positioned high in council chambers, as if flying, and backed by a mirror to reveal as much of the aircraft as possible.<sup>42</sup> At some stage a showcase was added that displayed the ebony gavel with gold trimmings presented to Mayor Waugh by the delegation to Albury from the Netherlands East Indies on 13 December 1934, and the replacement Order of Oranje-Nassau medal related to Mayor Waugh's investiture as an Officer of the Order of Oranje-Nassau on 17 December 1934, the original medal having been stolen.<sup>43</sup>

The February 1942 Japanese invasion of Java terminated Dutch civil flights by KNILM (Royal Netherlands Indies Air Lines) to Australia. Dutch civil flights resumed in December 1951 with the arrival in Sydney of KLM's Lockheed Constellation L-749A, PH-TFD *Arnhem* on 11 December, on which one of the pilots was Uiver pilot Jan Moll. KLM Royal Dutch Airlines recalled its aviation beginnings in Australia and arranged for the Dutch consul-general, Jonkheer Dr Gerard van Swinderen, to visit Albury. On 13 February 1952, he presented Albury's mayor, Alderman Cleaver Bunton, later Senator Bunton, with a 1951 Delft blue plate and an inscribed flat brass plate mounted on varnished wood. The inscription recalled that 'one of the foundations' of the December 1951 flight 'was laid by Albury on the night of the 14th [*sic* 24th] October 1934'. Both these Uiver-related items were added to the Uiver display in the council chambers. A photograph of council in session taken between October 1972 and September 1974 conveys the significance placed on the Montford Uiver plaster statuette, on other Uiver-related objects and on the relationship between the people of Albury and the people of Holland. Uiver-related items, including the Montford Uiver plaster statuette, were omnipresent at possibly all meetings of the Albury Council from 1935 until it shifted premises in April 1976—from the town Hall in Dean Street to new municipal offices in Kiewa Street (see Image 10). All but the Montford Uiver plaster statuette were then put on display in the foyer of the new municipal offices. The statuette was transferred to the municipal library in a building, since demolished, in what is now known as Queen Elizabeth II Square.



**Image 10: Albury City Council 1972–74** (Courtesy AlburyCity Collection)

This photograph includes the first female alderman for the City of Albury, Mrs Ivy (Bobby) C. Derkenne, and reveals the prominent place in council life of Uiver objects, especially the Montford plaster Uiver statuette. On Derkenne's left (to the right in the photograph) is Alderman Cleaver Bunton, later Senator Bunton.

In 1978 or thereabouts, the Paul Montford 'Albury Flight Memorial'<sup>44</sup> plaster statuette was removed from AlburyCity premises for restoration but was not restored and not returned.<sup>45</sup> In 2014, an Albury resident who knew of the removal of the plaster statuette and also of its likely whereabouts discussed with the author means of retrieving this significant Australian sculpture. Circumstances dictated that at that time it was not retrievable. Also in 2014, the author contacted the City of Amsterdam and enquired as to the whereabouts of the original Montford bronze and marble Uiver statuette. Several months later he was advised that extensive enquiries had been made, but the statuette could not be found. It looked very much like the bronze and marble statuette *and* the associated plaster statuette crafted by a significant British–Australian sculptor had been permanently lost. But on 9 November 2017 the plaster statuette was finally 'anonymously donated' back to AlburyCity. An object of local, state, national and international significance crafted

by Paul Montford had been recovered some 40 years after its loss, and currently awaits conservation.

### **The Fate of the Bronze and Marble Montford Uiver Statuette in Amsterdam**

In 1935, the mayor of Amsterdam promised that the Montford Uiver bronze and marble statuette would be placed in a prominent position in the Amsterdam Town Hall, and Alfred Waugh wrote in the *Border Morning Mail* that this had been done. But, as corporate remembrance of the golden age of aviation faded along with Holland's pre-eminent place in it, Dutch corporate remembrance of the flight of the Uiver also faded, and with it the significance of the Uiver Flight Memorial. It is not known when, but some time in or before 1962 the bronze and marble statuette was removed from view, and, as noted above, in 2014 its location was unknown.

With the recovery of the Montford plaster Uiver statuette, AlburyCity generously decided to offer the City of Amsterdam a replica in bronze and marble of its 'recovered' plaster statuette. That prompted the author to make a further attempt to locate the original bronze and marble statuette in Holland. A request was made to an aviation historian friend, Will Porrio, to ascertain whether the statuette had somehow remained at its original venue, which in March 1992 became the Grand Hotel Amsterdam and is since January 2011 the 'Sofitel Legend The Grand Amsterdam'. Instead, on 12 July 2018 Porrio contacted Tom van der Molen, curator of the Amsterdam Museum, the municipal museum for the City of Amsterdam; van der Molen immediately recognised the described piece as an object held in their enormous storage depot, an object with no known provenance. It had been catalogued only under the terms 'statuette' and 'lion', and the curator in 1967 added the following: 'Regarding the provenance of this statue has been found nothing so far'. See Images 11 and 12 and note how the coiling of the rope differs from that on the plaster version of the statuette in Image 3.



**Image 11: The Montford bronze and marble statuette at the Amsterdam Museum, a gift from the people of Albury to the people of Holland in August 1935, photographed in July 2018 following its 're-discovery' (Courtesy Will Porrio)**



**Image 12: Close-up view of the scene on the Albury Racecourse, 24 October 1934, as depicted on the Montford bronze and marble statuette (Courtesy Tom van der Molen)**

The key for any object is its story. The bronze and marble statuette, brought into being by the people of Albury to create a shared memory of an event of significance to the people of Holland and to them, had lost its story for more than 50 years. Tom van der Molen was delighted to be informed by Will Porrio of the provenance of the mystery object. On 12 July 2018, a statuette of some significance to the shared heritage of Holland and Australia had been ‘recovered’.

In 2014, it looked as if both the bronze and marble and the plaster versions of the Uiver Flight Memorial, crafted by a significant but, until recently, relatively obscure sculptor Paul Montford, were lost forever. Now both have been recovered and in due course will again be on public display, thus restoring our corporate memory of the Uiver and also of Paul Montford, as well as recovering aspects of our shared Australian–Dutch cultural heritage.

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For digital enhancement of images: Peter Green and Ian Cossor.

## Notes

- 1 'Views of the Donor: Great Tribute to Dutch-men: "They fulfilled my intentions"', *Age*, 25 October 1934, p. 10, at <https://tinyurl.com/y7g9eam5>.
- 2 The times given in this article are local times.
- 3 18,152 postal items were for Australia and 7,754 for the Dutch East Indies.
- 4 Noel Jackling and Doug Royal, 'Drama at the Albury Racecourse 1934: The International Airliner KLM Royal Dutch Airlines Douglas DC-2 "Uiver"', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, vol. 102, part 1, June 2016, pp. 45–70.
- 5 'Views of the Donor.'
- 6 'Tour of Holland: Albury's Statuette Presented to City of Amsterdam: Silver Model of "Uiver" for Albury', *Border Morning Mail*, 1 October 1935, p. 4. Dutch Florin (*f*) is a very old name for Guilder, but, in writing it, *f* was always used as a prefix to a Guilder amount. The reported total sum raised, according to newspapers, was *f*2978,14 Guilders. For example, 'Het Albury-comité kreeg *f*2978.14'. See *Provinciale Drentsche en Asser Courant*, 28 November 1934, at <https://tinyurl.com/y8qu5a3p>.
- 7 'In Dean Square: Presentations Made,' and 'Netherlands East Indies Thanks Albury for Aiding "Uiver" Fly', *Border Morning Mail*, 14 December 1934, p. 4.
- 8 'Albury Honored with Netherlands Order: Oranje Nassau: Mayor Made an Officer', *Border Morning Mail*, 18 December 1934, p. 2.
- 9 Summary of the known accidents and incidents in 1934 are available at <http://www.hdekker.info/Nieuwe%20map/1934.htm>. The Uiver logbook can be found at <http://hdekker.info/UIVER/uiverleven.html>.
- 10 Aviation Safety Network, at <https://aviation-safety.net/database/record.php?id=19341220-0>; Uiver logbook, at <http://hdekker.info/UIVER/uiverleven.html>.
- 11 De Uiver verongelukt bij Rutbah Wells (Irak), at <http://www.aviacrash.nl/paginas/uiver.htm>.
- 12 'What Will Albury Do? This Evening's Meeting', *Border Morning Mail*, 3 January 1935, p. 2.
- 13 "'Uiver" Memorial Fund: Shilling Appeal Inaugurated', *Border Morning Mail*, 10 January 1935, p. 1.
- 14 'Gifts for Helpers: Dutch Delegation's Visit', *Border Morning Mail*, 11 December 1934, p. 2; 'Seven Lives Lost when "Uiver" Crashes', *Border Morning Mail*,

- 22 December 1934, p. 1; 'Lost 'plane "Uiver": Albury to Consider Action: Public Meeting this Evening: Mayor and Mr. Tietyens in Brisbane', *Border Morning Mail*, 3 January 1935, p. 2.
- 15 "'Uiver" Memorial: Plaque for Holland: Selection Is Likely', *Border Morning Mail*, 22 February 1935, p. 6.
- 16 "'Uiver" Memorial: Plaque for Holland'.
- 17 'Albury Flight Memorial Catalogue 1935d' is the term used in: Catherine Moriarty, *Making Melbourne's Monuments: The Sculpture of Paul Montford*, Melbourne, Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2013, p. 283.
- 18 Moriarty, especially pp. 3–18.
- 19 'Uiver Statuette: Copy Reaches Albury: May Be Seen at Town Hall', *Border Morning Mail*, 1 October 1935, p. 3.
- 20 'Uiver Memorial Plaque Decided On', *Border Morning Mail*, 19 March 1935, p. 2; 'Bronze Plaque for "Uiver" Memorial', *Albury Banner & Wodonga Express*, 22 March 1935, p. 9.
- 21 'Bronze Plaque for "Uiver" Memorial'.
- 22 'Bronze Plaque for "Uiver" Memorial'.
- 23 Moriarty, p. 283.
- 24 The description of the metal here is a layman's observation, not a professional assessment. Moriarty, p. 65.
- 25 'Nearly 50 Years in One Shop: Ald. Waugh Sells his Business', *Border Morning Mail*, 2 September 1944, p. 2.
- 26 Patricia Young, 'Ellen and Alfred Waugh', *Albury & District Historical Society Inc. Bulletin*, August 2014, pp. 4–5, at <https://alburyhistory.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Bulletin-548.pdf>.
- 27 'The ex-Mayor Ald. A. Waugh' and 'The ex-Mayoress Mrs. Waugh', *Border Morning Mail*, 10 January 1939, p. 2; 'The ex-Mayor Ald. Waugh' and 'The ex-Mayoress Mrs. Waugh', continued and concluded, *Border Morning Mail*, 11 January 1939, p. 4.
- 28 'Local Government Centenary Celebrations ... 1935', at <https://www.britishpathe.com/video/local-government-centenary-celebrations-at-york-ne>.
- 29 'Albury's Burgemeester: Komt Zaterdag in ons Land', *Bredasche Courant*, 3 August 1935, n.p., at <https://tinyurl.com/ybmeg3ju>; 'Burgemeester Waugh: Te Amsterdam Aangekomen', *Het Nieuws van den Dag voor Nederlandsch-Indie*, 5 August 1935, n.p., at <https://tinyurl.com/ydb7evjc>. Part of the article translates as follows: Mayor Waugh was unable to hand over the statuette that was meant for Mayor de Vlucht, due to the non-arrival yet of the luggage.
- 30 'Albury's Mayor in Holland', *Albury Banner & Wodonga Express*, 9 August 1935, p. 9.
- 31 The 'Albury' bronze Uiver plaque arrived in Albury on 4 July 1935. 'Surprise Present for Albury: Netherlands Gratitude: Handsome Present Arrives', *Border Morning Mail*, 5 July 1935, p. 4.
- 32 'Albury Racing Club Cup from Netherlands', *Border Morning Mail*, 3 July 1935, p. 6; 'Queen of Holland Receives Albury Mayor', *Albury Banner & Wodonga Express*, 30 August 1935, p. 9. There is a suggestion that the gold-mounted whip was donated by Albury horse-owner Mr A.H. Mackie, but he may only have presented the whip. See: 'Cup Coincidence', *Albury Banner & Wodonga Express*, 24 April 1936, p. 5.
- 33 'Uiver Model for Albury: A Magnificent Gift', *Border Morning Mail*, 2 October 1935, p. 3.

- 34 Photograph with caption but no title. *De Telegraaf*, 16 August 1935, p. 3, at <https://tinyurl.com/yayqengp>.
- 35 'Uiver Model for Albury: A Magnificent Gift'.
- 36 'Uiver Model for Albury: A Magnificent Gift'.
- 37 'Honoured by Queen of Holland', *Argus*, 1 October 1935, p. 8.
- 38 'Tour of Holland: Albury's Statuette Presented to City of Amsterdam: Australian Emblems', *Border Morning Mail*, 1 October 1935, p. 4.
- 39 'Tour of Holland: Albury's Statuette presented to City of Amsterdam'.
- 40 "'Uiver" Statuette: Copy Reaches Albury'.
- 41 'Surprise Present for Albury: Netherlands Gratitude', *Border Morning Mail*, 5 July 1935, p. 4.
- 42 There is no record of the date of arrival of the model Uiver in Albury, but according to the *Border Morning Mail* it was expected to arrive in the second week of October 1935. 'Uiver Model for Albury: A Magnificent Gift'.
- 43 'Netherlands East Indies Thanks Albury for Aiding "Uiver" Fly'; 'Albury Honored by Netherlands: Mayor Invested as Officer of Orange-Nassau: Valuable Gifts Presented to Citizens in Appreciation of Aid Rendered to Moll and Parmentier', *Albury Banner & Wodonga Express*, 21 December 1934, p. 7.
- 44 'Albury Flight Memorial Catalogue 1935d' is the term used in Moriarty, p. 283.
- 45 There is some evidence that restoration may have been attempted but failed. AlburyCity is the current corporate name for the City of Albury.

# Turning the Screw: The 1916 Victorian Campaign for Conscription

John Lack\*

## Abstract

*Historians of the home front in the Great War, while generally agreeing that by mid-1916 Australia was bitterly divided over the issue of conscription for overseas military service, have shown far more interest in the anti-conscriptionists than in the conscriptionists. This article traces the campaign for conscription that was waged in regional Victoria and in Melbourne, the national capital—notably the municipal and Australian Natives' Association crusades for compulsion. Was this why Victoria became the most closely divided state at the plebiscite held in October 1916?*

## Introduction

Celebrations of the centenary of Australia in the Great War are now behind us. Historians of the home front have given, and still give, far more attention to opponents of compulsory war service than they do to advocates of conscription. In 1968, introducing the re-issue of Leslie Jauncey's *The Story of Conscription* (1935), Patrick O'Farrell observed that the story actually told 'was that of the anti-conscription movement and its gospel'.<sup>1</sup> The title of the recent *The Conscription Conflict and the Great War* (2016) is just as misleading. 'Conflict' implies combatants, but only one of the eight essays is concerned substantially with conscriptionists.<sup>2</sup> With that exception, and Judith Smart's study of conservative women,<sup>3</sup> what O'Farrell wrote of Jauncey's leading anti-conscriptionists—'nothing more than names and actions'—remains true of the conscriptionists. Historians have understood that anti-conscription was a *reactive* position, a *response* to calls for conscription, yet comprehending the anti-conscription movement presupposes an appreciation of the *preceding* (as well as *accompanying*) movement for conscription. Nick Dyrenfurth has insisted that Melbourne 'became the organisational centre of the anti-conscription movement' and Victoria 'the ideological heart of the "No" case'.<sup>4</sup> But these developments,

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and what Frank Bongiorno described as ‘a mass movement against conscription’, were largely products of Victorian conscriptionists’ concerted advocacy of compulsion.<sup>5</sup>

Accounts of the home front generally date the rise of the conscription issue to the early months of 1916. During Prime Minister Hughes’s six-month absence in England, Ernest Scott wrote in his *Australia During the War* (1936), there grew up ‘a strong and well-informed [*sic*] body of opinion in favour of the policy’ of conscription, which he described as a ‘movement’. Relying on Scott, Barry Smith (1966) and Ken Inglis (1968) listed some of the organisations—notably the Universal Service League in Sydney and Melbourne and the Australian Natives’ Association in Victoria—that advocated conscription. Hughes’s main biographer, Laurie Fitzhardinge, concluded in 1979 that Hughes had found on his return ‘a country deeply divided on the question’. More recently Robert Bollard (2013), Michael McKernan (2014), John Connor (2015) and Robin Archer (2016) have agreed, Joan Beaumont (2013) offering the fullest overview.<sup>6</sup> What generated the Victorian ferment for conscription and how did the conscriptionist movement produce a state of heightened feeling in Victoria, and so early? Studies of the home front in other states suggest nothing to match the early level of excitement in Victoria.<sup>7</sup>

### **Australia’s ‘Promissory Note’ and ‘Debt of Honour’**

Australia went to war after the writs had been issued for a general election. Prime Minister Joseph Cook offered an expeditionary force of 20,000 men, which Labor’s Andrew Fisher endorsed, promising that, if elected, his government would defend the mother country ‘to the last man and the last shilling’. Fisher’s Labor Party won the election, and the opposition, especially Cook and the arch conscriptionist Sir William Irvine, never let Labor forget that ‘promissory note’. Irvine, attorney general in the Cook Liberal government of 1913–14, was a keen supporter of his successor attorney general W.M. Hughes’ War Precautions Act of 1914, and a strong advocate of compulsory overseas war service, which he wanted imposed under that Act.<sup>8</sup> In November Cook called for more energetic recruitment, and within weeks Fisher had set a new target of 60,000, raised in January to 70,000. By mid-1915 Cook was calling for ‘at least a hundred thousand Australians at the war’. Indeed, if our contribution were proportionate to that of Britain ‘our share would be a couple of hundred thousand.’<sup>9</sup> By the end of 1914

Australian enlistments stood at 52,561, and a year later 165,912.<sup>10</sup> Cook thereafter fell silent, and Irvine emerged as the Liberals' constant critic of Labor's war effort.<sup>11</sup>

The push for conscription was taken up in September 1915 by the Universal Service League (USL), which demanded a fuller organisation of the nation's manpower and resources for total war. The complex story of the League's origins and influence can be told only in summary here. It was modelled on the British National Service League (NSL), which, under the control of the avid Imperialist Lord Milner, pressed the Asquith government for an intense recruiting campaign and, failing that, conscription. Milner's original object was a closer union of the Empire, and to that end he had encouraged the formation of Round Table groups in major cities throughout the Dominions. With the coming of war, these groups became obsessed with the threat to the very survival of Empire.<sup>12</sup> The strongest of the Australian groups was in Melbourne, largely composed of university academics sharing Hughes's conviction that Australia could only be protected by a total crushing of Germany.<sup>13</sup> There was a strong, if clandestine, overlap of Melbourne Round Table and Victorian USL membership.<sup>14</sup> These bodies strongly influenced Hughes's critical decisions when he succeeded Fisher as prime minister in October 1915. 'In Britain and Australia,' Neville Meaney suggests, 'an imperially-minded professional elite began to organise a movement for the purpose of persuading their respective governments to legislate for conscription.' He is mistaken, however, in concluding that the USL failed in its campaign to have Hughes adopt conscription.<sup>15</sup>

On becoming prime minister, Hughes quickly signalled that the winning of the war came first; he abandoned the referendum for greater Commonwealth powers over prices and monopolies, announced his visit to England to confer on war policy, and offered Britain an additional 50,000 recruits, and 9,500 reinforcements per month, bringing the total number of volunteers up to 300,000 by June 1916. Both the *Age* and the *Argus* hailed this announcement: 'Our credit is now involved in redeeming this promise,' the *Argus* warned.<sup>16</sup> In his last speech before his departure for London, Hughes referred to the post-war challenge of finding employment 'for those 300,00 or 400,000 [*sic*] fighting men who come back.'<sup>17</sup> The AIF would be expanded from two to five divisions, supplied from volunteers raised by local recruiting committees based upon municipal councils armed with the results of the 1915 War Census

of manpower. Hughes specifically linked this procedure with Britain's 'Lord Derby' recruiting scheme. Australia's 600,000 eligible men aged between 18 and 44 would be questioned about their willingness to enlist: if not now, why not, and if later, exactly when? Britain's National Registration and 'Lord Derby' scheme had become the models for Australia's War Census and recruitment of a 'New Army'.

Representatives of the Melbourne Round Table had met with Hughes in November 1915, wanting from him the same guarantee that conscriptionists had obtained from Prime Minister Asquith: should the government's recruiting appeal fail to satisfy recruiting targets, conscription would follow.<sup>18</sup> Assuming Hughes's agreement, the USL suspended its campaign for conscription, and Hughes arranged a truce on the issue with newspaper proprietors and the opposition. Lord Derby's campaign failed. Before Hughes arrived in London Britain introduced conscription for single men and extended it to married men before he came home.

Andrew Fisher, the man who had issued the Australian blank cheque for the British war effort, arrived in London as high commissioner, and repeated his own pledge as well as Hughes's promise of 300,000 volunteers by June 1916. Hughes, crossing the Pacific on his way to London, with stopovers in New Zealand and Canada, did the same. Enlistments lifted before Hughes departed but soon fell again. In Victoria the *Age* and the *Argus*, their combined daily sales approaching 280,000 copies, called off their truce with Labor, asserting that only conscription would allow Australia to redeem Fisher's pledge and repay her 'debt of honour' to Britain. George Pearce, minister of defence and acting prime minister, defended voluntary recruitment but became enmeshed in arguments about exactly what the government had promised. A reduction of the promised 300,000 produced howls of indignant protest that Australia's honour was besmirched. The Melbourne University gentlemen of the Universal Service League stood by their undertaking with Hughes, as for a time did the Liberal opposition, with the exception of Irvine, who harried Pearce at every opportunity. With parliament in recess, conscriptionists sought other means of putting the screws on Labor. Their tactics made Victoria the scene of the most vigorous of the conscription campaigns to precede Hughes's return.

## The Municipal Movement for Conscription

The campaign was launched inauspiciously in Gippsland, at Warragul, a township in a shire with a population of 3,860 and a council comprising five farmers, a grazier, an auctioneer, a storekeeper—and a solicitor, Collingwood-born Milo Davine. Davine had made his career in regional Victoria, first as a customs officer at Port Fairy and Mildura, and then as a barrister and solicitor in Omeo and Warragul. Elected to council in 1912, he was shire president 1915–16, holding executive positions with the Municipal Association of Victoria, the Gippsland Shires Development Association and the Australian Natives' Association (ANA). Davine was a fervent Imperial patriot and recruiter who had argued the affirmative case in the local ANA branch debate: 'Should conscription be established throughout the Empire?'<sup>19</sup>

On 11 February 1916 Davine asked his councillors to report the progress of recruitment meetings. Edward Jones, a storekeeper at Buln Buln, spoke of enlisted men who had left their families in distress: 'the time had arrived for conscription. There should be equality of sacrifice'. Francis Arnold, a farmer at Sea View, felt he had a perfect right to ask a young fellow 'why he didn't go to assist his own [two] sons and [eight] nephews [at the front]'. There was unanimous support for Davine's motion:

the time has arrived when the Federal Government should adopt conscription for military service as a means of fairly dividing the responsibility of defending our Empire and home land, and that all the municipal councils in this State be asked to co-operate in having this matter placed before the Government.

Councils were asked to write to their federal MPs.<sup>20</sup>

Historians seem unaware of the spirited discussion that the Warragul circular generated. To Robert Bollard the call for 'equality of sacrifice' is merely 'the phrase by which conscription was spun as a democratic rather than authoritarian measure.'<sup>21</sup> One contemporary newspaperman, Thomas Shortill of the *Gisborne Gazette*, branded the call a cynical exercise in manufacturing public opinion. Laborites were immediately suspicious of the Warragul appeal. 'Why should [we] follow the lead of obscure Warragul?' a Williamstown councillor asked, a colleague quickly responding: 'It is in Irvine's constituency.'<sup>22</sup> He was not quite correct. Warragul was the westernmost township in

the sprawling federal electorate of Gippsland, sharing a boundary with conservative Sir William Irvine's electorate of Flinders. The labour movement and 'Iceberg' Irvine shared a mutual antagonism that went back to the Victorian railway engine drivers' strike of 1903. Warragul lay in the state electorate of Gippsland West, one of three Gippsland seats won in 1902 by supporters of the Citizens' Reform League. Originating in the northern Victorian shire of Kyabram, the league agitated for economy in public spending and a substantial reduction in the size of the public service and Victoria's parliament. Irvine, then Victorian premier, had astutely harnessed the Kyabram pressure group and fashioned a movement based in the shires to capitalise on country distrust of those three ogres—Melbourne, the Trades Hall, and the Labor Party. Thus, in the political vacuum occasioned by the migration of Deakinite Liberals from the state to the federal scene, Irvine achieved some success in furthering the move to a two-party system based on a country-city divide.<sup>23</sup> As the federal member for Flinders, extending along the eastern margins of suburban Melbourne to embrace the Mornington Peninsula, Irvine was familiar with Warragul and Gippsland, having established his early legal reputation in the Gippsland County Courts.<sup>24</sup> He would have known Milo Davine, at least by repute, and also the MHR for Gippsland, George Henry Wise. As we shall see, Davine and Wise were already well known to one another.

The conscriptionists appear to have found their campaign model in the Kyabram Reform Movement, which had gathered the support of almost 60 of Victoria's shires back in 1902.<sup>25</sup> Shires with grievances commonly appealed for support among fellow municipalities. In February/March 1916 council notice papers across Victoria carried not only Warragul's appeal for conscription but motions from Traralgon Shire protesting against the release from internment of a 'disloyal' townsman of German parentage, and from Ripon Shire advocating the suppression of peace and anti-conscription meetings.<sup>26</sup> It was no accident that Irvine, Davine and Wise decided to launch their campaign for conscription in the municipalities.

Victoria's municipal network outside Melbourne City consisted of 17 suburban and regional cities, 7 towns, 27 boroughs, and 141 shires. Elected by property owners on a franchise tied to property values and the payment of rates, councils were hardly democratic bodies. Mainly concerned with services to property, shires were dominated by farmers

and graziers, boroughs and towns by small businessmen and tradesmen. Council proceedings were reported in considerable detail, for virtually every Victorian suburb, town and shire had at least one local or district newspaper. In 1916 there were 223 country and 35 Melbourne suburban newspapers.<sup>27</sup> Taking advantage of State Library Victoria's magnificent newspaper archive, we can eavesdrop on a large proportion of the discussions of the Warragul circular.

Warragul Shire Council was gratified by the quick and positive response. The *Age* and the *Argus* reported progressive tallies, the *Argus* pronouncing the movement 'productive of striking results' and Warragul Council claiming that the replies were 'showing a remarkable unanimity of opinion in favour of conscription.' By late in April, 81 of 100 replies had been favourable.<sup>28</sup> Thomas Shortill, editor of the *Gisborne Gazette*, was sceptical. Shortill, a long-standing Irish nationalist who established the *Gisborne Gazette* in 1894, wrote for Daylesford and Kyneton papers and also for the Melbourne *Advocate* (where he was deputy editor in 1915 and editor in 1917), had already editorialised against conscription and for a fair trial of the voluntary system. He wrote that the compliant councils constituted a minority whose significance 'will be better understood when it is remembered that the Warragul movement had the full support of the daily press of Melbourne', which published very little about those councils that rejected the Warragul appeal. 'In this way', Shortill concluded, 'is "public opinion" manufactured.'<sup>29</sup> Certainly Melbourne press publicity created something of a bandwagon effect. For instance, South Barwon Shire's president 'did not think they should stand out.'<sup>30</sup> But the issue also struck a nerve. In Bannockburn Shire, President John McCallum, a farmer of Inverleigh, maintained that conscription 'had been the serious consideration of all of them for a long time past.'<sup>31</sup>

The response to the Warragul circular proved far stronger than Thomas Shortill realised and than the Melbourne press and Warragul Council ever claimed. Of the 174 responses that have been located, mainly in local and regional newspapers, only 40 were rejections. Only a few councillors, for instance at Bulla and Borung, doubted that they should be consulted at all.<sup>32</sup> Strathfieldsaye Shire Council called a public meeting that, poorly attended, unanimously endorsed Warragul's appeal.<sup>33</sup> In Melbourne, Labor councillors, uncertain of the policy their party would adopt, took refuge in their narrow municipal responsibilities.<sup>34</sup>

Half of the 40 rejections simply recorded the correspondence as 'Received' or 'No action', the other half considering the matter the preserve of government. Those not wishing to prejudice the current recruiting campaign favoured conscription should voluntary enlistment fail.<sup>35</sup> Only in a handful of councils were strongly anti-conscriptionist sentiments expressed. Conscription was supported unanimously by 75 councils, and approved by a further 59 councils where opposition was usually, but not invariably, feeble. These 134 approvals represented a majority (almost 70 per cent) of Victoria's 192 municipalities, and more than three quarters of the 174 whose response is known.

### **Like Sheep, Men 'had to be rounded up, and put through the race'**

The scions of Victoria's Western District squatters, perhaps with a keen sense of their stewardship of one of the Empire's most valuable estates, had little compunction about supporting conscription. At Leigh Shire Council (meeting near Shelford) the discussion was brief and pointed, grazier Joseph Vernon observing, without a trace of irony, 'no one ... would like to see this fair country of ours invaded.'<sup>36</sup> At Hamilton, Donald Fraser, president of Dundas Shire Council, believed that with conscription imposed from the outset 'the war would probably have been over by now'. Grazier Stanley Learmonth, of 'Eulameet', Cavendish, contrasted patriotic families with those that harboured shirkers: 'those who had "cold feet" should be compelled to serve.'<sup>37</sup> At Bacchus Marsh, grazier Molesworth Richard Greene, who owned the 10,000-acre 'Greystones' at Rowsley and six dairy farms in Gippsland, all operated by share-farmers, was blunt: 'The present voluntary system was rotten, as it skimmed the cream of the population and left the scum behind'. Shire president and farmer David Robertson agreed: 'They would not get the men under the voluntary system. He might as well go to his paddock and sing out to the sheep to come to market. They would not do it, but had to be rounded up, and put through the race.'<sup>38</sup> It was perhaps not inappropriate to liken conscription to the mustering of stock, given that soldiers were also destined for the slaughter yards, albeit further afield.

A substantial majority of Victorian councillors followed Warragul's lead, but many found the issue confronting. As public figures, their war service was already under scrutiny. In Charlton Shire the recruiting committee had secured the resignation of the president because his 'two sons of military age had not enlisted.'<sup>39</sup> William Day, a farmer at Tongala in Deakin Shire,

had suffered through the war, and there were others at the table also who were suffering through it. He had one son killed, and another young boy was anxious to go, but he was too young ... [T]hey were taking the lads too young ... the age of 20 was young enough.

Enlistment of only sons with dependent parents should not be permitted, he added. With barely another word, the council meeting supported Warragul unanimously.<sup>40</sup> But in Broadmeadows Shire, an objection to boys of eighteen being accepted, even with their parents' consent, brought grazier Samuel Baird's retort: 'When I was 18 years of age I would fight anything. (Laughter.)'<sup>41</sup> At Mortlake, Philip Ormsby, an Ellerslie farmer, had a son under the enlistment age: 'I also have one son at the front, whilst another is married with a family, and he felt he could not go.' Ormsby cast his vote reluctantly, and the motion for conscription was carried ten to one, with his support.<sup>42</sup> And, in Ararat borough, merchant George Burn, who could not enlist but had consented to his five sons serving, thought it was time for conscription.<sup>43</sup> Some council meetings were tense. Nunawading's shire president Herbert Davis, a salesman of Box Hill, 'remarked heatedly: Not one councillor who has voted against conscription has sent a man to the front.—Cr Bennett: Have you sent one?—The President: No, but I have relatives there.'<sup>44</sup> In Ararat Shire Edwin Sutherland, a Willaura farmer, when asked 'Would you go?' answered 'Most certainly'. His motion for conscription, promptly seconded by his inquisitor, was carried without dissent.<sup>45</sup>

One of the most fraught council meetings occurred in Braybrook Shire on the fringe of Melbourne's western suburbs, where George Pennell was one of several vehement critics of 'shirkers' who would neither enlist nor contribute to patriotic funds. Robert Hopkins, a Derrimut farmer, grew angry: '(Hotly)—It is all very well for the likes of you to try to get conscription. You are too old to go, but I have only one son. Do you think I want him dragged away from me?' George Pennell said he had tried to enlist, and had no sons old enough to go, but had nephews there: 'and what are they giving their lives for? The likes of Cr Hopkins and his son'. Hopkins and Pennell then 'jumped to their feet and faced each other in threatening attitudes'. Hopkins: 'Do not talk to me like that. My son is not going; he is my only boy'. Pennell: 'It is the likes of you who make conscription necessary'.<sup>46</sup>

**‘All the recruiting committees are formed from the councils, and they are in a position to speak’**

Most recruitment committees found their work dispiriting. Again and again they reported obstruction, resentment, defiance, rudeness, and outright evasion. Judging from the replies on the war census cards, Arch Fiskien of Buninyong remarked, ‘it would soon be necessary to establish a sanatorium in their midst, as all the men seemed to be in bad health.’<sup>47</sup> David Ballie, a councillor and clergyman at Gisborne, confessed that they had induced only 45 out of 274 to enlist.<sup>48</sup> Thomas Slaughter, a Murtoa farmer with a son at the front, reported that recruiting in Dunmunkle Shire had practically come to a standstill.<sup>49</sup> Newstead Shire’s recruiting subcommittee had just as dismal a response: ‘the most pointed replies were to the effect of “Waiting for conscription.” ... The percentage ... who had enlisted was about three and a half of all available men.’<sup>50</sup> Hamilton’s mayor reported ‘Plenty of men had aged parents who did not want them to go, and these men said “If the country wants us why don’t the country say so?”’<sup>51</sup> William Barnes, a blacksmith at Kenmare in Karkaroc Shire, knew farmers who had misstated their ages to avoid military service.<sup>52</sup> Such responses made councillors strong conscriptionists.

