

HISTORY NEWS

ISSUE.353 APRIL 2021



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What's on AT RHSV

All events are held at the RHSV unless otherwise noted. Bookings are recommended for all events and can be made through the RHSV website: historyvictoria.org.au/rhsv-events/

VICTORIAN COMMUNITY HISTORY AWARDS – NOW OPEN

Closing date: 5pm, Wednesday 7th July, 2021

Digital entry available on the RHSV website. The 2021 awards cover project which will come to fruition between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021 (inclusive).

The awards are not just for publications but cover collaborative community projects, oral history, multimedia, podcasts, apps, maps, walking tours, virtual tours, exhibitions, musical interpretation, journal articles, videos, projects which cover cultural diversity and activities which enhance awareness of local community records including digitising, indexing, and original research.

HOLSWORTH GRANTS – NOW OPEN

Closing date: 31 July 2021

The RHSV administers the Holsworth Grants each year which were established to aid the publication of rural and regional history by not-for-profit organisations such as historical societies, clubs, schools and museums. Grants of up to \$2,000 are awarded.

More information: historyvictoria.org.au/programs/holsworth-local-heritage-grants/

THE MACROBERTSON INTERNATIONAL AIR RACES EXHIBITION

**Mondays – Fridays
9am–5pm / FREE**

MacRobertson's International Air Races of 1934 produced feats of great courage and derring-do. There was tragedy and triumph. A tragedy was averted in the middle of a stormy night



when the inventive locals of Albury locals used their towns lights to flash A L B U R Y in morse, then turned their race-track into a make-shift airstrip using their car headlights to allow the lost Dutch entry, the Uiver, to land. The next morning the same locals hauled the bogged plane out of a quagmire so that it could continue to Melbourne to claim 2nd place. Every entry in that race had an amazing story to tell. Visit the exhibition and be immersed in the romance and drama of early flight.

AGL SHAW LECTURE: LAW, LAWYERS & LA TROBE

**Tuesday 20th April
6:30pm / \$35**

Co-presented with the C.J. La Trobe Society, the AGL Shaw Lecture, is part of our Distinguished Lecture series

Dr Simon Smith AM FRHSV is a leading legal history scholar. His work has included overseeing the research and publication of an authorised history of the Supreme Court to mark the 175th anniversary of that court in Victoria. He is a regular contributor to scholarship in that area and also a leading insurance historian. His most recent book is on the history of Solicitors and the Law Institute in Victoria.

As a Monash law undergraduate in the 1970s, he helped found Australia's first community legal centre, the Springvale Legal Service. With that venture, he became the first clinical legal education academic in Australia. He is also a founding editor of a leading practice text, the Lawyers Practice Manual.

In the 1980s, Simon was a pioneer in alternative dispute resolution and was the first ombudsman in the Australian services sector. Later he was



Senior Counsel with a top 500 insurance company and a curator of a nationally significant insurance archive.

HISTORY WRITERS' GROUP

Tuesday 27 April.

Tuesday 25 May.

FREE

The History Writers' Group is for RHSV members only. It is led by Dr Cheryl Griffin and meets monthly on the 4th Tuesday of each month from 11:30am – 1pm. These events are hybrid – some people choose to meet at the RHSV and others choose to Zoom. This is a very interactive group which shares information and assists each other with problems they have encountered in their history writing. Cheryl is not only a respected historian but also a splendid teacher.

CATALOGUING CLINICS

Thursday 22 April

Thursday 27 May

11am by ZOOM / FREE

Jillian Hiscock, the RHSV Collections Manager, hosts these clinics an hour from 11am on the 4th Thursday of each month. It is a relaxed gathering of people who are finding their way through the intricacies of cataloguing material in historical collections which, as we all know, fall between a library and a museum with sometimes a bit of art gallery thrown in. Jillian always prepares some material on some specific queries but questions are encouraged and, remember, a problem shared is a problem halved. The clinics are conversational in format rather than a seminar. If you are new to cataloguing or an old hand you will find plenty to interest you in these sessions.

History News

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COVER IMAGE: Purse presented to Florrie Hodges by Jane Duff in 1926. 'Museums Victoria'. See page 17

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PLAN FOR HISTORY MONTH NOW

October is History Month. We encourage all historical societies to hold an event during history month – there is a great suggested list of events on our website which is a great place to start your brainstorming. We encourage you to think about collaborations with local schools, libraries and other community organisations – spread the joy!

History Month overlaps with the Seniors Festival and Children's Week so why not devise and event or two which can be featured in more than one program?

historyvictoria.org.au/brainstorm-history-month-event-ideas/



President's report

By the time this edition of *History News* is out, I will have travelled to Ouyen to present Merle Pole, from one of our far flung 330 affiliated societies across Victoria, with an RHSV Award of Merit for 2020. Her contributions to the History Centre at Ouyen have been sustained for over three decades and have resulted in a truly magnificent resource for researchers into the future as well as Merle's own book on Ouyen's place names. She has also been president for over twenty years. The following week the RHSV hosted a delayed 2020 award's ceremony for other recipients.

In a few weeks, after this *History News* is broadcast, I will also journey to the Croydon Historical Society to present an award to Les Hutchinson, aged 88, who was also unable to receive his award due to the pandemic. Les has for over forty years contributed to the preservation of Croydon's history by writing several books, mentoring several other publications, leading a huge oral history project on Croydon, speaking on the area's history countless times to schools and community groups and by promoting Croydon's history on Radio Eastern FM. He has been honoured several times for his work.

The altruism of these award winners is truly magnificent. Of course, we volunteer in the history movement for more than just altruism, as our efforts satisfy a buzzing in our heads about something in the past we want to explore. How did the places we inhabit come about? Who were the

dominant figures in our local area? What was the First Nation's history of our region? Our personal wellbeing is clearly enhanced by volunteering in the history movement. But there is no doubt that there is also a social good emanating from our efforts. Local communities and their identities are enhanced by knowledge of their origins. We study history to know our past and to know ourselves in the present. Therefore, before the 2021 award nominations close in just a few weeks consider nominating someone from your society; see the information on page two of this edition. It requires a page to set out their achievements. The criteria are that their work for an affiliated society of the RHSV must have been sustained, normally, over ten years and must be exceptional. The person being nominated does not need to have written a notable publication or publications, but must have done something exceptional to advance their society's efforts to protect or disseminate the local history of the area, beyond the routine holding of office.

This is not to say that office bearers do routine work, they do not! Their efforts are invaluable. But this award of merit is an exceptional award for exceptional effort. It is the gold medal of the history movement. I hope that those who win such an award, and those around them, see it for what it is: a truly remarkable honour for sustained and outstanding contributions.

So please consider honouring those who deserve it, with a nomination. And if your

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nominee is unsuccessful in 2021, please try again next year, because we are only able to present ten awards each year, to uphold their meritorious nature.

Richard Broome AM

Editor's Note: Seeking contributions

History of Aboriginal peoples of Victoria: celebration and awareness

For the June issue of *History News*, we plan to focus on the history of First Nations peoples in Victoria and we invite relevant articles for consideration. We especially extend this invitation to Indigenous authors within the Victorian community.

Suggested topics include:

- The role and importance of Indigenous knowledge in understanding Aboriginal history from Deep Time to the present
- The role of Indigenous knowledge in managing and protecting the land and its flora and fauna

- The role of archaeology in understating the Indigenous past
- Aspects of the history of colonisation and its impact on Aboriginal peoples since 1788
- Impact of early missionaries
- ... and many others.

Please contact me with any questions. We look forward to receiving your proposals and contributions: 200-800 words with an image or two.

Sharon Bettridge

sbettridge@outlook.com





'Lyndhurst Hall', Albion Street East, Brunswick, in 1866
(photo State Library of Victoria H654, cropped)



Lyndhurst Hall, Pascoe Vale South
(contemporary photo, Alex Levia)

Heritage report: Australia's World Heritage in the spotlight

Australia has four cultural world heritage sites: Australian Convict Sites, 11 sites across Australia; Budj Bim Cultural Landscape, Victoria; Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens, Melbourne; and Sydney Opera House. Now the Central Victorian Goldfields World Heritage bid is underway and the RHSV has joined others in a new bid, to obtain world heritage listing for the nearly 100 19th-Century prefabricated or 'portable' buildings still standing in Australia.

