

Mrs. Sylvia Black
East Melbourne Historical Society

Sylvia Black has been the mainstay of the East Melbourne Historical Society for nineteen years, serving as founding Secretary to the organisation since 2001. Over that time, the EMHS has grown substantially, until today when we have just over 200 members.

Sylvia's role is central: she organises weekly voluntary meetings and the more formal committee meetings every two months, plus the annual AGM; she prepares and contributes most of the newsletter, a bi-monthly task; she answers all correspondence with up to thirty queries a month coming in about people, places and events; she organises the annual February excursion with which we start the year, this year, 2020, to the State Parliamentary Gardens.

Beyond this, Sylvia has built up an on-line archive of East Melbourne, based on her own research, which includes house photographs, histories, maps, MMBW plans and books. Sylvia has almost single-handedly done the catalogue, the building histories, and edited and contributed to virtually all of the newsletters. The archive has 3,600 pages of historical data including 2,000 catalogued items, 830 biographies, 247 building histories, 56 newsletters, and over 3,000 images and maps. In 2019 it had over 38,000 visitors viewing over 300,000 pages. During her time as Secretary, she has also been a team member in researching and writing the five booklets produced by the East Melbourne Historical Society.

A major project with which she has been involved is the compilation of over 500 biographies of soldiers and nurses connected to East Melbourne who served in World War 1, in honour of the centenary of the Great War in 2014. An ongoing project is the biographies of Notable Women of East Melbourne.

Nominated by Jill Fenwick, EMHS President 2006–2019