In February the *Argus* reported an attack on the enlistment record of farming families. The Reverend J.A. Lee

said that in Numurkah 750 said they could not go because they were growing wheat for the soldiers. They lied ... They were not growing wheat for soldiers, but to line their own pockets ... farmers had cheap labour in their sons, and they could not turn round or get married without the father’s consent.<sup>53</sup>

Recruiting Sergeant Paterson reported cases of parents threatening to disinherit their sons if they enlisted. James Tuckett, a farmer at Waaia, said: ‘Mere boys, only sons of widowed and poor mothers had answered the call and gave the opportunity to sons of well-to-do landholders to shirk’. William Campbell said ‘it was “murder” to send young boys to take the place of older men who should go.’<sup>54</sup> ‘The Government should take who they wanted’, said Inglewood’s mayor and cycle engineer Charles Ansett, ‘and then it would be fair to all’. The father of five children, he enlisted in May.<sup>55</sup> At Bendigo the recruiting committee’s experience of resistance converted five opponents of conscription into advocates of

compulsion—‘desperate diseases ... required desperate remedies.’<sup>56</sup> As Tatura farmer James Wilson said: ‘All the recruiting committees are formed from the councils, and they are in a position to speak.’<sup>57</sup>

Where were the conscripts to come from? One assumption was that patriots would enlist once their ‘cold-footed’ neighbours faced being conscripted. But exactly who were these ‘shirkers’? The answers varied according to circumstances. Bill Gunn, a farmer at Everton and president of the North Ovens [Benalla] Council, had the rich in his sights: ‘the wealthy people were not going, and some of them turned round and even said it was only the working man that should go. The only way they would get the wealthy men or their sons to go was by conscription.’<sup>58</sup> Bellarine Shire councillors reached a sort of consensus that conscription could solve a number of problems. Denis O’Halloran, a Moolap farmer, ‘thought it would be a good idea to conscript the loafers and wasters who were ready to go on strike on any pretext’. Another farmer, Edward Harvey, ‘thought that the strikers, agitators and racecourse hangers on should be put in the front rank, and made to fight for the country.’<sup>59</sup> In Ballarat City, Alexander Bell lamented: ‘The best blood of the country had gone [to war], and if they were not careful they would be left with a lot of degenerates’. James Brokenshire, with two boys at the front and one returning, condemned the ‘thousands’ who frequented Melbourne racetracks and football matches.<sup>60</sup> The reluctance of young single men to enlist, it seemed, was the heart of the problem. When Tom Dally informed his fellow Borung Shire councillors that ‘four married men went away from here [Warracknabeal] recently ... leaving twenty dependents [*sic*] behind them’, John Campbell, a retired farmer, observed: ‘Heavy casualties among married men at the front meant additional expense to the country to pension their dependents [*sic*].’<sup>61</sup>

Labour needs presented councillors with a dilemma. In Dunmunkle Shire, Michael Tobin, a Murtoa storekeeper and farmer, declared that: ‘He and his sons, when they thought of the miseries experienced through the drought, considered they were justly entitled to remain behind and square up the harvest and their debts if possible ... His sons would be there, when the time comes.’<sup>62</sup> Dairy farmers and market gardeners in Cranbourne Shire sometimes looked to conscription to save their sons. Angus Cameron, a farmer at Yannathan, ‘was letting [*sic*] his son go, whom he could ill spare’; William Greaves, a farmer at Monomeith, ‘owing to the effect of the war was working his place with the aid of his son’; William Brunt had ‘a son going to the front, another ready to go,



**Anti-conscriptionist: 'What, not enough men! Well, get back into the trenches yourself! We can't interfere with the liberty of THESE people!' Norman Lindsay, *Bulletin*, 25 May 1916**

Norman Lindsay targeted union leaders or Labor Party MPs who protected shirkers.

and another rejected'. There was resentment of young men strolling about Melbourne and 'flocking to city offices'. Angus Cameron proposed that 'the men from the city should be drafted out first, as they could be better spared', for they had lost too many Cranbourne boys.<sup>63</sup>

In the wheat lands of northern Victoria the cries were similar: 'in the country the population was being decimated'; 'the producer ... was as necessary as the soldier to carry on the war'; 'those who could be more easily spared would be taken [conscripted] first'; 'the cities should send more men'—city loafers rather than productive farmers.<sup>64</sup> Such views issued from a long-incubating rural resentment of the continuing drain of the young to the metropolis. Melbourne City and its ring of eighteen municipalities, housing almost half of Victoria's population, were thought to offer a great reserve, ripe for conscription.

### **‘Why don’t you bald-headed old boodles go instead of pushing young fellows?’**

In Melbourne and suburbs discussion of conscription was usually less heated than in the more intimate settings of the boroughs and shires, but the evidence from recruiting committees remained stark. Young men were resisting enlistment, and most committees, whether in middle- or working-class areas, reached the same conclusion as their rural counterparts; ‘patriotic’ families resented the shirkers who were indifferent to the Empire’s peril.

Melbourne City Council’s recruiting committee led the way, and councils in the solidly middle-class suburbs east of the Yarra also gave Warragul their unanimous support, their table talk extolling national honour and duty to Empire, lamenting the necessity for compulsion, and imploring (rather than demanding) the government to redeem its pledge to Britain.<sup>65</sup> In the suburbs stretching from Essendon through Brunswick, Northcote, Fitzroy, and Collingwood, solid majorities for compulsion overwhelmed small numbers of doubters and anti-conscriptionists.<sup>66</sup> South Melbourne delayed its support of Warragul for two months, but endorsed conscription when a mere 10 per cent of those circularised agreed to enlist. Voluntarism, Robert Cuthbertson declared, was an unjust and undemocratic system, ‘really a form of compulsion to the best type of our manhood ... A democracy which would claim manhood suffrage and refuse to recognise national service is only a mockery and a sham.’<sup>67</sup> Several councils softened their call for conscription by recommending a system of ‘national and compulsory service’ at home and abroad, but the aim was the same.

Fitzroy Council’s discussion was interrupted when a youth called out ‘Why don’t you bald-headed old boodles go instead of pushing young fellows?’<sup>68</sup> At Richmond, Port Melbourne and Williamstown, where Labor councillors had, or could attract, majority support at the council table, Warragul’s appeal was rejected in favour of allowing voluntarism to prove its worth.<sup>69</sup> Such resistance to compulsion often sprang from the conviction that conscription was aimed at horny-handed workers who were already doing most of the heavy war lifting, rather than white-collar and middle-class employees. At Prahran—a collection of socially diverse neighbourhoods from upper-crust South Yarra to working-class Windsor—there was a vigorous debate: ‘The wealthy and middle classes’, contractor Ernest Naylor insisted, ‘had sent as many men to the war as the working classes’. Others rejected the notion that the AIF

was socially skewed, and they appear to have been correct. Occupational analysis suggests that the AIF was broadly representative. Certainly enlistment from Melbourne's residential suburbs matched that from the industrial suburbs.<sup>70</sup>

**The  
Recruiting  
Test**



insists on good teeth but does not bar a man from enlistment because his teeth are artificial. Don't YOU run the risk of being "turned down" on account of YOUR teeth—far better give me a call first and I will tell you what treatment your teeth require so that you will be sure of "passing the test."

**I give Special Attention  
to all Military Cases**

Call, write or 'phone and make an appointment.

**William F. Zelius**

Recorded by the Dental Board of Victoria

**Opp. Railway Gates.      BOX HILL**

**Advertisement, *Camberwell and Hawthorn Advertiser*, 4 March 1916**

A livelier copywriter might have invited AIF recruits to 'Put the bite on the Hun', but this suburban dentist at least offered them the chance to make their best impression.

How could support for conscription be encouraged in the industrial suburbs? This was a challenge to which Australia's most extensive and influential patriotic organisation—the Australian Natives' Association (ANA)—especially applied itself.

## **'Britishers first and Australians afterwards': The Australian Natives' Association**

Endorsements of the Warragul circular were pouring in as the ANA prepared for its annual conference—at Warragul—in the last week of March 1916. On 25 February the ANA's board of directors decided to recommend adoption of the policy of conscription. The *Warrnambool Standard* expressed what was possibly a common attitude in country Victoria:

The great issue of conscription should not be left to vote-counting politicians ... It is hard to point out any body better to express such an opinion than is the ANA [which] occupies a somewhat exceptional position as a mouthpiece of public opinion [for it] is non-party, and its members include rich and poor, young and old, capitalists and employes, residents of the country and inhabitants of the city.<sup>71</sup>

With 31,000 members and more than 200 branches across Victoria, the ANA was the largest of the state's friendly societies.<sup>72</sup> Founded in Melbourne and spreading in the 1880s to Victoria's gold towns and throughout Melbourne's suburbs, where some 80 per cent of the members lived, the ANA was quite distinct from benefit societies transplanted from ethnic and religious roots in Britain, preoccupied with single issues such as temperance, and absorbed by esoteric rituals and regalia. With membership restricted to native-born Australian and New Zealand men, the ANA not only provided medical, sickness and funeral benefits but encouraged national pride and promoted discussion of 'national questions'. The 'Natives' gloried in their Australian nationality and celebrated Foundation Day (26 January) with patriotic nods to their British heritage. Rejecting both republicanism and Imperial Federation, the Natives' middle-of-the-road patriotism had played a prominent role in bringing about Federation of the Australian colonies in 1901 as a loyal Commonwealth within the Empire.<sup>73</sup>

The ANA avoided direct involvement in party politics, but it had been a vehicle for many parliamentary careers. For twenty years from 1884, 'the ANA gave Deakin's political life a representative base', comprising the 'special constituency' for his heroic nation-building Federation enterprise.<sup>74</sup> George Meudell, a former ANA member, once twitted Deakin 'regarding the wrong use of this patriotic and friendly society for political ends', but Deakin advised him against resigning.<sup>75</sup>

By the 1900s the ANA, living on its reputation for securing Federation, was going through a period of *ennui*. ‘Federation: What Next?’ was a common question at branch meetings and conferences and in the house journal *Advance Australia*. What would be the association’s next great national cause? Would it formally enter politics by endorsing candidates?<sup>76</sup> In the early 1900s it hardly needed to, given its close identification with Deakin’s Liberal program—national security (White Australia and defence preparedness), domestic harmony (industrial arbitration), and economic prosperity (protective tariffs and the fair wage). However, the ANA found the rising federal Labor Party challenging Liberal hegemony, undermining the national political consensus, and pushing for augmented federal powers. Deakinite Liberals regarded the Constitution as sacrosanct; Labor wanted power over arbitration and monopolies. In 1914 the European war appeared to offer the ANA respite from years of rising tension and division.<sup>77</sup>

The ANA endorsed the offer of a volunteer expeditionary force, threw itself enthusiastically behind recruiting, and within a year had more than 4,000 members serving with the AIF. ‘We are at one with the Empire in her stand for fidelity as against perfidy, and honour as against obliquity’, Chief President Hewison declared at the 1915 conference. Later that year the senior vice-president, Albert Ostrom, said ‘beyond [our pride in our native land] there is a fine Imperial patriotism—a recognition of benefits enjoyed because we are part of the great British Empire. Britishers first and Australian afterwards.’<sup>78</sup> In July 1915 Hewison, Milo Davine and Gippsland MHR George Wise supported a great recruitment rally hosted jointly by the Warragul Shire Council and the ANA branch.<sup>79</sup> Wise had been a member of the ANA Board for some 30 years (and president in 1891); Davine, elected to the board in 1913, and now junior vice-president, would become in 1917 senior vice-president (that is, president-elect). In February 1916 Davine and Wise helped frame the conscription resolution. The decision was announced by Chief President Hewison at a public meeting in St Kilda, where it was ‘received with cheering.’<sup>80</sup> Having found its next great national issue, the ANA was about to take sides on the most bitterly divisive issue Australia had yet faced.

The Warragul conference had the appearance of a stage-managed event at which the ANA’s position on conscription had been predetermined. The largest ANA branches were in regional and suburban

municipalities, but equal representation of branches, irrespective of their membership size, gave country delegates a preponderant weight of numbers, similar to the gerrymandered Victorian parliament.<sup>81</sup> The board of fifteen directors, elected annually and ruling supreme between conferences, comprised middle-aged, professional men and public servants, mainly honorary members, ten of whom had already served as chief president.<sup>82</sup> They were part of a Victorian élite in the law, academia, the civil service and business, complacently assuming that public opinion accorded, or could be made to accord, with their own. In 1916 the conference agenda and the board's annual report were distributed so late that branches had little opportunity to canvass members' opinions before selecting delegates for the four-day conference.

The conference opened with the traditional 'smoke night'. Where there was smoke there was soon fire. After the delegates welcomed two Gallipoli veterans, both VC winners, by singing 'Soldiers of the King', followed by 'Sons of the Sea' for a sailor from HMAS *Australia*, the invited politicians spoke. Labor's representative was non-contentious, but Sir William Irvine denounced 'the wretched system of voluntarism—that moth-eaten relic of political superstition that was wasting the vital strength of Australia. (Cheers).'<sup>83</sup> When the conference opened the next morning the board tabled the resolution, which avoided the word 'conscription': 'In the opinion of this Conference, the needs of the war can no longer be met by voluntary service. This Association pledges itself to support the Government in taking the necessary steps to utilise the services of every citizen.' Hewison accepted an amendment requiring the addition of the words 'and the resources of the Commonwealth'. Thus was lip service paid to the conscription of wealth. Debate was vigorous, anti-conscriptionists being frequently interrupted by 'Cries of Rot!' Director and Labor Senator Albert Blakey rather unwisely denounced conscriptionists as "'aldermanic individuals" too old to serve'. Board members, their average age 50 years, were indeed mainly beyond enlistment age, but seven of them had sons who had enlisted. 'It had to be decided whether men should be invited, coaxed, cajoled, threatened or compelled', said Director M.M. Phillips. 'Conscription really meant organised enlistment.' The debate ended at 10.30 p.m. and resumed at 9.00 next morning, when delegate Thomas Shortill urged members to give the voluntary system a further trial: 'Voices: Too late! Too late!' Several Melbourne delegates thought conscription would prevent

employers pressuring their workers to enlist! Director Wise said the ANA was not advocating conscription but 'merely compulsory military service in time of war'; and, when he finished speaking, the *Weekly Times* reported, 'most of the delegates rose and cheered for about two minutes'. Premier Sir Alexander Peacock spoke last: 'There was no greater patriot than William Morris Hughes. (Cheers.)'. The *Argus* reported that the motion had been carried on the voices by 'an overwhelming majority' amidst rousing cheers.<sup>84</sup>

An ANA delegation presented Acting Prime Minister Pearce with the conference resolution on 12 April, but this was preceded by the ANA's traditional post-conference gathering at Camberwell, where Pearce praised the association 'as an organisation that knew no politics, [and] could well discuss these [national] questions. Those associated with parties were very often one-eyed, and looked at one side of the question only'.<sup>85</sup> The country press generally approved of the ANA discussing conscription,<sup>86</sup> although some branches, notably in working-class Melbourne, felt aggrieved by the process.<sup>87</sup> The Easter conference of the Victorian Labor Party had declared its opposition to conscription, and it seemed as if the ANA was now responding by launching a conscription campaign in conjunction with the Universal Service League.<sup>88</sup> On 3 May the ANA held coordinated public meetings in regional cities across Victoria and in many Melbourne suburbs. The Melbourne Town Hall meeting was wildly enthusiastic for conscription. Soldiers clashed with anti-conscriptionists, dissidents were ejected, and several women refusing to stand for the national anthem were roughly handled.<sup>89</sup> On 4 May, the day that conscription was extended from single to married men in Britain, George Wise introduced a municipal delegation led by Milo Davine to present Pearce with the Warragul resolution. Pearce, stung by earlier municipal criticism of his release of a 'disloyal' Traralgon citizen from internment, was generally dismissive of municipal resolutions 'apparently ... turned out ... like a sausage machine did sausages'.<sup>90</sup>

The ANA now canvassed every mayor, shire president and ANA branch to support a petition to parliament for conscription. Returned soldiers were paid eight shillings a day over fourteen days to collect almost 70,000 signatures, mostly in Melbourne. When housewives proved reluctant to sign in the absence of their husbands, house-to-house visits were abandoned in Labor constituencies and the attack

was concentrated on factories. In an attempt to discredit Labor Party and trade union hostility to conscription, the names of signatories in Labor electorates were abstracted from the lists so that Melbourne newspapers could publish tallies.<sup>91</sup> Large claims were made of popular support: a thousand signatures obtained in just part of a day at Port Melbourne, another thousand during an afternoon at Footscray's factories, and hundreds of signatures at football matches, the races and picture theatres.<sup>92</sup> The *Age* claimed that 'solid support [was] accorded the petition at the hands of working men and supporters of Labor', and the *Argus* concluded that 'the Trades Hall was, for the moment, out of sympathy with its supporters.'<sup>93</sup> Several ANA directors were members of the Victorian Universal Service League, which now resumed active operations and joined the ANA campaign, confident that 'if a referendum were taken on the subject there would be an overwhelming majority in its favor.'<sup>94</sup> The petition was presented to federal parliament.

### **Consequences**

Hughes returned to Australia hell-bent on conscription. Even though his goal of 300,000 enlistments had been surpassed (301,370 enlistments, 270,802 of them already overseas), he and Pearce had enlarged the AIF beyond the capacity of voluntary enlistment to sustain. Besides, Britain had introduced conscription of military and civilian manpower for the total war that Hughes had urged, and major concessions to Japan in the Pacific had fuelled Hughes's fears of an Allied defeat, truce or negotiated peace in Europe.<sup>95</sup> Most conveniently, and more than a little suspiciously, the British requested even greater numbers—32,500 more immediately and a further 16,500 each month. Ernest Scott wrote that this 'colossal demand' would raise the total Australian commitment to about 400,000 within a year. He suspected that 'the authorities in London were partly impelled by the desire to furnish a motive for the adoption of conscription by Australia.'<sup>96</sup>

On 30 August Hughes announced a referendum on conscription for 28 October. He had a ready-made campaign organisation, Victorian conscriptionists having perfected the art of the requisition, resolution, deputation and public rally, and thoroughly rehearsed the case for compulsion as a self-evident truth. But uncertainty persisted. When farmer Robert Hopkins of Braybrook had been assured that shirkers, and not farmers' only sons, would be conscripted, no one had an answer to the query: 'Is there any man at this council who knows what

conscription means?<sup>97</sup> Hughes, confident that the rank and file of the labour movement would defy its recalcitrant union and party leaders, tried to allay the fears expressed in country Victoria, exempting all youths under 21 (though they might still enlist), all who were the sole supports of dependants, and all members of families from which at least one-half had enlisted. Married men would be excused as long as the required numbers were found. To ensure ‘that the wheels of industry’ kept turning, Hughes promised ‘exemption for persons engaged in certain industries—for some of such persons, at any rate.’ Anticipating approval of conscription, the government used its powers under the Defence Acts to compel all men 21–35 to register for service and enter camp for training. A week before the poll, however, Hughes was forced to release all men engaged in rural industries until the harvesting, shearing, and cane-crushing seasons ended.<sup>98</sup>

These exemptions were not sufficient to secure a national victory for conscription, for there were fears that Hughes would continue to expand his demands for military manpower. Thomas Shortill, writing for the *Advocate*, maintained that the terms of the referendum gave Hughes power to conscript at his pleasure all the available manhood of the Commonwealth.<sup>99</sup> The attempt to pay ‘Australia’s debt of honour’ (in reality, Fisher’s and Hughes’s ‘debt of honour’) with the blood of young men surplus to industrial requirements and without dependants requiring state support, failed, albeit narrowly, and Hughes’s continuing refusal to reduce the number of AIF divisions explained (at least partly) why the death rate among Australia’s depleted ranks was higher than that of Canadians and New Zealanders.<sup>100</sup>

Australian historians have been surprised by the result of the 1916–17 plebiscites. Barry Smith thought ‘the surprising thing [was] not that a majority of the community refused to send its young men to be killed or maimed but that so large a minority was prepared to do so,’<sup>101</sup> while Ian Turner considered ‘that the vote should go twice against conscription was—given the “patriotic” hysteria of the time—astounding.’<sup>102</sup> Certainly Victorian conscriptionists, expecting an overwhelming national victory, were surprised by the state’s narrow 52 per cent ‘Yes’ majority in 1916. Does the closeness of the Victorian vote justify surprise, given the enthusiastic municipal–ANA campaigns of early 1916? After all, as the *Argus* regularly expostulated, Victoria had never been, indeed *was* not, a Labor state, the party being a rump in



**IN THE MUD. 'Boo-hoo! New South Wales made us sit in it!', by David Low, *Bulletin*,  
9 November 1916**

The Military Service Referendum of 1916 was an indicative plebiscite requiring a simple majority of voters, rather than a constitutional referendum requiring also the approval of a majority of states.

Here Victoria in her white pinafore is shown besmirched by her bigger bullying brother.

state politics and never holding a majority of federal seats there. Had Victoria's conscriptionists misread Victorian political culture, or at least the public mood? David Esler of Port Fairy, it seems, had been wrong when he confidently told his colleagues that the municipal survey was 'the best and only means of getting the feeling of the people of Australia on the [conscription] question'. Port Fairy voted 'Yes', but only by a whisker (50.5 per cent) and Wannon Division was almost as evenly split (51.5 per cent Yes).

A full analysis of the Victorian vote cannot be attempted here, but some salient points need to be made.<sup>103</sup> Over half of the valid Victorian votes (52.6 per cent) in the 1916 referendum were cast in Greater Melbourne (the City and its suburbs), where 'Yes' voters were slightly in the minority (49.1 per cent). Non-metropolitan Victoria voted clearly in favour (55 per cent), producing a Victorian majority 'Yes' vote (51.9 per cent), a mere 25,714 in a poll of 682,146. In Melbourne the pronouncedly 'Yes' vote in the residential suburbs was balanced by the equally pronounced 'No' vote in the industrial suburbs. Urban Ballarat and Bendigo voted marginally 'No', but most rural shires and small-town boroughs (and Geelong) voted 'Yes'. 'A country member [of parliament] had but to say he was against conscription', said the Labor MHR for Indi,

‘and he was howled down.’<sup>104</sup> All except three non-metropolitan electoral divisions (Ballarat, Bendigo and Grampians) voted ‘Yes’: from a high of 66.4 per cent per cent in Gippsland to 51.5 per cent per cent in Wannon.

Rural Victoria voted ‘Yes’, some shires and boroughs narrowly. How well had councillors reflected shire and borough residents’ feelings? Not as completely as perhaps they assumed or hoped, yet voters favoured ‘Yes’ in 81 of 114 shires and 13 of 24 boroughs for which I have information.<sup>105</sup> In these rural and small-town communities forthright anti-conscriptionist councillors were few in number during discussions of the Warragul appeal. In Bendigo City a voice that warned that ‘in voting for conscription they were practically putting themselves and the whole of Australia under the heels of military despotism’ was a lone voice, but in October Bendigo voted (narrowly) ‘No.’<sup>106</sup> Benjamin Davis, a Portland tanner, denounced wars as created by the few who coerce the majority, Australia having no voice in the making of this war.

The only capital that some men could point to was his sons. These were to be taken from him without compensation, but the man [with] no family, ... able to accumulate wealth was to get 5 per cent interest if he loaned his money to the Government. Was that fair?<sup>107</sup>

His fellow councillors were unmoved, but in October Portland’s ‘Yes’ vote was marginal (53.3 per cent), and some subdivisions in blueblood Western Victoria voted ‘No’. These and other subdivisions of country electorates that voted ‘No’ appear to have been pockets where Irish Australian Catholics, rural labourers, timber getters, and gold and coal miners exerted some influence.<sup>108</sup> From Gippsland Division in the east to Wimmera Division in the northwest, rural Victoria, broadly speaking, voted ‘Yes’, to outpoint urban, working-class Victoria.

Working men, but not necessarily class-conscious workers, made up a majority of the AIF, and the Warragul–ANA campaign of professional, middle-class and small-property-owner Imperial patriots may even have alienated voters in urban Victoria. Country families with sons at the front perhaps assumed that conscription would force equality of sacrifice by their country and city cousins. But the widespread conviction that voluntary recruitment was depleting rural Victoria may have been built on a false premise that the war was being fought by producers and lifters rather than shirkers and leaners, with city enlistments lagging behind those of the countryside. Victoria had

a significantly higher number of recruits in the first period of the war (August 1914 – June 1915), consequent on unemployment associated with the 1914 drought and the disruption of trade by the outbreak of war. Was this reflected in the rural response to the Warragul circular? But unemployment also afflicted urban working-class Victorians—railwaymen, wharfies, wheat lumpers, agricultural machine makers, rope and twine workers, and the like—who also enlarged Australia's 'volunteer' AIF.<sup>109</sup>

Allegations of working-class 'shirking' brought resentment. Port Melbourne Council and ANA branch were centres of resistance to the Warragul-ANA push for conscription, not only consistently declining their support, but condemning Milo Davine's suggestion that Labor councillors opposed recruiting. 'As a matter of fact', Richard Gill, a councillor and ANA Member, asserted: 'Richmond, Port Melbourne, and Footscray, where there are Labour councils, have doubled their quotas ... A lot of people who have failed in their own districts to get their quotas, want to drag men out of the districts that have given more than their complements of men.'<sup>110</sup>

If Victoria overall had voted as Warragul Shire (70.5 per cent 'Yes') or Gippsland Division (66.4 per cent 'Yes') voted, then Australia might have had conscription. But, aside from regional demographic and cultural differences, there were weaknesses in the municipal-ANA campaign. It had largely ignored women, content with the declared and platform support of organisations such as the ANA's counterpart Australian Women's Association and the powerful National Council of Women of Victoria.<sup>111</sup> The stage-managed ANA conference and the somewhat manipulative campaign that followed perhaps preached to the converted and antagonised the doubters. Working men subjected to patriotic harangues and pressed to sign ANA petitions in factories, such as the 162 of 180 meat workers at Angliss & Co., were unlikely to have declared their true feelings.<sup>112</sup> Municipal councillors and ANA branch leaders in Melbourne's working-class suburbs (where the largest branches existed) did not reflect their citizens' and members' views of conscription. More than half of ANA membership was in metropolitan Melbourne, one-third of those members were in the six largest branches and in areas that voted decidedly against conscription.<sup>113</sup> The October poll confronted conscriptionists with the reality of firm working-class opposition to compulsion, and also a sizable defection to the 'No'

position of 1914 Liberal voters. Clearly, many Liberal voters were not prepared to give the Labor government greater power, even in wartime.

However, there were neither opinion polls nor exit polls in 1916–17, and there are real dangers in judging individual or group behaviour from aggregate voting figures. Between the climax of the municipal–ANA campaign in May 1916 and Hughes’s announcement of the referendum on 30 August there fell the Somme campaign on the Western Front, which claimed higher AIF casualties than the eight-month Gallipoli campaign in all the dismal categories of those who were killed or died from wounds, were wounded, and went missing (aggregate totals 33,785 and 26,094 respectively).<sup>114</sup> And by October the anti-conscriptionists had moved beyond trade union and Labor Party resolutions to a strong campaign mode. Long denied access to public halls, and with their open-air meetings harassed by soldiers and ‘loyalists’, they now mustered more confidently in streets and parks throughout Victoria.<sup>115</sup> Perhaps support for conscription collapsed between May and October? A generation later in a referendum on a similarly fraught issue—the banning of the Communist Party—an expected 80 per cent approval turned into a (slim) negative vote by polling day.<sup>116</sup>

The ANA Board remained defiant, clinging to the organisation’s last great national cause, censoring branches like Port Melbourne for their ‘breach of loyalty to the Association’, campaigning for conscription at both referendums, and easily defeating attempts in 1917 and 1918 to rescind the 1916 conference resolution.<sup>117</sup> They were Pyrrhic victories. Anzac Day superseded the ANA’s Foundation Day (celebrating the arrival of the First Fleet in Sydney Cove) as Australia’s national day. The ANA, George Meudell wrote in 1929, had ‘fallen from grace as a national society and has become a safe sick and burial association ... a feeble shadow of what it might have been, a great national brotherhood.’<sup>118</sup> It was symptomatic of its hidebound decay, perhaps, that George Wise retired from the board only in 1947, after a record 60 years, when he was 93. The conscription crisis was also the last hurrah for the Deakinites, marking the conversion of Victoria’s radical interventionist Liberalism to a form of conservative and retrogressive Liberalism.<sup>119</sup> Premier Peacock, a convert to conscription whose hometown Creswick and local ANA branch voted ‘No’, was defeated in 1917 by his party’s Economy faction (shades of Kyabram) and never became premier again. Anti-conscriptionist Chief President-elect Senator Blakey was denied

the ANA presidency in 1917, Milo Davine being elected instead. But a Protestant Federation candidate, exploiting anti-Catholic feeling consequent on Archbishop Daniel Mannix's stand against conscription, defeated Davine at the Warragul municipal election in 1918.

Thus were played out the stories of the victors and the vanquished of the Victorian conscription campaign in 1916. Melbourne, the national capital, had been divided more closely and bitterly than any Australian state capital.<sup>120</sup> But what of Victoria's small town and shire communities, rent and tormented by division in 1916–17? Neither Warragul's *West Gippsland Gazette* nor the Melbourne *Advocate* reported Archbishop Mannix being pelted with tomatoes when he visited shortly after Armistice Day 1918, but the apocryphal story lived on, testifying to the power of sectarianism inflamed by home-front conflict. Self-inflicted war wounds can be the slowest to heal.<sup>121</sup>

## Notes

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- 14 Foster, p. 79.
- 15 Meaney, pp. 48 (quotation), 118.
- 16 *Argus*, editorial, 25 November 1915, p. 6.
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- 19 *Advance Australia*, 16 February 1917, p. 525; *Age*, 19 August 1940, p. 22; *West Gippsland Gazette* [Warragul], 20 July 1915.
- 20 *West Gippsland Gazette*, 15 February 1916. Councillors' names and occupations, here and throughout the article, were sourced from the *Victorian Municipal Directory 1916* and the 1916 Commonwealth Electoral Roll.
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- 26 Traralgon's Rudolph Schmidt not only lost his job, but the board expelled him from the ANA on Milo Davine's motion: *West Gippsland Gazette*, 14 March 1916, p. 7.
- 27 Calculated from the *Australian and New Zealand Press Directory 1914*, Parramatta, Cumberland Argus, 1914.
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- 29 *Gisborne Gazette*, editorial, 19 May 1916, and Shortill's editorials on 17 March and 7 April 1916. Dr Val Noone kindly alerted me to Stephanie James, "'Deep Green Loathing'? Shifting Irish–Australian Loyalties in the Victorian and South Australian Irish–Catholic Press 1868–1923", PhD thesis, Flinders University, 2014.
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- 31 *Ballarat Star*, 19 April 1916, p. 2.
- 32 *Essendon Gazette*, 23 March 1916; *Minyip Guardian*, 28 March 1916.
- 33 *Bendigonian*, 11 March 1916, p. 8.
- 34 For 'bricks and mortar' and 'roads, footpaths and sanitation': *Fitzroy City Press*, 25 March 1916; *Williamstown Advertiser*, 4 March 1916.
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- 39 *Argus*, 29 February 1916, p. 7.
- 40 Quotations from *Kyabram Guardian*, 24 March 1916, and *Kyabram Free Press*, 24 March 1916.
- 41 *Essendon Gazette*, 2 March 1916.
- 42 *Mortlake Dispatch*, 8 March 1916.
- 43 *Ararat Chronicle*, 3 March 1916.
- 44 *Reporter* [Box Hill], 10 March 1916.
- 45 *Ararat Advertiser*, 9 March 1916.
- 46 *Advertiser* [Footscray], 18 March 1916; *Age*, 14 March 1916, p. 8.
- 47 *Bendigo Independent*, 3 March 1916, p. 6.
- 48 *Gisborne Gazette*, 10 March 1916.
- 49 *Minyip Guardian*, 7 March 1916.
- 50 *Mount Alexander Mail*, 10 March 1916.
- 51 *Hamilton Spectator*, 25 February 1916.
- 52 *Beulah Standard*, 23 March 1916.
- 53 *Argus*, 28 February 1916, p. 8.
- 54 *Nathalia Herald*, 21 March 1916.
- 55 *Ingelwood Advertiser*, 29 February 1916; Ansett's military service record, National Archives of Australia.
- 56 *Bendigo Independent*, 3 March 1916, p. 6.
- 57 *Kyabram Free Press*, 3 March 1916.
- 58 *Wangaratta Chronicle*, 8 March 1916.
- 59 *Geelong Advertiser*, 15 March 1916.
- 60 *Ballarat Courier*, 29 February 1916, p. 2.