New developments made possible the manufacture of buildings in parts, known at the time as 'portable buildings', that could be shipped to Australia or other colonies and assembled on site. They seemed the perfect solution for settlers needing houses and public buildings that could be put up without much skilled labour, especially during the gold rushes. Victoria has 63 of Australia's total of 98 extant portable buildings.

Many were of cast or wrought iron, or even steel, but many others were of wood. Typically, they involved parts that

could easily be joined together, a bit like IKEA furniture. Some were simple buildings, not unlike today's sheds, often clad in corrugated iron. Others were sophisticated buildings you wouldn't pick without close observation. Prince Albert took an interest in the process and ordered a ballroom building for Balmoral, which still stands on the castle grounds. The same manufacturer produced a house that stands today in South Melbourne.

An elaborate double-storey eight-room portable house named Lyndhurst Hall, which arrived in Melbourne on 6 November 1854, was erected in Brunswick. Its walls and floors are made of wooden boards joined together by metal tongues. Before 1870, it was moved to its present site. The veranda was later reconstructed from the 1866 photo above.

Australia's collection of portable buildings is the largest in the world. It represents a unique heritage of 19th century technology and colonial adaptation. A task force has been set up to foster an Australian bid for world heritage listing. It is led by Tony Isaacson, who chairs the Robin Boyd Foundation, and advised by Emeritus

Professor Miles Lewis, the world authority on these buildings. I have joined the task force on behalf of the RHSV. The task force will be launched in mid-April at the Collingwood site of four 1850s portable 'Singapore Cottages'. A web site will be set up with a link from the RHSV web site.

Even world heritage status, however, isn't full protection. In last June's *History News*, I wrote about the threats to the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens World Heritage Site. Australia promised to create a buffer zone around the Carlton Gardens, the World Heritage Environs Area (WHEA), to maintain the heritage character surrounding the site. But the Victorian Government removed protection from much of the WHEA in 2009.

The result was a forest of towers, topped by the 65-storey twin tower Shangri-La Hotel under construction near Victoria Street. The other three sides of the Carlton Gardens, however, are much as they were during the 1880 and 1888 Exhibitions. But two proposals now threaten the Fitzroy side of the WHEA: a five-storey tower on Gertrude Street, behind Royal Terrace and a huge new building for St Vincent's

Hospital on the corner of Nicholson Street and Victoria Parade.

The St Vincent's proposal is nearly 15 metres higher, the equivalent of five normal storeys, than the one it replaces and faced in glass. 'Intended to be contemporary and visually striking', it would dominate the World Heritage Area. The RHSV has lodged submissions opposing both proposals.

The RHSV has participated in a review of the WHEA, which may result in improved protection, but it will take two years. In the meantime, it is the responsibility of the federal Minister for the Environment to ensure protection of the world heritage site. The RHSV heritage committee wrote to the Minister for Environment Hon. Sussan Ley MP on 31 January 2021, but we have received no answer or acknowledgement. In February 2021, the

RHSV heritage committee wrote to the Director of UNESCO's World Heritage Centre to request their intervention with the Australia Government. This is a big call. But it is the only card we have left to play. You will find the full story on the RHSV web site. <https://bit.ly/38Gu4eo>

Charles Sowerwine,

5 March 2021.



A Hall of fame: The Bundy is reborn

From an unremarkable rural hall threatened with closure to 'one of the best sounding country halls in Australia' – the transformation of Bundalaguah Hall is almost complete.

The Bundalaguah-Myrtlebank Hall has always had strong community roots. It was officially opened in November 1954 following extensive community fundraising led by the local CWA, which had previously met at members' homes. The branch, formed in September 1946 and raised some £500 towards the project. There were dances, euchre and other card nights, street stalls, film exhibitions and catering at clearing sales.

Locals also donated special entries to local cattle and sheep markets to aid the Hall fund. The then Maffra Shire endorsed the project and supported a grant application to Government to cover the £1778 construction cost.

Built on land subdivided from a local farm, the hall stands midway between Sale and Maffra. Red gum blocks for the hall were cut and split at working bees on a local farmer's property. This type of in-kind support of materials and skills has continued with the most recent upgrades. The tender for construction of the 60 x 30 feet hall was called in April 1954 and was awarded to W. F. Barton of Maffra.

The Bundalaguah CWA was fittingly one



Top:

The Bundy Hall now boasts a new covered outdoor space as well as numerous upgrades inside.

Bottom:

*The basic Bundalaguah-Myrtlebank Hall which faced closure in 2013.
Image Bundalaguah Hall committee*

of the first to use the hall when the local branch celebrated its eighth birthday on 1 November 1954 with the hall “beautifully decorated for a gay party”. A few days later a planned ball had to be cancelled due to poor weather.

The hall was officially opened on 24 November 1954 with praise for the CWA and other locals from dignitaries who noted they had “provided their own community centre”. The official speeches were followed by a “grand supper” with music by Lou Bourbaud’s local band; Lou Bourbaud was also a successful shooter with the Sale gun club. The local radio station, 3TR, used a broadcast program line installed to the hall on the evening of the official opening as well to broadcast balls subsequently held in the hall.

A schedule of dances, badminton and other community uses were soon in full swing and the hall was extended with a new supper room and kitchen constructed by L. P. McMahon in the 1960s. Dedicated locals continued to serve on the committee, with some providing a decade or more of service.

But in 2012, the hall faced a huge hurdle when the shire closed it down due to electrical issues. The locals swung into action with a concerted campaign, letters to the paper, a petition with 700 signatures and revitalization of the committee with a wider mix of users.

The new committee developed a business plan. This and their enthusiasm won over council which upgraded the electrics and the committee’s first upgrade involved restumping, a disabled toilet, a smart galvanized iron roof and a new water tank. There were improvements to the kitchen and a new sound system. The work of local farmer and construction contractor Paul Verstedden on the sound system has led to a new sideline helping many other local halls improve their sound systems and staging.

The forward-thinking committee got behind the dream of converting the hall into a non-commercial, not-for-profit, all-abilities inclusive, intimate live music and arts venue hosting high quality local, interstate and international artists. And so ‘Live at the Bundy’ was born with the first featuring Blues guitarist Fiona Boyes in December 2013; a sellout like most of the subsequent shows. One new partnership



Joe Camilleri and the Black Sorrows perform ‘Live at the Bundy’.
Image Stuart Anderson Photography

involved the ‘First Tuesday Blues Club’ with musicians who were seeking a new venue away from pubs and nightclubs in Sale: teacher Brett Glover and Paul Verstedden.

The milestone 100th ‘Live at the Bundy’ on 27 March this year featured soul and blues singer Shaun Kirk. In between have been a host of well-known names including Joe Camilleri and the Black Sorrows, Jon Stevens, Eurogliders, Russell Morris and Ross Wilson. A few others cancelled during COVID are being rescheduled.

The plan from the outset was to have premium artists, premium sound and a premium acoustic environment. But the intimate setting has appeal for both performer and audience. It might be a small venue ‘in the middle of a cow paddock’ but it is often included with large city venues on tours: Newcastle, Gold Coast, Brisbane, Bundalaguah, Melbourne. *“Every community needs a Bundy Hall...it was an honour to see it first hand...Viva Euro gliders Bundy Hall!”* said Joe Camilleri.

The Bundalaguah branch of the CWA, the largest in regional Victoria, continues to meet at the hall and provides a gourmet barbecue at each event, again contributing to its upkeep.

And while ‘Live at the Bundy’ is “all about the music”, the hall has other strings to its bow. There is regular yoga, dancero-bics,

pilates and exercise sessions, First Aid classes and lots of private functions too.

Currently, a \$250,000 Future Plan is nearing completion and will ensure the Bundy Hall remains a viable community asset for generations to come and perhaps lead the dream of a regional east coast touring network for performers.

This latest round of upgrades has seen a massive change to the hall with a large verandah and deck on the northern side of the hall providing shade and shelter for outdoor events. The once overgrown paddock behind the hall has been landscaped and a suitable roadway now defines the carpark.

