

# HISTORY NEWS

ISSUE 357 | DECEMBER 2021



## ABLAZE

A feature documentary by Tiriki Onus and Alec Morgan



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# What's on at RHSV

The RHSV will close for 2 weeks over the Christmas to New Year period. We close at noon on Christmas Eve, Friday 24 December 2021 and reopen on Monday 10 January 2022.

## DECEMBER 2021 History News: WHAT'S ON

We will be attempting to offer all our events as hybrid: both in our premises 239 A'Beckett St, Melbourne and via Zoom, unless otherwise indicated. Information on booking tickets to all our events can be found on our website

### NAA GIPPSLAND VIRTUAL OPEN DAY

Monday 6 December

10am – 4:30pm Only via ZOOM

FREE



**Speakers:** Patrick Ferry and his team

The team of researchers, archivists and librarians from the National Archive of Australia, in partnership with the Gippsland Association of Affiliated Historical Societies and the RHSV, will be presenting a full day of free events. You will be able to register for individual events or the full package. You will be able to ask questions and engage 'live' with the reference officers.

**10am – 12noon** Finding Families @ the National Archives of Australia

**12noon – 1pm** Ask a Reference Officer: Immigration Records

**2pm – 3:30pm** Local History Resources @ the National Archives of Australia

**3:30pm – 4:30pm** Ask a Reference Officer: Defence Service Records

### THE MELBOURNE SOCIALITE & THE TURKISH DIPLOMAT

Thursday 9 December

10:30am – 11:30am

FREE. Only via Zoom

**Speaker:** Patrick Ferry, National Archives of Australia

London, 1913: A wealthy young woman from a stately country home falls in love with and secretly marries a handsome young diplomat from the Turkish Embassy. It sounds like a plot line from the hit British period drama Downton Abbey ... but it is the real-life story of Melbourne socialite Florence Winter-Irving. Florence's story is told through records held by the National Archives of Australia, contemporary newspapers and treasured family memorabilia and traditions. Her story is set against the backdrop of patriarchal nationality laws which stripped women of their own nationality when they married 'aliens': foreign men who were not British subjects.

Florence's marriage created a sensation in the Australian press, which even speculated that Florence was about to enter a 'harem'.

### PLAN FOR WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH NOW

WOMEN'S  
HISTORY  
MONTH

March each year is Women's History Month (WHM). This is an RHSV initiative and we encourage all historical societies, libraries and schools to hold an event during WHM 2022. We commissioned a great logo for WHM and it is available

for anyone holding an event to download from our website as effective branding logos available for download here:

<https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/programs/march-is-womens-history-month/>

We encourage you to think about collaborations with local community organisations: spread the joy! Women's History Month can encompass events about women's history or events delivered by women historians. There is a WHM calendar hosted by History Council Victoria so, when you are ready, upload your event to share. The RHSV will once again be promoting these events widely. [https://www.historycouncilvic.org.au/womens\\_history\\_month](https://www.historycouncilvic.org.au/womens_history_month)

There are some great ideas on our website; originally developed for History Month but they can be adapted easily for WHM

[historyvictoria.org.au/brainstorm-history-month-event-ideas/](https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/brainstorm-history-month-event-ideas/)

## CATALOGUING CLINICS

by ZOOM / FREE

Jillian Hiscock, the RHSV Collections Manager, hosts monthly hour-long clinics. These will continue in 2022. They are 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. Jillian always prepares some material on some specific queries but questions are encouraged. 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.

Look on our website for 2022 dates and Zoom log-in.

## History News

History News is the bi-monthly newsletter of the RHSV  
ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA INC.

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**COVER IMAGE:** Alec Morgan, Tiriki Onus and Tom Zubrycki's film, Ablaze, winner of the Victorian Premier's History Award 2021. See page 7

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What's on is continued on page 6

# President's Report

As I plunged my hands into the soil on the surf coast a few days ago, after the end of Melbourne's last lockdown, it felt deeply connected. I had wielded the mattock, but now was face down, close to the earth. I could smell it, rich in parts, sandy in others, as my gloved hands searched under the gum leaves tracking down yet another rhizome from an agapanthus mother wending its path to spawn another satellite of itself. I knew I had to gently tease out the roots of this invader lest it break off, and soon regrow. As I stood to mattock some more ground, I saw the large task ahead, as young agapanthus peeped from the leaves all about me. And metres away was another agapanthus city with its suburbs stretching beyond.

Scattered about were pittosporum invaders as well, not from Africa like the agapanthus which had escaped surf coast gardens, but natives which had travelled somehow from Queensland and Northern NSW to infest this area. While the agapanthus covered the ground, the pittosporums threatened to range up to four metres or more, blanketing the land and stifling biodiversity. However, they were easier to defeat while small. They could be plucked from the soil when less than a foot high, although a wrestle ensued once they got bigger. I spotted dozens of seedlings which had sprouted from the recent rains from seeds dropped by currawongs feasting on pittosporum berries. I determined to root them out while they were small, the soil wet, and snakes still avoided the cooler days.