- 61 *Minyip Guardian*, 28 March 1916.
- 62 *Minyip Guardian*, 7 March 1916.
- 63 *Lang Lang Guardian*, 15 March 1915.
- 64 Councillors of the shires of Rochester and Gordon: *Rochester Express*, 25 February 1916; *Echuca and Moama Advertiser*, 26 February 1916; *Northern District Standard*, 23 March 1916.
- 65 Melbourne City Council: *Age*, 29 February 1916, p. 7, and 2 March 1916, p. 6; *Brighton Southern Cross*, 11 March 1916; Caulfield: *Malvern Courier and Caulfield Mirror*, 10 March 1916; Hawthorn: *Hawthorn, Kew and Camberwell Citizen*, 3 March 1916; Kew: *Camberwell and Hawthorn Advertiser*, 11 March 1916; *Malvern News*, 11 March 1916; St Kilda: *Malvern Standard*, 4 March 1916.
- 66 *Essendon Gazette*, 24 February 1916; *Brunswick and Coburg Star*, 3 March 1916; *Northcote Leader*, 11 March 1916.
- 67 *Record* [South Melbourne], 13 May 1916; also 4 March 1916.
- 68 *Fitzroy City Press*, 25 March 1916; *Age*, 21 March 1916, p. 8.
- 69 *Richmond Australian*, 4 March 1916; Port Melbourne: *Age*, 2 March 1916, p. 8; *Williamstown Advertiser*, 4 March 1916.
- 70 *Prahran Telegraph*, 11 March 1916; Naylor quoted: *Malvern Standard*, 11 March 1916; John Lack, “The Great Madness of 1914–18”: Families at War on Melbourne’s Eastern and Western Fronts’, *La Trobe Journal*, no. 96, September 2015, p. 86; L.L. Robson, ‘The Origin and Character of the First AIF, 1914–18: Some Statistical Evidence’, *Historical Studies*, vol. 15, no. 61, October 1973, pp. 737–49.
- 71 *Warrnambool Standard*, 9 March 1916.
- 72 ‘Thirty-Ninth Annual Report on Friendly Societies. Report of the Government Statist for the Year 1916’, *Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly and Papers*, Session 1917–18, Paper No. 1, Appendix B, pp. 25–6.
- 73 Branch membership figures at the end of 1914: *Australian Natives’ Association: Victorian Board of Directors: Report of Proceedings of the Annual Conference held at ... Port Fairy ... 1915*, Melbourne, 1915, pp. 50–3; Marian Aveling (Quartly)’s unpublished study—‘A History of the Australian Natives’ Association 1871–1900’, PhD thesis, Monash University, 1970—is distilled in John Hirst, *The Sentimental Nation: The Making of the Australian Commonwealth*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2000, esp. pp. 36–43, but see also Marian Quartly, ‘Victoria’, in Helen Irving (ed.), *The Centenary Companion to Australian Federation*, Melbourne, Cambridge University Press, 1999. For the ANA after 1901, see John Lack, “‘Britishers First and Australians Afterwards’? The Australian Natives’ Association, 1901–1921’, MA Preliminary thesis, Monash University, 1970.
- 74 Judith Brett, *The Enigmatic Mr Deakin*, Melbourne, Text Publishing, 2017, pp. 103, 201.
- 75 George Meudell, *The Pleasant Career of a Spendthrift*, London, George Routledge & Sons, 1929, p. 53.
- 76 Lack, “‘Britishers First ...’?”, pp. 5–8.
- 77 Lack, “‘Britishers First ...’?”, pp. 15–24.
- 78 *Advance Australia*, April 1915, p. 238; July 1915, p. 231.
- 79 *West Gippsland Gazette*, 13 July 1915.
- 80 *Age*, 28 February 1916, p. 11.
- 81 Thirty-eight of the ANAs 208 branches were in metropolitan Melbourne, accounting for 50.2 per cent of the membership, but they were entitled to less than 20 per cent of conference delegates. In the 1914 parliament, 100 metropolitan votes were worth only 47

- country votes. See Frank Bongiorno, *The People's Party: Victorian Labor and the Radical Tradition*, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1996, p. 81.
- 82 The board included three politicians (an MLA, an MHR and a Senator), and James Hume Cook, the former Deakinite Liberal. Ten directors lived in Melbourne, and five in regional Victoria.
- 83 *Argus*, 21 March 1916, p. 6; *Advance Australia*, 15 April 1916, p. 110.
- 84 *Age*, *Argus* 22–23 March 1916; *Weekly Times*, 25 March 1916, p. 40.
- 85 *Argus*, 29 March 1916, p. 9.
- 86 Some of this was syndicated material masquerading as independent opinion: *St Arnaud Mercury*, 4 March 1916; *Dunolly and Bet Bet Shire Express*, 14 March 1916; *Ararat Chronicle*, 28 March 1916 (letter); *Heyfield Herald*, 30 March 1916, and *Gippsland Independent*, 31 March 1916 (editorials).
- 87 There was dissent in some ANA branches: Footscray, Coburg and Avoca said the issue was not ANA business; St Kilda, South Melbourne and Port Melbourne criticised the board for failing to canvass members' opinions; Northcote, Newport and Richmond defied the board by condemning conscription. These branches ignored the board's referendum campaign.
- 88 'Special Meeting of the ANA Board of Directors, 29 March 1916', in *ANA Reports*, vol. X, pp. 444–6 (held by the ANA head office, and now presumably by the ANA's successor, Australian Unity).
- 89 *Age*, *Argus*, 4 May 1916.
- 90 *Age*, 5 May 1916, p. 7.
- 91 *Argus*, 9 May 1916, p. 7.
- 92 *Argus*, 5 May 1916; *Age*, 6 May 1916.
- 93 *Age*, 10 May 1916, p. 10; *Argus*, 17 May 1916, p. 9.
- 94 *Age*, 5 May 1916, p. 7.
- 95 Beaumont, *Australian Defence*, Table 3.2, pp. 108–09; Jeffrey Grey, *The Australian Army*, Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 2001, Table 2.1, p. 56.
- 96 Scott, pp. 358–60.
- 97 *Advertiser* (Footscray), 18 March 1916.
- 98 *Age*, 22 September 1916, p. 3; 20 October 1916, p. 6.
- 99 *Advocate*, 7 October 1916, p. 22.
- 100 John Donovan, 'The Over-expansion of the AIF in 1916—Effects and Possible Alternatives Then, and Implications Now', *Sabretouche*, vol. LV, no. 3, pp. 4–19; Grey, pp. 48–9.
- 101 F.B. Smith, *The Conscription Plebiscites in Australia, 1916–17*, Melbourne, Victorian Historical Association, Third Edition Revised, 1971, p. 24.
- 102 *Australian*, 30 December 1967, p. 10.
- 103 Absentee votes (including soldiers' votes) were assigned only to electoral divisions, and not subdivisions. Matching subdivisional results to local government areas (using the *Victorian Municipal Directory 1916* gazetteer) can only be approximate, but I have managed individual results for all but 27 shires and 3 boroughs. The cities: Ballarat figures (Ballarat and Ballarat East); Bendigo (Sandhurst and Golden Square); Geelong (Geelong, Geelong West and Belmont).
- 104 Parker Moloney, MHR: *Labor Call*, 4 May 1916, p. 2.
- 105 Hence voters in 33 shires voted 'No', as high as 74 per cent in Bungaree and as close as 50.1 per cent in Bright, and voters in 11 (mainly mining) boroughs voted 'No', with Koroit the highest at 69 per cent.

- 106 *Bendigonian*, 9 March 1916, p. 13.
- 107 *Portland Observer*, 2 March 1916.
- 108 On interpreting the conscription plebiscites, see Ina Bertrand, 'The Victorian Country Vote in the Conscription Referendums of 1916 and 1917: The Case of the Wannon Electorate', *Labour History*, no. 26, May 1974, pp. 19–31; and Murray Goot, 'The Results of the 1916 and 1917 Conscription Referendums Re-Examined', in Archer *et al.* (eds), pp. 111–46.
- 109 Robson, pp. 739–40. Given Robson's large category of undifferentiated 'labourers', I am unconvinced by the claim (p. 745) that 'men engaged in farm work in Victoria were significantly few'.
- 110 *Port Melbourne Standard*, 5 August 1916.
- 111 Smart, 'Women Waging War', pp. 61, 70.
- 112 *Age*, 9 May 1916, p. 7.
- 113 The ANA branches, and the approximately matching subdivisional 'No' vote, were Collingwood (75 per cent), Footscray (68 per cent), Richmond (71 per cent), Prahran (53.5 per cent), Brunswick (63.5 per cent), North Melbourne (75 per cent). Branch membership figures at the end of 1914: *Australian Natives' Association: Victorian Board of Directors: Report of Proceedings of the Annual Conference held at ... Port Fairy ... 1915*, Melbourne, Cheshire, 1954, p. 129.
- 114 Beaumont, *Australian Defence*, Tables 7.3 and 7.4, pp. 269, 274.
- 115 Judith Smart, 'The Right to Speak and the Right to be Heard: The Popular Disruption of Conscriptionist Meetings in Melbourne, 1916', *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 23, no. 92, April 1989, pp. 201–19.
- 116 Leicester Webb, *Communism and Democracy in Australia: A Survey of the 1951 Referendum*, Cheshire, Melbourne, 1954, p. 129.
- 117 *Age*, 18 November 1916, p. 14.
- 118 Meudell, p. 53.
- 119 Tim Rowse, *Australian Liberalism and National Character*, Melbourne, Kibble Books, 1978, esp. pp. 15–23, 56–8.
- 120 Judith Smart, 'A Divided National Capital: Melbourne in the Great War', *La Trobe Journal*, no. 96, September 2015, pp. 28–58.
- 121 Sally Wilde, *Forests Old, Pastures New: A History of Warragul*, Warragul, Shire of Warragul, 1988, p. 219. Thanks to Wayne Hardie of Warragul for his advice on this point.

# Melba's Gift Book: Fund-raising, Propaganda and Australian Identity in World War I

Lucy Bracey\*

## Abstract

*This article explores Melba's Gift Book of Australian Art and Literature, produced in 1915 to support the war effort. It argues that the wartime employment of the popular gift book served both propaganda and fund-raising purposes in mobilising Australian writers and artists for largely conservative forms of national identity and purpose. The content created for the gift book reflects the way war influenced and helped shape this kind of Australian national identity. It also looks at the practicalities of creating the gift book and organising its publication and sales, and how this fits into the broader context of World War I fund-raising. Overall, Nellie Melba's gift book is an important, yet overlooked resource that provides invaluable insight into Australian society at a time of great change.*

Few Australians were immune from the impacts of the First World War. Its effect reverberated among families and communities and continued through subsequent generations. Responses ranged from support and enthusiasm to anxiety and opposition. Large numbers of Australians on the home front worked hard to support the war effort through fund-raising efforts, rationing, and supplying necessary goods and materials to the soldiers on the frontlines. Public displays of patriotism through the waving of flags, wearing of buttons and participation in galas, fetes and performances were common. From school children to the governor-general and governors' wives, working to support the war effort was widespread, and it was not exclusively the domain of women and children in towns and suburbs across the country. Neither was fund-raising solely devoted to Australian troops abroad; one other cause that raised great emotion in the early stage of the war was the suffering that accompanied the invasion and defeat of Belgium.

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\* This article has been written in collaboration with Yarra Ranges Regional Museum, based on research conducted by Way Back When for the exhibition 'Charity: Melba's Gift Book of Australian Art and Literature', which was on show from October 2017 until February 2018.

Nellie Melba was one of thousands of women working hard for the war effort from the home front. But she was also one of the most famous opera singers in the world, and a household name in Australia. Melba used her extensive contacts to produce *Melba's Gift Book of Australian Art and Literature* in support of the Belgium Relief Fund. The book and her World War I fund-raising efforts were some of the most impressive achievements of Melba's career but have largely gone unrecognised.

In 1915 Melba rallied the support of the Australian artistic community to create the book, which is a collection of works by some of Australia's most famous artists and cartoonists, including Will Dyson, Ellis Rowan, Frederick McCubbin, Arthur Streeton and E. Phillips Fox, as well as poets and writers such as Henry Lawson, Dorothy Frances McCrae, Marion Miller Knowles, John Bernard O'Hara and C.J. Dennis. With no central theme, and described as 'a delightful miscellany', the book provides a glimpse into the concerns, interests and opinions of its contributors during one of the most trying times in Australia's history. It also samples some of the best Australian literary, artistic and publishing talents at the time and provides insight into Australia's growing national identity on the international stage.

When war broke out in August 1914, Nellie Melba had recently returned from Europe to her Lilydale home, Coombe Cottage, in Victoria's Yarra Valley. Returning to Europe, where she had been wowing audiences with a permanent spot on the Covent Garden stage, was not possible in war conditions. So Melba threw herself into fund-raising for the war effort from afar. Eager to help her country and those suffering in Europe, she auctioned flags at the end of every concert and made three wartime tours of North America to encourage support for the allies. Her total fund-raising efforts amounted to as much as £100,000 and, in recognition of her great contribution, she was made a Dame Commander of the British Empire (DBE) in 1918. But it was the publication of *Melba's Gift Book of Australian Art and Literature* in 1915 that was arguably her most impressive single fund-raising achievement.

Gift books such as Melba's, as well as gift annuals, had been popular throughout the nineteenth century. The combination of illustrated plates and literary works by popular authors, sometimes focused on a particular theme, together with an attractive, durable binding, made gift books and gift annuals popular as presents, especially for women and children.<sup>1</sup>

PUBLISHED IN AID OF THE BELGIAN RELIEF FUND

# MELBA'S GIFT BOOK



3/-  
net

HODDER AND STOUGHTON  
Warwick Square, LONDON, E.C.

3/-  
net

**Image 1: Florence Rodway, *Madame Melba*, c.1915** (Published in *Melba's Gift Book*, Yarra Ranges Regional Museum (YRRM) Collection, image courtesy of Simon Collins)

This portrait of Melba is one of several made during her lifetime. A work in pastel by Florence Aline Rodway, it is the frontispiece in the gift book and in some editions, such as this one, it is also on the dust cover.



**Image 2: Program for the Melbourne Town Hall concert, 1915**  
(YRRM Collection)

Often created to reflect an occasion such as Christmas, and marketed as gifts with light and bright literary and artistic content, gift books nonetheless responded to the desires and anxieties of society at the time. Usually this was a reflection of the concerns of the intended audience: literate, middle-class women and children. While the content created for these gift books has often been described as 'lacking in intellectual substance', it was often very moralistic in tone, reflecting

many of the nineteenth-century anxieties about the place of women and the working class in the rapidly growing industrial world.<sup>2</sup>

During World War I, gift books took on a new role as fund-raisers but they also served morale-boosting and propaganda purposes. Gift books produced for the war effort were immensely popular and, before *Melba's Gift Book of Australian Art and Literature* was published, Australia had already seen several other such publications that issued from England. Princess Mary's Gift Book sold over 600,000 copies in the 24 months that followed its publication in 1914, raising necessary funds for the Queen's Work for Women Fund.<sup>3</sup> *King Albert's Book: A Tribute to the Belgian King and People from Representative Men and Women throughout the World*, the brainchild of novelist Hall Caine, appeared in December 1914. It was published by the *Daily Telegraph* and included contributions from authors, artists, composers, princes, statesmen and religious leaders, all reflecting on the German invasion of Belgium. Sales from this book went towards the Daily Telegraph Belgium Relief Fund.<sup>4</sup>

In this context Australian audiences had become familiar with gift books as fund-raising endeavours, so it is not surprising that the idea of producing an Australian version arose. Given her skill at raising money, her relationship with Australia's artistic community and her personal connection to Belgium where she had made her operatic debut, Nellie Melba was more than qualified to oversee its production. As one newspaper commented: 'We have no Princess in Australia. But Melba is our Queen of Song.'<sup>5</sup>

Whether it was her own idea or suggested to her by others is unclear, but, from March 1915, newspapers reported that an 'Australian Gift Book' was Melba's new project:

The great success attending the publication of "King Albert's Gift Book" and "Princess Mary's Gift Book" at home, has inspired the suggestion that an Australian Gift Book, in aid of the Belgian Fund, should be brought out here. With this object in view, Madame Melba, who has undertaken the organisation of the scheme, is inviting the leading authors and artists in the Commonwealth to send contributions.<sup>6</sup>

*King Albert's Book* was not only a tribute to the much-lauded bravery of Belgium and a fine piece of propaganda, it was also a showcase of the best and brightest literary, artistic and political talents of the day. Hall Caine declared in the introduction: 'Never before, perhaps,

have so many illustrious names been inscribed within the covers of a single volume, but KING ALBERT'S BOOK has a significance which even transcends its distinction.<sup>7</sup> The sheer volume and variety of contributions was one of the main selling points of the book.<sup>8</sup> *Princess Mary's Gift Book*, on the other hand, was a fund-raising endeavour for the Queen's Work for Women Fund, but it was also a showcase of 'the best of present day English authors'.<sup>9</sup> These gift books served to raise money as well as to promote the talent of artists in allied countries.<sup>10</sup> An advertisement for *Princess Mary's Gift Book* asserted that it would 'long be a cherished memorial of the loving young Princess', as well as 'the great war of the nations'.<sup>11</sup>

While undoubtedly inspired by the cause of Belgium, Nellie Melba was a great self-promoter and would have been well aware of the personal benefits of having her name on an Australian gift book. But she was also conscious of the opportunity the book afforded to promote Australia's artistic and literary talents, of which she herself was a great patron. The *Argus* waxed lyrical about *Melba's Gift Book of Australian Art and Literature* when it first appeared in early July 1915:

The distinguished auspices under which the book is put before the people, as well as the benevolent object in view, will at once commend it to the generosity of the public. But the book itself, as a literary and artistic product, is deserving of high praise. It stands upon its own merits, and while purchasers will have the gratifying consciousness of helping a deserving cause, they may rest assured that they will receive full value for their outlay.<sup>12</sup>

The publishers entrusted with the production of Melba's gift book were also at pains to demonstrate the skill of the Australian publishing industry. Several newspaper reviews after the book was released commented on this:

It is of purely Australian origin ... the publishers George Robertson and Co., have done their part of the work well ... they claim that it is a collection of the best in Australian art and literature of the present day, and a representative example of Australian work in blockmaking, printing and binding.<sup>13</sup>

According to another review: 'Messrs. George Robertson and Co., were given practically a free hand on the business and technical side of the proposal and were determined working in conjunction with the editor,

Mr. Franklin Peterson to build up a book which would be unique in Australian publishing.<sup>14</sup>

From the 1850s until around 1900, George Robertson & Co. dominated the Australian publishing industry. An immigrant from Scotland, George Robertson arrived in Melbourne in 1852 and set up his first bookstore a few months later. In 1860 he opened bookstores in Melbourne, Adelaide and Sydney, then set up separate publishing departments, becoming the first publisher in Australia to do so. He also established a lithographic plant and bindery. George Robertson retired in 1890, around the time that Sydney's publishing industry started gaining prominence over Melbourne's.<sup>15</sup> Before the economic collapse of the 1890s, Melbourne was the centre of many industries in Australia, including publishing.<sup>16</sup> Robertson's sons took over the family business but lacked the talent of their father.<sup>17</sup> In 1922, Robertson & Co. merged with Melville & Mullen to become Robertson & Mullens.<sup>18</sup> Before that, in 1915, George Robertson & Co. made a shrewd decision to produce *Melba's Gift Book of Australian Art and Literature*.

Information about the sales, profits and production of Melba's gift book is relatively scarce. Literary historian Nick Milne has studied gift books and propaganda as part of his broader research into the literature and historiography of World War I.<sup>19</sup> He comments: 'It remains a sad fact that the war's publishing culture is criminally understudied when compared to its more purely literary legacy, and we look in vain for a "publishers' circulars" equivalent to Oxford's First World War Poetry Archive, or other projects like it'.<sup>20</sup> However, there is some information about the production and sale of Melba's gift book to be found in contemporary newspapers, and we can contextualise it in the propaganda about 'Poor Little Belgium', whose sufferings had captured public imagination.

German invasion and occupation of Belgium was the trigger for Britain's involvement in World War I and, as a result, Australia's. When Britain declared war on Germany on 4 August 1914, Australia immediately affirmed its support for Britain, pledging an initial commitment of 20,000 men. Belgium had declared itself neutral in the event of war, but Germany demanded passage through Belgium into France. When Belgium resisted, the German government invaded, declaring war on Belgium. While the majority of the German troops continued into France, a small garrison remained in Belgium and

instituted a policy of terror against the Belgian people, involving massacres, executions, hostage-taking, and the burning of towns and villages. This became known as the ‘Rape of Belgium’.



**Image 3: Alexander Colquhoun, *Belgian Rose Day*, 1915 (YRRM)**

Art work published in *Melba's Gift Book of Australian Art and Literature*.

News of these atrocities spread throughout Europe and to allies across the seas. In October 1914, Australian Prime Minister Andrew Fisher proposed that the government, on behalf of the Australian people, make a ‘free gift’ of £100,000 to the people of Belgium.<sup>21</sup> Propaganda circulating at the time told the tale of brave little Belgium resisting the German invaders as long as it could, giving France and Britain time to mobilise, but at a terrible cost to its own citizens.<sup>22</sup>

While Australia was officially at war from the time of Britain’s declaration, most Australians did not see any action until the Gallipoli campaign of April 1915. Until then, the plight of Belgium and its people

became the focus of much of the patriotic fund-raising on Australia's home front. Activities in aid of Belgium included fêtes, concerts, galas and other performances.<sup>23</sup> Nellie Melba gave a special concert in aid of the Belgium Relief Fund on 27 April 1915 at the Melbourne Town Hall.<sup>24</sup> 'Belgian Day' was declared and celebrated on 14 May 1915, with fund-raising activities held across the country.<sup>25</sup> This was the first of several special 'days' declared during World War I. 'Australia Day' was celebrated later, on 30 July 1915.<sup>26</sup>

Newspapers reported throughout 1915 that Melba's gift book was selling well. Ten thousand copies of the first edition were printed, and as early as July 1915 reports of a forthcoming second edition were already circulating.<sup>27</sup> By September 1915, the second print run was 'selling rapidly' across Australia, and the consul-general of Belgium was presented with a cheque for £600. This was the first of many anticipated instalments from sales of the book for the Belgium Relief Fund. The consul-general was reported to have congratulated Melba and her publishers on a splendid book and commented that he was 'surprised at the large sums that were being realised by its sale'.<sup>28</sup>

*Melba's Gift Book of Australian Art and Literature* is just one of many examples of fund-raising endeavours that Australians engaged in during the war. It is, however, a particularly interesting one, as it is not only a showcase of some of Australia's best and brightest literary and artistic talents but also an example of Australians fund-raising for the benefit of a nation outside the British Empire. Fund-raising for Belgium was a focus before the reality of war had hit home for many Australians. But even after enthusiasm for the war was dampened (or even extinguished) by the events at Gallipoli, the enormous loss of life on the Western Front, and the divisive conscription referendums at home, many Australians continued to give in support of people suffering on the other side of the world—an international humanitarian engagement that also included support for the victims of the Armenian massacre.<sup>29</sup> During World War I, Nellie Melba helped to raise money for Russia, France, Poland and Serbia, as well as Belgium and of course Britain and Australia. Her concerts in the United States were similarly designed to raise money for the war effort, though they also served a propaganda purpose in raising American consciousness of and support for the allied cause.

A summary of the fund-raising collections held at the Australian War Memorial lists a huge number of different World War I campaigns, including Belgian relief from 1915, Croix Rose Day in 1916, which raised money for the destitute girls of France and Belgium, and France's Day in 1917.<sup>30</sup> At a public meeting held in Melbourne and addressed by Archbishop Daniel Mannix and Belgian priest, the Reverend van Damme, in aid of Belgian relief in 1918, van Damme said that Australia had given more to the international Belgian Relief Fund than any other country. This statement was greeted with applause from the huge crowd.<sup>31</sup>

By September 1915 London publisher Hodder & Stoughton, which produced both *King Albert's Book* and *Princess Mary's Gift Book*, had agreed to release a special edition of Melba's book for sale in Great Britain and America. The printing blocks for this special edition were made in Australia and sent to London.<sup>32</sup> Described as comparing 'more than favourably' with other gift books, the British edition of *Melba's Gift Book of Australian Art and Literature* was a very attractive production:

The binding is extremely artistic: and the frontispiece is a reproduction in colour of Florence Rodway's portrait of Madame Melba. Among the many illustrations are numerous plates—excellent examples of three-colour process work. Black and white drawings, marginal decorations and tail-pieces, and reproductions of photography comprise the rest of the illustrated selection of the book. Both illustrations and letterpress are entirely the work of Australian artists and authors. In fact, the work in its entirety is a wonderful tribute to Australian craftsmanship.<sup>33</sup>

Some of the reproduced images in the gift book were attached using a tipped-in publication method. With the tipped-in method, publishers could use different paper stock for various purposes within the same publication. Colour lithographs, for example, required higher quality paper than text. Rather than print the whole book on higher quality paper, publishers could use the tipped-in method to print only the images on paper of better stock and then attach them to the relevant text pages. Sometimes these tipped-in pages were printed by specialist printers if the publisher did not have the required resources. The method of attaching the tipped-in image varied. Sometimes all four corners were glued down, and other times just one side or the top two corners were attached.<sup>34</sup>

While tipped-in pages look temporary owing to the way they are attached in the final volume, it was not the intention of the publishers to make them temporary or removable. State Library Victoria's History of the Book Manager Des Cowley points out that most of the gift books surviving in collections today remain intact. This suggests that removing tipped-in pages for framing was not a common practice, despite some newspapers at the time billing this as a selling point.<sup>35</sup>

In newspaper advertisements and reviews of the time, Melba's gift book was priced at four shillings—the same price as *King Albert's Book*. *Princess Mary's Gift Book* was slightly cheaper at just three shillings and six pence.<sup>36</sup> Any comment made in the press on the price of *Melba's Gift Book of Australian Art and Literature* was only to say that it was 'very good value for the money.'<sup>37</sup>

Several different versions of the gift book were published. The most common edition has a light green cover. It is likely that this is the edition that sold for four shillings. According to one collector, there were at least five different editions: a light green cover; a dark green cover with an illustrated dust jacket featuring Melba's portrait; a blue cover; a deluxe version with a red cover, signed by Melba; and an edition printed for Melbourne bookseller E.W. Cole with a dark green cover and gold lettering.<sup>38</sup> In July 1915, the 'autographed edition deluxe' was selling for £1 1s, a price it was suggested that: 'Many will be willing enough to pay ... not only for the sake of the "Nellie Melba" signed on the fly-leaf facing her portrait, but for the handsome gilt binding and the exceptional contents of the book.'<sup>39</sup> But the cheaper edition was still an impressive publication, being described as 'a triumph of Australian printing and engraving, quite apart from the merits of its contents.'<sup>40</sup>

Producing a variety of differently tiered versions of the gift book was a clever marketing strategy. The special editions created a market for collectors and were also a creative way of utilising the same content to create a different, more expensive product. While it is unclear exactly how many copies were produced and sold, by 1930 *Melba's Gift Book of Australian Art and Literature* was described in one newspaper report as a book 'which is now rare and out of print.'<sup>41</sup> Today, copies of the most common version of the gift book (with the light green cover) can be found through second-hand book dealers. The deluxe copy signed by Melba is harder to come by, and the selling prices reflect that rarity.

Many of the contributors to Melba's gift book used their talents, influence or position to comment on the war—some in the content they produced for the book and others in work beyond the book. The book has literary contributions from 49 different authors, including many names familiar to contemporaries such as Henry Lawson, C.J. Dennis and Ethel Turner. Turner, author of *Seven Little Australians*, wrote a piece titled 'A Snuff-box for Bismarck' for Melba's gift book, described rather superfluously in one review as 'the best bit of writing that she has hitherto produced'.<sup>42</sup> Turner later went on to edit *The Australian Soldiers' Gift Book* with one of Melba's friends, Bertram Stevens, in 1916: another gift book produced to raise funds for returned soldiers and widows of fallen soldiers.<sup>43</sup> Bernard O'Dowd's poem, 'Louvain! Ah Louvain!', which was included in the book, has been described as sounding a 'deeper, fuller and more significant note of judgement on the Great War than any other poet has yet struck'.<sup>44</sup>

Melba's gift book includes 34 artistic contributions, many created especially for the book. Artist Hans Heysen commented in a letter to Melba dated 21 March 1915: 'I have begun a small water-colour for your Australian book a couple of gums, north wind red dust suggesting travelling sheep and a horseman—I will finish it this week and post it on to you'.<sup>45</sup> Not every contribution to the book was an original, however; for example, Arthur Streeton's 'Venice, Bride of the Sea' (1908) and E. Phillips Fox's 'The Green Parasol' (1912) were painted some time before the war. The gift book also included cover illustrations and designs from eleven different artists, including Napier Waller, Christian Yandell and Sydney Ure Smith. Other contributors to Melba's gift book included Australian artists well known for expressing their opinions, thoughts and feelings about the Great War through their art. Norman Lindsay, Dorothy Frances McCrae, John Sandes, Will Dyson and David Low, along with many other gift-book contributors, all gained reputations as pro-war patriots. Their writing and cartoons, published in newspapers and magazines including the *Argus* and the *Bulletin*, evoked a strong sense of duty, honour and obligation.



**Image 4: Hans Heysen, *Bush Giants*** (Published in Melba's Gift Book, YRRM Collection, image courtesy of Christopher Heysen)

This was one example of work specially completed for *Melba's Gift Book of Australian Art and Literature*.

Norman Lindsay (1879–1969) created some of the most fearsome anti-German propaganda during World War I. He included one of these drawings, aptly named 'A War Cartoon', as his contribution to Melba's gift book. It depicts Lady Liberty standing up to a stereotyped German soldier, with an injured man crouched behind her and a dead woman and baby. During the war Lindsay produced a number of cartoons for the *Bulletin*, depicting the Germans as monsters and destroyers, and the allies as women, children and babies in need of defence, protection and

rescue.<sup>46</sup> After Australia's two failed conscription referendums in 1916 and 1917, he was commissioned by the minister for recruiting, R.B. Orchard, to produce a 'recruitment kit'.<sup>47</sup> Lindsay's recruitment posters employed the same techniques used in his cartoon sketches but with even more emphasis on the monstrous nature of the enemy and the threat Germany posed to liberty, freedom and to Australia.<sup>48</sup> As well as featuring German monsters and liberal amounts of blood and death, Lindsay's posters depicted Australian soldiers as fighting on bravely through pain and exhaustion, aiming thereby to instil in the audience the sense of desperation on the frontlines and to inspire guilt in those who had not enlisted.<sup>49</sup>

Dorothy Frances McCrae gained a reputation as a patriot because her poetry, published in newspapers and magazines, elicited a strong emotional response from readers, with its message encouraging enlistment, duty and honour. Many of these poems were compiled in two collections: *Soldier, My Soldier!* (1914), dedicated to her brother Geoffrey who was later killed at Fromelles in 1916, and *The Clear Call* (1915), dedicated to 'the mothers of our soldiers'.<sup>50</sup> Her work in Melba's gift book is a story about a man struggling with his own physical imperfection (a damaged leg) who meets a beautiful, blind woman in the bush. The detailed descriptions of the bush evoke a very Australian atmosphere, but the story itself can be interpreted in many different ways—perhaps as a commentary on the destruction of war, on the social demands and ultimate unimportance of physical perfection, or perhaps just as a piece of fiction.

Irish-born John Sandes (1863–1938) was a journalist, writer and poet who arrived in Australia in 1887. He wrote for the Melbourne newspaper the *Argus* and later the Sydney newspaper the *Daily Telegraph*. His early works about the Boer War, published between 1898 and 1903, were evocative and imperialistic but included elements of Australian national identity, especially connection to the bush. One biography claims he was 'probably the most widely read, proficient and influential local poet of the South African War'.<sup>51</sup> When World War I began, Sandes further developed this understanding of Australian identity in *Anzac Day, Landing in the Dawn* (1916) and the essay 'Australian National Character in the Crucible' (1918), which was influential in the formation of what became known as the 'Anzac legend'.<sup>52</sup> His work 'Flowers in the Field' for Melba's gift book describes the war-torn fields of Europe, immortalised later that same year in Canadian John McCrae's now famous poem 'In Flanders Field'.<sup>53</sup>

## A Memory.

By DOROTHY FRANCES McCRAE (*Mrs. C. E. Perry*).

HE plunged into the gully—deep into its musk and green coolness. The laughing water leaped over the stones, singing to the mosses on the tall tree-ferns—so tall,—so scented—through dim green vistas, where at every turn he suspected a naiad.

Above the ferns—the gums—up, and up, and up. A heaven of blue. . . . He paused to listen. Water splashing, stirring leaves—the crack of the whip-bird. Another crack, crack, crack! A volley of thunder, and the groan of another forest giant—and, above all, a girl's voice, singing. Such a voice! (as he parted the boughs) such a face! She sat on a log that spanned the water. Hands clasped—beauty born of murmuring sound in her face:

The night has a thousand eyes,  
The day but one;  
But the light of the whole world dies  
With the setting sun.

He caught his foot on a projecting root and stumbled. The girl did not turn her head, but ceased singing, and appeared to listen.

“I startled you,” he volunteered.

“ 'Tis an awkward path.”

“But I've spoilt your song.”

“I'd only begun.”

“Thanks be!”

Image 5: Dorothy McCrae, 'A Memory' (Published in *Melba's Gift Book of Australian Art and Literature*, YRRM Collection)

Three of the 94 contributors to Melba's gift book were later commissioned as part of the Official War Art Scheme.<sup>54</sup> In May 1917, Will Dyson became the first official war artist of the Australian Imperial Force. He held this position, despite being wounded at both Messines and Zonnebeke, until March 1920.<sup>55</sup> War historian Charles Bean felt that Dyson experienced ten times more of the Western Front than other official war artists. It was an experience that not only reinforced his hatred of war but showed him the resilience and endurance of Australian soldiers.<sup>56</sup> In developing the Official War Art Scheme, Will Dyson stressed that only Australian artists would be able to capture the experiences of Australians overseas. This idea was encouraged by Charles Bean, and helped not only to create a visual record of Australian war experiences but also to further develop Australian art itself.<sup>57</sup> Dyson's work captured the unique characteristics of Australians at war. His drawings were powerful and compassionate expressions of human experience and very different from his earlier cartoon work, an example of which can be seen on page 63 of Melba's gift book.<sup>58</sup> In a later conversation with Charles Bean, Dyson said 'I'll never draw a line to show war except as the filthy business it is'.<sup>59</sup>

George Lambert (1873–1930), another contributor to Melba's gift book, studied art under Julian Ashton at the Art Society of New South Wales and began exhibiting his own work from 1894. By the outbreak of World War I, Lambert was living in Europe, had gained prominence as an artist and was frequently exhibiting his work. His contribution to the gift book was a reproduction of a painting he had completed in 1907, called 'The Holiday Group (The Bathers)'. Lambert was a member of the Voluntary Training Corps until December 1917 when he was named an official war artist under the Official War Art Scheme.<sup>60</sup> He was appointed to the honorary rank of lieutenant, and during his commission he completed over 130 sketches, as well as several large battle pictures and a portrait. Lambert saw his role during the war as 'artist historian' and was keen to record the 'events precious to the history of the nation'.<sup>61</sup> One of the battle pictures he produced was 'The Charge of the Light Horse at Beersheba'. Lambert learned about the charge directly from the men in the 4th Light Horse Brigade in Palestine during his tour of duty, and he rode across the location where the charge had taken place. The painting was completed in December 1920 and became part of the collection of the Australian War Memorial.<sup>62</sup> After the war, the Official

War Art Scheme moved from London to Australia and came under the control of the Australian War Memorial Art Committee. Lambert's large war commissions were completed during the inter-war period, and came to dominate Australian World War I iconography, and to influence the development of the Anzac legend.<sup>63</sup>

For many of the contributors to Melba's gift book, the war was a defining period not only in their own careers but in the development of propaganda about the nature of Australian identity. The Anzac legend that later grew was facilitated in part by the works of artists and poets like George Lambert, Dorothy Frances McCrae and John Sandes, and by Prime Minister Billy Hughes in 1919 with his statement 'Australia was born on the shores of Gallipoli'.<sup>64</sup> As shown through this exploration of the creation of Melba's gift book, the war presented opportunities for artists and writers to contribute both to fund-raising efforts and to war propaganda—in this instance, creating content to support the war effort and to promote a specific, conservative, war-defined national identity.