Internally the hall layout has been flipped with the stage moved to the eastern end of the hall with improved sound insulation. A new covered area at the western end of the hall is the new entry, improving access and crowd control. New storage areas and a green room also improve the flexibility of the hall for a variety of uses. With the focus on the successful trademark ‘live’ music events, the sound system has again been upgraded.

And the success of this dynamic committee seems to have inspired other communities in the local Wellington Shire to reinvigorate their own community halls with several undergoing major facelifts in recent years.

Pauline Hitchins



History Victoria Support Group (HVSG)

So just what will the new normal look like? We are all fast learning to be adaptable and establish new ways to keep in touch, attend lectures, undertake research and promote the work of our historical societies. We've also been reminded of the value of conversations, shared discoveries and the other bonuses the collaboration of society work provides. At a time when we have lost many friends and colleagues, we are even more aware of the importance of recording stories, naming pictures and preserving memories.

For most of the past 12 months, museums and historical societies have been forced

to close their doors. Some retained access to their archives for research but many more have been locked out of that access too.

History Victoria Support Group member Larina Strauch managed to respond to some research queries but most were put 'in the queue' until after COVID lockdowns. However, Larina and her co-author have completed their Kyneton history which is now off to printers.

Instead of the planned celebrations, Kyneton Museum, an initiative of the Kyneton Historical Society and now run by Macedon Ranges Shire, marked its 50th anniversary by posting an online newsreel from its opening by Premier Sir Henry Bolte in April 1970. The newsreader on the day observed that "items of everyday life from more than a century ago may become an interesting tourist attraction and industry for Kyneton": a fact we now all appreciate.

Kyneton Historical Society has now reopened and has been blessed with some valuable photos, letters and documents from those who have sorted out family archives during lockdown. They are also benefitting from a special exhibition, 'Unique by Nature, United by History', at the museum. Larina notes the exhibition helps visitors understand the

diversity of the role of historical societies and often acts as a referral to the society, whose rooms are beside the museum.

Kyneton is one of five local historical societies including Malmsbury, Carlsruhe, Romsey Lancefield and Gisborne and Mt Macedon, which explore the unique history of their home towns in the exhibition. Using their collections, they illuminate histories of ancient megafauna, communities and culture, farming, indigenous occupation, industry, quarrying, winemaking and tourism.

This year the Kyneton Society will celebrate its 70th anniversary and help the Museum belatedly mark its 50th anniversary.

We hope all societies will be able to get back on track in 2021 and we want to hear what your critical issues are: membership, cataloguing, conservation or emergency preparedness?

Please let us know how the HVSG and RHSV can help. Also, HVSG would love to have more members from across the state, so contact us if you are interested in helping us determine the best resources and workshops we can develop.

Pauline Hitchins

Convenor HVSG (RHSV)

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The grand early 20th century foyer of the Australian National Memorial Theatre in St Kilda, Melbourne, the only other National Theatre now in existence.

The Theatre with the grand-sounding name

The Ballarat National Theatre is a local amateur dramatic society with a surprisingly grand-sounding name. It is one of the longest-running community theatre groups in Australia, for which it deserves celebration. But the company's name reveals another fact worth celebrating. It has a rare, ongoing connection to a foundational episode in the cultural history of Australia: the Australian National Theatre Movement.

Nowadays, when Australian content is mandated on TV stations, and we have a wealth of government and privately funded performing arts institutions filling every conceivable niche, it is difficult to see why the Australian National Theatre Movement was such a big deal. But before the 1930s, Australia was not seen, nor did we see ourselves, as a nation which deserved its own cultural icons or forms of cultural expression. We were at the edge of the British Empire. Culture came from there, and that was where the best, the only, culture was found. At the time there was little sense that Australia had any form of identity outside of England. And it was simply expected that the brightest and most talented Australian performers would go overseas.

This attitude was challenged by a formidable Australian opera singer called Gertrude Johnson. Johnson had studied under the famous Nellie Melba and enjoyed a successful, though not stellar, career in England in the 1920s. On returning to Australia in the 1930s she argued for a National Theatre in all states of Australia which would give talented Australian artists performance experience in their own country. The Australian Broadcasting Commission had just been formed and though there was little formal government support of active cultural institutions Johnson and others had high hopes of a national strategy to keep young talent in Australia.

In 1935 Johnson founded the Australian National Theatre Movement and set up a theatre in her home base of Melbourne to train young people in music, opera, ballet and drama to a professional level. Part of her genius was to found supportive branches of the Movement, beginning with the Melbourne suburbs but extending outwards.

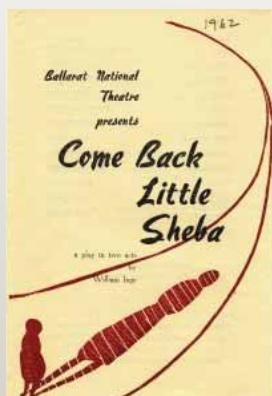
The first regional branch was founded in Ballarat in 1938. The Ballarat National Theatre was formed at a meeting convened by the Mayor of Ballarat, J. H. Trekardo. Gertrude Johnson was there and over 100 people attended. The excitement in the contemporary articles is palpable. Ballarat

felt it was at the vanguard of a flowering of Australian culture. The first performance in Ballarat by the Melbourne company of the popular 'Barretts of Wimpole Street', was a crowded success, although the conditions in the Alfred Hall were freezing, prompting a call for better venues in Ballarat.

Gertrude Johnson's network of theatres and branches took hold in Victoria and flowered in the 1940s and up to the 1950s. During this time Melbourne's 'National' became known as a source of sometimes rowdy, but often surprisingly high calibre performances.

The Ballarat National Theatre started producing its own performances in 1939 with *Smilin' Through*. As other groups existed locally for music and dance, 'The National' in Ballarat focused almost exclusively on drama. A lively troupe with a dedicated local audience soon formed. And when the intimate 100 people venue, the 'Little Theatre', was built in the basement of the ANA Building and Plaza Cinema in Camp Street in 1949, the company flourished.

Counter to Ballarat's local success story, the broader National Theatre Movement began to fizzle out after a peak of activity and critical acclaim in the 1950s. It never achieved its grand aim of creating a network of theatres across Australia.



Left to Right: 1962 Program for *Come Back Little Sheba*. Image courtesy of the Ballarat Gold Museum. Gertrude Johnson, c. 1921. Still from *Come Back Little Sheba*, produced by the Ballarat National Theatre in 1962. Image courtesy of the Ballarat Gold Museum.

Instead, Gertrude Johnson's goal of a truly Australian national theatre was realised in the 1950s when the 'Elizabethan Theatre Trust,' a national group, was formed. From this organisation developed a State Theatre network and the two institutions the Australian Ballet and the Australian Opera. Johnson herself, sadly, chose not to be part of the Elizabethan Theatre Trust, an organisation she helped initiate but which she felt was compromised. Instead, she kept her Melbourne-based Australian National Theatre separate and, while it remains a Melbourne cultural fixture to this day, it gradually declined in influence, prestige and in numbers.

The Ballarat National Theatre kept going, producing play after play, developing and extending its repertoire and drawing strong local audiences well up to the 1980s when the Little Theatre was forced to close to meet new stringent safety regulations. Undeterred, the company remained active and eventually relocated to a new venue in the 1990s: the Courthouse Theatre in Lydiard Street Ballarat. There it still puts on four productions a year to this day.

At some point in its journey the Ballarat 'National' lost its contact and connection with the Melbourne 'National' and became essentially an independent amateur theatre company.

Now as memories recede, we don't really know how many branches of the Australian National Theatre Movement were set up in its heyday; the Melbourne movement apparently did not keep records of branches as they formed. In 1988 three other regional National Theatre branches still existed: metropolitan Heidelberg, Yallourn and Swan Hill in regional Victoria but gradually they severed their ties to the movement and the name. (The 'National Theatre' in Perth is not connected to Johnson's Movement). Today there exist two solitary reminders of Johnson's dream. One is the Australian National Memorial Theatre in the glorious old renovated silent cinema on the corner of Barkly and Carlisle Streets, St Kilda, the heart of the Movement since the 1970s. It has trained and continues to train generations of performers, struggling for every dollar to keep its legacy alive.