As I worked away, I thought about connection to the land and how identity was formed as one chopped, cut and plunged hands into the earth. First Nations peoples know this based on millennia of managing Country: extracting roots from the soil, harvesting fruits, and applying fire to create templates of alternate grass and cover to suit kangaroo. If only this tiny strip of land beside a driveway had been managed by fire these invading weeds may not have taken hold. All I had instead, was the Surf Coast Shire's brochure on the top twenty weeds in the region and another suggesting what might be replanted in place of these invaders. But no matter the outcome of my battle with weeds, I

experienced the connection, the shaping of identity as I dug and pulled.

Stories also shape identity and have bound Indigenous Australians to Country for millennia. Stories of ancestral heroes who shaped the land still underpin Indigenous ideas of custodianship. Other Australians are bound to place by stories. At the local level these are nurtured, shaped and protected by historical societies all over the country. Almost every suburb and town across the state has a historical society helping to build a local identity and sense of place.

Many of these groups, and individuals, over the last two decades have entered their hymns to memory into the Victorian Community History Awards, 151 of them in 2021 alone. In total the number is well over two thousand since the awards began. Identities are being shaped year after year by this process. This issue of *History News* and our website lists the winners for 2021, led by the Premier's Prize for 'Ablaze' a film about the Aboriginal activist and creator, Bill Onus. May more enter next year, and my battle with weeds by then be in sight of victory.

**Richard Broome AM**

## Editor's message: where did they settle and what impact have they had?

Our June edition of *History News* this year included a focus on Australia's Aboriginal people: their impact on Victoria, both pre and post 1788. Our February 2022 edition will focus on waves of migrants in Victoria post 1830. These waves of immigrants have tended to settle in clusters of like immigrants. Where did they settle? What impact have they had on location names, sport, educational institutions, religions, agriculture, cuisine, architecture...?

All articles of 200-800 words, with an image or two are very welcome for consideration in this special issue: deadline 2 January 2022.

Any questions or thoughts, please contact me.

**Sharon Bettridge** | sbettridge@outlook.com

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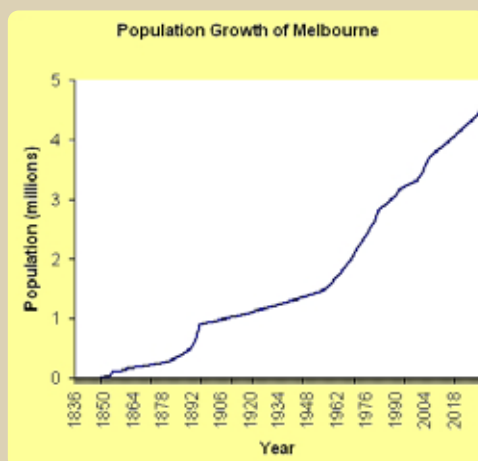
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*Immigration - Hostels, holding centres and state reception centres - Bonegilla migrant centre meals area, courtesy NLA A12111 7427627*





# Heritage

## Report



**This Heritage Report is about local historical societies acting to protect their heritage. They are making a difference and supporting them is our number one goal. These four examples are all positive and indeed inspiring.**

*Sunshine Technical School (Girls' Section), HO57, 111 Derby Rd, 1939, architect Percy Everett; photo courtesy Sunshine & District Historical Society)*

**1. Buninyong and District Historical Society** objected to a particularly egregious proposal for a tourist village of apartments in the shape of giant wine barrels on Mt Buninyong. We supported them with an objection in May. Dr Anne Beggs-Sunter represented Buninyong HS and I represented the RHSV. Ballarat Council refused the permit. The developer went to VCAT, where it became clear that the proposal was even more egregious than we thought. It would, for example, depend on trucked-in water, and Shelly Fanning, a planning consultant for the objectors, proved that the developer had not made adequate provision for sewage! We were pleased that VCAT upheld Council's refusal. They were concerned not only about the shoddiness of the application, but also about 'the impact of the proposal on environmental and landscape values':

*We do not accept that this design response will add to or enhance the natural and rural landscape of the area. We find that the siting of the structures on the site gives rise to their visual prominence and the repetition of a shape that is foreign to the locality is not consistent with the principles of site responsive design.*

**2. Sunshine & District Historical Society** have thrown a roadblock in front of plans to demolish two important heritage buildings comprising the former Sunshine Technical School. Together with Brimbank City Council, its Heritage Advisor Natica Schmeder and Heritage Advisory Council, including Neil Head, President Albion & Ardeer Community Club Inc., they swung into action.

In ten days, Dr John Pardy, President of Sunshine HS, produced a study of the school's history to support a nomination to the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR), prepared by Brimbank Heritage Advisor Natica Schmeder, which the Council submitted on 6 September.