The years of the Great War constituted a period of national pride and patriotism for many Australians—but not for all. As the war progressed and the cost of Australia's involvement became more apparent and personal, Australia became a nation divided. This division only increased over the issue of conscription and with the return of the broken and wounded at the end of the war. *Melba's Gift Book of Australian Art and Literature* is an important historical source because it provides a fascinating glimpse into a segment of Australian society at a time of great social, economic and political turmoil.

By the time Australia entered the war in 1914, the foundations of a national cultural identity were already established. But, despite obvious differences, most Australians still identified culturally as British. World War I pushed Australia into the international arena and provided a catalyst to step out from Britain's shadow and forge a national identity of its own. In a review of the gift book, contributor John Sandes recognised this:

In days to come 'Melba's Gift Book' should have a substantial value as material for the historical investigator. It is an expression of the art and literature of Australia at the time of the Great War ... The book ... is a beautiful production, which will show people in other countries that Australia has definitely left the old bushranging days very far behind, and that she is now well able to keep step with the older countries of the world in the field of letters and art.<sup>65</sup>

The dedicated and unique fund-raising endeavours of the Australian people were just one part of this process. But, while the 'Anzac Spirit' has become a pervasive and enduring part of our cultural identity and persists even now, there is some irony in the fact that the events of World War I and the years that followed went a long way towards cementing Australia's relationship with Britain even further. After the war, 'the bond with king and empire had been sealed and sanctified in blood', as historian Henry Reynolds has recently observed.<sup>66</sup>

In the context of Nellie Melba's career and overall achievements, *Melba's Gift Book of Australian Art and Literature* is often overlooked. Indeed, in her award-winning biography of the diva, Ann Blainey makes just one reference to the gift book, describing it as 'an anthology of Australian writings and drawings that she had sponsored in 1915 to raise money for war charities.'<sup>67</sup> While Melba's story is an important one and her extensive fund-raising efforts during the war were such that they earned her a DBE, it is worth taking a closer look at her gift book. In the context of Australia's burgeoning cultural identity and World War I experiences, Melba's gift book provides an interesting and valuable insight into Australian society at the time.

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# A Place of Hope? Family Life and Post-war Refugee Experience in Somers Migrant Holding Centre

*Sandra Sutcliffe*

## **Abstract**

*This article focuses on Displaced Persons refugee immigrants who were accommodated in the Somers Migrant Holding Centre in the early 1950s. It argues from oral and archival evidence that they were not victims of a ploy by the Australian government to import indentured workers, as some historians have argued. Rather, those who came as family groups were treated kindly and helped to recover from the trauma of displacement. Indeed the policy and practice of Arthur Calwell, minister for immigration, and his departmental secretary, T.E.H. Heyes, can be seen as an act of 'constrained compassion' that ensured family members in migrant holding centres, and Somers centre in particular, were looked after and helped to adjust to a new way of life.*

As R.M. Crawford wrote, Australia's history is 'a chapter in the history of migration ... to migrate is to be uprooted, to be compelled to adjust old habits and assumptions to new circumstances'.<sup>1</sup> During World War II, and in its aftermath, the Australian government became concerned that Australia's small population made the nation extremely vulnerable to invasion from enemy forces. The bombing of Darwin and Broome in 1942 by Japanese fighter planes showed how an aggressor could penetrate Australia's defences with relative ease. After the war, the fear that communists had their sights set on Australia's vast emptiness expanded this sense of vulnerability within the national psyche.

The Australian government saw migration as a way to increase the population and thus help to make Australia safe from invasion. There was also a need for workers to assist post-war development projects. Arthur Calwell, the newly appointed minister for immigration, stated this clearly on 2 August 1945:

If Australians have learned one lesson from the Pacific war now moving to a successful conclusion, it is surely that we cannot continue

to hold our island continent for ourselves and our descendants unless we greatly increase our numbers. Our first requirement is additional population. We need it for reasons of defence and for the fullest expansion of our economy.<sup>2</sup>

The war in Europe and the subsequent carving up of territory had resulted in hundreds of thousands of refugees being stranded in camps in Germany. Displaced Persons (often called DPs) were people who had been deported from or obliged to leave their country of nationality, such as those compelled to undertake forced labour or deported for racial, religious or political reasons.<sup>3</sup> The International Refugee Organization (IRO) had the task of resettling those unfortunate people who could not, or would not, return to their own countries, many because of fear of reprisal from Communist regimes. In a short period of just over four years, the population of Australia was boosted by 170,700 government-sponsored Displaced Persons who came as migrants from the IRO camps in Europe.<sup>4</sup> Between 1948 and 1952 these post-war refugees were obliged to reshape their lives and resettle in Australia.

This article revises some of the earlier historical interpretations of Displaced Persons' experiences in Australia. It focuses on the way family units were treated by the authorities and, in particular, how the memories of those who spent time at Somers Migrant Holding Centre shaped their subsequent experience of settling into the Australian community.

### **Post-war Migration Policy**

Immediately after the end of World War II the major priority of the Australian government was to settle the returned soldiers into work and accommodation. In 1947 the focus switched to immigration. As with previous schemes, British migrants were the first choice, but there was a shortage of suitable ships to transport them to supply the projected needs of the workforce.<sup>5</sup> Three factors shaped the beginning of a shift in the composition of Australia's population from its almost exclusively British origins to a more cosmopolitan make-up. First, there was a need to increase the population. Second, the preferred source of British migrants was insufficient, and third, large numbers of East European refugees were in urgent need of placement. These Displaced Person refugees had some features that were attractive to the Australian government. Many were fair-skinned, well-educated and healthy young

people. This meant that they would not look too 'foreign' and would not be competing with Australian workers for 'good' jobs. Most were destitute and desperate and therefore willing to work and live anywhere<sup>6</sup> (see Image 1). The main architect of the post-war immigration scheme, Arthur Calwell, saw their entry to Australia as a population-boosting humanitarian gesture, which gave the refugees an opportunity to forge a new life in Australia in exchange for agreeing to work in assigned employment for up to two years.<sup>7</sup> The Australian government was careful to reassure the public that the influx of refugees would not impact on housing or employment.<sup>8</sup>

Other countries such as the United States of America, Canada and some South American countries also needed migrants and were competitors for the best young workers. Australian immigration officers had two bargaining tools in presenting their case to the IRO. The first was a willingness to take dependants and the second was the preparedness to pay £10 for each adult in order to cover the extra cost of transporting the migrants to Australia.

A successful applicant was offered work at award rates, as long as he or she agreed to assigned employment for one year.<sup>9</sup> Arthur Calwell restated details of this agreement in 1949, and extended the obligation of DPs to work for two years in assigned employment. Calwell declared:

The Commonwealth Government has accepted full responsibility for the reception of these migrants and their settlement in employment. The migrants themselves, however, are subject to direction in employment for two years. It is intended generally to employ them in country areas rather than in cities and many will go to rural employment.<sup>10</sup>

The way the government selected these migrants and dealt with them during their first two years in Australia has been judged by many historians to be harsh and opportunistic, a scheme designed to draft destitute refugees into the workforce, mostly as manual labourers. The 'carte blanche' signed by the DPs, by which they agreed to work as directed, has been assessed as inferior to other schemes, operating at the same time in which the migrant was recruited for a specific position. Egon Kunz has described the migrants who came to Australia as second-class citizens who could be processed in camps and sent to work in menial jobs.<sup>11</sup> This included professionally qualified migrants, who were initially

placed in jobs as labourers. The Displaced Persons' camps in Europe were full of rumours about which country would offer the best prospects for resettlement, but all had similar selection criteria and all wanted labourers able to help with post-war reconstruction. In order to satisfy the authorities and be placed quickly, the would-be migrants sometimes hid their true qualifications.

Another common view is that the federal government demonstrated little concern for the migrants as people. James Jupp, who has written extensively on migration, contends that the decision to offer resettlement to DPs was 'a coolly calculated drive, in competition with the United States, to draft workers into Australia without upsetting the domestic labour or housing situation'.<sup>12</sup> Glenda Sluga further claims that the attitude of the Department of Labour and National Service was that DPs should be corralled in isolated accommodation because of the fear that, left to their own devices, they would compete with Australians for jobs and housing in the metropolitan centres. There was also a fear that they would form ethnic enclaves and thus upset the homogeneous way of life of existing local communities.<sup>13</sup>

This article suggests that government policy was based on pragmatism rather than exploitation and on the belief that immigrants would be more readily accepted into Australian society if they fulfilled their obligation to 'pay' for the opportunity to build a new life in Australia. Migrants referred directly to a reception centre such as Bonegilla could be speedily registered for employment and sent off to be interviewed by prospective employers. Although the new arrivals were paid an allowance, most of this was taken back as board and lodging, so they were keen to obtain paid work as soon as possible.<sup>14</sup>

The Australian scheme for resettlement of Displaced Persons allowed intending workers to be accompanied by family members immediately or, alternatively, after three months residence in Australia, when the head of the family could nominate dependants to join him.<sup>15</sup> Historians have generally not considered that the Australian government recognised the advantage to be gained, both for the migrant families and for their integration into Australian society, from provision of compassionate care for the women and children dependent on DP breadwinners who were fulfilling their assigned employment obligations.



**Image 1: Hopeful Immigrants at a Displaced Persons Camp in Italy in 1947**  
(Courtesy National Archives of Australia, NAA:A12111, 47/15/9, digital image, p. 1)

Early expectations were that most of the migrants would be either single workers or family men whose wives and children would follow from Europe at a later time, and the barracks-style accommodation at Bonegilla reflected this assumption. However, it soon became apparent to migration officials in Europe that the number of single people available for resettlement was declining as the pool of Displaced Persons was also being tapped by the US, Canada and South American countries. The resulting decision by Australia to take a higher proportion of family units upset the initial barracks plans.<sup>16</sup> The Australian government expected that 27,500 dependants out of a total of 100,000 Displaced Persons arriving by June 1950 would require accommodation.<sup>17</sup> However, the families of breadwinners, who were sent to work in remote areas with accommodation only for single men, were initially forced to remain at Bonegilla or Cowra.

The Australian government managed its Displaced Person refugee program carefully. For instance, those with families had to meet strict guidelines, namely:

Canberra has directed that “no family unit shall be eligible for selection where it comprises more persons than a man, wife and two children under 14 years of age” ... [N]o group shall be accepted if it contains more than three dependants. As among dependants, wives and children are preferred ... [n]ot more than one aged dependant is to be included in any family unit.<sup>18</sup>

This may seem restrictive, but there was a drastic shortage of housing in Australia in the immediate post-war years. Archival records reveal that the federal government was planning carefully for migrants by establishing holding centres to enable dependants to be filtered gradually into the community.<sup>19</sup> The Australian people needed reassurance that the Displaced Persons scheme would not threaten their standard of living. An orderly picture of migration was to be presented to the Australian public. Publicity should not stress the numbers arriving and due to arrive but, rather, the planned character of the intake and the employment being found for Displaced Persons, which would ultimately increase living standards in terms of houses, public works and availability of consumer goods.<sup>20</sup>

### **Holding Centres**

Glenda Sluga attributes the unsatisfactory accommodation experience of refugee dependants to the authorities’ attitude that separation from the breadwinner was acceptable in the context of the pressure to place all the men, including those with families, into work.<sup>21</sup> However, this assumption of government complacency fails to acknowledge the effects of increased numbers of refugees and family units arriving in Australia in the second year of the Displaced Persons scheme. In May 1949, 7,717 DPs arrived in four different Australian ports, including 5,910 over a period of just nine days in six different ships. Furthermore, the arrivals in June were expected to be 7,933.<sup>22</sup> The ratio of single workers to family groups shifted too. Bonegilla was at capacity, with more shiploads of migrants already on the high seas and due to arrive, and the problem was exacerbated by a severe housing shortage in Australia.

The Australian government reacted quickly and established a cabinet sub-committee to tackle the accommodation situation.<sup>23</sup> Three categories of accommodation were created: ‘reception and training centres’, ‘workers’ hostels’ and ‘holding centres’. All migrants were processed through a reception centre, such as Bonegilla, and breadwinners were then sent to a workers’ hostel. The holding centres

were set up for wives and dependants of workers. The decision by government to establish holding centres for the families of men sent to work in areas without family accommodation was a pragmatic reaction to a change in the proportion of family groups migrating to Australia and the general housing situation in 1949.

The impact of holding centres or family camps has been assessed recently by several historians in a special edition of the journal, *The History of the Family*. Catherine Kevin's Introduction to the collection points to the tension in post-war Australian immigration policy between the desire to be a good global citizen in a time of refugee crisis and the need to abide by a national agenda of population expansion based on an idealised white nuclear family. Kevin terms this tension 'constrained compassion'. This led policy makers to temper economic motives for immigration represented by a tied labour scheme with the view that immigrant 'children were considered a public investment and their economic returns would come with social returns as their assimilated working lives as adults unfolded'. Immigration policy was therefore based on a 'fraught coupling of humanitarian and economic aims'.<sup>24</sup> Thus, as Ann Synan argues, exploitative tied labour sat alongside benevolence in the benign general running of the Benalla Holding Centre.<sup>25</sup>

My article explores examples of this 'constrained compassion'. It argues that the setting up of holding centres, instigated by the government as a reaction to the increase in family units migrating from the IRO camps in Europe, provided the first step in the refugees' recovery from the trauma of displacement and was a significant factor in assisting them to make the transition into Australian society. This gradual introduction into Australian society of family groups, combined with positive press reports to persuade Australians of the benefits that Displaced Persons would bring to the nation, was an astute way to foster a smooth transition.

The first holding centres set up to cater for wives and children of men who were working in government-arranged positions were at Uranquinty (near Wagga) and Cowra, both in New South Wales. This was not satisfactory for those families whose husbands were sent to work in Victoria, and five more holding centres were thus set up at Mildura, Rushworth, Benalla, West Sale and Somers, near Melbourne. Archival records from the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Accommodation

for Immigrants [Displaced Persons] established in April 1949 show that this followed another change in the ratio of workers and dependants, with the expected 100,000 migrants comprising 65,000 workers and 35,000 non-working dependants.<sup>26</sup>

The government was making a determined effort to foster family unity. For example, on 11 May 1949 Tasman Heyes, secretary of the Commonwealth Department of Immigration, wrote to the director of employment in Sydney outlining the government's plan for the allocation of dependants of Displaced Persons' breadwinners to holding centre accommodation: 'The employable breadwinner is channelled onto defined areas or States—our agreed policy of placing the breadwinner as near as practicable to his dependants will be maintained. This should minimise problems arising out of lack of reasonable access by a displaced person to his family'.<sup>27</sup>

### **Somers Camp**

Somers is a seaside town on Western Port Bay in Victoria. It was named after Lord Somers, who, when governor of Victoria (1926–31), set up a camp for boys, first at Anglesea and subsequently at Balnarring East, which changed its name to Somers in 1930.<sup>28</sup> During World War II some land in Somers was acquired by the Commonwealth government and an air force camp was established.<sup>29</sup> In 1947, after the war ended, the Victorian government purchased the camp from the Commonwealth but subsequently sold it to a private organisation for £20,000. Improvements to the tune of £130,000 were undertaken and the camp opened as Feature Holidays, Somers by the Sea.<sup>30</sup> The holiday camp at Somers operated for only two seasons and was not financially successful.<sup>31</sup> It was re-acquired by the Commonwealth government in 1949 to become a migrant holding centre.<sup>32</sup> Thus the accommodation provided at Somers was more like a civilian holiday camp than an army camp. Compared to the bleak inland environment at Bonegilla, the Somers Migrant Holding Centre, situated as it was by the seaside, was more reflective of the congenial accommodation depicted in the promotional material distributed in Germany's DP camps.<sup>33</sup>

When the Somers camp was opened in August 1949, the Melbourne *Herald* published an article headed: 'New Life Begins', depicting a young woman who had been forced to work as a labourer in Germany now working in the office at the holding centre.<sup>34</sup> A reporter from the Frankston *Post* also told of children playing happily and commented:

‘One cannot view these people without a feeling of compassion. Australians must do their share to make them happy. That they will be great assets to the country there is little doubt.’<sup>35</sup> Another report in the *Frankston Post*, written shortly after the camp opened in 1949, described the migrants’ fascination with the abundant seashells and went on to reflect on the benefits for them if they stayed in the rural environment and did not gather together in the city.<sup>36</sup> While this reveals some trepidation about the formation of ghettos, the article generally portrayed the new immigrants as non-threatening and deserving of welcome into the community. Images of women and children in particular (see Image 2) portrayed them as benign and emphasised their potential as nation builders.

On the eve of its opening in August 1949, Arthur Calwell stated to the House of Representatives that the Somers camp for women and children would accommodate at least seven hundred people, with capacity for up to fifteen hundred.<sup>37</sup> They were to be provided with meals, accommodation, health care and education while their husbands/fathers were fulfilling their employment obligations. The camp would employ some migrant labour, and residents would pay only 25s per week. This compared favourably with the fees charged at hostels of £2 12s 6d. Thus, the women and children were able to live closer to their husbands and fathers at a reasonable cost.

Once Somers was opened, mothers and children arrived by the busload. The camp included a medical centre and hospital; Sister Iris Everingham, the sister in charge, reported on 4 September 1949 that there were fifteen pregnant women and that some children had infectious diseases such as chickenpox and measles. By the end of October there were 687 residents at the holding centre, and the medical centre reported over thirteen hundred out-patient visits and 51 hospital admissions.<sup>38</sup> It was government policy to employ migrants at the accommodation centres, and migrant women were employed as nursing assistants. Their language skills and medical experience enabled them to assist the Australian administration and medical staff.<sup>39</sup>



**Image 2: Pre-school Play Centre, Immigration Centre, Somers**  
(Courtesy National Archives of Australia, NAA:AA1969/441, 19/1, digital image, Photo 9)

Somers proved a benign experience for many. It became a self-contained and well-equipped enterprise. Three families were accommodated in each hut, each family having two bedrooms, and there was a common area.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, as a former holiday resort located by the seaside, Somers was a vast improvement on accommodation at Bonegilla or Bathurst, both of which were former armed services camps. Somers contained a post office, hospital, kitchen and dining hall, and two general stores also served the needs of the migrants.<sup>41</sup> Because it was specifically set up as accommodation for women and children, Somers' inhabitants did not experience the urgency to move on as did migrants sent to Bonegilla. For example, the state government

established a kindergarten and primary school almost as soon as the camp was opened,<sup>42</sup> whereas, by contrast, the children at Bonegilla did not have a school until 1952. There the ideal turnover of residents was no more than six weeks, and it was deemed more important to provide classes and opportunities for the adults to ‘assimilate’.<sup>43</sup> Somers was a separate and self-sufficient mini-village, but the residents were free to travel on the local bus to Frankston for entertainment and shopping. Young children could be educated at the camp school or at the Catholic school in Crib Point, whereas those of high school age attended local schools in Frankston and Mornington.<sup>44</sup>

### **Four Migrant Memories of Somers Camp**

Some historians have given dismal accounts of the experiences of Displaced Persons as we have seen, and immigrants themselves have published gloomy recollections of the voyage from Europe, the reception at Bonegilla, and the arbitrary placement in employment. Oral accounts by immigrants also often mirror the experiences reported in published histories. However, my interviews with adults and children accommodated at Somers in the late 1940s reveal that memories of the experience were less disparaging than most historians’ accounts of migrant lives in hostel accommodation.<sup>45</sup> Evidence presented below from oral and written sources shows that, at Somers Migrant Holding Centre, Displaced Persons who migrated as family units were given hope to start rebuilding their lives.

I started my research on holding centres in 2003 by contacting the Latvian Retirement Village in Wantirna South, a suburb then on the outskirts of Melbourne, and gained consent to record individual interviews with some of the former Displaced Persons who were living there. Further interviews were conducted with some who had been at Somers as children. The six interviews with these former refugees, though relatively few in number, indicate that their initial experience at Bonegilla Migrant Reception Centre was, on the whole, unpleasant. However, those who were transferred to Somers found the new camp to be a much more congenial environment. Although the name ‘holding centre’ suggests the idea of temporary accommodation, Somers and other such centres were designed to be semi-permanent. Some migrants stayed in them for up to seven years, until the family unit was ready to move to private accommodation.

One of the migrants who lived at Somers was Adolf J. He had successfully applied to migrate to America, but his documents, he suspects, were sold on the black market. He recalls he was happy to migrate, instead, to an underpopulated country and took the chance to travel to Australia: ‘I applied to Argentina and Australia and ... being a fatalist, I thought whoever comes first I will go. We went through the screening conditions for Australia and that was it’.<sup>46</sup>

Adolf had intended to study commercial law in Latvia, but the war put paid to his ambition. He had been working in an insurance company before becoming a refugee. Once in Australia, Adolf soon found himself working at an army camp at Balcombe on the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria, and then at HMAS *Cerberus* at Flinders. He was delighted when his wife and little boy arrived at Somers: ‘They were in Cowra. I don’t know why they were sent down because in those days you didn’t really bother anybody with your personal wishes. Then, all of a sudden, they arrived at Somers, which was ideal. Just five kilometres away’.<sup>47</sup> Adolf described Somers in positive terms:

There were Nissen huts, beautiful little units, they were lined, but not insulated. They were very hot in summer ... it was one room for the family ... you had a room for yourself. Some people had two rooms ... It was well looked after. It was clean and pathways were everywhere. The great attraction was that the sea was just down there.<sup>48</sup>

Adolf could visit his wife and son at weekends and was allowed to stay and have meals in the dining room.<sup>49</sup> This transfer of Adolf’s family was a result of government policy, as outlined by the secretary of the Department of Immigration, to keep families as close together as possible. Adolf’s wife and son were able to live at the camp for several years and his son commenced his secondary education at Mornington High School.

Vlad. B., another interviewee, came to Australia from Yugoslavia in 1952, towards the end of the Displaced Person’s scheme. He was only three years old when the family set sail on the *Nelly* on 4 January 1952.<sup>50</sup> His early memories are like a series of scenes and mostly concerned with highlights such as a party night on board ship.<sup>51</sup> His memories of Bonegilla are also fleeting—just the presence of flies. However, he remembers the time spent at Somers more clearly: ‘We had the opportunity to go to Somers. It was opened as a migrant camp

... What a blessing that was for us because the environment was fresh, the beach, a sought-after holiday environment that we had just as a place to live our lives'.<sup>52</sup>

These are recollections of a small child and could be discounted as an atypical 'rosy view', but they are echoed by the adults who were interviewed.<sup>53</sup> Vlad's father, who had trained as an architect in Yugoslavia, obtained work in Geelong at a truck factory and would ride a bicycle to Frankston from Somers to catch the train, returning at weekends. Vlad continued: 'as kids, we didn't really need our parents because we had the magic of the environment there. The wonderful, wonderful creek and the beach to swim, to explore'. The family lived at the Somers camp for about seven years because Vlad's father obtained a job at the camp as a night watchman while working at HMAS *Cerberus* in Flinders. They stayed until after the camp was closed in 1957.<sup>54</sup> Subsequently they remained in the area and lived at Crib Point.

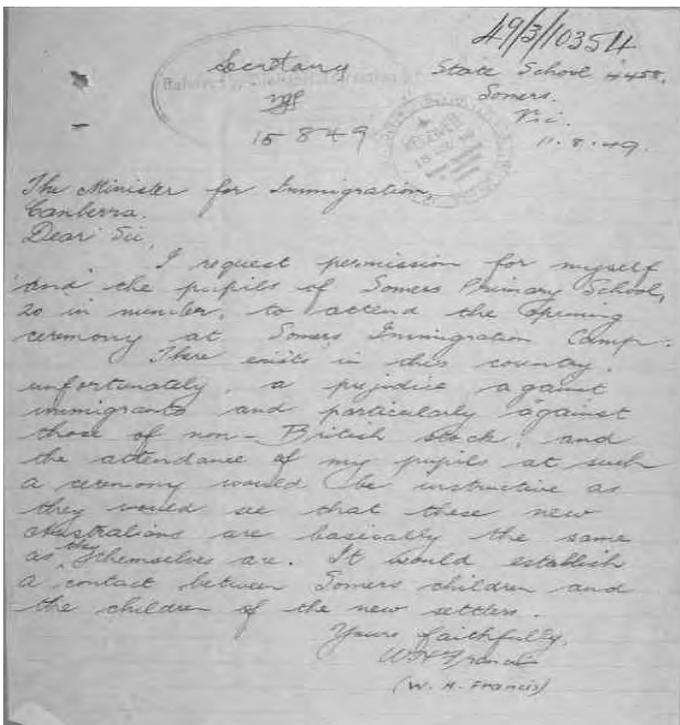
Vlad also remembers life at Somers as happy and healthy. The separation from fathers, although a cause of transitory sadness, was ameliorated by the potential of the environment for adventure and the company of other children. Somers Migrant Holding Centre appears to have been a children's paradise with its setting beside the beach at Western Port Bay. Here they were able to recover from the years of deprivation in Europe and to live a more stable existence. Although separation of children from their fathers was not ideal, weekend visits helped to fulfil the government's aim of fostering family unity.

These childhood memories, which include unhappy as well as carefree moments, show that on balance the Somers experience, although not ideal, was the beginning of a better life. The women who lived at the Somers Holding Centre were able to derive support from each other and to learn some English language skills. The healthy seaside environment was a boon for them and their children and a vast improvement on Bonegilla, with its extremes of heat and cold and the flies. This was a period of transition for both the children and their mothers, and it helped to prepare them for the next stage in their lives—settling as family units into the broader Australian society.

Bruce Marshall was employed at Somers as a public servant working for the Commonwealth Immigration Department. He recalls that the department chartered buses from the Peninsula Bus Line to transport the breadwinners from Frankston railway station to the

holding centre on Friday nights, when the population would increase by up to two hundred people. The families could be together for the weekend and the fathers then travelled by bus back to Frankston station on Sundays.<sup>55</sup> Thus the migrants were able to maintain family ties while waiting to move into the community.

Families also had some interactions with the wider community. Some attended school outside the camp. And some Australian children seem to have visited the camp too. I discovered a letter in the National Archives of Australia written by a teacher, W.H. Francis of State School 4458 at Somers, on 11 August 1949 to the minister for immigration, Arthur Calwell (see Image 3). The teacher requested permission to bring his pupils to the Somers camp to show them that non-British children were basically similar to themselves, and in order to establish contact between Somers children and the new settlers.<sup>56</sup>



**Image 3: Letter to Arthur Calwell from W.H. Francis, State School 4458, Somers**  
 (Courtesy National Archives of Australia, NAA:A445, 220/30/1, digital image, p. 76)

Leontine E., from Latvia, arrived in Australia as a married woman and the mother of a child born in Latvia during World War II. Her experiences and memories are those of a mature woman with responsibility for the welfare of a child. When I interviewed Leontine, she was a spritely woman, living comfortably at the Latvian Retirement Village. Her story of displacement started during World War II when Latvia was occupied by the German Army. Although some of her memories still caused her pain after over 50 years, she was able to recall and relate her experiences coherently.

Leontine, her husband and daughter went to Germany when the Russian Army occupied Latvia during World War II. In Germany her husband worked in industry, making lenses for war machines. Leontine and her daughter lived out of town until the bombing started, after which they went into hiding. When the war ended, the Russians occupied parts of Germany, so the family managed to obtain a car and found their way to the British Zone. They lived in a camp, using coffee and cigarettes from American aid parcels as currency in order to buy things such as milk and eggs from German farmers. After landing in Melbourne as Displaced Person refugees, the family was transported immediately to Bonegilla by train.

Oral history interviews conducted with migrants who spent some time at the Somers Migrant Holding Centre paint contrasting pictures of their lives there compared with their time at Bonegilla; their memories of the latter confirm historians' accounts of both the primitive character of the accommodation and the overcrowding. Leontine E. remembered her arrival at Bonegilla:

It was very strange ... The accommodation was pretty primitive ... [A hut] ... corrugated iron. It was tough ... a big room, we were at least four families with children and it's no privacy at all ... Then we screened ourselves off with blankets ... to get a little bit of privacy, 'cos it is embarrassing.<sup>57</sup>

Somers, to which they soon moved, was much better: 'we had a little house with two rooms—one for us and one for [our friend] ... There were a lot of children and they played ... I did spend lots of time on the beach ... There were lots of beautiful shells, especially after a storm.'<sup>58</sup>

Leontine's husband, also a Displaced Person, had to agree to work in an assigned position for up to two years. His first job was as an

office worker at a children's camp at Portsea, also on the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria. While he was working there his wife and daughter were accommodated at Somers Migrant Holding Centre, about twenty kilometres away. Leontine smiled as she remembered the beach and lots of children, but she could not remember having English lessons. Her husband was able to visit them at weekends, and she recalls cooking special meals for him on a camp stove in their two-roomed house. These cheerfully related recollections contrast markedly with her expressed dismay at the accommodation provided when they were at Bonegilla.<sup>59</sup> At Somers her daughter played happily on the beach, the accommodation was reasonable and her husband joined them at weekends. She remembers this time as a pleasant experience.<sup>60</sup>

The government policy of providing accommodation for dependants as near as possible to the breadwinner helped compensate this family for years of disruption and uncertainty as refugees. Leontine's husband held a government job and was secure in the knowledge that his wife and child were accommodated nearby in a safe place. Leontine does not express bitterness about her husband's placement in employment, and she recalls the accommodation at Somers as a great improvement over Bonegilla. Her memories, like those of others, indicate that the treatment of migrants as family units at Somers was the start of recovery from displacement.

After this period of transition, Leontine's husband obtained work at a newspaper in Melbourne, and the family moved to a two-roomed flat in inner-city Brunswick. Except for the voyage from Europe and the disappointment with Bonegilla, this story does not reflect an overall sense of being let down by the way the Displaced Persons scheme was administered. Leontine's story indicates that it was a positive contribution to the resettlement of her family in Australia.

Val Crawford (née Blums) was the social worker at the Latvian Retirement Village when I interviewed her. She arrived in Australia as a young child.<sup>61</sup> Her earliest memories of Latvia are typical fragments of childhood experiences: 'one Christmas ... we went downstairs to go into the hall and it had just snowed and I remember putting my foot in the snow and the crunching noise of snow, the morning sky ... the smell of yeast bread and the singing of Christmas carols'.<sup>62</sup> This tranquil life was soon to change forever when Latvia was occupied by the German Army. Val and her family fled to Germany. Her father was

separated from the family. Val and her mother, grandmother, sister and brother were all accommodated in one room, living with the threat of air raids, sometimes hiding in the woods in makeshift shanties. The end of the war brought more unhappiness for the family. They were in the American Zone in a Displaced Person's camp, but Val's father's whereabouts were unknown. She continues her story of refugee trauma:

There were a lot of people wandering from one camp to another looking for their own, my mother finally found out where my father was, but in the meantime he had got himself a girlfriend, which happened unfortunately to a lot of men thinking that the other half was gone. So he had set up house ... in another camp with another woman, and they actually never got back together again because she had a child by him ... and it was just turmoil.<sup>63</sup>

Nevertheless, when the time came to leave Germany, Val's father made arrangements for the family to go to Australia instead of America, because Australia would accept families with dependants. He was sent to a job in Yarraville, a suburb of Melbourne, and the rest of the family was accommodated at Cowra, then at Rushworth, and finally at Somers. Val recalled: 'I enjoyed Somers ... Initially we were put in Nissen huts and we had two rooms ... the huts once they started to develop mildew on the inside, they painted them, so that was something fantastic not to have the corrugated metal inside'.

Val's family was officially a unit and was treated by the government as such, but, in fact, her father only once came to visit them at Somers. However, her mother, sister and grandmother were all accommodated as a family there and were beneficiaries of the system that promoted family unity. Having briefly attended local schools near the camps at Bonegilla, Rushworth and Cowra, Val continued her education at the camp school in Somers in grades five and six.

Val's mother found work as a household help in the Somers district and socialised with the other women at the camp. They were given reasonably good meals and on-site medical attention, as well as having a school inside the camp for their children. Some women were able to obtain work in the camp office or as kitchen assistants, while others worked as domestics for local landowners and trades people.

These four case studies reveal that the conditions at Somers were different from Bonegilla and served to help the women and children who

were accommodated there to live a more settled way of life. It provided a period of consolidation that helped to prepare them for settling into the wider community.

By comparison the story told by a migrant, Philomena, who was not part of the Displaced Persons scheme and who arrived from Italy in 1953, tells how she was left to her own devices to adjust to her new land. She could not speak English and could not find anybody who spoke Italian:

When I came to Australia I felt sick, I cried every day. And my husband didn't know anybody, no doctor that understood Italian. So my husband took me to a doctor in Lygon Street, it's the doctor I still go to. But I didn't understand English and my husband didn't either. But I went and my husband told the doctor, "Oh my wife feels sick because she just came to Australia". He gave me a tonic, because he said the change in climate from Italy to Australia makes a big difference. But when I took the medicine I vomited, every time I took it, for three days, and I said, "This doctor gave me poison, I don't want this". My husband took me back to the doctor and told him that I vomited and that I thought I was poisoned ... So he arranged to see me again, and said, "Ah, I didn't give you poison, you're pregnant" ... And I say, "Oh my God, I'm pregnant and I have to look for a job, what can I do?"<sup>64</sup>

This poignant story shows how difficult it was for newly arrived migrants to find their feet in a strange land. With only the support of her husband, Philomena lacked the amenities that were available to the Displaced Persons at Somers.