And the other is the Ballarat National Theatre, the community theatre company in regional Victoria, putting on four shows a year in the Courthouse Theatre near the Old Ballarat Gaol.

Neither company keeps in touch with the other, they are linked only through threads: name, a bit of history, and remarkable longevity. It's probably time they started talking.

Lucinda Horrocks, 2014.

Wind & Sky Productions was commissioned to produce a history of the Ballarat National Theatre in 2013. This article is based on some of the history we unearthed whilst researching the story.

To watch the documentary film, visit <http://www.windsky.com.au/ballarat-national-theatre/>



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Around the societies

**Prepared by volunteer
Glenda Beckley on
behalf of the History
Victoria Support Group.**

We welcome Societies to submit an article/event of around 50 words, or email your Newsletter to us and we will write up around 50 words for you around twice per year.
FOR THE JUNE 2021 ISSUE please send details to office@historyvictoria.org.au by 24th April 2021.

AUSTRALIAN GARDEN HISTORY: Later this year the Victorian Branch will be visiting Coolart House and Wetlands on the Mornington Peninsula. Dr Jan Schapper has been invited to talk about her connection with the property and discuss her 1980 Environmental conservation plan. This week marks the 50th Anniversary of the signing of the Ramsar Convention. The Convention's mission is 'the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world'. www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au

BENDIGO: 'Walks into History': First Sunday of the month, except Easter, at 10.00 a.m. Cost: \$5, unless otherwise specified. April 1: 'Kings Bridge and its surroundings a taste of Irishtown' with James Lerk; meet at Gasworks retort house, Weeroona Avenue, Bendigo - note: Unsteady terrain. May 2: 'Passport to the Borough' with Aylene Kirkwood; meet at the Old Court House, Sailors Gully Road, Eaglehawk. June 6: 'Mining at Victoria Hill with Billy Allen; meet at Victoria Hill, opposite the Goldmines Hotel. July 4: 'Bendigo's German Community' with Dennis Johanson; meet at Vahland Drinking Fountain, Pall Mall.

BRIGHTON CEMETORIANS: Diary Dates for 2021: April 18: Anzac Walk, angels of Mercy Walk, WW1 Nurses. May 23: Law Week Walk, Convict Taint. August 8: AGM. October: Sporting People. October: Boyd Family of Artists Walk. November 14th: Remembrance Day Walk. Ring Lois on 9558 4248 to book.

Flag Project: We intend to have an Australian Flag attached to a pole to publicly commemorate the role these people had in representing Australia as part of the war effort. The pole will be placed in a sleeve that will be anchored into the ground at the front of the grave. Please note that Flags cannot be placed at cremation memorial positions, wall positions or public grave areas. Family permission is needed for a service person to be included. The little booklet that will tell the stories of the people in the first 50 graves to have a flag flying is nearly

finished; orders now being taken. Cost will be \$5 per booklet plus \$2 postage. If you would like to order a booklet or if you have a service person at the Brighton Cemetery please contact Lois on 9558 4248 or info@brightoncemetorians.org

CASTLEMAINE: The Society to reopen the doors of the Former Court House in Goldsmith Crescent from Tuesday, February 23. Volunteers are looking forward to welcoming everyone back after 11 long months. The Society's new opening hours will be Tuesday from 10am – 3pm, preferably by appointment. To make an appointment please email the society at chsi@castlemainehistoricalsociety.com.

To find out more about the Society and our holdings visit <https://www.castlemainehistoricalsociety.com/>

COBURG: The Society has reopened the Bluestone Cottage Museum at 82 Bell Street Coburg, on Fridays from 12-2pm and on the first Sunday of the month from 2-4.30pm. We have organised another interesting year of talks to be held mainly at Coburg Library on a Thursday night at 8pm. To find out more, email coburghistory@gmail.com or browse our website. The Society used social media to connect with its community during lockdown and increased its membership by generating interest in local history topics through images, discussions online and zoom talks. It was nominated for an AMAga award for its Social Media Project in the category of 'Audiences and Engagement'. <https://coburghistoricalociety.wordpress.com/>

ECHUCA: 'Always Tells a Story': An exhibition that looks at some of the museum's vast collection of letters, books and documents that give an insight into the lives of early settlers to the region. Now open: Echuca Historical Society Museum, 1 Dickson Street Echuca, Victoria 3564 Phone 0407297845. The exhibition will close on 3 May 2021 Visit: www.echucahistoricalociety.org.au

ELTHAM: Reduced program until June 2021: Saturday 3 April 2pm: Heritage Excursion. Saturday 1 May 2pm: Heritage Walk. Wednesday 12 May 9.30am: Committee Meeting. Saturday 12 June

2pm: Annual General Meeting. Society Meetings are held at the Eltham Senior Citizens' Centre, Library Place, Eltham.

FRIENDS OF WESTGARTHTOWN: With restrictions easing the Zeibell's Farmhouse museum and garden has reopened with pre-booked entry each Sunday from 11.30am-3pm and on our new Tuesday hours of 11.30am-2pm. Bookings can be made at EventBrite via the link on our website <http://westgarthtown.org.au/visit/index.htm>. New to the garden will be tours led by the garden's horticulturalist, Christine Burke. The garden now also has QR codes on selected plants. This allows visitors to access additional information regarding various plants. Silent reading hours is a program under consideration, likely to be Sunday mornings from 9.30-11.30am. This will be a chance for anyone to sit and read in the garden with no talking or mobiles ringing allowed. While the Ziebell's Farmhouse may be in the middle of suburban Melbourne, it is tranquil and usually quiet and, wherever feasible, we will welcome everyone to come and experience it.

HEIDELBERG: Speakers for Heidelberg Historical Society evening meetings in 2021: 13 April: Terry Young, Chinese Market Gardens. 8 June: Eleneth Woolley, Ivanhoe Reading Circle Centenary. 10 August: Dr David Sornig, The Blue Lake, Finding Dudley Flats and the West Melbourne Swamp. 12 October: AGM/Members Night. 14 December: John Anderson, A short history of the railway line to Heidelberg to mark the centenary of electrification. The talks are held at the Uniting Church Community Centre, Seddon Street, Ivanhoe at 8pm under applicable Victorian Government COVID19 regulations.

KILMORE: What a time to be part of the Kilmore Historical Society! A new home with more space than we could dream of, new opening hours, so many new opportunities and even a new committee member. How exciting! We would be keen to hear from anyone who is familiar with the history of our new home at the bluestone Old Kilmore Post Office on Powlett Street. We are particularly keen to hear oral histories from those who worked

or lived here. If you have photographs of the interior we would be delighted to see and copy them. Either contact us via Facebook or drop in on one of our open days. <http://www.kilmorehistory.info/> or <https://www.facebook.com/kilmorehistory/>



KORUMBURRA: The township was surveyed in 1887, and the first land sales in Commercial Street took place early the following year. With the discovery of coal and the arrival of the railway, the town was set to boom. Some buildings of the time still stand. The self guided historical tour was designed and compiled by our members. <https://bit.ly/3b83D2z> We welcome all visitors who wish to see our extensive eCollection or to obtain help in looking for information. Starting the walk from any point you could visit each site in a loop that would bring you back to your starting point.

RICHMOND & BURNLEY: Upcoming events at Studio 1, Kennedy Place Richmond. Booking essential to cater for numbers due to COVID restrictions: email the society or call 94271800. Events will also be available on Zoom. 16 May 2.30pm: Look What I Found, Mysteries and Artefacts from Richmond, discover some of Richmond's past through items, images and artefacts. Contribute to a 'Did You Know?' session and hear what's happening in the suburb. 20 June 2.30pm: Ghost Signs and the Melbourne Circle, Nick Gadd author of *Melbourne circle : walking, memory and loss* (2020). With the intensive development in the suburbs, Ghost Signs suddenly appear after being locked away from previous development. Nick has captured many of these nostalgic and historic signs on his webpage. Many have since disappeared behind the new constructions, perhaps waiting for another century until they reappear. Email: richmondhs@optusnet.com.au

RINGWOOD & DISTRICT: Using decals, our Heathmont History Group has now decorated more than 100 of the bollards in the Heathmont shopping strip. All the artwork has been done by local school children and local artists, the youngest 4 years old, the oldest 100! This 'urban silo art' display has the theme of Orchardng Tribute, for the bollards and the shops are on the site of one of the orchards so prevalent in Heathmont one hundred years ago. That the theme has been expressed in many ways is a feature of the bold and colourful display. There are apples and pears, paintings and photographs, trees and ladders, cherries and lemons. And only 50 more to do!