These lovely Moderne, or Streamline Moderne, buildings are fine examples of the work of Percy Everett (1888-1967), legendary chief architect of the Victorian Public Works Department from 1934 to 1953. Everett played a major role in introducing Moderne style to Victoria, with many important public buildings, including the Russell Street Police Headquarters (1940-43).

The Sunshine Technical School buildings are covered by a local Heritage Overlay, but the Education Department isn't bound by that! So the RHSV and the other parties wrote to the Honorable James Merlino, MP, Minister of Education. On 30 September, the *Age* ran a story

with photos of the Sunshine HS officers and me. Three weeks later, the Minister replied: 'will await the decision of Heritage Victoria. There is no proposal to demolish the nominated buildings', he added. This is very hopeful news.

Meanwhile, Dr Pardy made a further discovery. Harold Blair (1924-1976), a classically trained tenor and Aboriginal activist, was employed as music teacher at the school from c1966 to 1969, almost surely the first Indigenous person employed as a teacher in a Department of Education school in Victoria.

**3. Apollo Bay and District Historical Society** is also preparing to nominate the Old Cable Station for the VHR. Committee Member Dr Judith Smart is working with the Society.

The Cable Station is now a museum and home to Apollo Bay HS. You see it on the right as you drive into Apollo Bay. From here, the telephone cable between the mainland and Tasmania, via King Island

## Enhance your next book with an Index by Terri Mackenzie

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Detail of façade, former Blood Bros Store, Ringwood (photo courtesy Ringwood and District Historical Society)

“

Ringwood & District Historical Society is leading a fight to preserve what they describe as Ringwood’s last remaining piece of Edwardian heritage.

”

and Stanley, was laid out in 1935. It was the last link in the national telephone network. The coaxial cable was only the second submarine coaxial cable in the world and for a while the longest.

The museum retains some of the machinery and is well worth a visit now that we can travel! Jan Lewis, Secretary of the Historical Society, is optimistic. Dr Smart says there is a strong *prima facie* case.

**4. Ringwood & District Historical Society** is leading a fight to preserve what they describe as Ringwood’s last remaining piece of Edwardian heritage, the former Blood Bros Store (c.1915), now Bryan’s Ringwood Cellars.

The shop is covered by the Heritage Overlay ‘as a rare and relatively intact rural Edwardian corner shop’. It is the last remaining pre-WWI shop in Ringwood’s commercial hub and has close connection to two pioneer families. It has a highly

unusual feature: a façade of rare majolica tiles with the shop name incorporated into the tiles, very likely manufactured by the Australian Tesselated Tile Company at Mitcham.

Maroondah City Council bought the block with car park funds promised by the Federal government at the last election and demolition looked likely until Ringwood HS mobilised opposition.

Earlier this year, Ringwood HS President Russ Haines presented a heritage report on the building. The RHSV wrote a strong letter asking Maroondah Council, ‘strenuously, to consider all possible alternatives, even at this late stage. This could include finding alternative sites for the car park or retaining the store as part of the overall development. If it is not possible to find another site, Council’s priority should be to develop an innovative design which retains the store and makes it into a focal point for

the community’. Matters appear to be at a stalemate, but at least the building has not been demolished.

The RHSV, through its Heritage Committee, works to support local historical societies across Victoria as they fight to protect their heritage. Heritage is becoming even more important as our society undergoes waves of disruptive change. The more change we undergo, the more we need the anchors that heritage provides. The heritage that matters is always local in the sense that it plays a role in people’s customary lives, which are necessarily local: your life is where you live it.

We count on our members to keep watch on their heritage and to alert us to any threats. As these cases show, we can make a difference.

**Charles Sowerwine**, Chair  
Heritage Committee RHSV  
2 November 2021.



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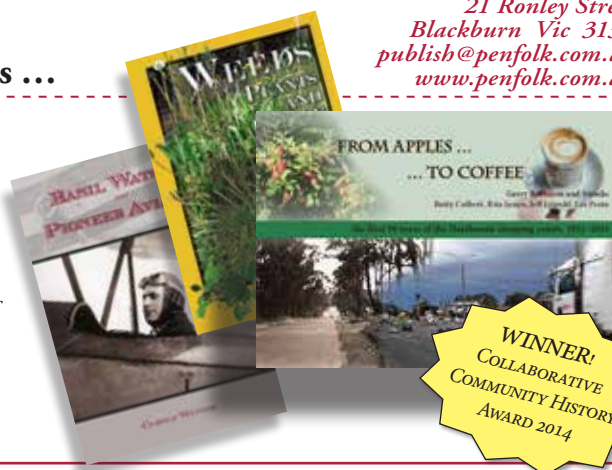
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# What's on at RHSV

► continued

## THE MACROBERTSON INTERNATIONAL AIR RACES EXHIBITION

**Monday-Friday**

**9am – 5pm | FREE**

**Extended until early March.**

Once again lockdown has played havoc with our exhibitions so we have decided to extend our current exhibition until early March. There will be some Curator's talks from the team behind the exhibition in the New Year; please go to our website to find those talks. If you have a group that would like to tour the exhibition with a curator please contact Emily 03 9326 9288 [office@historyvictoria.org.au](mailto:office@historyvictoria.org.au) Curator talks can be combined with morning or afternoon tea.