Families accommodated at Somers were generally in a more organised situation, living at the holding centre until the breadwinner could arrange independent accommodation for them. Those with special needs, such as pregnant women, were able to visit the hospital at the camp. Those needing extra care were transported to the Women's Hospital in Melbourne.<sup>65</sup>

The government policy of staging the introduction of the migrant families to Australia by ensuring that the new arrivals did not have to compete directly for jobs or housing was pragmatic, and it assisted these migrants and their extended families to make the transition from displacement to settled existence. The fact that the Australian government recognised the advantage to be gained, both for the migrant families and for their integration into Australian society, by providing

compassionate care for the women and children while the breadwinners were fulfilling their assigned employment agreements, has not been sufficiently recognised by historians. Many have argued, to the contrary, that the Displaced Persons scheme was no more than an opportunistic stratagem to draft hapless refugees into the Australian workforce.

The holding centres were planned by the Department of Immigration to allow families to live as close as possible to the breadwinner at a reasonable cost and in good conditions. The Somers Migrant Holding Centre provided a secure environment that acted as a shock absorber for women and children who needed to adjust to a new way of life, with a new language and a different culture. Somers also offered better accommodation than other holding centres and had the advantage of an idyllic beachside location.

Newspaper evidence shows that, during this period of adjustment for the migrants, the Australian community was encouraged to look positively on the influx of newcomers into their world. Migrants who lived at the Somers centre, both mothers and children, recall the time they spent there as a positive stage in their transition from displacement to a settled life in Australia. The Australian government's policy of actively assisting family unity by providing dependants with accommodation near their breadwinner was a contributing factor to that transition. It was an act of compassion, albeit for national ends.

## Notes

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- 46 Interview with Adolf J., 24 January 2003.
- 47 Interview with Adolf J.
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- 62 Interview with Val Crawford, 26 April 2004.
- 63 Interview with Crawford.
- 64 Philomena Lacorcchia, cited in Patricia Grimshaw *et al.*, *Among the Terraces: Carlton People and Social Change*, Melbourne, Carlton Forest Group, 1988, pp. 23, 24.
- 65 Bennett, p. 163.

# Amelia Carey White—Her Book, Her Life: Victoria, October 1852 to November 1859

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## Abstract

*In Social Life and Manners in Australia, Amelia Carey White published the story of her life in Victoria in the 1850s to reassure married women like herself whose husbands were uprooting their family and homes to come to the colony because of gold. When Amelia arrived she was 'strongly biased' against the colony and the people she might meet. She left seven years later with admiration for the colony and love for the people she knew. Her story provides a unique perspective, that of the wife of a 40th Regiment officer. However, her decision not to acknowledge that status means that it is not her full story. This article presents evidence validating events and issues of importance to Amelia, relates previously untold parts of her story and looks briefly at Amelia's life after the family returned to Ireland. It expands on my article in Script & Print (vol. 41, no.1, 2017), which verifies Amelia's authorship and much of her story. It also provides missing context and shows that the visit to New Zealand is not reliable as a record of Amelia's personal experience.*

## Introduction

When the HMS *Vulcan* bringing the 40th Regiment to Melbourne in 1852 was quarantined off Melbourne, in the lying-in ward Mrs Amelia Carey White, wife of Captain Hans Thomas Fell White, gave birth to James Grove White. Many years later, Captain James Grove White signed his copy of *Social Life and Manners in Australia: Being Notes of Eight Years Experience* by A Resident and, under 'A Resident', identified his mother as the author: 'by Mrs A.C. White, wife of Major Hans Th Fell White 40th Regt & of Kilbyrne—Doneraile—Co. Cork'. In 2002, Jonathan Wantrup advertised Grove White's copy for sale and was confident that this evidence would overturn the misattribution of authorship to Elizabeth P. Ramsay-Laye.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, wide-spread misattribution continues.

## **Social Life and Manners in Australia—Retracing Misattribution and Checking the Reality of the Author's Story**

In light of Wantrup's evidence, I set out to retrace misattribution back to its source, and also to explore whether the life portrayed in *Social Life and Manners* matches the reality of Amelia Carey White's life. My recent article in *Script & Print (S&P)*, 'Amelia Carey White: Author of *Social Life and Manners in Australia*', demonstrates that the initial attribution to 'Isabel Massary' was just a suggestion.<sup>2</sup>

*Social Life and Manners in Australia: Being Notes of Eight Years Experience* by A Resident was first published by Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, London, in June 1861. Eight years later, William E.A. Axon, a Manchester librarian, suggested in *Notes and Queries* (February 1869) that the author of *Social Life and Manners* was 'Isabel Massary?'. His suggestion was probably influenced by the Manchester Free Public Libraries' copy of *Our Cousins in Australia, or, Reminiscences of Sarah Norris* by 'Isabel Massary' (Edinburgh, William P. Nimmo, 1867). In 1924, a note in a Dixon Library copy of *Social Life and Manners* referred to the suggestion in *Notes and Queries* as 'the authority' for attribution to 'Isabel Massary?'. Ferguson reiterated this statement (FER 11497) and noted Miss Massary's [*sic*] marriage to Ramsay-Laye. While Ferguson notes that copies were also held in the Mitchell Library he does not refer to an inscription in the DSM/982/L copy that states 'Miss [I.S.?] Smith / from the Author / Kilburne'. As Grove White noted in his copy, Kilbyrne (also spelt 'Kilburne') was Amelia's home.

Kay Walsh questioned attribution to Ramsay-Laye in 1994 but no further information emerged until Wantrup's 2002 sale of Grove White's copy provided evidence linking Hans to the 40th Regiment. Reading *Social Life and Manners* in light of this evidence it is easy to locate many expressions, passing references and events that indicate the author's connection with the military. My *S&P* article validates Wantrup's evidence by showing that the life of the author portrayed in *Social Life and Manners* reflects many aspects of Amelia Carey White's life. At the same time, the account given in the book omitted critical information, and it is clear that the Whites were not involved in the key events described in the final chapter.

In *Social Life and Manners*, Amelia left Melbourne to escape high living costs, mud and flies. In reality, the shift was part of the transfer of 40th Regiment detachments to the goldfields in January

1853. Captain White's position ensured that their tent accommodation was as comfortable as described in *Social Life and Manners* and that Amelia could depend on the gold escort to make purchases for her in Melbourne. Later, however, when walking past 'the residence of the officer commanding the Detachment of the 40th Regiment' Amelia does not acknowledge that it was her home.<sup>3</sup> While visiting Bendigo, Amelia's party went to the theatre and a concert and attended the horse races. Newspaper reports confirm these events were held in April 1854 and that camp officials and their ladies attended. Amelia's party travelled on to Avoca where they purchased Aboriginal artefacts. Photographs later taken by Hans show these on display in Kilbyrne House.

In Melbourne, where they lived from mid-1854 to early November 1859, Hans and Amelia were frequently involved in the official, regimental and social events described in *Social Life and Manners*, many of which reflect this period of major change in Melbourne. Their attendance can be verified by newspaper reports. In April 1857, Hans became the aide-de-camp to Major General Macarthur, commander-in-chief of the forces in Australia, and attended such functions as part of Macarthur's suite. The position also required close cooperation with Lieutenant (later Captain) Boyd in the Military Secretary's Office.

The *S&P* article shows that Amelia omitted much critical information from the book: the long involvement of the White and Carey families in the British regiments and foreign postings; that she was married to her cousin, a captain in the 40th Regiment; and that they arrived in Melbourne with the 40th Regiment on 19 October 1852 because of Lieutenant-Governor La Trobe's appeal to the secretary of state for assistance to cope with the wide-ranging impacts of the gold rush. Nor does Amelia mention the birth of two sons in Melbourne. Deciding not to acknowledge Hans's position may have been influenced by military attitudes to an officer's wife publishing a book about life during a colonial posting.

Finally, my *S&P* article demonstrates that Hans and Amelia could not have visited New Zealand in February 1860. By then they were nearing Liverpool on the *Donald McKay*, having sailed from Melbourne on 8 November 1859. The description of the visit is most likely based on letters and information provided by 40th Regiment officers and by Hans's close friend Captain Boyd, who sold out and shifted to Dunedin in December 1859 with his wife Lucy.

## Amelia Carey White and Her Unique Perspective on Life in Victoria in the 1850s

For too long the author of *Social Life and Manners* has been invisible. In this article I seek to introduce Amelia Carey White—both the author and the person—to readers and to explain why hers was a unique perspective on life in Victoria in the 1850s. Further evidence, beyond that in my *S&P* article, is provided on the extent to which many of the events and activities described in *Social Life and Manners* reflect the reality of Amelia's life at that time. These include her delight in Victoria's landscapes, her ever-expanding knowledge of flora and fauna, and her wide-ranging record of the growth of Melbourne. Last, the article briefly examines Amelia's life after the family left Melbourne—their return to Ireland, Hans's short posting to the Maori wars in New Zealand, and the family's life after Hans's death in May 1876.

In *Social Life and Manners*, Amelia Carey White provides a unique perspective on life in Victoria in the 1850s—that of the wife of a captain (later major) in the 40th Regiment. As the daughter of Colonel Edward James White of the 70th (Surrey) Regiment of Foot she was familiar with army life and had spent part of her childhood in the West Indies and at Demerara in British Guiana where White was posted from 1839 to 1841.

Three other women published books about life in Victoria during the 1850s: Ellen Clacy, *A Lady's Visit to the Gold Diggings of Australia in 1852–53* (1853); Celeste de Chabrillan, *Les Voleurs d'or* (1857); and Elizabeth Murray, *Ella Norman; or, A Woman's Perils* (1864). Questions about Ellen's story have been canvassed in this journal by Marjorie Theobald and by Susan Priestley.<sup>4</sup> Celeste and Elizabeth both lived in Melbourne while Amelia was there, yet their experiences differed greatly from Amelia's, and this is reflected in their novels. Neither was the wife of a serving officer. Celeste was married to the French consul, Monsieur le Comte de Chabrillan.<sup>5</sup> For their part, Elizabeth and her husband, Captain Virginius Murray, both came from long-serving military families. Virginius had sold out before emigrating to Victoria in January 1853 where he worked in goldfields administration—much to Elizabeth's disappointment—until his death in 1861. Elizabeth and her five sons were left penniless. Her disappointment and bitterness are reflected in *Ella Norman*, which is highly critical of emigration, particularly for women.<sup>6</sup>

Amelia was neither a traveller nor an emigrant. She had no say in the decision to come to Victoria and, like everyone who came out with the 40th Regiment, she had just a few weeks to prepare to depart for an unknown period on the other side of the world in a colony reeling from the effects of the gold rushes.<sup>7</sup> In *Social Life and Manners*, Amelia states that she is ‘publishing some selections from a diary’ written during her stay in Victoria because of her ‘desire to place before such as are about to emigrate a true picture of the colony ... [which] ... I do not think is sufficiently appreciated in the mother country’. She addresses a specific audience, not single women, but her ‘fair countrywomen, whose husbands, bent on becoming rich with Australian gold, are breaking up their English homes, and filling the hearts of their devoted and loving wives with dismay and apprehension.’<sup>8</sup> Equally, she was addressing women like Amelia herself, faced with accompanying their husbands on military postings to Australia.

Rarely does Amelia explicitly mention emigration.<sup>9</sup> Rather, she tells of her own experiences and interests, her joy in the friendships she makes and the stories of people she encounters to illustrate the challenges and rewards of life in Victoria. Her background sheds light on her capacity to observe and adapt to foreign countries and also explains her references to the West Indies and Demerara. Her husband’s position explains the ‘privileged’ life she led on the goldfields and in Melbourne—from her ready access to comfortable accommodation and well-bred horses on the goldfields, to their desirable residence on Punt Hill, attendance at parliamentary and regimental events, and exploring Mt Juliet with sappers clearing tracks to enable the ladies to walk to the top.<sup>10</sup> At the same time, Captain White’s position placed constraints on what Amelia could write about without making known her relationship with the 40th Regiment.

### **On the Goldfields—January 1853 to mid-1854**

In *Social Life and Manners*, Amelia observed the hardships and uncertain rewards of miners’ lives on the goldfields, but, while these provide a constant backdrop to her story, they are not the central focus. She soon settled into the routine of Sunday church, visits and balls, buying gold specimens, and walks within the Gold Commissioner’s Camp. She also quickly adjusted to very rough Australian riding and explored the goldfields and countryside as well as visiting various stations. She travelled to Bendigo too, where she attended the theatre, races and a

concert, before moving on to Avoca. Soon after, her husband's affairs called them back to Melbourne.

Few newspaper reports mention the 40th Regiment at Mount Alexander during this period, and only two mention Captain White—being sworn in as a justice of the peace in the Castlemaine Criminal Court in June 1853, and leading a detachment to Bendigo in October 1853.<sup>11</sup> Even so, it is possible to identify some of the events Amelia described in her book and to consider the feasibility of some other claims.

The story of Amelia's life while living on the goldfields occupies 63 pages. Fewer than 30 pages relate to life on the diggings and, while these mostly tell of her own life and what she saw and did within the camp, they also reveal her concerns about the diggers demanding and soul-destroying circumstances. Much of the 63 pages describes visits on horseback, mostly to stations owned by people known to Amelia earlier in her life or with military connections, but including visits further afield to Bendigo and Avoca too.

Amelia admired the practicality, open-mindedness and compassion of many of the people she met on these visits. These were characteristics she considered essential to successfully adapting to colonial life, alongside a willingness to lend a helping hand 'to a degree unknown in the mother country'. Some, however, adapted with difficulty. Working across the district was a young minister whose wife, 'the personification of discontent and vanity', was undermining relations with his parishioners. Amelia explained to her that the minister's situation required him to mix freely with all classes and asked the ladies of the camp—'very sensible women'—to help the young woman 'make the best of the lot she had chosen for herself'. It is also clear that Amelia viewed the difficulties and misery experienced by some of the people she met as not necessarily attributable to conditions on the goldfields but rather to problems brought with them from their earlier lives elsewhere. For example, the misery and death on the goldfields of an earlier acquaintance, 'Adelaide C—', stemmed from her father's insistence some years earlier that she marry the man of his choice, who, it turned out, treated her cruelly. Amelia also warned against 'the strange delusion ... [that] those who misconduct [*sic*] themselves at home ... [can] "unknown and unsuspected" make a new life in Australia.'<sup>12</sup>

### ***'villages of tents'***

For Amelia, tents of various sizes and designs were an everyday part of regimental life. With this experience, she quickly realised just how critical tents were to many aspects of goldfields life and to the surrounding stations. Together her observations provide a positive overview of the importance of tents in 1850s Victoria, which would have helped reassure her readers that not all colonial tents were made of cotton too thin to keep out torrential rain or scorching sun, though some were clearly of poorer quality than others.

Amelia recalled that, soon after arriving on the goldfields, they attended a Church of England service. Later they walked past the tent services of other denominations, including an Evangelical Wesleyan service in a very large tent, but both expressed concern about the inadequacy of the miners' thin cotton tents. Around the time Hans and Amelia arrived at Mount Alexander, the Reverend Cheyne was erecting a tent church near the *Argus* office, and the Reverend Currie a Wesleyan chapel. Both were nearing completion with services planned to commence by mid-February 1853.<sup>13</sup> *Social Life and Manners* also refers to 'a street of shops in tents ... such a novel sight', and wooden stores, some with the luxury of glazed windows. From this place, Amelia recorded, 'all conveyances start for Melbourne' and 'with an astonishing range of goods'. While this is consistent with S.T. Gill's painting of the tiny Forest Creek village, Amelia's additional reference to an attempt at a square with a bustling market may indicate that she was referring to the new town of Castlemaine in early 1854.<sup>14</sup>

### ***'we ... set out next day for Bendigo and the Avoca'***

The sophistication of some tents is evident in Amelia's description of one given up for her by a friend on the occasion of a visit to Bendigo: 'The tent was divided ... by a screen of Indian matting, and lined with striped Indian cotton; the carpet was rich and handsome; a dressing table, washing stands, several luxurious armchairs ... constituted the furniture; and vases ... ornamented the tent'. Indeed, it was 'quite as comfortable as any room in a house'.<sup>15</sup> The design and furnishings were influenced by the years the 40th Regiment had spent in India. Amelia's friend was probably Lieutenant Daniel Pennefather, who commanded the 40th Regiment detachment sent to Bendigo in January 1853. Such a tent was fit to welcome his new wife, Elizabeth Sarah Curr, daughter of Edward Curr of St Helliers.<sup>16</sup> While in Bendigo Amelia's party went

to the theatre, which was housed in an exceedingly well-got-up tent, attended the horse races, and enjoyed an evening concert. She mentions one gentleman rider in the hurdle race, who ‘centaur-like ... seemed to be a part of the noble animal he rode’. After months of planning, in April 1854 the first races at Bendigo were held over several days. The theatre was a substantial tent or ‘canvas house, sufficiently large to contain 1000 persons comfortably’, and it doubled as a ballroom for the race celebrations. Among the attendees were ‘most of the camp officials and their ladies’. A summary report of each race names the horses, not the riders, but, given Amelia’s somewhat theatrical allusions to Hans elsewhere in her story, it seems likely that Hans rode in the hurdle race.<sup>17</sup>

Captain White had spent some time in Bendigo in late September 1853 when, in response to disturbances by miners concerned about licence fees, the 40th Regiment detachment was reinforced by 120 soldiers, including 30 from Castlemaine under his command. By the time they arrived the situation had been defused somewhat, so it is likely that he had an opportunity to see the development of the Bendigo township and to hear about plans for the races.<sup>18</sup>

From Bendigo, Amelia travelled on to the Avoca River with ‘an agreeable party of ladies and gentlemen used to “bushing it”’. They stopped at Daisy Hill where they had intended to stay overnight, but, supplied with fresh horses, they rode on in the moonlight to arrive at the Avoca River at midnight. After supper they retired to their tent, which ‘contained every comfort a camp could afford’.<sup>19</sup> As thousands of miners rushed to new goldfields on the Avoca, the Government Camp at Daisy Hill was shifted to a new camp on the Avoca River. It was located near the combined public house/store, butchers shop and blacksmith that comprised the beginnings of Avoca. The camp would have been the only accommodation available, and the ‘agreeable party’ probably comprised camp officials and their wives.<sup>20</sup> While a private gold escort had serviced Avoca for some time, the dramatic increase in the quantity of gold led to growing concerns about the frequency of the escort, the safety of the gold and its circuitous route through Castlemaine, rather than Ballarat. Given Captain White’s responsibilities regarding the 40th Regiment’s gold escorts, it seems likely that his reason for visiting Avoca was to assess these issues. In

August 1854, the route was changed so that the escort from Avoca went direct to Ballarat.<sup>21</sup>

### **Melbourne: Mid-1854 to Early November 1859**

These years saw three governors, the relocation of military headquarters from Sydney to Melbourne consistent with Lieutenant-Governor La Trobe's earlier request to Earl Grey, and greater integration of the military through the appointment of a commander-in-chief of the forces in Australia. Consolidation also saw changes in the command and structure of the 40th Regiment. All of these changes directly affected Captain White. However, consistent with Amelia's decision not to declare Hans's involvement in the 40th Regiment, her story refers to them only indirectly.

#### ***'we were anxious to get settled as soon as possible'***

According to *Social Life and Manners*, Amelia's first concerns on returning to Melbourne were her domestic arrangements. The assistance of a land agent was sought to secure a five-year lease on a house on Punt Hill at a rent of £450 a year, which Amelia considered expensive.

The house we sought was quite close to the Richmond Punt, and almost opposite the Cremorne Gardens. It was built of brick, and the rooms were all on the ground floor with a wide verandah running round three sides. The stables were good, whilst a paddock, a very large fruit garden, and a vineyard made it a desirable residence ...<sup>22</sup>

*Social Life and Manners* infers that they took up residence before they attended the Governor's Queens' Birthday Ball in May 1855. James Kearney's 1855 map of *Melbourne and Its Suburbs*, and a photograph of Punt Hill in the Stonnington Library, show few residences close to the punt and opposite Cremorne Gardens.<sup>23</sup> 'Yarra Bank' and 'Avoca', on Punt Hill Lots 1 and 2, were established properties running from Gardiner's Creek Road to the Yarra River almost opposite Cremorne Gardens. Both included single-storey residences with verandahs, stables and coach houses, extensive gardens and vineyards.<sup>24</sup> Their respective owners, Major Alexander Davidson and William Easey, were land agents and property speculators who were sub-dividing their lots for gentlemen's villas, but these would not have had established gardens or vineyards by early 1855. Spasmodic advertisements by Major Davidson in 1854 and early 1855 indicate a willingness to lease 'Yarra

Bank'. William Easey had purchased 'Avoca' for £12,500 in November 1854; advertisements for the sale present 'Avoca' as indeed a desirable residence. As Easey could not expect a quick return on this investment he, too, may have been willing to consider leasing. Although it seems likely that Hans and Amelia leased 'Avoca' I have not yet been able to confirm this.<sup>25</sup>



**Image 1: S.T. Gill, *Cremorne Gardens from South Side of Yarra nr Col- Andersons*, 1855**  
 (Courtesy State Library Victoria, Image H82.216)



**Image 2: Punt and Punt Hill showing the few houses in the location when the Whites lived there, including Avoca, c. 1860** (Courtesy Stonnington Library)

According to *Social Life and Manners*, in choosing their residence Amelia was impressed by the house, its location and the potential to produce excess vegetables, chickens and eggs, the sale of which would help offset their domestic costs. Amelia took a close interest in the care of her poultry guided by Miss Watts's *The Poultry Yard*.<sup>26</sup> Later, in 1858, Major-General Macarthur moved to 'Balmerino House' near the governor's residence, 'Toorak'. Captain White, his family and the poultry shifted to a 'Genteel family residence' later advertised as 'that stone-built house, eight rooms, with garden, stable, &c ... adjoining residence of Major-General Macarthur'.<sup>27</sup> Amelia does not refer to this in *Social Life and Manners*.

**'My husband's affairs [in] Melbourne'**

At headquarters in Melbourne, Captain White continued to command the Grenadiers and from October 1855 was also the paymaster and the president of the Committee of Paymastership. As paymaster he was responsible for overseeing the regiment's complex *Returns: Muster Books and Pay Lists* and, together with Colonel Valiant, the sign-off monthly returns. These wide-ranging reports provide full details of personnel, their names, rank, location, movements, promotions, entitlements, rates of pay, penalties and other information.<sup>28</sup> Very rarely was Captain White named in the press during this time, but there are frequent references to the presence of military officers, or particular details that indicate Amelia's claims are feasible.

Once appointed as ADC to Major-General Macarthur in 1857, Hans largely worked behind the scenes as a member of Macarthur's suite, involved in the planning, liaison, protocol, security and briefing for his activities. At the same time, Hans's public profile increased significantly, and his presence at events is frequently reported—by name, or by reference to Major-General's Macarthur's ADC, or his suite. Hans attended ceremonies associated with the opening and prorogation of the parliament. He also accompanied Major-General Macarthur to Queen's Birthday and St Patrick's Day celebrations; dinners with the Philosophical Institute of Victoria and the Port Phillip Farmers Association; lectures such as one on public health for the Benevolent Society; and the opening of the Castlemaine railway—to mention just a few. As Amelia was careful to refer only to events in which she was involved, she made no mention of these, apart from the Castlemaine railway opening to which she was invited but did not attend.<sup>29</sup>

Hans was also part of the mournful pageantry for the funerals of Major-General Macarthur's predecessor, Major-General Sir Robert Nickle, 28 May 1855; Governor Hotham, 4 January 1856; and the French Consul, Monsieur le Comte de Chabrilan, 31 December 1858.<sup>30</sup> One funeral, reported extensively in the colonies and in New Zealand (but not mentioned in *Social Life and Manners*), was far more personal than pageantry for Hans and Amelia. Shortly after riding away from their home near 'Balmerino' on the evening of 18 July 1859, Lieutenant-Colonel Bladen Neil was found dead on the road. Hans identified his body and gave evidence at the inquest. Hans had known Bladen Neil since joining the 40th Regiment in 1844. The closeness of their friendship is indicated by the fact that, at his funeral, the mourning coach following the pallbearers was occupied by Mrs Colonel Neil and Mrs Captain White. Major-General Macarthur and Captain White followed close behind. Hans and Amelia's daughter, born six months later, was named Mirabel Bladen Neil White.<sup>31</sup>

***'The birds, flowers and ferns were all new to me, and so full of interest'***

A recurring theme throughout *Social Life and Manners* is Amelia's delight in observing, sketching and beginning to recognise species of Australian flora and fauna. Her determination to learn about them was consistent with her belief that to enjoy a new country 'you should be quite *up* in all the sciences; or at least have an idea of the various specimens which are constantly exhibited to your wondering eyes'. In this she was helped by the small microscope she brought with her, which proved a 'never-ceasing source of enjoyment' allowing her to contemplate 'the hidden marvels of creation.'<sup>32</sup>

On her trek to the goldfields, her rides and visits to stations near the goldfields and to the Pyrenees, on excursions from Melbourne to the Lallal Falls, the Upper Yarra and Mount Juliet, and even at the Melbourne Exhibition, Amelia admired and compared the flowers, mosses, ferns and trees. She regretted that it was not possible to 'examine and sketch each and every one of the beautiful objects before' her. Despite the leeches in the fern gullies on Mount Juliet, Amelia lingered, 'examining the varieties of ferns that grew in wondrous luxuriance under the shadow of their taller brethren, whose feather-like fronds drooped so gracefully over them'. On these ventures Amelia often referred to her 'bird-collecting friend', her pleasure in watching his 'handsome,

animated countenance as he held forth on the peculiar beauty or rarity of each bird', and her recognition that his collection was based on his shooting skills. His constant presence and Amelia's admiring comments indicate that this was Hans.<sup>33</sup>

Amelia also lauded the contributions of Dr Mueller's work to science, especially the establishment of the Botanic Gardens with its mix of native plants, birds and animals and introduced species being acclimatised. In the Botanic Gardens, Amelia was fascinated by scarlet *Clianthus Damperii* [sic] flowers and felt particularly fortunate to meet a man just returned from the expedition searching for 'Mr Coultherd' [sic].<sup>34</sup> Newspaper reports show that the *Clianthus Dampierii* were growing in front of Dr Mueller's house in the Gardens and that the man Amelia met was Benjamin Herschel Babbage, whose expedition had discovered William Coulthard's remains in June 1858. In January 1859, Babbage was in Melbourne where, at his request, Mueller had classified and prepared a listing and report of the plants collected by the expedition, including *Clianthus Dampierii*. Babbage also attended a meeting of the Mining Institute in the Mechanics' Institute on 17 January 1859.<sup>35</sup>

#### *'this wonderfully progressing city'*

On her return to Melbourne, as reported in *Social Life and Manners*, Amelia was unprepared for the remarkable change in 'this extraordinary city—so young and yet so flourishing, which possesses all the institutions, public buildings, and places of amusement only found in the first-rate cities of the old world'. Near the end of their stay Amelia again reflected on the development of Melbourne, 'lavishing her gold on everything that will beautify and adorn her'.<sup>36</sup> In keeping with the use of the term in the 1850s, Amelia's concept of 'amusement' variously refers to 'fun', 'passing the time pleasantly' or 'engaging the mind in intellectual considerations'. While admiring the buildings and places of amusement for their architecture, she also recalled the events she had attended with Hans and emphasised the ways the buildings were used to progress the arts and foster public benevolence and intellectual engagement.<sup>37</sup>

Completed in 1847, the cathedral was 'neither the largest nor the handsomest' she had seen when compared with the newer churches. However, for Hans and Amelia, it was where James Grove White was baptised soon after they first arrived in Melbourne, a fact that Grove White included in his *Historical Notes*.<sup>38</sup> Melbourne's first Exhibition

Building, also referred to in *Social Life and Manners*, was described as 'a miniature model of the Crystal Palace, and of much beauty'. Amelia and Hans bought season tickets to the first exhibition, which displayed 'various specimens of native produce, together with works of art and industry which were destined to represent Victoria at the great Paris Exhibition'. Not surprisingly, they enjoyed the wildflowers and the fine collection of birds. Although Amelia thought she was becoming acquainted with the wildflowers in the colony she acknowledged that most of those on display were strangers to her. Amelia's bird-collecting 'friend' (Hans) declared that his own collection 'contained rarer and finer specimens'. Melbourne's first exhibition, held in the Exhibition Building on the corner of William and Little Lonsdale streets, opened on 17 October 1854, a few months after Hans and Amelia returned from the goldfields. The season tickets they bought also entitled them to attend the inauguration on opening day and exhibition concerts at half price.<sup>39</sup>

Over the coming years the Exhibition Building proved as flexible as the designers intended, supporting other aspects of community progress. Some of the displays drew criticism from Amelia in *Social Life and Manners*; for example, she considered that many of the paintings exhibited in the Fine Arts section should have been rejected. She admitted, nevertheless, that novice artists could learn by comparing their works with the more successful paintings on display. She was more impressed by the plaster models, exquisite miniatures and especially the photographs, including 'portraits of public characters', which far surpassed any she had seen before. The first exhibition by the Victorian Society of the Fine Arts, held in December 1857, displayed 250 paintings, plaster models, miniatures and photographs. At a private preview, the governor and Major-General Macarthur particularly admired the works of von Guerard, Strutt and Chevalier. The photographs that so impressed Amelia were portraits of members of parliament and theatrical personalities by Batchelder and O'Neill. The exquisite miniatures were the work of Mrs A.M. (Georgiana) McCrae.<sup>40</sup>

Other events at the Exhibition Building attended by Amelia and Hans included the Victorian Volunteer Rifles Regiment's Ball (July 1855), Queen's Birthday Celebrations (May 1858), and Governor Barkly's Levee (June 1857).<sup>41</sup> In *Social Life and Manners*, Amelia recorded the opening on 16 July 1855 of the Theatre Royal—in a theatre 'as large as Drury Lane ... beautifully fitted up and brilliantly lighted'—where she enjoyed

the talent of Mrs Charles Poole in *The School for Scandal*. The Theatre Royal was also the venue for Amelia's greatest treats, the Philharmonic Society concerts, which included selections from Handel's Oratorios and the Stabat Mater performed with taste and delicacy.<sup>42</sup> While the Philharmonic Society's concerts were usually performed in the Exhibition Building, for several months from mid-1856 the Exhibition Building was closed for repairs. Hence, the society's Festival of Sacred Concerts and its third subscription concert were held in the Theatre Royal, both under the patronage of the acting governor, Major-General Macarthur, and featuring Madame Anna Bishop.<sup>43</sup>

When attending the opening of parliament at the invitation of 'leading Members of Parliament', Amelia was impressed by the profuse white-and-gold decoration adding to the imposing effect of the interior. From the first sitting in the new Parliament House in November 1856, ladies received tickets to the opening and the prorogation of parliament. Their attendance in the elegant galleries built specifically for them and the contrast of their gay dresses with the classical architecture were regularly reported. As Captain White took part in the opening of parliament in 1857, 1858 and 1859, Amelia may have attended on more than one occasion.<sup>44</sup>

In *Social Life and Manners*, Amelia describes her pride in showing visitors around the Public Library, National Gallery and Museum. She felt that such 'a handsome edifice', with interior furnishings, library and collections worthy of the building, would no doubt heighten the enjoyment of an amusing book. In the Museum, she admired the fine collection of native birds and animals. Opened by the acting governor, Major-General Macarthur, on 11 February 1856, the hall was thronged by ladies and gentlemen, and the 40th Regiment provided a guard of honour.<sup>45</sup>

While acknowledging in *Social Life and Manners* that she was not present at the opening of the Emerald Hill Mechanics' Institute, Amelia claimed to have been generally much pleased with the lectures she attended there, particularly those on China and the Chinese: 'that singular people, and the opening at last of a country so pertinaciously closed against the world'. After the lecture, Amelia claims to have watched from her verandah a fireworks display in Cremorne Gardens representing the bombardment of Canton. The lecture took place on 6 August 1859, and again the presence of a great number of ladies was reported by the

newspapers. The bombardment of Canton fireworks display actually occurred between November 1857 and April 1858, when Amelia could indeed have watched from her verandah on Punt Hill but, by August 1859, the family had moved to near the governor's residence, 'Toorak'.<sup>46</sup>

**'generously, freely responding to every appeal made to their benevolence'**

*Social Life and Manners* praises the generosity of the people and of individuals in raising money, promoting causes through their patronage, donating goods for the annual bazaar in the Botanic Gardens, or giving their time to benevolent activities. Many of the events Amelia attended benefited from the patronage of Major-General Macarthur, or his senior staff, and involved music played by the 40th Regiment Band or performances by the Garrison amateur actors. Amelia also noted the generosity of leading theatrical personalities, as well as other dignitaries and families of distinction. She twice mentioned attending theatrical performances supported by Catherine Hayes, whom she praised for encouraging other performers, including the officers of the Garrison, and for giving generously to charitable causes. The Garrison amateur theatricals' first performance on 3 July 1855 was under the patronage of the mayor of Melbourne and Major-General Macarthur. Catherine and her mother were in the audience. The *Argus* praised Catherine's generosity in fostering local talent and, by her presence, encouraging many others to attend. That performance was in aid of a Crimean War patriotic fund, with the money being forwarded to England. Most subsequent performances by the Garrison amateurs in July and September, and by the Garrick Club amateurs in 1855, 1856, 1857 and 1858, supported local causes such as the destitute in Collingwood, the Orphan Asylum, the Benevolent Asylum, and building new hospitals.<sup>47</sup>

According to *Social Life and Manners*, a bazaar held in the Botanic Gardens for charitable purposes attracted all classes of persons, including newly rich diggers and their fashionably dressed wives willing to pay high prices for fancy work imported from England—to the amazement of the 'quiet little lady' in charge of the stall. This 'Grand Fancy Bazaar' took place on 27 and 28 November 1857 in aid of the South Yarra School Fund and was held under the patronage of Governor Barkly, Major-General Macarthur, nine lady patronesses including Mrs Neil, and was supported and promoted by Dr Mueller. The *Age* reported

that Mrs White was one of the ladies who managed the stalls selling an amazing variety of goods—surely not the ‘quiet little lady’!<sup>48</sup>

### **Required to Return to England**

In *Social Life and Manners*, Amelia somewhat confusingly claimed that, unexpectedly, her husband was ‘peremptorily required [to] return to England’ but also that they ‘had for some time taken our passage to England in one of the favourite clipper ships’. The *Donald McKay* arrived in Melbourne on 7 July 1859 bringing replacement drafts for the 12th and 40th Regiments. It was expected to depart in late October taking back to England men whose term of service had expired and those, like Captain White, who were required to go on leave.<sup>49</sup>

Amelia and Hans had four months in which to see their ‘happy home dismantled’ while coping with the death and funeral of Bladen Neil, Amelia’s pregnancy, and Hans’s official duties. On 5 November 1859, on behalf of Captain White ‘who is leaving for England’, William Easey auctioned the whole of their household furniture; a horse, carriage, cart and dray; two chaff cutters; Hans’s turning lathe, fancy wood and tools; and Amelia’s beloved poultry and animals. Easey’s advertisements for the auction were the only acknowledgment in the press that the Whites were leaving.<sup>50</sup>

Primarily a wool ship, the *Donald McKay* was also claimed to be the largest, most comfortable ship in the world, with commodious, properly furnished cabins, a stewardess for the comfort of lady passengers, a qualified doctor, musicians, and a cow for the use of saloon passengers. The *Donald McKay* sailed from Melbourne on 8 November 1859. Among the cabin passengers were Captain White, Mrs White, Jas. White and Rob. [sic] White; also Major-General Coxworthy, his wife and six daughters. Formerly the deputy commissary-general and comptroller of army expenditure, Coxworthy was also a pallbearer at Bladen Neil’s funeral. Another cabin passenger was James Bonwick, the well-known educator, author and regular lecturer at the Emerald Hill Mechanics’ Institute.<sup>51</sup> Hans and Amelia were assured of a comfortable and amusing voyage and, for Amelia, support and care for the birth of Mirabel Bladen Neil White on 28 January 1860.<sup>52</sup>

When Amelia had stepped off the *Vulcan* she was ‘strongly biased’ against the colony and the people she might meet there. She left ‘with warm feelings for the country, and much love and respect’ for the people she knew.