ROCHESTER: We remember the devastation 10 years ago. January 15 2011 the Society was inundated with 70 centimetres of flood water from the Campaspe River. We lost books, display cabinets, and some display items. We were very fortunate with the help of the Echuca Historical Society and the Shire of Campaspe to save a great number of old book ledgers and records that were very sodden. The process involved wrapping the individual wet books and photos in plastic wrap and freezing. Months later these frozen articles were Freeze Dried in Melbourne and returned to our Museum here in Rochester in good condition. After receiving many grants for new shelving and furniture our Museum was back in business in about 14 months.

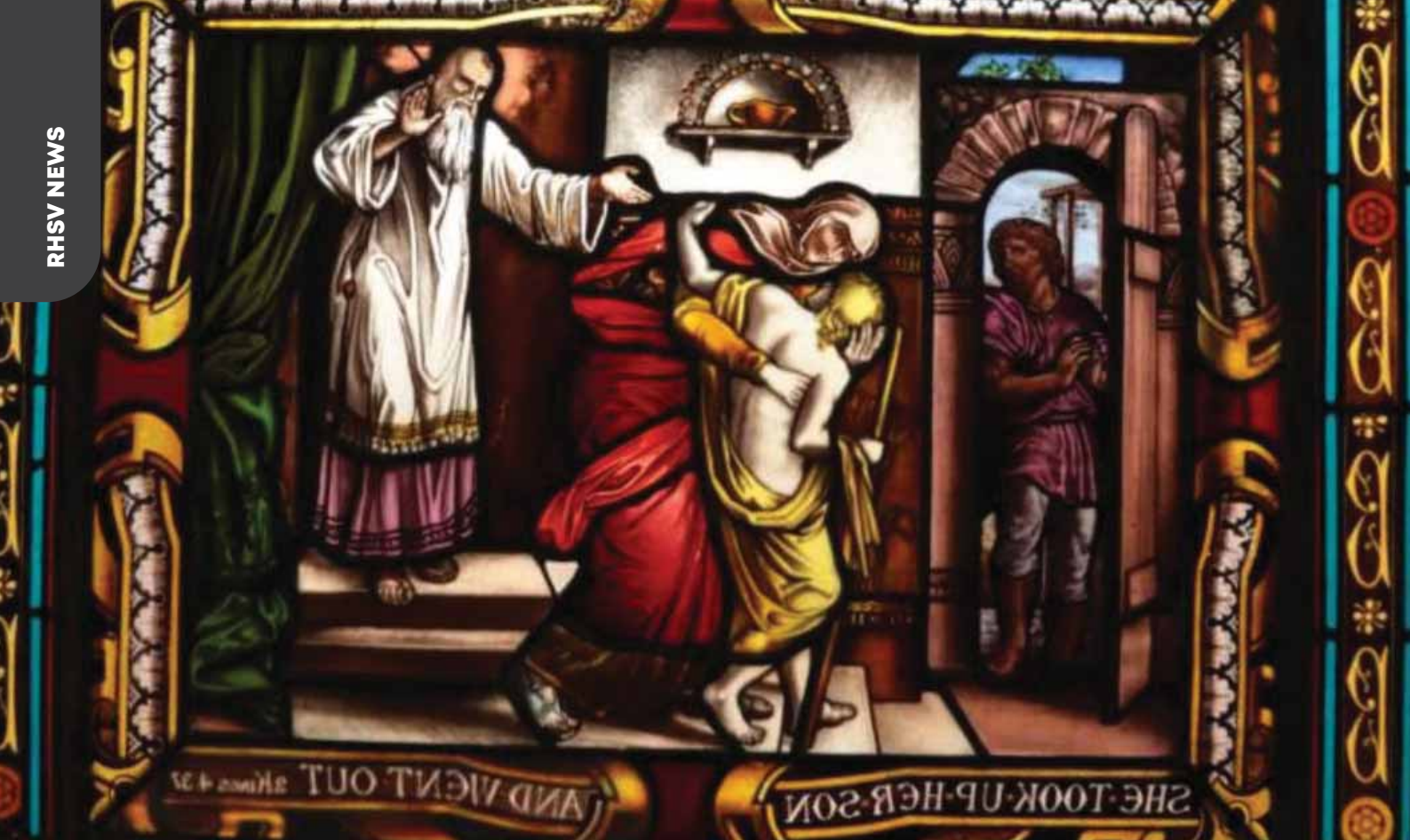


SEYMOUR: In the early 1870s there was debate as to a location to establish a town library, and eventually the site currently occupied by the Pioneer Library was decided on. In July 1974 the Society took over the back part of the Library for research and exhibition rooms, and the remainder of the building in November 1979. We have hosted many historical exhibitions and displays, local history book launches, guest speakers and become the central archive on Seymour and District History: preserving our local history for future generations. The Library is open to the public on the first Sunday of each month from 1-3pm, and the third Tuesday of each month from 1-3pm, and other times by arrangement.

1990's postcard of the Pioneer library



WHITEHORSE: 2021 Diary Dates: Meetings are held at the Schwerkolt Cottage and Museum Complex. Saturday, 10 April 1pm: General Meeting - Ross McMullin - Will Dyson, War Artist. Saturday, 5 June 1pm: General Meeting, Jenny Briely, Vermont, A History. Saturday, 14 August 1pm: Annual General Meeting, Rosalie Whalen, WHS. Saturday, 9 October 1pm General Meeting, Dr. Gary Presland, Coranderrk.



Windows on history:

The Beaney Stained Glass window

The first Melbourne Hospital opened in 1848 and stood on the corner of Lonsdale and Swanston Streets for nearly a century. Thirty years later...

"...Mr. Jas. Geo. Beaney, one of the honorary surgeons... expressed his wish to present a stained-glass window, to be placed in the west wing of the hospital. The committee had much pleasure in assisting to give effect to his generous offer, and entrusted the work to Messrs. Ferguson and Urie, who executed the commission to the satisfaction of the donor. This acceptable present has greatly improved that portion of the building..." Argus 30 Jan 1879.

James George Beaney (1828 – 1891), was a native of Canterbury, England. After completing his training in Edinburgh, he emigrated to Australia in 1852 and by 1860 had bought his appointment as an honorary surgeon at the Melbourne Hospital. He remained an honorary for most of his life, expending large amounts

of money to ensure his reappointment, as was often the practice before 1910.

History doesn't flatter Beaney who was loved, hated, admired, despised, and labelled a controversial surgeon, medical pioneer and plagiarist. His flamboyant clothing, extraordinary coif, diamond studs and rings won him the title of 'Diamond Jim', earned in part through his practice of performing surgery wearing his jewelled rings, at a time when sepsis was rife. Another nickname, 'Champagne Jimmy', resulted from boozy hospitality before and after his lectures and operations.

Beaney's first charge of medical negligence was in 1866 when he was tried for the murder of St Kilda barmaid, Mary Lewis. The post-mortem suggested he had performed an illegal abortion, a charge dismissed due to lack of evidence. Regarded as crass and egotistical, Beaney performed risky operations his peers would never dare, which almost certainly led to him defending himself a further three

times in subsequent years. Unsurprisingly, he features prominently in Medico-Legal Society of Victoria's 'Medico-Legal Crimes in the Nineteenth Century Melbourne'. Despite his notoriety James George Beaney was elected to the Victorian Legislative Council in 1883.