## FLAGSTAFF GARDEN GUIDED WALKING TOURS

Chris Manchee is taking his very entertaining guided walking tours of Flagstaff Gardens again. The tours are at 11am or 2pm every Monday and cost \$10. Bookings on 03 9326 9288. Chris can often also accommodate larger groups on other days.

These are great tours for groups like Probus, U3A and others: to find out more please contact Emily 03 9326 9288 | [office@historyvictoria.org.au](mailto:office@historyvictoria.org.au) Curator talks can be combined with morning or afternoon tea.

## MILESTONES IN ABORIGINAL WOMEN'S ACTIVISM, MELBOURNE 1930-1970

**Wednesday 23  
February 2022**

**5:30pm refreshments;  
6-7pm lecture**

**Speaker: Dr Julie Andrews  
FREE. Hybrid Lecture**

This, our inaugural Indigenous History lecture, will be added to our stellar annual program of Distinguished Lecturers. The lecture has been sponsored so we can make it free-of-charge and as accessible as possible. Our President, Richard Broome, will

chair this event.

We are thrilled that Julie Andrews has agreed to deliver the inaugural lecture. Julie is descended from the Woiwurrung people of Melbourne and the Yorta Yorta tribe near the borders of Victoria and NSW along the Murray River. She is a member of the Dhulanyagan family clan of the Ulupna people. Julie is a senior lecturer in Aboriginal Studies at La Trobe University where she has developed extensive experience in policy and Indigenous higher education.

## PLAN AHEAD FOR 2022

As well as planning events for Women's History Month in March and History Month in October 2022 you could be thinking about applications for the 2022 Victorian Community History Awards which cover projects which come to fruition between 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2022. Applications open on our website in March and close in early July.

Also, if you are working towards publishing a history in rural or regional Victoria, then think about applying for a Holsworth Local Heritage Grant, via the RHSV, for a small grant to help with publishing costs. Information can be found on our website and applications close on 31st July each year.

<https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/programs/holsworth-local-heritage-grants/>

At our AGM each year in May we announce new RHSV Fellows (applications close mid-March) and recipients of RHSV Awards of Merit (applications close early April). The nomination process is straightforward and we encourage historical societies to nominate one of their very deserving volunteers. Awards of Merit are limited to one per society per annum with no more than 10 Awards each year. More information: [historyvictoria.org.au/recognition/awards-of-merit/](https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/recognition/awards-of-merit/)



# Farewell Valerie Rohde



Our beloved volunteer, Valerie Rohde, died unexpectedly and far too early on 21 of October, 2021. Valerie joined the RHSV in 2005 and has been one of our most generous volunteers since 2006. She was awarded an RHSV Award of Merit in 2020 and we were all touched by her heartfelt acceptance speech.

Valerie's love of history started when she was at school in the Wimmera and has continued all her life. Valerie came from a pioneering farming family whose history she researched for over 20 years. She was also keenly interested in both local history and geography.

Valerie regretted not having the opportunity to go on to higher education when young; she spent a working life in uninspiring jobs but always loved history and read extensively. Late in life she trained as a library technician but didn't have the opportunity to put that to use until, after retirement, she volunteered at the RHSV. Helen Stitt says, "Valerie told me when she got the opportunity to volunteer at the RHSV she felt that at last she was doing what she really wanted. She said she loved working here and her eyes were really shining as she said it. It wasn't just a statement, it was a forceful declaration."

At the RHSV Valerie's skills were immediately put to good use in administration, cataloguing, shelf-checking and organising the Ephemera Collection. However, she really came into her own in the last six years when she took on a remarkable project to take our Pioneers' Register to the world through Trove. She did more than simply digitise and catalogue the material; she was enriching each record with links to other material in the RHSV collection, building up a comprehensive database of the pioneers and their families in Victoria from 1835 to 1900. Valerie had a great knowledge of the 19th century pioneers of Victoria. She will be thanked by future generations of historians for this massive undertaking. It has been a huge labour of love and the project benefited from Valerie's very good attention to detail and excellent research skills.

Although, at times, Valerie had health problems that slowed her down physically, she held her own with history, politics, and world affairs; and had opinions on all. She read widely and her knowledge of television programs was extensive. Valerie had great kindness, humility and a very generous spirit. She was also very funny, with a cheeky sense of humour that she exercised more as you got to know her.

Valerie volunteered every Tuesday and Wednesday and formed part of tight-knit groups of volunteers on those days. She gave much to the RHSV and received a lot in return. It is comforting to know we recognised her contribution during Valerie's lifetime and she knew how much she was valued by RHSV staff, councillors and, of course, the other volunteers who really loved her. As Margaret Fleming says, "her empty chair will remind us of how we will miss her quiet presence".