## Beyond the Book

Hans was on leave for two years, much of which was spent on Guernsey where Amelia's parents lived and James (and later Hans Junior) attended the prestigious Elizabeth College. Amelia remained on Guernsey when Hans rejoined the 40th Regiment in New Zealand on 1 December 1861 with the intention of retiring in November 1862.<sup>53</sup> For most of his time in New Zealand he commanded the camp at Otahuhu, where drafts of 'the least effective men' of various corps prepared the camp for winter by constructing mess huts and kitchens and maintaining the productive gardens, while the regiments concentrated on pushing out the frontier defences. In July and August Hans made brief visits to Wanganui, Wellington and Nelson before sailing on 1 September 1862 for five days in Melbourne, then embarking on the *Great Britain* for Liverpool, Amelia, their children and retirement.<sup>54</sup>

Beyond Hans's return, I have little information about Amelia. Returning to Kilbyrne House and their 323-acre property in County Cork, the Whites extended the house for two additions to the family, Henrietta and John (Ion), and to accommodate Hans's photographic gallery, dark rooms, lathe and native artefacts from Avoca and Dunedin. Some of the artefacts are shown in a photograph in *Historical Notes*, which also includes some of the photographs taken by Hans after their return to Kilbyrne.<sup>55</sup> Amelia, Hans and James had life-long interests in such artefacts and in the archaeology of Ireland. In July 1885, Mrs Hans White was elected a member of Royal Historical and Archaeological Association of Ireland—one of its few women members. Colonel James Grove White became a respected antiquarian and historian.<sup>56</sup>

All of the children received some of their education on Guernsey where Hans, Amelia and their daughters were living when Hans died on 17 May 1876. Of Hans's properties—Kilbyrne, Nursetown Beg and Carriglena Beg—Amelia inherited a lifetime interest in Nursetown Beg and Carriglena Beg. In 1907 she sold these properties to her tenants under the *Irish Land Act 1903*.<sup>57</sup> Sons James (Colonel) and John (Captain Adjutant Viceroy's Body Guard) followed the family's military tradition, while Hans rose to commander in the Royal Navy.<sup>58</sup>

Amelia lived at Kilbyrne until at least 1897, maintaining her interest in antiquities and the arts. She exhibited three paintings in the 1883 Cork Industrial Exhibition and another at the 1885 Channel Islands Fine Art Exhibition.<sup>59</sup> In her later years, she lived with her son

Hans, his wife Beatrice and their children at Springfort Hall, Mallow. On 11 March 1913 Amelia died at Springfort Hall and was buried in the family vault at Doneraile.<sup>60</sup>

## Notes

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See *Manchester Times*, 7 September 1861; *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, 8 September 1861; University of Reading, 'Longman Group Archive', at <https://rdg.ent.sirsiidynix.net.uk/client/special/search/results?qu=Longman+Group+Archive&te=&lm=UMASCS2>.
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- 11 *Argus*, 14 June 1853, p. 7; *Legislative Council Papers*, 10 October 1853; *Argus*, 1 November 1853, p. 5.
- 12 *Social Life and Manners in Australia*, pp. 3, 65–7, 41–2.
- 13 *Social Life and Manners in Australia*, pp. 16–18; *Argus*, 11 February 1853, p. 4.
- 14 S.T. Gill, *Forest Creek, Mount Alexander Diggings*, July 1853, Bib ID 2930088, National Library of Australia (NLA); *Social Life and Manners in Australia*, p. 35. When Amelia arrived at the diggings they were known as Mount Alexander or Forest Creek. A government survey in 1854 established a new town, Castlemaine, to which existing businesses were required to move: *Australian Heritage*, 'Castlemaine', at <http://www.heritageaustralia.com.au/victoria/2767-castlemaine>; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 March 1854, p. 5.

- 15 *Social Life and Manners in Australia*, p. 55.
- 16 *Argus*, 18 January 1853, p. 5; *Courier* (Hobart), 22 January 1853, p. 2; *Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer*, 13 June 1854, p. 5; 'Curr, Edward (1798–1850)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, at <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/curr-edward-1944/text2331>; Jocelyn O'Neil, *The Curr Sisters*, at <http://www.portphillippioneersgroup.org.au/pppg5hq.htm>.
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- 24 Sale advertisements, for example, see *Argus*, 14 November 1854, p. 2, and 2 May 1854, p. 3. Davidson's daughter remembered 'Yarra Bank' as 'like an Indian Bungalow, and all covered with lovely creepers': National Gallery of Victoria, *Picturesque Descriptions of the Colony*, Portrait of Caroline Davidson, at [http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/234657/TWLPdf.pdf](http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/234657/TWLPdf.pdf).
- 25 On 'Yarra Bank', see *Argus*, 20 April 1854, p. 7; 27 April 1854, p. 3; 12 June 1854, p. 1; 6 November 1854, p. 7; and 15 February 1855, p. 1. On 'Avoca', see *Argus*, 20 November 1854, p. 4, and 28 December 1854, p. 7. In Sands and Kenny's *The Melbourne Directory*, 1857, 1858 and 1859, Captain White is listed only under Military and Naval Departments. Nor is he listed as a rate payer in the transcript of the Prahran Rate Book 1856–57, at [http://www.stonnington.vic.gov.au/Lists/Search-Results?dlv\\_DLV%20Public%20Search=\(keyword=rate%2520book%25201856-57\)\(pagesize=10\)\(pageindex=1\)](http://www.stonnington.vic.gov.au/Lists/Search-Results?dlv_DLV%20Public%20Search=(keyword=rate%2520book%25201856-57)(pagesize=10)(pageindex=1)).
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# HISTORICAL NOTES

## Dendy's Brighton Plan: Questions, Conjectures and Insights

*Mike Scott*

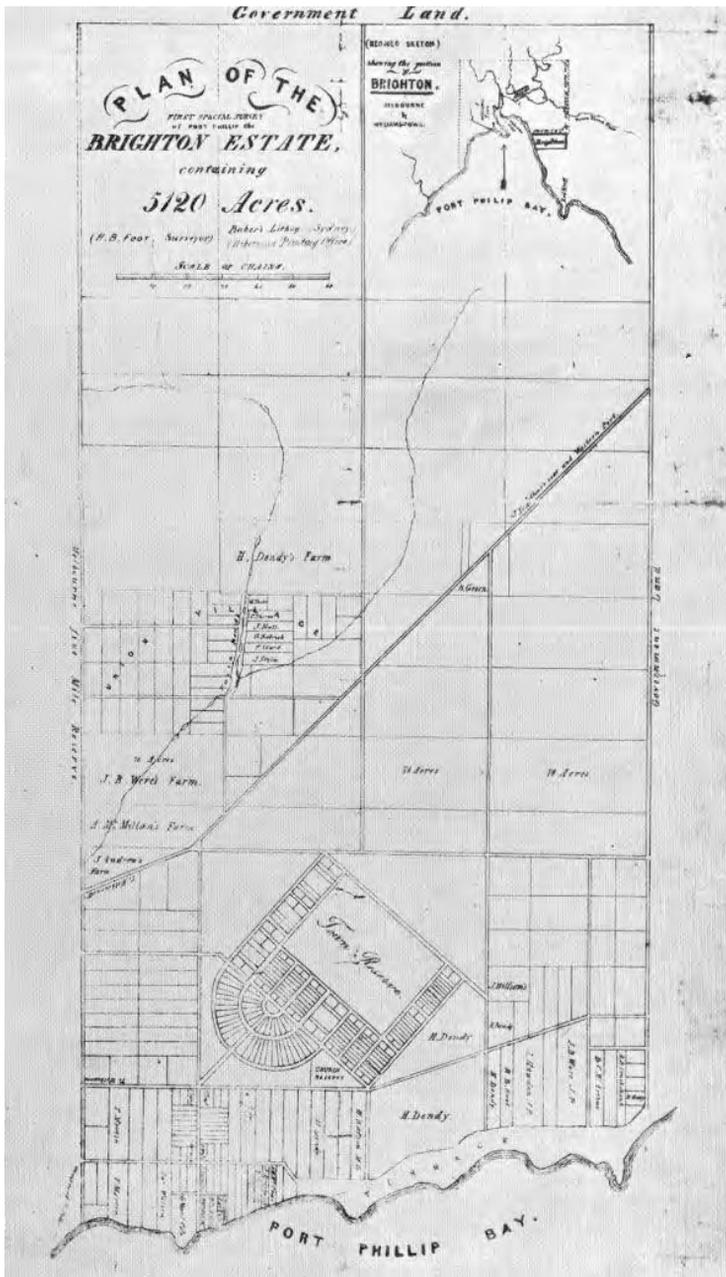
### **Abstract**

*This article poses questions, posits conjectures, and suggests insights into the rationale for, and execution of, the Brighton plan prepared by H.B. Foot for Henry Dendy in the earliest years of Victoria's settlement. There are several unusual characteristics of the plan for Brighton, which, taken together, render it unique in the history of Victoria's town planning. It arose from a design competition and gave Brighton a street pattern different from any other part of Melbourne, with a skewed grid and a formal design of semi-circular crescents. These and other unusual aspects of the plan are enigmatic and, so far, largely unexplained.*

Weston Bate's seminal *History of Brighton* provides an engaging account of Henry Dendy's acquisition of the land extending from North Road to South Road, and from the foreshore to East Boundary Road. Of particular interest is the design of the Special Survey of subdivision, prepared by H.B. Foot in 1841, which included the distinctive street layout of the Brighton Estate township—the land bounded by Bay, Hampton, Dendy and New streets—that survives in large part to this day.

### **Foot's Plan for the Brighton Estate**

There are several unusual characteristics of the plan for the Brighton Estate, which, taken together, render it unique in the history of Victoria's town planning. It was part of one of only three Special Surveys—large land tracts released by the colonial authorities in advance of a government plan of survey—entertained in the Port Phillip District; it was the subject of a design competition won by Foot; the grid is tilted NW–SE, rather than north–south; and it includes the semi-circular crescents that survive to this day (see Map 1).



Map 1: Henry Dendy's Special Survey—his town plan for Brighton, dating from the early 1840s. North is to the left. (Source: Weston Bate, *A History of Brighton*)

Other distinctive characteristics did not survive: most lots were double-ended, instead of fronting only one street; a very large town reserve was delineated (bordered by today's Carpenter, William, Halifax and Church streets), occupying almost half of the area of the township; and an even larger area of town boundary formed what Bate terms a 'green belt' around the edges of the township.

### **Bate's Critique of the Plan**

Bate's description of the plan includes a well-informed commentary that places it in the context of early nineteenth-century town planning practice. Foot's plan for the Brighton Estate, he wrote, 'is a pretentious one ... foolishly grandiose in size' (more than 150 properties are delineated in the subdivision plan), and the geometrical regimentation of the English crescent was 'completely out of place ... in a minor town in the primitive colony of Port Phillip'. Bate added: 'The double-fronted crescent blocks have never been properly used, and the same applies to the rest of the grid.'

Some aspects of the plan received a more favourable comment from Bate, however. He described the crescent pattern as 'cleverly placed to fit the contour of the ground ... placed ... with full consideration for the topography', and the inner crescent sits 'neatly right over the tongue of the fifty foot contour. There was a drop of ten feet to each of the outer crescents, although it is doubtful if beyond the rough placing, Foot was aware of this'.

On balance, Bate assessed the township plan as an 'optimistic misconception of the possibilities of place and time', rather than a cynical exercise in speculative window-dressing. Few would disagree with this opinion, accepting that he judged the plan against the conditions and possibilities of 1840s Melbourne. Neither Foot nor Dendy (nor his land agent J.B. Were) could have anticipated the astronomical urban growth that saw Melbourne become a world metropolis within the space of a mere 30 to 40 years.

But are there aspects of Foot's plan that might be assessed today in a more favourable light?

### **The Skewed Brighton Grid: A Rational Response?**

Dendy's land lay five miles south of Melbourne's township, a condition of sale he had no choice but to accept. The only parts of it saleable for residential development in the 1840s would have been the very large lots nearest to the sea frontage of Port Phillip, which were laid out by Foot in

a conventional orthogonal pattern. How was Dendy to add value, over and above its pastoral potential, to the rest of his land? The pretentious township plan was one answer. So, too, was the proposed Union Village farming settlement, located where the waters of the Elster Creek divide, east of Hawthorn Road. Both were to service farmers on the agricultural allotments occupying much of the rest of Dendy's land.

The SE–NW tilt of the street pattern is a feature that continues to confound the navigation of visitors and even some locals. Weston Bate's observations about the relationship of the crescents to the contours tell only part of the story. The Bayside Planning Scheme's Special Building Overlay maps bring the topographical rationale of the plan into sharp focus. They reveal that the major topographical feature of the Brighton area is a series of parallel ridges running SE–NW, between which run drainage lines that would have been less than desirable for development owing to flood risk (see Map 2).

The trackway to Western Port (later Point Nepean Road, now the Nepean Highway), which already existed at the time of Foot's survey, proceeds along the central spine of one such ridge. Foot's Outer Crescent precisely straddles another of the ridges, and its arc springs from two streets (present day Durrant and Lindsay streets) that precisely occupy the two drainage lines flanking the ridge. Further, the SW edge of Foot's township plan, extending beyond the crescent area (present-day Well Street), runs parallel and close to a third drainage line.

So, the tilted grid is an entirely rational response to the local topography. It is the rest of Melbourne that is out of step, with its rigid adherence to the surveyors' one-mile grid of N–S, E–W 'rural' roads, for the most part irrespective of undulations and watercourses. The intersection between the two street patterns has produced an unintended but welcome consequence—it has helped to make central Brighton's streets unattractive for extraneous through traffic.

### **The Large, Double-ended Lots: Evidence of Planning Naivety?**

The streets of the Brighton Estate township are around 100 metres apart, which is congruent with the government's practice in laying out early planned suburbs like Carlton and East Melbourne—though these were laid out a decade or more later than Foot's plan. The absence of rear laneways for night-soil collection should not surprise us because they were also absent at this time from the government plans. The difference is in the allotment pattern. In the government plans, each block was



**Map 2: Composite of Bayside Planning Scheme Special Building Overlay maps**

The SBOs approximate to the alignment of topographic depressions/watercourses, which can be seen to explain the orientation and location of the 1840s Dendy town plan (Map 1).



**Map 3: 1862 map of Brighton** (Courtesy State Library Victoria)

North is to the left. The watercourses and low-lying land currently covered by the Special Building Overlay (Map 2) are clearly visible.

divided longitudinally, so that each allotment (mostly of a quarter acre) had a single street frontage. In Foot's plan, while most lots are of a similar area, they are double-ended and therefore narrower—they have two street frontages, one at each end of the lot.

The 1862 map of Brighton (see Map 3) shows a scattering of buildings that had begun to fill the township plan. Some occupy a complete double-ended lot, including consolidated lots that have expanded sideways to occupy more than the standard narrow widths sketched on Foot's plan. This is particularly true in the crescent area, with its premium location. But, generally, the predominant pattern is a house at one end of a lot that has been subdivided to provide separate street frontages. The haphazard way in which this occurred is evident today throughout the township area.

Was Foot naive in delineating double-ended lots? Possibly. Few purchasers took advantage of the two street frontages, and the uncoordinated way in which individual owners subsequently subdivided is hardly best-practice town planning. On the other hand, subdivision of lots immediately after purchase was commonplace in Victorian Melbourne. Single-fronted terraces on long, narrow lots, epitomising the heritage character of our inner suburbs, are the direct result of this practice. So, it is likely that Foot's plan was conceived only as a starting point in terms of its lot layout, allowing maximum flexibility for purchasers to customise.

### **The Brighton Crescents: Are They 'completely out of place'?**

There is a subtlety to the layout of Brighton's crescents that is only evident on the MMBW detailed plans of 1906 or to an observer on site with a measuring tape: the road reserve of Middle Crescent is 50 per cent wider than its Inner and Outer counterparts (see Maps 4 and 5 and Photograph 1). The Inner and Outer crescents, along with the majority of road reserves in central Brighton, are one chain (20 metres) wide, which was the most common width for urban main roads in Victorian Melbourne. Middle Crescent is 1.5 chains (30 metres), a dimension mainly used within government-planned townships such as Melbourne, Williamstown and Violet Town. So far as I am aware, no other street in Brighton shares this characteristic.

Even at this relatively late date in Brighton's development, there were many vacant lots, including in the crescent area. An interesting detail is the 'tram line' along Point Nepean Road (top right corner Map 4). These tramways consisted of two iron strips mounted on red gum sleepers embedded in the roadway, along which normal



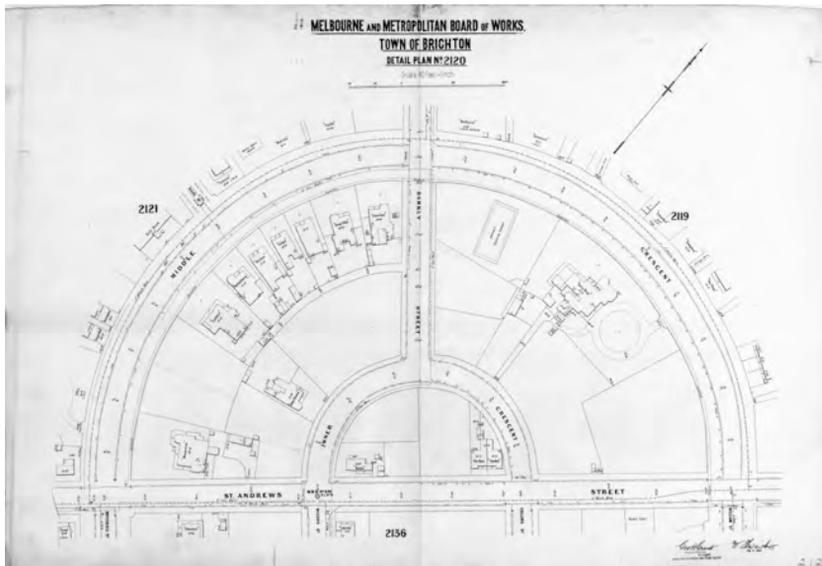
**Map 4: 1906 MMBW map of central Brighton (original is 400 feet to one inch) correctly oriented with North at the top** (Courtesy State Library Victoria)

horse-drawn road carts were pulled. They were primarily designed to limit the damage to roadways caused by the market-garden traffic to the city; night soil 'fertiliser' was carted in the reverse direction. The tramways are more accurately termed 'plateways', which is the origin of the description 'platelayers' (at least in the UK) for railway workers involved in track maintenance.



**Photograph 1: Middle Crescent from St Andrews Street** (Photograph Mike Scott)

It shows the street's wide (one-and-a-half chain) reservation, and surviving (though incomplete, and unlikely to be original) elm tree avenue.



**Map 5: MMBW detailed plan (1:480) of 1906**

This shows Middle Crescent with its wide road reserve and incompletely planted street tree avenue (the small dots). Only one property appears to have had a frontage to both streets, although even its land looks to have been subdivided.

Middle Crescent's semi-circle springs from Boxshall and William streets. The 30-metre width of the crescent continues along both these streets as far as Carpenter Street, which was the boundary of the intended town reserve. The northern properties on William Street, developed later on less desirable lower terrain, gradually encroach well into the reserve after the St Andrews Street crossing.

The 1906 MMBW detailed plans show a number of substantial mansions in large double-ended grounds either side of Middle Crescent. Most of the development, though, is of comfortable villas on smaller (but still expansive) allotments fronting either a crescent or the radials of Barkly and Allee streets—and Allee Street was not part of the Foot plan (see Map 4).

Bate refers to Barkly Street as 'the High Street', which was 'never to function as a main street'. This is true; Melbourne's shopping strips have only thrived where they flanked through-routes (*cf* the fate of Napier Street, Fitzroy—having been truncated by Edinburgh Gardens, it was supplanted by Brunswick Street as the main commercial strip). None

of the early suburban plans delineated commercial centres—they just grew along the later tram and train lines. Nevertheless, there is a logic in the alignment of Barkly Street in that it provides direct access from the township into New Street, which was the main route to Melbourne from the large marine allotments.

### **Street Tree Avenues: A Lost Heritage?**

The 1905–06 MMBW detailed plans of Brighton show that avenues of street trees were in the process of being planted in some of the principal thoroughfares. In common with the street tree planting of this era throughout Melbourne’s inner suburbs, most trees were planted in the parking lane, not in the footpath; the dominant species elsewhere, and likely in Brighton too, was English elms. Only a handful of such avenues remain, examples being the northernmost block of Drummond Street in North Carlton, and a few survivors in Nicholson Street immediately south of Victoria Parade.

In Brighton, the beautiful North Road tree avenues west of Asling Street are almost certainly a survival from that era, although there have been some replantings and removals (see Map 6 and Photograph 2). Part of one side of Middle Crescent also has an elm avenue, but these look too young to be the trees shown on the MMBW map. The 1906 map also shows avenue planting outside a single property, ‘Wolsingham’, on Boxshall Street, which may indicate that some property owners took matters into their own hands—a practice that persists.



**Map 6: MMBW detailed plan 1906 of North Road, between Asling Street and Conchrane Street, with its two-chain reservation width and tree avenues**

Today the surviving planting in the wide nature strips of the 30-metre crescent streets is a mish-mash of specimen trees, private plantings, and species such as paperbarks, which are more suited to informal landscape settings. As a result, this potentially fine piece of historic urban streetscape is less significant and attractive than it could be if properly planted with trees of a similar kind.



**Photograph 2: Part of the heritage-protected length of North Road, which runs west from Asling Street** (Photograph Mike Scott)

This landscape-dominated roadway, with its magnificent elm avenues, conforms to the 'parkway' template of Melbourne's distinctive 2-chain/40-metre Victorian streets, similar to Fitzroy Street, St Kilda, and MacPherson and Pigdon streets, Princes Hill.

### **The Town Reserve and Town Boundary: An Enigma?**

The disproportionate expanses of Foot's town reserve and town boundary/green belt remain difficult to understand, and impossible to explain with any certainty. The hopes of some early settlers were grandiose—for example, the Brighton Beach pier was constructed by the railway company as the basis for a significant port—and these may simply be another example of grandiosity.

The pattern of residential and commercial development that subsequently occurred in Brighton township fell far short of any elegant vision that Foot, Dendy or Were might have intended. Dwellings were built sporadically across the area. For decades, Brighton remained semi-rural, with a mix of random groups of houses, cottages and farms. Shops established themselves outside or on the periphery of Foot's township, attracted no doubt by the through traffic on Bay Street and Church Street (the latter was extended to meet New Street, in contravention of Foot's plan).

The eventual, and controversial, decision to locate the Brighton Town Hall in neither shopping strip, but instead on Wilson Street, is a

sort of back-handed compliment to Foot's plan. The town hall occupies the high ground at the apex of the ridge that forms the main axis of Foot's plan, though it is offset from the central axis of the plan, and outside the intended town reserve.

### **The Perimeter Road Reserves: Practical, Visionary or Accidental?**

Dendy's land is bounded by North Road, East Boundary Road and South Road. North Road is five miles south of, and parallel to, the Batman's Hill east-west survey baseline, according to Max Lay. Centre Road, which bisects the two-mile distance between North and South roads, is a typical one-chain (20 metres) road, but the perimeter road reserves are much wider, often double this width, at or close to two chains/40 metres. The oldest section of street—North Road west of Asling Street—appears to be exactly two chains.

Only a very few Victorian-era roads were laid out as two-chain (40 metres) reserves, apparently in special circumstances (the Melbourne boulevards, and some country roads, are three chains/60 metres). Some at least seem to be associated with carriage drives to public amenity spaces. An example is the landscape-dominated roadways of Pigdon and MacPherson streets in Princes Hill, feeding into Princes Park, which once had a carriage drive around its perimeter. Fitzroy Street, St Kilda, is another, and it feeds to the foreshore from St Kilda Road. North Road west of Asling Street, with its outstanding landscape of wide nature strips and exotic tree avenues, and its destination at the bay, seems to qualify as one of these historic 'parkways'.

Because Dendy's boundary roads remained 'on the edge' for many years (they soon became administrative boundaries), they were probably a low priority for accurate surveying and construction. Interestingly, the 1907 MMBW plan of South Road at its western extremity shows its northern half—the half lying within the City of Brighton—laid out as a self-contained one-chain roadway with its own tree avenue. No constructed roadway is shown on the southern (Sandringham municipality) side. East Boundary Road measures almost exactly 40 metres for much of its length, and has a median similar to that of Pigdon Street. It has a 'parkway' sort of character, but this is likely to be the result of road construction in the mid-twentieth century.

## Conclusion

This article has posed questions, posited conjectures and, I hope, offered a few insights into the rationale and execution of the plan prepared by H.B. Foot under the instructions of Henry Dendy. If any reader can add to this discussion, I would be most grateful. My speculations may or may not be wide of the mark. I remain convinced, however, that there is more we can add to our understanding of Brighton's unique town plan, given the sound starting point of Weston Bate's timeless contribution.

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## Joseph Raleigh: 'a new course of life' and Some Street Names

*John Daniels*

### **Abstract**

*Joseph Raleigh left England in 1843 as a bankrupt merchant and outcast Quaker. Like many Port Phillip immigrants he became extremely active in the pursuit of success in this new and raw society. He has not been studied extensively before, yet his prolific business and social interests made a significant contribution to early Victoria—in just nine years before his death in 1852.*

Joseph Raleigh, bankrupt merchant, arrived from Manchester in 1843. He soon became a very successful businessman noted for: his tallow works, 'Malakoff Castle' and large landholdings at Maribyrnong; for Raleigh's Punt across the river; for Raleigh's Wharf (next to Queen's Wharf) with his steamboats; and for his lease of several sheep runs. His remarkable commercial success story, which ended with his death in 1852 aged just 49, demands elaboration; and inaccuracies in past accounts about him need correction. What has been written to date consists mainly of some information produced by the Living Museum of the West, a 1947 article on Maribyrnong by Alan Gross in the *Victorian Historical Journal*, and a Raleigh family history.<sup>1</sup>

Joseph was the son of John Raleigh, a grocer in Manchester and second-generation Quaker originally from Shipton, near Hull. John was also described as a fustian maker; perhaps he was one of the thousands of skilled craftsmen who lost their livelihoods to steam-powered cloth factories, and who saw a living was to be made by serving the needs of the multitudes flocking to the cities. By 1825, Joseph was working as a warehouseman but was successful enough to be listed in the 1841 *Manchester Directory* as a cotton manufacturer with three shop premises.<sup>2</sup>

There are hints of financial problems in family letters of the early 1840s, and Joseph was declared bankrupt in 1843. He and his partner, T.S. Goode, were discharged bankrupt 'without any implication being cast upon them.' They may have fallen victim to the American Repudiation of Debts, when several of the cotton-producing American

states refused to honour any foreign debts because of a recession in the 1830s and 1840s. His dealings with Australian interests also turned sour.<sup>3</sup>

The Society of Friends, or Quakers, automatically expelled bankrupts whether they were innocent of fraud or not. This expulsion, along with urgings from friends Samuel and Eliza Smyth, appears to be the reason for his decision to take his family to Australia.<sup>4</sup> Also, the Crewdson controversy (a dispute that caused a schism in English Quakerism) resulted in the expulsion of some of Raleigh's friends and family members from his local Hardshaw East Meeting of the Society of Friends. However, his older sisters (Rachel and Sarah) remained in the Society and were stalwart members of the Melbourne Meeting after they followed Joseph to Port Phillip in February 1845.<sup>5</sup> Neither married. Raleigh's heart-felt words give an insight into the man and his situation:

I am leaving England perhaps for ever; well I almost wish I felt more regret, but so many things conspire to make me weary of the struggle in England, the death struggle of commercial life and so many hearts that once thought all my own have shown me that they are hollow at the core that I have less regret than I should once have felt and I do leave some kind hearts and tried friends and these I could still enjoy living with, but I feel sure that I shall be able to get the necessities of life for my dear little family with less of that corroding case that ache of heart that I have been accustomed to feel in this country and I do hope that on entering upon a new world new sphere of action and a new business I shall be able to begin a new course of life and avoid the many errors and sins [in] which I have been buried in times past.<sup>6</sup>

Despite his harsh expulsion, it must have been very difficult to forsake his upbringing. When involved as a witness in court cases in Port Phillip, Joseph is recorded as 'having taken the affirmation of the people called Quakers' before giving evidence.<sup>7</sup>

Joseph Raleigh sailed from London on the *Imaum of Muscat* with his wife Priscilla, his children Joseph (aged two), William (aged eight), John (aged ten), and his brother-in-law Samuel Thorp. The family was accompanied by others who later worked for them: John Fowler, his wife and two children; William Smith, his wife and two children; and James Hassell. On arrival in Port Phillip on 1 December 1843, Raleigh was quick to resume his profession as a merchant, now based in Market Square and selling assorted cotton, worsted, woollen and silk goods, as well as saddlery, hats and soap.<sup>8</sup>

At this time Port Phillip faced an economic slump, and the price of wool plummeted. With the colony's small population there was no significant local market for meat products from the large herds of stock that had increased so rapidly since settlement in 1835. Raleigh saw an alternative commercial opportunity, producing tallow from sheep. He joined William Stuart Fyfe and James Hassell (Hassell, Fyfe, and Co.) to form the Australia Felix Salting and Melting Company sited below the junction of the Yarra and Maribyrnong rivers. Fyfe, like Raleigh, was a former bankrupt merchant from Manchester. W.C. Wentworth was the first to advertise sheep-boiling for tallow, a world first, at Windermere near Maitland, north of Sydney, in October of 1843, the month of Raleigh's arrival.

The banks of the lower Maribyrnong and Yarra rivers were to become home to necessary but noxious industries. Raleigh's boiling-down and salting works on the waterside of Whitehall Street in Yarraville was the first of these. Squatters Ryrrie and Bolden established the salting works, the first in Port Phillip, in mid-1843, and it was in the hands of Raleigh by early 1844.<sup>9</sup> Soon after he tried to purchase the land, but had to wait until the government sale in June 1845.<sup>10</sup> It was noted (for allotments 1 and 2 of Portion 8) that 'the salting establishment belonging to Mr. Raleigh is erected on this allotment; also a wharf ... also some cattle yards.'<sup>11</sup> In August 1846, the company secured the contract for 150 tons of colonial salted beef required by the Van Diemen's Land government.<sup>12</sup>

At the above-mentioned land sale, Raleigh's works site was subdivided, and he was either unable or unwilling to buy at the upset price. The *Port Phillip Patriot* and *Melbourne Advertiser* observed that the property

had been improved by the gentleman to a considerable extent and [if] it was an attempt to deprive Mr. Raleigh of his land, or to compel him to purchase at such an exorbitant price, we are glad to say, [it] has most signally failed; in a moral point of view, it was little better than an attempt to pick his pocket.<sup>13</sup>

In 1847 he purchased land further upstream and relocated the business. There is a Raleigh Street in Spotswood in the vicinity of where the salting works was. There is also a Raleigh Street in the heart of Footscray as a reminder of his influence in the west of Melbourne.