The Beaney window was designed and made by Ferguson & Urie of North Melbourne at the huge cost of £105, and unveiled on 14 June 1878, a day before Beaney left for Europe. The window depicts Faith and Hope and the Greek medical philosopher Esculap (Asclepius), the God of Medicine and Healing with his daughter Hygeia, Goddess of Health and Sanitation. The central scene is from the Old Testament, 2 Kings 4-37, 'She Took Up her Son and Went Out'. There is a nurse holding an oil lamp is synonymous with Florence Nightingale. The medical symbol below her contains the Caduceus, or 'The Rod of Asclepius', being symbols of medicine. Beaney's heraldic crest is more



Left to Right:

Once Beane's private medical clinic, 'Cromwell House', on the corner of Russell and Collins Streets, Melbourne. Rexness February 2010.

1873 Lithographic print of caricature of Dr. Beane. 'No. 6. - A Collins Street Surgeon. Patients and Diamonds.' State Library of Victoria

contentious, if not fictitious, and the Latin motto *Virtus sola nobilitas* (Virtue is the only nobility), probably wishful thinking.

The arrangement is now set in a wooden frame flanked by two Ferguson & Urie windows dating from 1867. My first impression was that all the text was Latin but close examination showed it was English, but all the glass has been assembled back-to-front, except for Beane's dedicatory panel at the base that reads: 'THE GIFT OF JAMES GEORGE BEANEY F.R.C.S. HONORARY SURGEON OF THIS HOSPITAL 1878'.

'...When the hospital was rebuilt on the same site in 1913, the window was relocated to the Chapel facing Russell Street. It remained on this site following ... the occupation of the buildings by the former Queen Victoria Memorial Hospital from 1946 to 1988. In the late 1980s ... the window was transferred to the Chapel of Monash Medical Centre's Clayton Campus...' – RMH Web site 2021.

Beane's private medical clinic is significant in Melbourne's architectural history. 'Cromwell House' was designed by William Salway and still stands on the corner of Russell and Collins Streets, diagonally opposite Scots church. Today it is home to the swank 'Louis Vuitton' shop with 'Beane Lane' behind it.

Before Beane's death in 1891 he boastfully predicted the timing of his demise to his housekeeper: '...he would sink into a comatose state 24 hours before his death and would breathe his last at 4 o'clock in the morning' - In his prediction he was but five minutes astray...' - Argus 1 July 1891.

Beane was buried in the Melbourne General Cemetery. Unsurprisingly for a man so determined to leave his mark on Melbourne, his almost-five-metre-high granite monolith still dominates that section of the cemetery skyline.

His will included many philanthropic disbursements, most notably £2,000 to

the University of Melbourne to establish scholarships in Pathology and Surgery which continue today. A bequest to his hometown in Canterbury, Kent, established what is known today as the Beane House of Art and Knowledge.

Beane's window can be seen in the chapel of the Monash Medical Centre at Clayton. Unfortunately, it remains assembled back-to-front.

Further information can be found at: <http://fergusonandurie.wordpress.com>

Ray Brown 2021



The Italian Ossario Murchison

To mark 75 years since the end of World War 2, Heritage Victoria engaged Heritage Advisor David Helms to research and compile an assessment on the cultural heritage significance of the Italian Ossario, located at Murchison, central Victoria. This resulted in the Ossario being listed on the Victorian Heritage Register on the 1 October 2020 as a Registered Place: VHR Number H2405. The official statement reads: *'the Italian Ossario is of cultural heritage significance to the State of Victoria and is to be included in the Heritage Register, as a Registered Place.'*

The Italian Ossario, situated in a peaceful setting in the south east corner of the Murchison Cemetery is a sacred place. The Italian word *'ossario'* (old bones) is a place of final rest for human remains that have initially been buried elsewhere. The Ossario shelters Italians who passed

away during their imprisonment in Australia during World War 2. They were military Prisoners of War (POWs) brought to our shores as Italian civilians, thought to be a security risk, who were both resident in Australia and from allied territories overseas.

Entry to the grounds is through wrought iron gates with sculptured relief on pillars either side. The Ossario is approached through an avenue of Mediterranean Cypress, each bearing the name of Italian Service Organizations. Appearance of the building is attractive and distinctly Mediterranean. It is quite unique as it was built and is maintained by the Italian community, not the Commonwealth War Graves Commission as other foreign war grave cemeteries are in Australia, such as the German War Cemetery at near-by Tatura.

Prior to the construction of the Ossario, graves of Italian POW's from Camp 13 Murchison, were located in the General section of Murchison Cemetery. Each year, beginning mid-1950s, a Mass of Remembrance was celebrated in the open air at a temporary altar draped with flags, until the Commonwealth Government authorized the building of an Italian Memorial on Australian soil.

The Murchison Cemetery Trust handed over a piece of land, fundraising began and Mr. Luigi Gigliotti, a notable community worker in Kyabram collected £25,000 from the Goulburn Valley Italian community. Negotiations occurred with the Italian Government, Consuls, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and families of the deceased. This resulted in the remains of Italian POWs and civilian internees, previously buried in local cemeteries close to the detention camps in all states of Australia, being exhumed and re-interred in one place, at Murchison.

The Ossario is constructed of Castlemaine stone with terracotta tile roof, bell tower, and a sanctuary area containing an altar of white Italian marble enclosed with decorative wrought iron gates. The names of the 129 men and one woman who rest here are cast in bronze on the walls of the sanctuary. The Ossario was officially



dedicated on the 10th September 1961. A monument to their fallen comrades built by Italian POWs at Camp 13 Murchison was relocated and placed to the left of the building in 1968.

Initially, a crypt below ground level, housed the caskets but following severe Goulburn River flooding in the early 1970s when water inundated this underground area, Victorian Health Commission ordered the caskets to be relocated above ground level. This required extensive alteration to the Ossario in 1974, with the addition of an area behind the sanctuary to house the remains. The crypt was then filled in with sand. A memorial on the right side of the forecourt created by Attilio Greco was installed in 1975, dedicated to the armed forces of Italy.

It is a European oasis, a little piece of Italy, set in the Australian bush-land.

A remembrance service with speeches, Catholic mass and choral singing is held annually on the nearest Sunday to Armistice Day in November. Hundreds of Italian relatives, descendants and friends attend each year, coming from overseas and from all around Australia. Italian and Australian dignitaries attend the service beginning with a procession and laying of wreaths on the Greco memorial in the forecourt then the singing of both the Australian and Italian national anthems. It is a moving and colourful ceremony, with flags flying, music and men and women from Italian Services wearing their distinctive uniforms.

In 2020, due to Covid-19 restrictions, the annual service to be cancelled. Although unable to attend a memorial service and remember those that rest in the Ossario, we can at least applaud and celebrate the listing of this unique place on the Victorian Heritage Register, a fitting acknowledgment of its value to the cultural heritage of our State and of its importance to the Italian community. It also acknowledges the significant history associated with POW Camp 13 Murchison.

Kay Ball,

President, Murchison & District Historical Society

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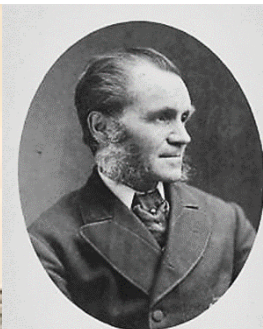


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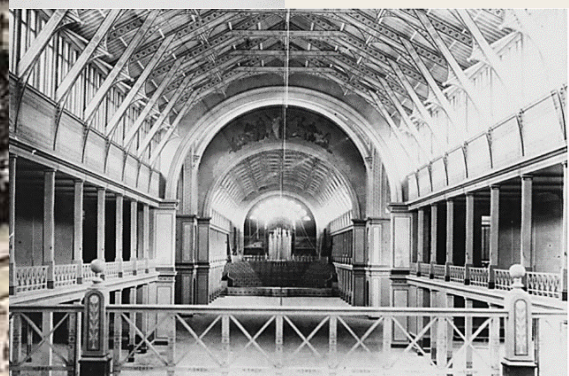
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Left: Portrait of architect Joseph Reed
Source: State Library of Victoria

Bottom: Interior of the building in 1880
Source: Museum Victoria



The Royal Exhibition Building: celebrating 140 years of a Melbourne icon

The Royal Exhibition Building and its surrounding Carlton Gardens were designed for the Melbourne International Exhibition of 1880, by architect Joseph Reed and landscape gardener William Sangster. Joseph Reed was born in Constantine, Cornwall, England, about 1823 and arrived in Melbourne on 4 April 1853. In the following year Reed won the competition to design the Melbourne Public Library, now the State Library of Victoria.