**By Rosemary Cameron with much assistance from Valerie's good friends, Margaret Fleming, John Rose and Helen Stitt.**

# Congratulations VCHA winners

We were thrilled when the announcement of the winners of the Victorian Community History Awards was made on the 27 of October, during History Month. It was a breathtakingly good line-up from a very strong field of entrants.

## Premier's History Award

Our congratulations go to all entrants, winners and commended entrants but especially to Alec Morgan and Tiriki Onus, writer/directors and Tom Zubrycki, producer, of *Ablaze*, the film that won the Victorian Premier's History Award 2021.

In part, the judges' citation for the winner reads, *'This superbly researched and charmingly narrated film ... makes an important contribution to Victorian history not only because it retrieves the voice and the resilience of Bill Onus, but also because it shows how he was sometimes misunderstood and often thwarted. This film deserves a wide audience, whether at home, in the cinema, or at school. This film prompts reflection. This is history at its best: as fuel for informed conversation.'*

Read the full citations for winners and commended entries here: [historyvictoria.org.au/2021-vcha-winners/](http://historyvictoria.org.au/2021-vcha-winners/)

## The winners in the other award categories are:

### JUDGES' SPECIAL PRIZE Joint Winners

*Under the Rainbow: The life and times of E.W. Cole*

Richard Broinowski

*'This engaging biography considers many of the social movements and developments of his period. Richard Broinowski has produced the pot of gold at the end of Cole's trademark rainbow.'*

*and*  
*For the Fallen: The 1921-22 Melbourne Public Library Mural Competition within the setting of decorative painting in Australian art*

Paul Paffen

*'By tracing the ideas and hopes of Victorians on how best to commemorate the trauma of the recent 'war to end all wars', Paul Paffen tells us a great deal about our former selves.'*

## Collaborative Community History Award

*A History of LGBTQI+ Victoria in 100 Places and Objects*

Graham Willett, Angela Bailey, Timothy W. Jones and Sarah Rood

*'This beautiful and insightful community collaboration explores cultural heritage by enabling sensitive storytelling. Objects and places of social significance are documented to narrate personal histories and to share collective experiences. Community memories and knowledge make a sometimes-hidden history visible,*

*tangible, compelling and politically forceful.'*

## Local History Project

Victorian CEDT Index

Chinese Australian Family Historians of Victoria

*'This outstanding project digitises and transcribes records, complemented by adept search functions. The project adds value by linking the data to stories from historians, artists and community members. People of Chinese Australian backgrounds can be placed in their local histories now that the records are accessible.'*

## History Publication Award

*In the Shadow of the Prom: Early South Gippsland times, tales and tramlines*

Mike McCarthy

*'In the Shadow of the Prom is a beautiful testament to the value of painstaking, prolonged and passionate historical research into community history. Mike McCarthy's labour of love combines history with studies of photography, geography and the history of technology to reveal the heart and soul of his beloved South Gippsland.'*

## History - Small Publication Award

*Places of Reconciliation: Commemorating Indigenous history in the heart of Melbourne*

Sarah Pinto

*'This thoughtful book doesn't shy away from the complexities of the politics of naming and marking place, not only in the face of settler discontent, but also in the context of different and sometimes conflicted Aboriginal groups and voices. Sara Pinto knows she is part of an active and ongoing conversation.'*

## Community Diversity Award

*On Taungurung Land: Sharing history and culture*

Uncle Roy Patterson and Jennifer Jones

*'This exemplary study of community and cultural diversity is the result of an unusual collaboration between an Indigenous male elder of the Taungurung language group and a non-Indigenous female academic historian. Born of Uncle Roy Patterson's desire to make his knowledge of traditional culture more widely known, the book relates both the history and traditional culture of his people. The defining feature in this telling of Taungurung history is that it is from the perspective of Indigenous participants, rather than—as so often—solely through European eyes.'*

## Digital Storytelling Award

*A Miscarriage of Justice*

Atalanti Dionysus / Atalanti Film

*'Etched in Victoria's collective cultural landscape, Pentridge Prison in Coburg has been notorious since its construction in 1851. A Miscarriage of Justice is an intimate, immersive and site-specific project which blends technologies (augmented and virtual reality) with historical interpretation and dramatisation. Powerful, personal and emotional, A Miscarriage of Justice transports audiences back in time.'*

## Oral History Award

*End of an Era: The Last Gippsland Lakes Fishermen*

Lynda Mitchelson-Twigg, representing the Gippsland Lakes commercial fishing community, assisted by Nikki and Leigh Henningham, Tanya King, Donna Squire and Geoff Stanton

*'In April 2020 the long history of commercial fishing in the Gippsland Lakes ended by government decree. The interviews and images capture the life histories of the men and women of the Gippsland Lakes fishing industry, and its profound significance for each narrator and for their community.'*

## Historical Interpretation Award

*Finding Fanny Finch*

Commonplace Productions (Garner & Gore) with Sinclair, Garner, Furze and Friends of Wendy Cotton

*'A sense of us-&-them there-&-then is important, when presenting history. The judges were impressed by the play's way of imagining and building an immersive world for audiences by embedding the research, and by placing the historians on stage, instead of behind the scenes. There is sufficient context for a general audience, but also enough nuance and depth to fuel a history buff's desire for thoughtful detail. The authors contrast contemporary and historical values. The play deserves to be widely performed.'*

## History Article Award

*'The Rise and Fall of Lady Gillot in Melbourne's Turn-of-the-Century Society'*, Victorian Historical Journal, vol. 91, no. 2, 2020, pp. 291-318.