In early 1845 Raleigh took over one of the three private wharves downstream of Queen Street (between the Yarra and Flinders Street), adjoining and east of Spencer Street, from James Dobson. ‘Dobson’s spacious stone stores adjoining those erected by Captain Cole upon the wharf’ were admired as ‘a credit and an ornament to the Colony’.<sup>14</sup> He soon made improvements, adding the first dock—a platform with projecting beam, block and tackle.<sup>15</sup> Along with George Ward Cole and Skene Craig, Dobson had been most fortunate to gain a riverfront property at the crown land sale in August 1841, and a ‘Private Sufferance’ wharf licence. Transporting people and freight upriver from where sailing ships arrived in Hobson’s Bay to the main settlement was a lucrative business. Raleigh acquired the *Aphrasia* in May 1845 from the defunct Port Phillip Steam Navigation Co. and soon reduced fares to and from Geelong. He acquired the brig *Diana* in February 1847 for the Sydney trade. He also owned tugs and lighters and had the paddle steamer *Victoria* built to order in England in 1851. Raleigh’s Wharf became a busy landmark. In 1846 Raleigh became the lessee of the wharfage rates upon goods landed at the Queen’s Wharf.<sup>16</sup>

In late 1847 Joseph Raleigh made a large purchase of eight lots of land in Maribyrnong and proceeded to construct a new boiling-down complex on the river, south of present-day Raleigh Street. The Australia Felix Salting and Melting Company became the Victoria Melting Company, opening on 1 September 1849:

The Buildings comprise the slaughter houses, boiler room, cooling store, vat room, tallow coolers, salting store, candle factory, men’s apartments, offices, etc., all fitted up in the most substantial manner, with every requisite for the works, and which may be easily converted into many other kinds of factories, such as sugar refining, soap boiling, candle making, etc., in addition to which there are drafting yards, cooking place, wool-sorting store, and washing stages.

Accommodation was ‘provided for the owners of stock, or any one he may appoint, during the time the stock are in hand’.<sup>17</sup>

Raleigh also built ‘Malakoff Tower’ on the nearby hill, church-like in appearance with a weather vane in the shape of a sheep. (The Battle of Fort Malakoff was a defining moment in the Crimean War in 1855 and the tower was likely then named by the locals.) Whether it served as a place of worship or accommodation for workers is unclear, but it was a

landmark for approaching shepherds and drovers. It fell into disrepair and was demolished in about 1917.

Raleigh also employed a nearby punt at the site of the present Maribyrnong Bridge. This was at first for his own use, but, as the traffic became greater with the gold rush in 1851, he put a toll on the punt and opened it for public convenience. Bluestone quarrying was begun, creating a huge hole that is now occupied by Highpoint West shopping centre.

The boiling-down site continued in use with the Melbourne Meat Preserving Co. (1867–1888) and Hume Bros Cement Iron Co. Ltd (from about 1910). Apparently, the buildings currently occupying the site, now The Living Museum of the West, date from the 1860s and later.<sup>18</sup>

Raleigh extended his reach into squatting, acquiring the depasturing licences to a number of properties between late 1844 and 1849 in the counties of Bourke, Wimmera, Murray and Western Port. Most prominent of these were ‘Sutton Grange’, ‘Noorilim’ and ‘Morton Plains’. Sutton Grange, now a town about 30 km south of Bendigo, is in one of the best wool-growing areas in Victoria. It was held from November 1844 to March 1851. ‘Noorilim’, near Nagambie, is named after the local Ngurai-illum Aboriginal tribe and supposedly translates to ‘many lagoons’, as the area was a natural flood plain of the lower Goulburn River. It was held from November 1844 to January 1850. ‘Morton Plains’ (near Birchip) was held with William Lockhart Morton (who in 1845 managed ‘Sutton Grange’) from June 1846 to September 1847. From September 1847 to April 1850 Raleigh held ‘Morton Plains’ alone after a falling out with Morton, who invented an efficient pump, a dip for dressing scab in sheep and a revolutionary swing gate for drafting sheep.

Raleigh also leased the 400-acre ‘Gellibrand Farm’, across the Moonee Ponds Creek opposite the Broadmeadows township, from Niel Black. In December 1845 he bought the remaining two years on the lease and continued to hold it until it was taken over by Samuel Thorp, Raleigh’s brother-in-law, in December 1849. Raleigh Street, the main thoroughfare through Westmeadows, is named after him.<sup>19</sup>

As well as the rural properties, Raleigh possessed suburban lots. The Hermitage Estate, a large property in Newtown, Geelong, was broken up in early 1851 after its owner, Police Magistrate Robert Fenwick, retired. Raleigh bought a portion and sold it soon after in late 1851.<sup>20</sup>

Hassell, Fyfe and Co. was dissolved in July 1850 and continued as Raleigh, Fyfe and Co., although James Hassell continued to work with Raleigh. The merchant company of Raleigh, Locke, Thorp & Co. appeared in mid-1852. Partners with Joseph were brother-in-law Thomas Thorp and William Locke. Locke, a disowned Irish Quaker, had migrated to Sydney in 1833 and consequently had business dealings with Raleigh; he came to Port Phillip in 1840. Raleigh, Fyfe and Co. was dissolved only weeks before Joseph's untimely death from influenza on 26 November 1852; Raleigh, Locke, Thorp & Co. continued with sisters Sarah and Rachael taking over in name until October 1856.

In February of 1853, Raleigh, Locke, Thorp & Co. was selling a subdivided block in Prahran called 'Westby's Paddock', although a correspondent to the *Argus* claimed that: 'What is now Windsor was formerly known as "Raleigh's Paddock", and I have no doubt the Raleigh Street in that suburb was named after him.'<sup>21</sup> Raleigh Street runs from St Kilda Road across Punt Road ending at Upton Road.

The Raleigh family also developed the Maribyrnong Estate, part of Joseph's 1847 land purchases, with house, orchard and garden situated on present-day Commonwealth government land between Cordite Avenue, Raleigh Street and the river.

Accounts of Joseph Raleigh have highlighted his connection to Maribyrnong, and rightly so; yet it has only fleetingly been mentioned that he lived at 'Mona Vale', Moonee Ponds. Possibly because the name Moonee Ponds had such a broad geographical application in the early days of settlement, it was taken that Maribyrnong and Moonee Ponds, with regard to his residence, were close enough to be the same. Even the State Library Victoria declares: 'He died at his home Maribyrnong House (also known as Mona Vale), Moonee Ponds.'<sup>22</sup> However, the two areas are quite distinct.

First mention of 'Mona Vale' was in the September 1840 sale of 'THE beautiful ESTATE of MONA VALE situated on the MOONEE MOONEE PONDS ... adjoining the property of Dr. McCrae'. This would be Jika Jika Section 125, south of Dr Farquhar McCrae's Section 126, first purchased in June 1839 by J.M. Chisholm. It was put up for sale in small lots of 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, and 20 acres,

to enable the labouring man to build his cottage on a piece of ground that he may call his own, and cultivate in his leisure hours, as a market garden or other ways. The locality of this property would ensure him

constant employment, being in the immediate neighbourhood of the estates of Messrs. Urquhart, McKenzie, Atkins, Dr. McCrae and others.<sup>23</sup>

Lot 2, on the creek, sold to neighbour Robert Atkins, giving him a creek frontage from today's Albion Street to Hope Street.<sup>24</sup> This would form the 45-acre parcel of land eventually to be sold as the Dal Campbell Estate by the Closer Settlement Board in 1905 for 'workmen's homes'—ironically the same intention as the sales pitch given by Chisholm.

Raleigh rented 'Mona Vale' from soon after his arrival and had a number of workers; these included Mrs Smith as cook and the Fowlers, all of whom made the journey out with Raleigh's family. Raleigh's wife, Priscilla, recorded improvements such as an upstairs schoolroom, a lodging room and a bridge across the creek.<sup>25</sup> A map from 1854 shows a bridge.<sup>26</sup> It was not far from both his wharf and Maribrnong; it would certainly have suited him personally to instal the punt across the Maribrnong River.

All references to Raleigh at 'Mona Vale' suggest that the name was not specific to the property. After Chisholm named his 'Mona Vale Estate', it was reported in November 1841 that 'Mr. Urquhart's beautiful property, Mona Vale, on the Moonee Moonee Ponds, is offered to let, the owner being about to return to Britain'. George Urquhart's wife (from 'Mona Vale, Moonee Moonee Ponds') had died in October.<sup>27</sup> In the 1847 *Directory for the Town and District of Port Phillip*, John Hazlett [*sic*, Haslett] was listed as a 'farmer, Mona Vale, Moonee Ponds'. In that year's renewal of occupation licences, Haslett occupied one lot of 660 acres in the parish of Doutta Galla, which was on the western side of the Moonee Ponds Creek. The only 660-acre lot was Portion 14, from present-day Buckley Street to Woodland Street. Once the Doutta Galla portions were put up for sale in 1846, Haslett chose to stay in the area, building his Victoria Hotel in the designated village of Hawstead (present-day Melfort Street, Strathmore). The name 'Mona Vale' lived on to at least the 1870s. In April of 1870, 'Whitbyfield', a landmark two-storeyed residence in West Brunswick, was for sale and 'from one side are seen the bay, the Benevolent Asylum, etc. & and from the others a pleasing landscape view of Essendon, Monavale, Pascoevale, etc.'<sup>28</sup>

Raleigh was still living at 'Mona Vale' right up to his death in November 1852 '[a]t his residence, Moonee Ponds'.<sup>29</sup> A few months earlier, in August 1852, a reward was offered for two horses 'Stolen or

Strayed, from Mr Raleigh's, Moonee Ponds.<sup>30</sup> A year later, Dalmahoy, Campbell and Co. was offering for sale a large part of section 110, either unaware that Raleigh had passed away, or in reference to his eldest son, John (who would have been 21 years old). 'Lot 1: Contains twenty-one acres, and has a Cottage, kitchen, and flower gardens, with offices, and is now occupied by Mr. Raleigh.'<sup>31</sup>

Certainly, soon after Joseph's death, the family had moved, or was in the process of moving. A newspaper notice in January 1853 states: 'STRAYED, on John Raleigh's property at Maribyrnong, Saltwater River.'<sup>32</sup> 'Joseph had proposed to build a large residence on his estate and his sons carried out their father's intention,' and this is where Joseph Junior's daughter, Helen Webster, begins the unfinished biography of her father.<sup>33</sup> Rachel and the boys were certainly there in 1854 when Quaker Frederick Mackie visited.<sup>34</sup> (When Priscilla Raleigh passed away in 1846, Joseph's sister Rachel moved in to take care of the children and the running of the household.)<sup>35</sup> 'Maribyrnong House' was sold in 1858 along with the subdivided land and buildings to the south of Raleigh Road. Despite the untimely deaths of their parents, the boys led successful lives, marrying into influential families and becoming well known for their pastoral pursuits.

In just nine years Joseph had certainly achieved his intention of securing 'for them and myself the comforts of a good conscience for having tried with an humble and white heart to do our duty to our God and our neighbours.'<sup>36</sup> Raleigh's influence extended well beyond business into the social and political issues of the day. As a member of the Australasian Anti-Transportation League he moved the following motion: 'that it would be manifestly unjust to introduce convicts into this District without the consent of every inhabitant in it. Our families and children were dear to us all, and we certainly incurred no little risk of their contamination by the introduction of convicts.'<sup>37</sup>

Raleigh even proposed a society be formed to be called 'the Society for enabling convicts whose sentence has expired to return to Great Britain and Ireland, or some equally unmistakable title ... to Send back a few hundreds of the worst of the expirees.'<sup>38</sup> Despite this, Raleigh was willing to give people a chance, being an employer of Pentonvillains.<sup>39</sup> He also involved himself in that other great issue of the time, the movement to separate from New South Wales. Joseph was one of the superintendents of the lighting of beacon fires to announce the news

of separation.<sup>40</sup> He was involved in philanthropy in Port Phillip as well. He was a church warden for St James' Church, a member of the Bible Society and also of the Yarra Aboriginal Mission with 'its conviction of the paramount importance of Christian instruction to ameliorate the condition and elevate the character of the degraded Aborigines of this country'.<sup>41</sup> He was on committees for the Distressed Irish and Scotch Relief Fund and the Melbourne Fire and Marine Insurance Society.<sup>42</sup> As a member of the Melbourne Diocesan Society, Raleigh provided financial support to schools at Tullamarine and Broadmeadows, both near his rented 'Gellibrand Farm'.<sup>43</sup> One assumes he was involved in the foundation of St Paul's Anglican Church (and school) on Raleigh Street in present-day Westmeadows. There is no evidence for his involvement in the Pascoe Vale National School on the creek at Mona Vale, but coincidentally it was moved to Raleigh Street, Essendon, in the 1860s. Raleigh Street is on the western side of Moonee Ponds Creek, opposite where he lived.

Raleigh's community interests extended to the Industrial Society, the Moonee Ponds Farmers' Society and its later incarnation, the Port Phillip Farmers' Society, where he was a regular entrant in ploughing and other competitions. He was also a member of the Victorian Horticultural Society where he won prizes for fruit and vegetables.<sup>44</sup>

Raleigh was enterprising, competitive and generous. He was 'prepared to "dump" or to press wool, hay, etc. by hydraulic power, and convey the same from the wharf or the ships in Hobson's Bay or at Point Henry at the same charge as any other party will do it'.<sup>45</sup> After he took over the steamer *Aphrasia*, the *Port Phillip Gazette* reported 'that Mr. Raleigh is reducing the rates of charges to Geelong, and we hope from the public spirit he has shown will be well supported; only 6s. is charged for horses'.<sup>46</sup> When the Total Abstinence Society travelled to Geelong 'they proceeded to Mr. Raleigh's store, which had been generously placed at their disposal by that gentleman'.<sup>47</sup> Raleigh had gained quite a reputation for achievement. In 1927 the *Sunshine Advocate* declared: 'Just as we say to-day, "Let Pennell do it", so the old pioneers used to say, "Let Raleigh do it"'.<sup>48</sup>

Upon his death, the *Argus* reported:

As a token of respect to the deceased gentleman, many of the offices in town were partially closed, and the vessels in the river had their colours half-mast high ... He was a gentleman characterised by very

considerable enterprise and intelligence, and his death will create a gap in our commercial circles which will not easily be filled up. The remains of the deceased were followed to the grave by upwards of three hundred persons, including some of the government officers, and nearly all the merchants and leading tradesmen of Melbourne, together with the mayor, and several members of the corporation.<sup>49</sup>

Joseph Raleigh's faith and 'good conscience' were displayed throughout his time in Port Phillip as a businessman, churchman and humanitarian. As with many of our pioneers, that time was short and the contribution made has gone largely unacknowledged and forgotten, save for some street names.

## Notes

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# REVIEWS

## ***Pompey Elliott at War: In His Own Words***

By Ross McMullin. Scribe, Melbourne 2017. Pp. 544. \$59.99, hardback.

In *Pompey Elliott at War: In His Own Words*, Ross McMullin has channelled the war writing of one of Australia's most famous generals, Harold 'Pompey' Elliott. The book's publication coincides with the centenary of 1918. McMullin asserts that this was a most decisive and divisive year in Australian history. Pompey Elliott was there, and it is clear from this fine book that we were fortunate to have him as a chronicler.

McMullin's 2002 biography, *Pompey Elliott*, won acclaim for its monumental research and literary quality. It is among a small group of books high in academic integrity yet accessible to most readers. I have spoken to nurses, tradesmen, truckies and university lecturers who read *Pompey Elliott* and enjoyed it. *Pompey Elliott at War: In His Own Words* is a timely new book that tackles the same 'special' character but with a different aim.

McMullin has selected 1,105 excerpts from Pompey Elliott's writing, including diaries, letters, articles, speeches, battle reports and other official documents. McMullin argues that it is the rare combination of Pompey's prolific writing and his rank that make his words so important: 'Though not a top-level commander, he was ... in charge of thousands of Australian soldiers, and this endowed his frank observations with a broader and more informed perspective than the writings of AIF privates and corporals.'

As a battalion commander at Gallipoli leading the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion, and the commander of the 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade on the Western Front, Elliott's first-hand accounts of the battles of Fromelles, Polygon Wood and Villers-Bretonneux are among the most detailed of their kind, making him 'notable as a recorder and interpreter of the AIF's history'. Throughout the war he wrote prolifically and in a variety of genres. This gives the reader a unique insight into the highs and lows of command, while Pompey's emotions are revealed as he battles war weariness, the death in action of his brother, looming business debt and the anguish of separation from his wife and children.

McMullin reminds the reader that although Elliot had a distinguished war record: 'His fame had more to do with his character and personality—with his style of leadership—than with its results'. He was a strict disciplinarian, given to outbursts, who moulded his men into a fine fighting force. Pompey harangued, and amused, his men. He would roar at hapless officers, 'Call yourself a soldier ... you're not even a wart on a soldier's arse!' His frankness was an advantage in battle. At Lone Pine he ordered an officer to a vital post with words that have become part of the Pompey Elliot legend: 'Goodbye Symons, I don't expect to see you again, but we must not lose that post!' But the same trait tainted his reputation in the eyes of some superiors, particularly British ones to whom Elliot refused in his words, 'to bow and scrape'.

One of the book's strengths is that it is an emotional history as much as it is a military one. Just under 50 per cent of *Pompey Elliott at War: In His Own Words* consists of the fertile correspondence Pompey kept up with his wife Kate. Kate was Pompey's sounding board and his muse. The absence of her letters is an important silence in this book. Pompey simply could not carry them for the duration of the war and hence they have been lost. Perhaps readers will have to fill that vacuum thematically by accessing sources such as Michael Roper's *Secret Battle: Emotional Survival in the Great War* or by considering the history of private sentiment in Australia between 1914 and 1919 pioneered by historians like Bart Ziino, Joy Damousi and Tanja Luckins.

Elliot's descriptions of open warfare and envelopment tactics in March 1917 are among the most vivid pieces of writing in the book. He commanded an advanced guard, which harassed the German army as it withdrew to the Hindenburg Line. 'My word Katie, my boys have been making a name for themselves ... Even the Army commander, [General] Gough ... sent his staff [officer] to take notes of my methods of attack, which were simply paralysing the old Boche'. Elliot's success reflected his learned and innovative traits. He drew on his knowledge of Napoleonic warfare, British Army Field Service Regulations and the initiative and resourcefulness that he encouraged in his junior officers and men. Few historians have given this period adequate attention, but McMullin identifies Elliot's envelopment tactics as the precursor to the counter-attack at Villers-Bretonneux on 24–25 April 1918, arguably the 'best thing done' by the AIF in the war.

Chapters 17 to 24 track Pompey Elliott's war in 1918. By this time Elliott was an outstanding commander in an outstanding force. The counter-attack by his 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade (and General William Glasgow's 13<sup>th</sup> Brigade) at Villers-Bretonneux involved a difficult enveloping movement at night and, for Elliot's men, several changes in direction over unfamiliar open ground. The battle has gone down in the annals of Australian history. In 1938 the Australian National Memorial was unveiled nearby, as was the new Sir John Monash Centre on 24 April 2018, although Monash was not involved in the battle.

*Pompey Elliott at War* comprises 25 chapters, organised chronologically and supported by a useful list of Elliot idioms and straightforward maps, formation and command charts of his most significant battles. The book is easy to hold and lightweight for a hardback edition, 554 pages in length. It includes 36 images also arranged chronologically and carefully chosen to represent Pompey's wartime service, family and some of the fine men he led and mentioned in his writing.

*Pompey Elliott at War: In His Own Words* will appeal to a host of readers—those new to Pompey as well as admirers of McMullin's rightly celebrated oeuvre of Australian history and biography. This is an emotional as well as a social and military history, bounded by one man's experience and penmanship. It is a timely and important book that tells us a great deal about the Australian achievement in 1918. McMullin's selections from Elliott's writing do not shy away from the tempestuous, even infuriating, side of Pompey's nature. *In His Own Words* gives the reader a 'warts and all' perspective on this big-hearted fighting man and loving husband and father.

*Lucas Jordan*

### ***Stealth Raiders: A Few Daring Men in 1918***

By Lucas Jordan. Vintage Books, Sydney 2017. Pp. 303. \$34.99, paperback.

There has been an outpouring of academic research about the First World War in the past two decades, much of it challenging popular ideas about Australian experience in the war. It is no coincidence that academic historians seek to challenge the Anzac legend at the same time

as its public cachet has risen, helped by the injection of large amounts of government funding into Anzac commemoration.

Lucas Jordan's new book, *Stealth Raiders*, based on his PhD thesis, swims against this tide of Anzac irreverence. If other academic historians have studied groups that defy the Anzac stereotype, such as gay Anzacs, black Anzacs, nurses, and traumatised and disfigured soldiers, *Stealth Raiders* promotes a more traditional ideal of the Australian soldier as an independent-minded larrikin, whose bush instincts made him an exceptional soldier. Unlike some of the best-selling popular histories written by journalist-historians, however, the admiring picture of the digger that emerges from *Stealth Raiders* is based on extensive and original archival research.

Jordan's PhD thesis was supervised by Bill Gammage (with Peter Stanley and Paul Pickering as associate supervisors), and the influence of the author of the classic *The Broken Years* (1974) is not hard to discern. Gammage studied the First World War as an honours and PhD student at the ANU in the 1960s, when such a topic was highly unfashionable. He read Charles Bean's *Official History* in the midst of the Vietnam War, expecting to find a celebration of militarism. Instead, Gammage admired Bean's sensitivity and humanity, and found himself persuaded by Bean's thesis that Australian conditions had produced a particular 'type': a man who was independent-minded and laconic, with a talent for soldiering.

It has become an academic sport to discredit Bean's thesis of Australian exceptionalism, given that Lloyd Robson showed in 1970 that the majority of Australian soldiers came from urban rather than rural backgrounds. In the past two decades, the 'learning curve' thesis has become popular internationally in explaining the Allied victory—the notion that improvements in Allied military strategy and technology over the course of the war eventually delivered victory. In the Australian context, the idea of the learning curve has been applied to counter Bean's thesis; from this perspective, it was not the outstanding ability of the Anzacs that led to the 1918 victories in France but improvements in strategy and hardware.

Lucas Jordan's book is far from a chest-beating celebration of Anzac exceptionalism, but it does challenge historiographical orthodoxy. It puts emphasis back on the martial skills of the Australian soldiers and the origins of those skills in the bush ethos. Jordan builds this wider argument through an examination of Australian actions during the

summer of 1918 on the Western Front, specifically through the actions of a group of about 200 men whom he calls 'stealth raiders'.

The tactic of conducting stealth raids emerged after the stunningly successful German Spring Offensive in March 1918, which brought the war out of the trenches into open countryside. The depleted Australian battalions on the Somme and Hazebrouck fronts were faced with wide, open battlefields defended by small outposts of German soldiers. New battlefield conditions invited new tactics for soldiers who were prepared to take the initiative; Australian troops launched a series of hastily conceived, opportunistic and highly successful raids between 13 April 1918 and 18 September 1918. The raiders often moved in daylight, crawling through crop fields, outflanking outposts and capturing (and killing) large numbers of Germans and their deadly machine guns.

Surprisingly little has been written about the stealth raids of 1918. Charles Bean dedicated three chapters of volume six of the *Official History* to what he called acts of 'peaceful penetration', but there has been little else published, perhaps because the origins of the raids among the ranks left no obvious paper trail for historians to follow. Jordan has identified 204 stealth raiders, and he uses diaries, letters, memoirs and manuscripts to piece together the chronological story of the raids.

Of the men Jordan has identified as stealth raiders, 63 per cent came from what he describes as a "bush" background' (p. 222), compared to an average of approximately 30 per cent across the whole First AIF. This figure is grist for the Gammage/Jordan thesis about the pervasiveness of the bush ethos in the AIF, though not definitive proof. The thesis of Australian exceptionalism is boosted by the observations of outsiders. The German enemy at Mont St Quentin described the Australians as 'very warlike, clever and daring. They understand the art of crawling through high crops to capture our advanced posts' (p. 212). The English Lieutenant Colonel A.M. Ross thought the Australians had a particular capacity for raiding: 'His very mode of life, independence of character, initiative, and upbringing fitted him for this special duty' (p. 213).

Lucas Jordan has reasserted the place of the stereotypical Anzac in the historiography of Australians in the First World War. His book is deeply researched and well written. It will appeal to military history buffs and to those interested in debates about the Anzac legend and Australian national identity. Perhaps *Stealth Raiders* could stimulate a new level of sophistication in academic and public debate about Anzac.

We could acknowledge the martial capacity of the First AIF. We could recognise the importance of bonds of friendship. We could admire the independent spirit of the Anzacs and their lack of deference. And, we could recognise that the Anzac legend is a myth based on a kernel of truth; that it is the rule that has spawned a thousand exceptions.

*Carolyn Holbrook*

### ***La Trobe: Traveller, Writer, Governor***

By John Barnes. Halstead Press in association with State Library Victoria and La Trobe University, Melbourne 2017. Pp. 384. \$59.95, hardback.

Even though I have taught for over 30 years at La Trobe University I have known too little of Victoria's first lieutenant-governor after whom my university was named, but I always had kindly feelings towards him, though for no particular reason. I pondered his views about nature for a recent project and this alerted me to a young man of some sensibility. After reading John Barnes's excellent biography, my kindly disposition towards La Trobe is now based on evidence and my understanding of his inner self immeasurably deepened.

Perhaps Barnes could have added a fourth category to the book's title, that of Christian, for La Trobe's deeply held beliefs infused his whole career and provided his moral underpinning. For this reason, Barnes begins with a detailed analysis of La Trobe's Moravian father and grandfather, his uncle who emigrated to America, and the Moravian community that sustained them. He traces the roots of this family in Protestant émigrés from France in the late seventeenth century and the Moravian world that educated young Charles at Fulneck. Despite his evangelical Christian convictions Charles did not enter the ministry like his forbears but instead travelled to Switzerland to pursue the romantic rambling life of a travel writer. He was embraced by several notable families in Neuchâtel, one of which in the end provided La Trobe with his wife Sophie and, on her death, with her sister Rose: an intricate story meticulously told by Barnes.

While John Barnes believes La Trobe was not imbued with the introspection of a Byron, who made famous such romantic ramblings, he does demonstrate that our future lieutenant-governor developed a fine eye for travel description. He wrote several books of some note before

travelling to America and Mexico as mentor to a young Swiss friend of noble birth, whom he succeeded in guiding away from wayward and democratic tendencies. Their travels, which took them beyond the American frontier, were remarkable. Barnes deals with these admirably using La Trobe's journals, which became two highly praised guidebooks to America and Mexico. This literary and adventuring side of La Trobe's life is relatively unknown among those who associate him solely with colonial Victoria's administration. While La Trobe did not 'go native' in America, like his young travelling companion, he left keen descriptions of American life.

These writings led to La Trobe's first government position, a tour of the West Indies to report on the education of apprentices (ex-slaves) who were transitioning to become free labourers. This remarkable report for the Colonial Office led to La Trobe's appointment as superintendent of the Port Philip District, now Victoria. La Trobe arrived in Victoria with his young wife Sophie in 1839. This point of his career is only reached in chapter ten of twenty in Barnes's book, revealing the serious and detailed attention Barnes gives to La Trobe's formative years.

Young settler colonies are tumultuous places, and La Trobe found this new life more challenging than any trek through the Alps or the American frontier. It was not that he gave up rambling entirely, for he undertook 96 journeys in Victoria over fifteen years, mostly on horseback. Then he wrote of them not as a traveller but as an administrator.

Port Phillip, where Mammon was king, was not a likely field for an earnest Moravian who thought Providence guided his way through life. Although he was received with initial delight, La Trobe soon fell foul of a rumbustious and sniping society and suffered libellous and outrageous personal and political attacks for the fourteen years of his administration, led by an unruly and slanderous press. Barnes recounts many such episodes, centring on La Trobe's perceived social aloofness, his apparent servile relationship to Governor Gipps in Sydney, and his seeming indifference to the clamour for Separation from NSW. Barnes explains that La Trobe's failure to oil the patronage system and hold levies was due to his being poorly paid, and the parsimony of Gipps. La Trobe's despatches reveal his complex relationship with Gipps and his own nuanced views on Separation.

Barnes depicts Charles La Trobe as a hard-working rather than a natural administrator and leader. However, his achievements were notable, given the non-existent nature of administrative structures in the nascent colony, and how close Victoria came to chaos in the initial gold-rush years. Despite being unpopular with squatters and diggers and thought inept by other contemporaries, he administered without the help of talented men around him. He was patron to cultural institutions and formed the Botanic Gardens. He averted anarchy in 1852, set aside significant reserve lands for the future, and began land sales for closer settlement around the goldfields in the face of squatter rage.

This book is deeply researched from official records and numerous archival collections, beautifully written and filled with careful assessments of a much-misunderstood man. The book design matches that high quality, and contains many elegant images, some of them sketched by La Trobe himself. My review copy was part of a small batch with some minor printing blemishes, which the publisher, where possible, withdrew from sale. This book was a worthy winner of the History Publication Award in the 2017 Victorian Community History Awards.

Barnes's account of La Trobe's life after leaving Victoria in 1854 has the quietude of a Mahler symphony. He concludes powerfully, that La Trobe was 'a man of uncommon moral strength with a selfless commitment to the public good that continues to be rare in our democracy' (p. 361). It richly rewards any discerning reader.

*Richard Broome*

***From the Margins to the Mainstream: The Domestic Violence Services Movement in Victoria, Australia, 1974–2016***

By Jacqui Theobald and Suellen Murray with Judith Smart. MUP Academic, Melbourne 2017. Pp. 251. \$49.99, paperback.

While the establishment of the Elsie women's refuge in Sydney has a firm place in Australia's feminist historiography, the story of contemporaneous developments in Victoria is far less well known. *From the Margins to the Mainstream*, adapted from Jacqui Theobald's PhD thesis, sets out to remedy this omission. Beginning with the establishment in 2015 of a state royal commission into family violence,

it looks back over 40 years to explore the process by which feminist analyses of this phenomenon came to dominate both government and public understandings.

The story is a complex one. As the two and a half pages of acronyms at the beginning of the book make clear, the campaign has involved a multitude of organisations and shifting alliances, the members of which were drawn from across the full range of feminist organisations that arose out of the revived women's movement in the 1970s. Although earlier women's organisations had been aware of violence against women, it was women's liberation, the authors argue, that provided a new discourse through which their concerns could be publically articulated. Drawing on interviews with the key players in the women's refuge movement in Victoria since that time, the book demonstrates both the strengths and the weaknesses of this new discourse. It is a history of the workers rather than the women who used their services (although some fell into both categories), providing a chronological account of the movement over 40 years.

The radical feminists at the core of the new movement contested individualised understandings of domestic violence, arguing instead that it was the inevitable outcome of gender inequality and power relationships within the patriarchal home. While they focused their initial energies on the establishment of refuges, these were always understood as a starting point in a much larger agenda of social change. However, the provision and maintenance of the growing array of services always threatened to overwhelm the calls for broader social change, attracting a wider array of feminist and in some cases non-feminist organisations that did not fully share the radical feminist agenda. The constant challenge, and a key theme of the book, has been the development of processes by which activists could build and maintain a united public face despite such internal diversity. This united face, the authors argue, has been central to the cementing of feminist understandings of domestic violence into public policy, so that services came to be constructed and conducted according to feminist principles, even while the wider social environment remained resistant to change.

What the authors see as the success of the Victorian model has not been without its challenges and compromises. They document the uneasy alliance between radical and liberal feminists, which was particularly reflected in debates around relations with the state. The

need for government funding was recognised early, but the state in return had standards of accountability that threatened the collective organisation and secrecy provisions that radical feminists held dear. Later issues around qualifications and remuneration of refuge staff posed further challenges. The ability of the refuge movement to maintain a united face, despite the vigorous internal arguments, meant that such challenges were able to be resolved through compromises on all sides, thus avoiding the fight to the bottom that the introduction of compulsory competitive tendering brought to other community services. Relations with government were also facilitated by the incorporation of former refuge workers into the bureaucracy, creating a shared understanding that rendered negotiations less confrontational. While these relationships were at their smoothest with Labor governments, the power of the consensus was such that there were often allies within Liberal governments as well.

However, this growing consensus around a particular refuge model was not without its problems. From the beginning, the authors show, the feminist model excluded women who did not share their understanding of the causes of violence. Both Indigenous and non-Anglo women felt excluded by the emerging services and, over time, accessed government funding to develop services more suited to their situations. Women with disabilities were also excluded, sometimes overtly, an issue the movement was slow to acknowledge and redress. The refuge model itself came under challenge over time as arguments emerged for the need to keep women safe in their own homes rather than compelling them to flee, with the emphasis shifting to preventative services.

As the services recommended by the royal commission are rolled out across the state, this book provides the background essential to understanding how the feminist analysis of domestic violence came to shape Victorian policy. It is, however, far from triumphant, noting that the need for such services continues unabated, as the second part of the feminist agenda—the need for social and cultural change—has not been confronted.

*Shurlee Swain*

## ***Returning the Kulkyne***

By John Burch. Published by the author, returningthekulkyne@iprimus.com.au, 2017. Pp. xxiii + 304. \$29.95, paperback.

This book won the inaugural Premier's History Prize at the Victorian Community History Awards in 2017—and deservedly so. It is a big book with a big theme: the impact of colonisation on the Kulkyne country, which now lies in the Hattah-Kulkyne National Park beside the Calder Highway between Hattah and Nowingi. A part of the Victorian Mallee, it is connected to the Murray River via Chalka Creek during flooding. This excellent book, the author's first, emerged from his interest in the attempt to reconstitute this national park and pondering its nature before European settlement. Were the grassy plains created by nature, Aboriginal people or settlers? Four years of work produced a very readable and deeply researched answer that went far beyond that question. Indeed, the Kulkyne before settlement constitutes just a small early chapter.

The resulting book is part social history, part environmental history. The first 60 per cent of this history (save the extensive appendices) tells the story of exploration, pastoral settlement, the building of 'Kulkyne Station', and the fate of the traditional owners, here called the 'Kulkyne people', before the sway of pastoralists and Protection Board bureaucrats. The last 40 per cent of the book relates the history of the land and the efforts to protect it against those exploiting its water, wood, flora and fauna, which led successively to it being declared a game sanctuary, forest reserve, and finally a national park in two iterations between 1915 and 1980.

John Burch explains how the Kulkyne was settled in the late 1840s and how pastoralism in such difficult country struggled. The Kulkyne became the centre of the largest pastoral operation in the colony, created by Henry (Money) Miller, who came to control three million acres or a quarter of Mallee country. Burch reveals Miller's rise and how he made 'Kulkyne Station' pay by fencing and strategic placement of water tanks. In old age Miller sold up. His successors were soon brought low in the late 1870s by drought and rabbits. The land commissioners, wanting closer settlement, finished Kulkyne's pastoral episode, but agriculture never really worked in this area. The European presence by the 1920s was reduced to rabbiters, fishermen, poachers and others living off the land

known locally as the ‘white tribe’—a fascinating and little-documented story told by Burch from scant records.