The 1880 exhibition attracted more than 1.3 million visitors over eight months and the subsequent Melbourne Centennial International Exhibition of 1888 was even larger. Electric lighting was installed and visitors were now able to visit the building at night and so the 1888 exhibition was the first in the world to have night-time viewings. During the 1880 and 1888 international exhibitions, the southern portion of the Carlton Gardens became a pleasure garden with many attractions.

In the late 19th century Melbourne was a prosperous city, basking in the wealth from the richest gold rush in the world. When it was built, the Great Hall was the largest building in Australia, and the highest building in Melbourne. Reed's design was influenced by *Rundbogenstil*, a nineteenth-century round-arched architectural style combining elements from Byzantine, Romanesque, Lombardic

and Italian Renaissance buildings. The building is constructed of brick and timber, steel and slate. The dome's design was influenced by Brunelleschi's 15th century cathedral in Florence. The Royal Exhibition Building is the only surviving Great Hall that once housed a 19th century international exhibition and is still used for exhibitions. Today, the Royal Exhibition Building flourishes as one of the world's oldest pavilions.

By 1890 Joseph Reed was in financial difficulties through land speculation and died on 29 April 1890 of 'inanition and exhaustion' and is buried at Boroondara Cemetery, Kew. Reed was one of the most talented, prolific and influential Victorian era architects in Melbourne. The Royal Exhibition Building displays his skill in controlling large volumes in an extensive landscape. William Sangster died on 7 April 1910 and is buried at the St Kilda Cemetery. The Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens were inscribed on the World Heritage list on 1 July 2004, becoming the first building and gardens in Australia to achieve World Heritage listing.

Rose Raymen

Acknowledgements:

Museum Victoria
UNESCO World Heritage Centre
Australian Dictionary of Biography
State Library of Victoria

When heroines gather: how Florrie Hodges met Jane Duff



*Duff-Cooper children lost for 9 days in bush, 1864
Argus 3 August 1940*

Celebrity for its own sake may be relatively new but not of course celebrity itself.

The story of Florrie Hodges, heroic teenager of the 1926 Victorian bushfires, has recently been revisited in two articles in the *RHSV Journal*. In the second, Dr Nikki Henningham examines the toll of celebrity on a modest individual neither seeking nor prepared for it.

Florrie Hodges was a 15-year-old from a mill settlement near Powelltown. On Sunday 14 February 1926, she saved her three younger siblings by shielding them from the flames with her own body, suffering horrific burns to her own legs and back.

Her actions captured the national imagination. Florrie was celebrated. Almost a century later, Henningham's account of the intergenerational trauma flowing from both the fire and the ensuing celebrity is sobering reading.

The need for heroic figures during times of crisis has not diminished over time. If anything, it has been amplified almost to the point of absurdity. Oddly militaristic in construction, 'heroes' are framed as those on 'the front line', whether fighting bushfires or fending off a pandemic. Most upon whom the appellation is bestowed declaim it.

In the gendered terms of the day, Florrie was a "bush heroine". This led to a remarkable episode during her time as a national figure. Florrie's exploits triggered a search for a comparable figure. In Victoria there was only one: the original bush heroine Jane Duff, whose exploits occurred more than 60 years earlier.

The enduring story of Jane Duff and

her siblings would become familiar to generations of Victorians who grew up reading a version of her story: in an 1864 epic poem by William Stitt Jenkins, in religious tracts, in the *School Paper* and later the Education Department's *School Reader* up until the 1960s.

As Kim Torney notes in *Babes in the Bush* (2005), her exploration of this powerful phenomena in the Australian imagination, stories of children lost in the bush captured public attention in early colonial Australia. They still do, as shown in the desperate, and happily successful, search for 14-year-old autistic boy William Callaghan, lost at Mt Disappointment north of Melbourne in June 2020.

The Duff children, Isaac, Jane and Frank — aged nine, seven and three — lived on Spring Hill station near Horsham. John Duff was a shepherd. Isaac and Jane were children of their mother's first marriage. Their surname was actually Cooper. On Friday, 12 August 1864, the three went into the bush to collect brush for their mother to make brooms. They were lost for nine days and eight wintery nights.

Jane's selfless care for her brothers enthralled local scribes. Central to the story was how she had taken off her frock and wrapped her younger brother to keep him warm. The children's story became a morality tale that served both Christian and secular purposes. Quickly mythologised, Jane was venerated.

Just whose idea it was to unite the teenage Florrie and Jane, by then the 70-year-old Mrs Jane Turnbull and mother of 11, is unknown. But in September 1926 they were brought together in Melbourne

for the occasion of the presentation of a £1000 testimonial to Florrie.

By all accounts these two unlikely celebrities hit it off. Mrs Turnbull was described as "a woman of great vitality" when she arrived by train at Spencer Street station from her home in Horsham. Florrie greeted her with a handshake and a kiss.

At the presentation event at Hoyts picture theatre in Bourke St, it was Jane who was prevailed upon to present the purse containing the testimonial funds. Silent film actress Louise Lovely initiated a collection in her honour. Later that week, Florrie presented Jane with a cheque for 100 guineas raised.

While Florrie Hodges has been largely forgotten, Jane Duff, as she is always called, is memorialised in and around the locality where she lived until her death in 1932. Celebrity for her was a positive force, one she reportedly did not shun.

Near where the children were found is a stone obelisk 'in memory of Jane Duff'. Her gravestone in the Horsham Cemetery is 'sacred to the memory of Jane Duff, bush heroine who succored her brothers Isaac and Frank nine days and eight nights in Nurcoung scrub in August 1864'. There is a Duff Street in Horsham. The Jane Duff Highway Park on the road between Natimuk and Goroke, incorporating the 1935 obelisk, dates to the 1980s. Her story is occasionally retold in the popular media more than a century and a half later.

The experience of these two bush heroines whose stories intersected was in the end a world apart.

John Schauble

VALE

Margery Missen:

3.1.1927 – 15.2.2021



Margery Missen, 94, was the go-to person in the Yarram district for local history for more than half a century. A life member of the Yarram and District Historical Society for some 55 years, since it reconvened in 1965, Margery held the role of secretary for 42 years from 1965 to 2006 and treasurer from 1965 to 1975.

Margery was as passionate about the local history to the end as she was when she first joined with an enduring commitment and valuable contribution to the knowledge and recording of the Yarram and surrounds history. She helped many organisations and families solve mysteries of the past through her research. She became involved in the

historic Greenmount Cemetery, was a cemetery trust member and researched those buried there, publishing a history around 2000. She was also involved with the Port Albert Maritime Museum from its inception in 1973,

It was Margery who educated the local community on the singing success of Ada Crossley and one of her books, 'Ada, Tarraville's Queen of Song', led to an invitation to write an article on Ada for the Australia Dictionary of Biography, published in 1981. In 2008, when Margery was asked about an Alberton Shire WW1 medal, she promptly produced one her father had received, and this led to the search for lost soldiers in Pheasant Woods, Fromelles.

In 1996 Margery received an award of merit from the Royal Historical Society for her meritorious service to the Yarram and District Historical Society which was also recognised by the local and Gippsland history communities.

Margery lived in the Yarram area all her life, her younger years spent on the family farm at Wron Wron and then moving to Greenmount after she married. A true volunteer, she will be sorely missed. Our sympathy is extended to her children Judith, Graeme and Neil, her six grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.

Pauline Hitchins with Darren Chester MP

VALE

Joyce Woodroffe:

1932-2021

Members who recollect Ian Woodroffe, a former Executive Officer of the RHSV in its then home at The Mint, will be saddened to learn of the death of his

widow, Joyce Woodroffe. They were married in 1982 during Ian Woodroffe's tenure and many will remember the input and assistance given to the RHSV by the delightful Joyce, mostly after office hours, supporting Ian with clerical duties and administration. Joyce was a former air hostess with what was the Australian National Airways. She eventually focused on accountancy working for Eastwood and Etherington, and then, through acquisitions, to what

we know today as Deloitte. She cared with characteristic compassion for Ian as he later declined with Parkinson's.