Barbara Minchinton

*'This article demonstrates detailed archival research and depth of knowledge of not only of the subject, Lady Gillot, but also of her era of evangelical moralism. By focusing on gender and class, Barbara Minchinton challenges assumptions about the role and agency of wives of prominent men, in this case showing Lady Gillot's public and private lives, and choices she made in the wake of a scandal enveloping her husband.'*

# Gwenda Dagmar Marie Jones

(1923–2021)



**With the recent death of Gwen Jones, history in Victoria has lost a staunch and knowledgeable advocate, and the Royal Historical Society of Victoria a long-time member and generous supporter. Musician, teacher, educationalist, historian, writer and prolific correspondent; Gwen will be remembered by many for her tireless voluntary work for The History Institute, Victoria, from 1986 to 2002.**

Gwen was born in Coburg, where she lived almost all her life. From the outside, there was little to distinguish the Jones residence from thousands of similar houses across Melbourne. But inside it hummed with quiet industry of an intensely personal kind. Gwen's childhood was culturally rich, a product of her parent's love of music, literature, language and family lore. Her mother Meda (nee Maag) had Danish ancestry and her father Ebenezer, Welsh. Gwen maintained a lifelong interest in family ancestry. Much of her travel, both as a child and in later life, revolved around history and heritage.

Gwen's childhood, schooling and musical tuition was strictly governed, but she found escape in reading, writing, fancy dress, and dance. Sydney Road was her lifeblood. Piano and dancing lessons were nearby and her early teenage years coincided with the 'Talkies', enjoyed at Coburg's Grand Theatre or Brunswick's Alhambra.

Primary and secondary schooling were at local schools where Gwen was a conscientious student who enjoyed English, Geography, History, and later French and Geology. Under successive teachers she advanced rapidly with piano, at the age of just twelve gaining the prestigious Associateship of the London College of Music. For her final two years of secondary education, Gwen was sent to University High School, a prestigious choice. She had contemplated pursuing music as a career but with good academic results and advice from principal Matthew Stanton Sharman, she was convinced to pursue teaching.

Gwen commenced training as a student teacher in 1941 with teaching rounds in Melbourne, all the while working towards her Bachelor of Arts degree. She commenced training at Melbourne Teachers' College in 1943 gaining primary and secondary teaching qualifications on the way to her BA, graduating in 1947.

Gwen left home aged 23 for her first teaching appointment, Castlemaine High School, followed three years later by a stint at East Camberwell Girls' Secondary School. She graduated with her Bachelor of Education in 1953 including a thesis on the early career of Frank Tate, a pioneering and progressive Victorian educationalist and something of a personal hero for Gwen.

Original research for the thesis brought Gwen into contact with a generation who had known Tate; at the University of Melbourne her examiner was the redoubtable Alice Hoy.

In 1953, whilst at Geelong High School, Gwen was awarded the John and Eric Smyth Travelling Scholarship in Education. Her plan was to link drama education in Victoria with its teaching in Britain, studied from a base in London. Gwen sailed on the Orient Line ship *Orontes* in September 1953 and her year in Britain was filled with invaluable educational visits and cultural experiences. Her report gained Gwen Associateship of the University of London Institute of Education.

Gwen's career took another turn with appointment in 1955 to Geelong Teachers' College, where she embraced experimental approaches to drama. Alongside her other lecturing roles Gwen introduced an elective in Australian history with a focus on local and regional history, with Les Blake a colleague and mentor. She was local co-ordinator of the New Education Fellowship, an accomplished accompanist, madrigalist, and cello player, and produced *Salad Days* with her students to universal acclaim.

Gwen returned to Melbourne in 1964 with her appointment to Coburg Teachers' College. She undertook long-term research into the history of Coburg's Holy Trinity Anglican Church, was a book reviewer and occasional author of articles in professional journals, and wrote many plays for children's theatre in connection with her lecturing. Gwen enjoyed two periods of long service leave: touring Australia and New Zealand in 1967 and Europe in 1972. She took a keen interest in local history, joining the RHSV in the mid-1960s, visiting museums at every opportunity, and in 1973 commencing postgraduate research under the supervision of Pat Grimshaw. She gained a Master of Arts degree at the University of Melbourne in 1983 for her study of the governess in Australian colonial society.