The story of Aboriginal people of the Kulkyne is related as a separate chapter, which was not the historical reality, though it keeps their story a cohesive one. The violence of Major Mitchell and some overlanders in the region was not visited directly on the Kulkyne people, but they suffered from disease and the exploitation of their women. Burch refrains from a fatal impact story by recognising the role of Aboriginal workers on Kulkyne and surrounding stations, and how they forged a two-way relationship with station management. However, disease, the removal of the children, and other pressures of colonisation reduced the local population from several hundred to seven people by 1890. While descendants remained, by World War I none resided in the Kulkyne.

The most distinctive part of the book is Burch’s account of the long struggle to control the Kulkyne between different users of the land with different visions. Some saw it as a game or tourist park, others as a sanctuary, some as a source of water harvesting, others as a place to retain environmental water. People wanted to, and did, exploit its timber for fencing or the boilers of paddle steamers and, later, irrigation pumps. But, throughout this process, there remained some who imagined the Kulkyne as a saved, even restored, natural place. Burch relates these struggles well, thanks to a fine archive donated by one protagonist to the State Library Victoria.

Burch’s original question—what was the Kulkyne like before settlement, and how might it be reconstituted (the aim of the Victorian Land Conservation Council)—is carefully considered. The possibility of remaking the Kulkyne, Burch suggests, is a chimera. Each effort by a well-meaning parks service to restore a species and exclude a feral one has led to continued ecological imbalance. Culling and community outrage often follow.

The book is a beautiful creation priced moderately, as self-published books often are. The paper is generous, the 50 illustrations apt, and the seventeen maps will delight the careful reader. Maps are John Burch’s forte. A nice touch is the illustrative motif at the head of every chapter, together with an apt quotation about the subject matter from a Kulkyne observer. The bibliography and extensive endnotes reveal the deep research underpinning this work. The spin-off appendices are a bonus,

comprising a potted history of Hattah township and the reprinting of Charley Thompson's reminiscences from the *Sunraysia Daily*.

*Richard Broome*

### ***Can You Hear the Sea? My Grandmother's Story***

By Brenda Niall. Text Publishing, Melbourne 2017. Pp. 304. \$29.99, hardback.

Brenda Niall is one of our most accomplished biographers. She has been honing her craft for more than 40 years, mostly choosing as her subjects artists and writers who left rich records of their public and private lives. Women have been prominent in her studies, both as family matriarchs and as independent artists. Niall writes powerfully of the contradictions in women's maternal and creative lives. Recently, political biography has taken her into more masculine worlds, with great success. In 2016 her life of Daniel Mannix won both the National Biography Award and the Australian Literature Society's Gold Medal for Literature.

*Can You Hear the Sea?* is again a new departure for Niall. It continues her earlier themes of women and family but with a difference. In taking as her subject her maternal grandmother, Aggie Maguire, Niall has chosen a woman who left very little of herself behind: no written words, and not many spoken ones. When she asked family members what they remembered of Aggie, 'no one remembers much of what she said. A quiet woman, they all agree. Silent even. But her laughter is remembered'. Niall has taken on a task that she knew was difficult: '[Aggie] hardly ever talked about herself. No one knows much about her early life. It's late now, more than sixty years after her death, to look for the young Aggie Maguire, but I would like to meet her, if I can, and make her silence speak' (p. 8).

Niall's evocation of her grandmother is a lesson in making silence speak. Unusually for a woman of her time and class, Aggie Maguire shaped her life by decisions she made for herself. She chose to leave her well-to-do Irish family in England and to come to Australia as support and carer for her ailing brother Joe, and, when Joe died on board ship, she chose to stay in Australia and to live independently of Australian relatives, teaching in a tiny country school. When she was wooed and won by a local squatter, Richard Gorman, she worked to separate their

house and land, 'Galtree Park', from the Gorman family holdings. After the early death of her husband, she chose to refuse an offer from her own—now very well off—family in England to adopt one of her sons as their own. With no hard evidence to explain why Aggie made these choices, Niall reads them to build a convincing picture of a woman who put great value on independence for herself and her children.

Niall also reads the silences—and structures her story—by filling objects with meaning. A wooden box made on board ship by Joe Maguire, and given by Aggie Maguire to the biographer as a child, comes to symbolise the relationship between subject and biographer. The sound of waves that Aggie's grandchildren were invited to hear in a conch shell becomes a life-long wish on Aggie's part to live in sight of the sea—a wish she denied herself for the sake of those grandchildren. These exercises in making meaning are essentially imaginative, fictional devices, succeeding through the power of Niall's prose. This is also true of those passages, more frequent as the story progresses, in which Niall abandons historical reality for a fictional recreation of moments in her grandmother's life—for example, her return to 'Galtree Park' after her husband's death:

On the train Aggie felt a great weariness; she wanted to let go and let other people decide for her. Whatever they wanted, it didn't matter. Towards the end of the journey, she slept a little, tired out by wakeful nights and soothed by the motion of the train and the warmth of her baby, Bill, asleep on her knee. When she woke, she saw the other children looking at her anxiously. She sat up and drew Bill closer to her. "Look, we're at Tungamah", she said. "Nearly home" (p. 125).

Historian Graeme Davison has taken to writing family history to investigate 'the relationship between the familial and the communal pasts', and also 'because I wanted to better understand who I am' (*Lost Relations*, p. xiii). Niall achieves the former with grace and erudition; Aggie's story is located within (and to a degree explained by) a confident account of the culture and politics of the Irish-Catholic elite in England and Australia. This is an under-researched area in Australia, and Niall's is a valuable contribution.

Davison's second aim, 'to better understand who I am', seems to drive most family historians, amateur and professional. It is notably absent in Niall's story of her grandmother. The authorial voice remains

detached; Niall does not dwell on what the telling of her grandmother's story means to her personally. At one level this is to be regretted. But seen against the excesses of self-knowledge seeking displayed on TV programs like *Who Do You Think You Are*, Niall's restraint is to be admired.

Marian Quartly

***Understanding Our Natural World: The Field Naturalists Club of Victoria 1880–2015***

By Gary Presland. Field Naturalists Club of Victoria Inc., Melbourne 2016. Pp. vi + 276. \$30.00, paperback.

The Field Naturalists Club of Victoria (FNCV) is today the oldest Australian settler institution dedicated to popular study of the natural world. In this assiduously researched book, Gary Presland takes us inside the organisation to understand how it has evolved and ultimately endured over more than 130 years.

The book is structured chronologically in three parts, covering 1880–1929, 1930–1979, and 1980–2015. Starting out with a deft sketch of the study of natural history over the long run, Presland then places the inauguration of the FNCV in the context of the formation of similar societies in other Australian colonies in the late nineteenth century. While other societies were established earlier than FNCV, they were élite, academic, or short-lived.

The inaugural FNCV founding committee was a mix of professional, academic, and government men, but also included a Congregational minister. As well as their whiteness and social class, all shared a commitment to studying nature in the field. The club's first excursion was to Brighton, and sites in Melbourne's sandbelt region were popular excursion destinations in its early decades. In one of the most evocative parts of the book, Presland relates how over time FNCV members saw the heathland subdivided, fenced, and transformed into market gardens. Old walking routes were cut off, and navigating the country became a more complex affair. The expanding rail network also materially shaped the arrangement and experience of excursions.

The early chapters of *Understanding Our Natural World* include considerable detail about the process of launching and maintaining a

club comprising members with diverse interests—including, for some, romance. Issues arising around membership, venues, disputes, awards, finances and identity reappear throughout the book: a reminder of the significant labour and interpersonal skills required to sustain an organisation of this kind. Presland also situates FNCV and its members within a network of organisations and institutions, from the National Museum to the Conservation Council; these alliances with kindred bodies played a significant role in the FNCV's successes and longevity. Gratifying attention is given to the important part played by women, who took on a range of formal and informal roles from early in the club's history. Women exercising leadership in a range of ways feature prominently alongside their male counterparts in the biographical notes that appear between the book's narrative chapters. The class dimensions of the club are touched on more lightly, however.

Chapters on major FNCV activities shed useful light on the dimensions of contemporary enthusiasm for nature. Wildflower and nature shows, for example, were prominent features of the club's early history. Didactic in orientation, the first wildflower exhibition was held in 1886; by 1916 it had become a public event featuring flowers not only from Victoria but also New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia. Presland also highlights FNCV involvement in conservation, including the campaign to reserve Wilson's Promontory as a national park. While FNCV's conservation and education aims were usually aligned, a conflict became evident in 1930 with the passing of the *Wild Flower and Native Plants Protection Act*. The club had campaigned for this kind of protection for wildflowers for many years, but it restricted members' ability to pick wildflowers for the exhibitions, which were subsequently replaced with 'nature shows' featuring all branches of natural history.

One of the most interesting threads within the book deals with special interest and splinter groups. While the first FNCV Section—a short-lived orchid group—was established in 1926, it would be the mid-to late 1940s before more enduring groups emerged as part of efforts to rejuvenate the club. As Presland relates, there was at this time more interest in and knowledge of local flora and fauna and, accordingly, more people and information for specialised groups to draw on; at the same time the membership had grown such that it was harder to cater to all interests with generalist excursions and a single monthly meeting.

These groups would ultimately change how members related to and experienced their involvement in FNCV; in some cases they also led to the founding of other organisations. For example, the Native Plants Preservation Group left FNCV in 1951 in order to raise its own funds; by 1959 it had secured 55 wildflower sanctuaries in rural and urban areas. In 1957, the Wildflower Garden Section, after a brief hiatus, became the Society for Growing Australian Plants, now the Australian Plants Society (Victoria). Less edifying aspects of the FNCV's sectional interests are not overlooked. For example, a chapter devoted to the FNCV's interest in Aboriginal studies notes the involvement of FNCV members, among others, in the taking of artefacts from Aboriginal sites.

The book is descriptive in orientation, and events in the club's history are for the most part contextualised only briefly. We hear little of members' voices, and less of *why* they were drawn to studying the natural world. Presland delivers, however, significant insights into the important role of individuals and groups in driving the club, as well as revealing the range of the club's activities and its many and enduring achievements.

*Andrea Gaynor*

### ***Cazaly: The Legend***

By Robert Allen, Slattery Media Group, Melbourne 2017. Pp. 428. \$39.95, hardback.

### ***The Game of Their Lives***

By Nick Richardson. Pan Macmillan, Sydney 2016. Pp. 352. \$34.99, paperback.

In a recent review of yet another biography of the American boxer Muhammad Ali it was noted that Amazon listed 8,000 different items titled 'Muhammad Ali'. If you were to conduct a search for 'Cazaly' you would find just a small smattering of references to Roy Cazaly, an iconic figure of Australia Rules football in Victoria. Surprisingly, although Cazaly was a large and iconic figure in 'footy', Robert Allen's biography is the first serious attempt at an account, notwithstanding the entry penned by Noel Counihan for the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*.

In Victoria footy is often referred to as the ‘people’s game’, enjoying wide social and cross-class support. But, despite this popularity, quality biographies on the game’s key figures are sparse and lacking in genuine insight into their subject and historical context. In Robert Allen’s biography the reader is provided with a comprehensive account of the life and sporting career of Roy Cazaly. Meticulously researched, this biography examines the life of Cazaly from his birth in Middle Park in humble circumstances (as the tenth child of a labouring father and mother who was a part-time nurse and midwife) to his death in Tasmania in 1963.

Roy Cazaly may not need an introduction to Victorian audiences, for they would be familiar with the legend if only through Mike Brady’s popular hit record of the 1970s ‘Up There Cazaly’, which introduced his name to a new generation. Cazaly emerged from the inner southern suburbs of Melbourne and first came to notice as a player with St Kilda in the Victorian Football League in the years before the First World War. A largely unremarkable football career there was transformed when he transferred to neighbouring club South Melbourne and began an on-field ruck partnership with Mark Tandy and Fred Fleiter. Cazaly soon became a footballing icon and the catchphrase ‘Up there, Cazaly!’ was launched. Originally uttered by players and spectators, ‘Up there, Cazaly’ soon became a popular form of greeting and a part of the local vernacular.

Allen’s aim was to write the Cazaly story as ‘comprehensively, honestly and accurately’ as he could. To do so, he methodically sought and consulted all available sources and in the process uncovered many gems. Allen has helpfully included a note on the sources he used, which is a testament to his dogged search for information and helpful snippets. Roy Cazaly, who died in 1963 aged 70, did not leave behind an archive or much by way of documentary sources. Most sources are therefore second hand. While this is not an ‘authorised’ biography, surviving family members were involved in providing information. Allen tracked as many people as possible who had known or had contact with Cazaly, from patients at his Hobart clinic in the 1950s to locals who saw him train in the Victorian country town of Minyip in 1925. The extensive research is reflected in the significant number of footnotes assembled in the text—1,253 in total! The book also includes a detailed index.

Handsomely presented and including many glossy family and sporting pictures collected during the research, the book also contains extensive appendices detailing comprehensively the vital statistics of Cazaly's sporting career. Appendix 1 records the life and career highlights from birth until death. Separate appendices catalogue Cazaly memorabilia, including a collection of the numerous references to him in both popular and 'higher' forms of culture, such as the famous 'Up there Cazaly' catchcry from Ray Lawler's quintessential Australian play *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*. Winners of the 'Truth Cazaly Awards' conferred by the sensationalist *Truth* newspaper during the 1970s are also recorded for posterity.

At the outbreak of the First World War Cazaly had been married for a year and was still just 21. The young and sporting Cazaly, like all sportsmen at the time, would no doubt have experienced enormous social pressure to stop playing and enlist for military service. His attitude to the war and enlistment can only be inferred from the research conducted by Allen. We know that Cazaly had married in 1913 as a twenty year old and that his first child—a daughter—was born in February 1915. She died in 1916 at the age of eighteen months. We also know that Cazaly was the youngest male in a family that had already lost two other sons to mental illness. However, Cazaly did not enlist and instead continued to play football in the winter and cricket in the summer and to provide for his young family. St Kilda, his Victorian Football League (VFL) team, changed its colours in early 1915 to those of the Belgian national flag and then, before the 1916 season, joined other VFL teams in recess. Like other fit young sportsmen of the time Cazaly must have suffered from the burden of expectation that he would enlist. He did not succumb to the pressure but never articulated why.

It is on this subject—football and the First World War—that Nick Richardson's book *The Game of Their Lives* is focused. Richardson's effort adds to the growing literature exploring the links between footy, the players, the war and soldiering. 'The Game of Their Lives' of the title references the parallels drawn between playing football and military service. One focus of this story is a series of exhibition games played by Australia servicemen in England during the war years. Australian soldiers resting, recuperating and training in England organised to play these exhibition games, which were most likely the first Australian football matches played in England. Richardson describes the build-up to these

games and explores the lives and careers of many of the participants, officials and organisers.

Many well-known and lesser known figures from early twentieth century Australian history drift in and out of the narrative. Frank Beaurepaire, the beau ideal of amateur Australian sport, school friend of Roy Cazaly, and later Melbourne businessman and civic leader, appears in his role as recreation organiser for the Australian military. Programs produced for the exhibition games feature illustrations drawn by the famed war artist Will Dyson. Dan Minogue, a champion with Collingwood Football Club in the pre-war era (before traitorously transferring to Richmond following the war), was one of the many elite footballers to appear in the exhibition games. However, it is the many other lesser known, 'ordinary' servicemen and footballers who populate the narrative that help to bring the story to life and give depth to the account. Richardson follows several of the players and officials who featured in the exhibition games in England and looks at their formative influences and sporting interests before they signed up for the 'game of their lives'.

One of the results of the First World War was to expose class differences about the purpose and role of sport. As Richardson explains, the middle class 'with the smell of the Empire in their nostrils, saw sport as an instrument to impart the important values of life'. But the working class saw sport as a 'raw entertainment, an opportunity—through gambling or being paid to play—to escape the working class travails'. These different attitudes were reflected in the community divisions over the war that emerged at home and in the ranks of the enlisted. In following several of the participants in this war-time drama of sport and war we may gain greater understanding of individual attitudes towards war and sport. Richardson also neatly summarises what happened to the surviving participants once they returned so the reader can see the trajectory of their lives through peace, war and the return home, thus providing some further depth to the social history of the war and its aftermath.

Like Allen's Cazaly biography Richardson's effort was the outcome of serious and dedicated research. He also involved many family members and descendants in his investigations for the book, helping to flesh out the numerous documentary and archival sources. The end result includes a comprehensive bibliography, and the references will be

a boon to other researchers wishing to follow in Richardson's path and pursue the history of football and other sports during the Great War.

As Richardson notes, the book was prepared during the centenary of the First World War, and inspired by the Melbourne *Herald Sun's* coverage of the centenary for which Richardson was co-ordinator. This book is a fine addition to the growing literature around sport and World War I, and will have widespread appeal.

*Peter Burke*

**'A Secondary Education for All?': A History of State Secondary Schooling in Victoria**

By John Andrews and Deborah Towns. Australian Scholarly Publishing, Melbourne 2018. Pp. xx+394. \$39.95, paperback

In 1922, historian and education theorist R.H. Tawney wrote a book based on his visionary policy statement for the British Labour Party in which he made important recommendations regarding the creation and administration of a universal and free system of secondary education. He called his work *Secondary Education for All*, and it, plus his later Hadow Report, profoundly influenced the course of post-primary education in Britain, especially in the years following World War II.

Victorian Labor politician and minister for education Alfred Shepherd took up Tawney's call in 1955. Drawing on official documents and a large variety of printed publications, Andrews and Towns' *'A Secondary Education For All?'* considers how far this vision has been achieved in the century since the Victorian government's audacious move into secondary education in 1905 and the implementation of the Education Act passed in 1910.

Commissioned by the History Council of Victoria, *'A Secondary Education for All?': A History of State Secondary Schooling in Victoria* considers that broad and complex history from many different points of view. Encyclopaedic in scope, though not in layout, the authors state that over the six years of the project they changed and adapted as their work developed and that 'we tried to say it all, knowing full well that this was an impossible task'.

Theirs was indeed a difficult task. They had to consider a huge range of educational settings and issues: among them high schools, agricultural high schools, technical schools, girls schools, central schools, higher elementary schools, special education, migrant education, Indigenous education, changes in government policy and societal expectations.

How to do justice to such a diverse sector of the education system? Andrews and Towns chose a thematic approach, exploring the history from multiple stances: governments, students, teachers and teaching practice, curriculum, communities. This is followed by a chronological section outlining the milestones over the century and responses to 'special times' such as the two world wars. Each section is interspersed with pieces by other contributors. Of particular note are essays by Carolyn Rasmussen on University High School, Greta Jungwirth on Dandenong High School, Terry Hayes on subject associations, Kwong Lee Dow on highlights in the history of secondary education, and Bill and Lorna Hannan on the third half-century of government secondary education. The collaborative nature of the book was recognised in the 2018 Victorian Community History Awards in which it won the Collaborative Community History Award.

Most of *'A Secondary Education for All'* outlines what happened, when and why, and at times, given the huge scope of the project, it is superficial in its treatment of particular trends or issues. For example, in noting the introduction of civics to the curriculum, they say nothing of the tensions arising from the Cold War period in which this occurred, nor is it considered in the context of the teacher politics of the time. And, given my particular interest in the gender politics of the teaching profession, I found it frustrating that there was very little included about individual trail-blazing secondary women teachers, even though this is an area of research to which Towns has made a significant contribution elsewhere. There are other instances that come to mind, all of which would have made excellent vignettes on the model of those on individual high schools that intersperse the main text.

Importantly, the authors are not apologists; they have not shied away from making judgments. After all, that was their brief, as suggested by the question mark in the title. However, the sheer magnitude of the undertaking means that analysis and reflection are brief or absent, and sometimes issues or events are left as dot points in the history of

secondary education when they deserved a larger place. My preference would be to replace much of the minutiae with deeper analysis.

This is not a narrative history, so may not appeal to the general reader. It is not a book best read from cover to cover. The thematic approach, whilst understandable, has led to some repetitions, and the vastness of the brief to long paragraphs and text-heavy pages. So, begin with Part VII ‘Milestones Across the Decades’ and its useful ‘Timeline of Government Secondary Education’. Move on to the overview of some of the key events and initiatives of the century featured in Kwong Lee Dow’s excellent ‘Ten Highlights of State Secondary Education in Victoria’. Browse through the book’s photographs for a nostalgic look at the changing face of secondary education over the century. Then return to the main text.

Despite my reservations, those interested in the history of post-primary schooling will find this a very useful resource. The authors have covered important ground and left the reader pondering whether state secondary schooling really has provided ‘A Secondary Education for All’. In the spirit of inclusivity, Andrews and Towns will donate the book’s royalties to State Schools Relief, in acknowledgment of that organisation’s provision of the opportunity for ‘a secondary education for all’.

*Cheryl Griffin*

***Granville Stapylton Australia Felix 1836: Second in Command to Major Mitchell***

By Gregory C. Eccleston. Evandale Publishing, Melbourne 2018. Pp. xix+250. \$145 hardcover.

The life of Granville William Chetwynd Stapylton (1800–1840), grandson of Viscount Chetwynd, son of a British general, a black sheep despatched to the colonies leaving debts behind him in England, and an early surveyor in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland before being killed by Aborigines in the Moreton Bay district, might have the makings of its own story. Or perhaps it is just a colonial cliché. But inevitably Stapylton has been known for one thing, being second in command to Thomas Mitchell on Mitchell’s 1836 Australia Felix

expedition to south-western Victoria. His journals have added a depth of detail that complements Mitchell's record of the journey. Gregory Eccleston's interest in Stapylton follows this path and focuses on the journals and *Australia Felix*. Any other material—and Eccleston has done a thorough investigation of the location of Stapylton's death and the trial and execution of his alleged killers—is relegated to appendices.

Eccleston revisits Stapylton's account of the expedition because he was instrumental in locating the original journals and the first accurate version of their text. Until the 1980s the only available versions of the journals were transcriptions of poorly handwritten copies of Stapylton's original handwritten work, leading to what Eccleston has called a garbled and incomplete version, and inevitable misunderstanding and misjudgments. Trying to close gaps in Mitchell's record, Eccleston approached members of the Chetwynd-Stapylton family, from whom he learned that Granville's original journals were still extant, having been returned to England after his death. Eccleston was able to secure copies.

The immediate impression of *Granville Stapylton* is the richness, almost lushness, of its presentation values. Its coffee table appearance is deceptive, however, for its copious illustrations add a layer of meaning and visual evocation to the reading experience. Modern maps of the reconstructed route of Mitchell and Stapylton, their own maps and other contemporary maps are placed alongside recent photographs to recreate the journey itself. The experiences of the journey are captured in Mitchell's own drawings, contemporary artwork and photographs. We see the Major Mitchell Cockatoo in both Mitchell's own painting and a beautiful modern photograph.

Simple annotations line the margins of the text, giving modern names to geographical features, explaining idioms and 'slang' used by Stapylton, and correcting textual errors. Notes, sometimes pages long, explore the meaning of other references through detailed research that provides a number of separate histories that are fascinating in their own right. Stapylton's reference to 'A piece of scoria' becomes an investigation of tektites, including Mitchell's loaning of a tektite to Charles Darwin and a portrait of Darwin, the known origin of tektites and the places they have been found. Similarly, 'A new animal caught today' leads to the story of the now extinct Pig-footed Bandicoot, a discussion of the prevalence of mammals in the precolonial bush, and, subsequently, their inability to then compete with the likes of Stapylton's hunting dog.

Allusions to recent history lead to aspects of Napoleon's campaigns in Egypt. The basic, and known, story line is embroidered with countless asides.

With Stapylton's text corrected and clarified, the opportunity now exists to reassess the judgments that have been previously made from earlier versions of the journals. The relationship between Stapylton and Mitchell and the validity of Stapylton's criticisms of Mitchell, which have interested earlier writers, are of less import than the conduct of the Australia Felix expedition and its relationship with Aboriginal people. Though Aboriginal people had doubtless already received information about the nature of colonials entering their lands, and formed judgments, the importance of the expedition's interactions in the shaping of later meetings on the frontier needs to be acknowledged and explored. In discussing what has become known as the Mount Dispersion massacre, Stapylton credits Mitchell with giving instructions to his ambushing party to 'deal out destruction upon these Cannibals right and left'. Whether this and other comments accurately report Mitchell and reflect the way in which Australia Felix was conducted, or whether they are perhaps the prejudices of the aristocratic Stapylton, remain to be thoroughly investigated.

Eccleston's purpose in publishing the journals was clearly to ensure that their worth and meaning are properly understood and valued. He has achieved this by illustrating and closely annotating the text so that the reader can both visualise the expedition and understand exactly what Stapylton was wishing to convey. This painstaking illustration and annotation has been done with a remarkable, and one suspects tenacious, attention to detail that immerses the reader in layers of meaning—richly presented pages and meticulously researched notes. Dipping into *Granville Stapylton* is an enriching experience.

*John Burch*

## Notes on Contributors

**Marion Amies** is a member of the Independent Scholars Association of Australia; she has published in Australian social, literary, education, and maritime history. After retiring from the public service she is enjoying time for research.

**Lucy Bracey** is a historian with Way Back When Consulting Historians. Her article in this issue of the *Victorian Historical Journal* has been written in collaboration with Yarra Ranges Regional Museum and is based on research conducted by Way Back When for the exhibition 'Charity: Melba's Gift Book of Australian Art and Literature', which was on show from October 2017 until February 2018.

**Richard Broome**, FAHA, FRHSV, is emeritus professor of History at La Trobe University. He is the author of thirteen books and many articles in Australian and Indigenous history. He has been an editor of *Australian Historical Studies* and is the current co-editor of the *Victorian Historical Journal* and an RHSV Councillor. His latest book is *Naga Odyssey: Visier's Long Way Home* (2017) with Visier Sanyu. His forthcoming book, written with three colleagues, is entitled *Mallee Country: Land, People, History*.

**John Burch** graduated from Melbourne University with a degree in history before undertaking further studies and a career in the public service. Now retired, he is pursuing a number of personal projects relating to the history of the Mallee and restoration of its natural environment. In 2017 he published *Returning the Kulkynne*, which explored both those interests and won the Victorian Premier's History Award for 2017. John is currently a PhD candidate at Federation University researching Aboriginal land use in the Mallee.

**Peter Burke** completed a doctorate on the social history of workplace Australian football in 2009 and has published numerous articles and reviews on different aspects of Australian football history. He is currently researching the hybrid code of football called Austus that was played in Melbourne by locals and US Servicemen during the Second World War. He is employed in the Research Office at RMIT University.

**John Daniels** has an interest in undiscovered, untold early Melbourne history. After contributing to the *Victorian Historical Journal* in June 2014 with 'Batman's Route Revisited', and in June 2018 with 'J.T. Gellibrand and the Naming of Gellibrand Hill', he has now researched the career of an early and very successful Melbourne businessman, Joseph Raleigh.

**Andrea Gaynor** is an associate professor of History at the University of Western Australia. As an environmental historian, she seeks to use the contextualising and narrative power of history to help analyse real-world problems. Her most recent book, co-edited with Nick Rose, is *Reclaiming the Urban Commons: The Past, Present and Future of Food Growing in Australian Towns and Cities* (2018).

**Cheryl Griffin** majored in history and English before completing a Master of Education and a PhD in the history of education. She worked as a secondary school teacher for more than 35 years and, since retiring, has volunteered at the Female Convict Research Centre in Hobart, at Coburg Historical Society and at the Royal Historical Society of Victoria. She has contributed to a number of books on the lives of Tasmanian female convicts and in 2017 wrote *The Old Boys of Coburg State School Go to War* for Coburg Historical Society. A particular area of interest is the working lives of women teachers, and she is currently researching the influence of internationalism on Victoria's teachers.

**Noel Jackling**, after retirement as a lawyer and university lecturer in Instructional Design, turned himself into an historian. Since 2010, he has focused on the story of the KLM Royal Dutch Airlines 'Uiver' and its place in our shared Dutch–Australian heritage. His research led to major additions to the Uiver collection at the Albury LibraryMuseum, and successful advocacy for its listing on the NSW heritage register. Earlier this year, the Kingdom of the Netherlands honoured Noel by investing him as a Ridder (Knight) of the Order of Oranje-Nassau.

**Lucas Jordan** is the author of *Stealth Raiders: A Few Daring Men in 1918* (2017), has worked as a teacher and researcher, and wrote a global report for Amnesty International. He has taught history to undergraduate students at Deakin and Monash universities, and is currently a history teacher at Western English Language School in Melbourne as well as a visiting fellow with the College of Arts and Social Sciences, Australian National University. *Stealth Raiders* is adapted from his PhD thesis, supervised by historians Professor Bill Gammage (ANU) and Dr Peter Stanley (UNSW).

**John Lack**, FRHSV, was associate professor and is now a principal fellow in the School of Historical and Philosophical Studies at the University of Melbourne. He is a graduate of Melbourne and Monash universities, where he taught courses in Australian History, including war and society, immigration, and honours workshops in archives, oral and urban history. In these fields he has written and edited monographs and contributed articles to Australian and American journals. A former editor of the *Victorian Historical Journal* and Victorian section editor and chair of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (and a recipient of the ADB Medal), he remains an active researcher and writer.

**Stuart Macintyre** AO, FAHA, FASSA, is a professorial fellow at the University of Melbourne and has been chair of the Heritage Council of Victoria since 2015. His most recent books are *Australia's Boldest Experiment: War and Reconstruction in the 1940s* (2015) and, with André Brett and Gwil Croucher, *No End of a Lesson: Australia's Unified National System of Higher Education* (2017). In October 2018 Richard Wynne, the Victorian minister for planning, announced a review of the state of local heritage.

**Marian Quartly**, FFAHS, is professor emerita in the Monash School of Philosophical, Historical and International Studies. Her major works include four co-authored volumes: the bicentennial volume *Australians 1838* (1987), the feminist history *Creating a Nation* (1994, 2006), a history of adoption *The Market in Babies* (2013), and a history of mainstream feminism in Australia, *Respectable Radicals: A History of the National Council of Women of Australia 1896–2006* (2015). She is currently preparing a history of her family, which she hopes will have wider reference as a contribution to the history of the Australian family.

**Bill Russell**, FRHSV, studied history at Melbourne and Monash universities; worked as an archivist at the Public Record Office Victoria; headed two state departments; taught at six universities (five at professorial level) in management, public administration, health, and transport; and is a former Victorian State Electricity Commissioner, and a former Hawthorn city councillor. He was president of the RHSV from 2005 to 2009, and is now honorary secretary of the Rail Futures Institute. He is a proud friend of Gary and Joan Hunt.

**Mike Scott** is a city planner, now retired, who co-founded the consultancy Planisphere (now part of Ethos Urban). He was manager at the City of Melbourne responsible for implementing the renowned 1985 strategy plan, after leading preparation of multiple conservation studies of the inner suburbs. More recently he developed methodologies for assessing neighbourhood character and landscape significance, since applied throughout Victoria, and has played a leading role in securing the introduction of effective development controls in the Yarra River corridor.

**Sandra Sutcliffe**, after retiring as a Medical Laboratory Scientist, graduated BA Hons from La Trobe University. She has volunteered at the RHSV since then, mainly answering research queries. She is also part of the team that introduces secondary school work experience students to the activities undertaken at the RHSV. Sandra was presented with an RHSV Award of Merit on 25 May 2018 in recognition of distinguished service to history in Victoria.

**Shurlee Swain** AM, FAHA, FASSA, is an emeritus professor at Australian Catholic University. Her research, which focuses on the impact of welfare regimes on women and children, has informed several of the recent national inquiries into institutional abuse.

## About the Royal Historical Society of Victoria

The Royal Historical Society of Victoria is a community organisation comprising people from many fields committed to collecting, researching and sharing an understanding of the history of Victoria. Founded in 1909, the Society continues the founders' vision that knowing the individual stories of past inhabitants gives present and future generations links with local place and local community, bolstering a sense of identity and belonging, and enriching our cultural heritage.

The RHSV is located in the heritage-listed Drill Hall at 239 A'Beckett Street Melbourne built in 1939 on a site devoted to defence installations since the construction of the West Melbourne Orderly Room in 1866 for the Victorian Volunteer Corps. The 1939 building was designed to be used by the Army Medical Corps as a training and research facility. It passed into the hands of the Victorian government, which has leased it to the Society since 1999.

The RHSV conducts lectures, exhibitions, excursions and workshops for the benefit of members and the general public. It publishes the bi-annual *Victorian Historical Journal*, a bi-monthly newsletter, *History News*, and monographs. It is committed to collecting and making accessible the history of Melbourne and Victoria. It holds a significant collection of the history of Victoria including books, manuscripts, photographs, prints and drawings, ephemera and maps. The Society's library is considered one of Australia's richest in its focus on Victorian history. Catalogues are accessible online.

The RHSV acts as the umbrella body for over 320 historical societies throughout Victoria and actively promotes their collections, which are accessible via the Victorian Local History Database identified on the RHSV website. The Society also sponsors the History Victoria Support Group, which runs quarterly meetings throughout the state to increase the skills and knowledge of historical societies. The RHSV also has an active online presence and runs the History Victoria bookshop—online and on-site.

More information:

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1. The *VHJ* is a refereed journal publishing original and previously unpublished (online and hard copy) scholarly articles on Victorian history, or on Australian history that illuminates Victorian history.
2. The submission of original scholarly articles is invited following the journal's *Guidelines* available at <http://www.historyvictoria.org.au/publications/victorian-historical-journal>.
3. Articles from 4,000 to 8,000 words (including notes) are preferred.
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5. The review editor(s) commission book reviews—suggestions welcome.
6. The RHSV does not pay for contributions to the journal.
7. The manuscript should be in digital form in a minimum 12-point serif typeface, double or one-and-a-half line spaced (including indented quotations and endnotes), with margins of at least 3 cm.
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