Joyce Woodroffe had been closely involved with St John's Anglican Church Toorak all her life. A Service of Thanksgiving for the Life and Love of Joyce was held there on 12 February 2021.

Lucille Andel

A Reminder of what it was like 100 years ago

Mary Sheehan was the author of an article in the February edition of *History News* "Spanish Influenza Pandemic in Melbourne". Unfortunately, an inaccurate email address was included.

Please note, Mary can be contacted at: mmsheehan@student.unimelb.edu.au or alternatively: mary@marshan.net

Right: Australasian. 15 February 1919.



The 'Inhalatorium' in use

The Kodak Company has opened an inhalatorium as a means of protection of its employees against the influenza epidemic. The chamber at present in use will accommodate 20 persons at a time. It consists of a raised structure 16ft. long, 2ft. wide at the bottom, and 2ft. from the apex of the gable to the base, which is left open. In each sloping side of the roof there are 10 oval holes, about 6in. by 4in., and in these holes the faces of the persons receiving treatment are inserted. Steam under 30lb. pressure, carrying sulphate of zinc in solution, is then released into the box from sprays in a pipe running along the base, and the people receiving treatment breathe it in. It disinfects their throats and air passages. This treatment is administered twice a day for about four minutes at a time.



Parliamentary E-Petition

to see more Victorian newspapers searchable online

An excellent opportunity exists for more newspapers from all across Victoria to be digitised to Trove. Trove is a fantastic resource that enables anyone, anytime, anywhere, in moments to find the exact historical newspaper article that they are after. Unfortunately, there is a limited range of newspapers available to be searched, with most being concentrated during World War I. Having collective funding to sponsor mass-digitisation will mean a vast range of newspapers will be readily accessible and conveniently searchable.

During the COVID-19 lockdown community groups, students, genealogists, and researchers were unable to access the vital information contained in non-digitised newspapers. Digitising more newspapers provides broader access to information on community heritage, irrespective of time, geographical or physical constraints.

Whilst some areas' newspapers are on or coming to Trove, there are other municipalities that have multiple out-of-copyright newspapers published for more than a century yet to be digitised. In the past the Federal Government provided collective funding to sponsor digitisation of an even spread of newspapers. Now the responsibility for providing funding rests with members of communities, who can apply for grants, but these are far from what is needed to digitise all the newspapers. This creates a situation where there are thousands of Victorian newspapers yet to be digitised and disadvantages areas with

limited funds. Beyond the major newspapers and the World War One commemorative project only a minimal number of newspapers are fully on Trove.

Calculations have been done with State Library Victoria's microfilmed newspapers. Victoria has more than the equivalent of 10,000 years' worth of out-of-copyright microfilmed newspapers yet to be digitised (and that does not factor in the physical only newspapers). Allowing 12 pages per issue these include approximately 9.9 million pages in more than 870 newspapers, published in 216 towns (and on behalf of countless surrounding communities), all across Victoria. It would take nearly 180 years to digitise at 2018-19's rate of digitisation. Yet with reasonable State-level funding, mass-digitisation can be achieved between 2021-2024. All those newspapers on microfilm could be digitised for as little as 80¢ per Victorian, per year, for three years.

Dedicated collectively funded digitisation programs are already being run by the NSW and WA Governments, something the Victorian Government could also do. Please consider signing the Victorian Parliamentary e-petition and encourage the Government to help see more newspapers searchable online.

See Petition #286 <https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/council/petitions/electronic-petitions/view-e-petitions>

Visit: MoreTroveForVic.org/petition

 @MoreTroveForVic

Books received

John Schauble

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

Please note: these books listed are not necessarily offered to the bookshop by authors, please check the shop catalogue.



When the Past Awakens: a mother's pain. Maria Avraam and Helena Kidd, Xlibris, Melbourne, 2019, pp.vii-238, ISBN 9781796003178.

Arriving in Melbourne as the wife in an arranged marriage some years before in her native Cyprus, Maria Avraam's life story in Australia had a brutal beginning. Soon abandoned by her husband, her life as the single mother of three children in inner suburban Melbourne is far from the migrant dream. Her remarkable decision to document her story, supplemented by that of daughter Helena's story of her upbringing in their crowded Richmond home provides a window to Melbourne in the 1950s to 1980s in particular that would otherwise be shuttered to most. Aged in her nineties and a beloved yia-yia, Maria's life has been one of pain, hard work and eventually some peace and joy.



SAGA to Steam: The story of NG/G16-129. Puffing Billy Preservation Society, Belgrave, 2019, pp.1-14.

The Puffing Billy Preservation Society has enjoyed many successes over the years and its trains and infrastructure would have to be among the most popular and most photographed in the world. SAGA is an acronym for South African Garrett and NG/G16-129 is a locomotive that came to be reborn in Victoria after a life of service in Natal Province. Garrett locomotives were used fairly widely across Australia. The rebirth of this particular one began with its arrival from South Africa in 1996 and took almost a quarter of a century and more than \$2 million. This is a brief, well-illustrated tribute to the project and documents the achievements of those involved.



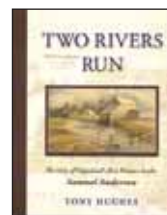
At home on the hill: the story of those buried in the Phillip Island Cemetery between 1901 and 1920 : everyone has a story, Vol. 2. Pamela Rothfield, the author, Rhyll, 2020, pp.1-253, ISBN 9780648735106.

It is 150 years since the first burial at the Phillip Island cemetery and 150 people were interred there in its first 50 years. Prefaced with a brief history of the island, this handsomely illustrated, well researched book tells the individual stories of the 77 buried there between federation and 1920. It also recalls more than a dozen others who were lost at sea around the island and whose bodies were never found. This is a companion volume to the stories of 73 island pioneers captured in Volume 1, published in 2018. Both are essential reading for those interested in the social history of Phillip Island. Published by the author.



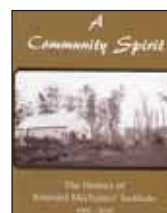
Busch's Weir. Heathmont History Group, Penfolk Publishing, Blackburn, 2019, pp.iv-90, ISBN 9781925467048.

Hermann Busch was one among the German diaspora to Australia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Melbourne's eastern suburbs attracted many who established and worked orchards which thrived until the 1970s when they were swallowed by housing development. 'Poppa' Busch married into an orchardist's family. A painter and handyman who arrived from Germany in 1912, he built a popular farm guest house, Waldheim, at then semi-rural Bayswater. Eccentric and gifted, in the 1930s he also built a weir in the Dandenong Creek for the benefit of his family and patrons. The water authorities eventually took a dim view of this and blew it up in 1967 before realigning the creek.



Two rivers run : the story of Gippsland's first pioneer settler Samuel Anderson. Tony Hughes, the author, 2020, pp.vi-185, ISBN 9780646802671.

Samuel Anderson settled along the Bass River near its entry into Western Port in 1835, just months after the arrival of the Batman party in the Yarra River. Growing grain crops, fruit and vegetables, producing salt and eventually milling flour, Anderson and his partner Robert Massie, and later his brothers Hugh and Thomas, were significant but often overlooked figures in the early settlement of Victoria. Trading with both Port Phillip and Van Diemen's Land, their focus on cropping is interesting in the context of the fixation of other farmers on sheep and cattle. This is not the first account of Anderson's exploits but serves to refocus attention on this earliest of Gippsland settlers.



A Community Spirit: The History of the Emerald Mechanics' Institute 1905-2018. Chris Avarad-Britton, Emerald Lions Club, Emerald, 2019, pp.1-179, ISBN 9780958021531.

In many Victorian communities, the Mechanics' Institute and Free Library provided community access to education and socializing; the role they fulfilled as a non-sectarian social hub was critical in many small communities. As they drifted from their original purposes to one of an all-purpose community centre, institutes remained just as valuable. No fewer than 20 diverse community groups used the Emerald Mechanics over its long life. Burnt down in 1955 and rebuilt as Emerald Hall, it is being rebuilt as new life Community Hub by the local shire. This book is a great record of the growth and transition of a community viewed through the doors of its most important meeting place.