Following retirement in 1986, Gwen spent an engrossing sixteen years with The History Institute, a member of its Executive Council while also acting as membership secretary and in other roles. After the wearing years of lecturing, Gwen enjoyed the camaraderie of her peers and interaction with younger colleagues.

Whether it was playing for Arthur Rubenstein on his 1937 Australian tour, watching Wilson Hall burn in 1952, meeting Yehudi Menuhin at the stage door, or observing artist Arthur Boyd and his family on board the 1972 cruise to England, Gwen seemed to have a ringside seat for history, a rich source for further research.

**Richard Aitken**



# History Victoria Support Group

## Stories and objects



It's *History News* deadline but a message pops up about an object with a family link to the enquirer. The names don't quite correlate, so we exchange several messages before agreeing on the correct background. We've all experienced the rabbit hole we disappear down when we start researching a person, place or object. It's part of the excitement and frustration of being custodians of our history and helping descendants or local residents understand more about the past. It's such fun to chance upon an object and discover the story it has to tell: and then to share that with your visitors as part of an exhibition.

Since we don't have dinosaurs in the museum at Sale, an expectation of many youngsters these days, one of the most fascinating exhibits for them is a display of taxidermy birds, bats and possums: an art form perhaps more common in Victorian households. It tells the story of the times, pre-Google, with a fascination for natural history and particularly of new and exotic creatures.

The birds and creatures are all from our local area but, unfortunately, we don't have the story behind its creation although it was obviously by a local enthusiast.

Similarly, our recently restored horse-drawn Butcher's Cart, tells the story of personalised services and special deliveries and how we 'shopped' before every family had a car and drove to modern 'supermarkets'. Have we really progressed?

Once upon a time, most staples were provided through a regular delivery by the shopkeeper or supplier. Groceries, bread, meat, milk and, of course, ice, were delivered on regular rounds. There was no need to go to the 'Farmer's Market': the market gardeners visited the neighbourhood on a regular basis.

Seeing the cart brings to life the reality of the times, as do the butter churns, ice chests and early sewing, ironing and washing equipment. Some of the objects demonstrate the realities of the hardships our forebears faced. Not

just the unfamiliar climate, the isolation, poor communications and the crude equipment but the risks and uncertainty of life and work in a developing settlement.

Some were bold, some were irresponsible in their endeavours and many overreached; huge numbers ventured into unfamiliar fields lured by the promise of wealth.

Sale's first mayor Nehemiah Guthridge had been a successful businessman in Melbourne but lost his money in a risky private railroad venture. He moved to Sale where he re-established his business but also took a leading role in the developing world of municipal government because he brought experience in that field. He was a councillor for about 15 years and Mayor four times. Even so, he had his battles. Today Lake Guthridge is a key attraction of the city and many locals use the path around it for daily exercise. But it started life as a less pleasant drainage pond. Cr Guthridge espoused its potential but his colleagues sarcastically dubbed it Lake Guthridge as a derogatory label.

Portraits of Nehemiah and his wife, Martha (nee Erskine), by early photographer Alfred Bock are among a group of Sennotype portraits (coloured photographs that look like original paintings) in the collection. Bock came to Sale in the 1870s from Hobart where he had worked with his father Thomas, a talented artist and photographer. Alfred was a more than competent photographer but appears to have been less talented as a businessman and lost several studios.

There's a parallel tale about the sugar beet industry which is the focus of the Maffra Museum. It's housed in the original office and weighbridge of the Maffra Beet Sugar factory, the only one of its kind in the southern hemisphere which produced sugar through to 1940. But it wasn't the only attempt, despite a bounty for the first sugar produced in the colony of Victoria. A factory on the Maribyrnong River in Footscray, Nathaniel Levi's Agricultural Distillery and Beet Root Sugar Company, only produced

alcohol. And a factory constructed 1875-78 in Rosstown, now Carnegie, by William Murray Ross, to a very similar style to that in Maffra, never produced any sugar. Ross too became distracted by the potential of railways, among his many ventures, and never convinced the local market gardeners to switch to growing beet.

We also have a fascinating metal hearth fender at the Sale Museum, which was designed by a tutor at the local technical school and produced by Sale foundry, Lacey's. It features Australian fauna and won a design competition, with a copy ordered for Government House. We're not sure where the Government House copy is but the other 'rabbit hole' is the link of the designer, Emily à Beckett, with the famous Boyd family.

Emily's uncle was William A. C. à Beckett, father of painter Emma Minnie who married Arthur Merric Boyd. Her mother was Affra Anne Robinson, stepsister of W. A. C.'s wife, Emma Mills, who brought her father's brewery fortune to the marriage and helped maintain the wider family for several generations. Was the artistic streak in the à Becketts as well as the Boyds?

Emily and her family lived at Dutson at the time, where her father is listed as a solicitor, but Emily eventually moved to South Gippsland with her mother and a brother and appears not to have pursued her design or teaching. Two of her brothers are listed on the World War One memorial for Dutson. Even identifying Emily has been tricky: she is listed as Miss à Beckett in most correspondence and the details of which sister was the teacher are only revealed in electoral rolls.

I just love the opportunity to tell a story and, while a picture may be worth a thousand words, so is an object in helping us pass on our history to younger generations in a meaningful way.

**Pauline Hitchins**

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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 FEBRUARY 2022 ISSUE** please send details to [office@historyvictoria.org.au](mailto:office@historyvictoria.org.au) by Monday 27 December 2021.

**APOLLO BAY:** In spite of the current restrictions, the Society has been looking to the future and how we can keep alive the vision of our founders. For over 30 years volunteers from the Society have been operating the Apollo Bay Museum, welcoming the local community and visitors from across Australia and overseas by opening weekends, public and school holidays. Between lockdowns a number of meetings were held with the committee and some of our members to produce a Strategic Plan for the next five years. The plan sets out to build on our existing Museum and open its potential to further engage our community and visitors in a wider scope of education, research, entertainment and preservation. See more at: <https://apollobaymuseum.com.au/>



**BUNGAREE:** Meets 3rd Monday of the month at Bluestone School, Bungaree during daylight saving. Our November get-together was usually our This Is Your Life evening, but at our meeting held in October, and due to opening up restrictions not yet fully known, we have decided to now defer this great evening to our first meeting of the year which is on the 20 February 2022. (Wow what a great date – 20/02/2022). As we get closer we will need to take bookings so keep an eye on our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/148332039088712/>

**ECHUCA:** Echuca Historical Society Museum operates from the National Trust and Heritage Listed 1869 Echuca Police Station and Lock up complex located in the Historic Port Precinct at 1 Dickson Street, Echuca. The Museum is shaded by ancient Moreton Bay Fig

Trees opposite the River Murray and has been in operation since 1960, collecting and preserving the history of the town and area. It is a local history museum, with a strong focus on recording the early settlement along the Murray River. Our website has a link to a self-guided walk and an Audio Poetry Trail is available to residents and visitors. <https://echucahistoricalsociety.org.au/>

**LEONGATHA:** The Leongatha Historical Society preserves the history and heritage of the Leongatha district. The Society's Museum and archive is in the 100-year-old Leongatha Mechanics' Institute. The museum is open Thursday and Friday afternoons, between noon and 4 pm, or on request - entry by donation. The best picture we have of the early South Gippsland environment comes from letters and diaries of the early settlers, and from accounts collected in books on the pioneering years. These can be found in the 'Pioneer Kit' on our website: <https://www.leongathahistory.org.au/>

**LINTON:** Update on the Mannibadar Centenary Celebration. The Mannibadar Centenary of Soldier Settlement 1921-2021 has been postponed a couple of times because of a Covid lockdown. The new date is likely to be Sunday 27 March, but this has to be confirmed. The memorial plaque celebrating 100 years of soldier settlement was installed as scheduled in June and can be seen outside the Mannibadar Soldiers Memorial Hall. Keep an eye on our Facebook page for information: <https://www.facebook.com/lintonhistory>

**LORNE:** In June, the Society welcomed Leigh Hammerton, who spent much of his early childhood in Lorne and has retained a connection with our town after moving to Murtoa in the Wimmera, many years ago. From very early in his life, Leigh has been an avid collector of Lorne memorabilia. He made the decision to donate his collection to the Society and so last week, he drove down from Horsham to present the collection. And what an amazing collection it is! Well over one thousand Postcards in pristine condition, glass photographic slides produced by the early photographers of Lorne: Anderson, Jarratt, Lindt amongst others. There are prints, paintings, glassware, porcelain, documents, the list

goes on. Our next job is to catalogue the 'Hammerton Collection'. This will be a big job because of the quantity of material that Leigh has donated. But it will be such a rewarding task because of the significance of the items in the collection and the enormous contribution they make to chronicling Lorne's history. <https://www.facebook.com/LorneHistoricalSociety>

**NHILL:** Hindmarsh Shire Council has decided to take on the role of Committee of Management for the old Lowan Shire Hall. This follows concerns from the Society over the future of the building. Council was approached by the Nhill and District Historical Society following a meeting held with a representative of The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. The building at 104-106 Macpherson Street Nhill was built in 1888 and was first occupied by the Lowan Shire Council following an official opening in early May 1888. Following the relocation of the Shire Council in the 1960s the building has been home to the Nhill and District Historical Society. The Society holds archives of early settlers: district school's information, oral history archival materials, Clydesdale Breeders yearbooks along with other records of historic value.

**KILMORE:** Next year will see the 160th birthday of the Old Kilmore Post Office. We believe it was opened in March or April of that year but so far we have not been able to track down the exact date. We are planning a special exhibition in celebration of the event and we are hoping Kilmore residents can help us. We would love to hear from anyone who has memories of the building that they would like to share that we could use in an oral history. These can be as personal as receiving an important telegram, meeting someone on the steps or getting a job in the building. See our website: <http://www.kilmorehistory.info/>

**MONBULK:** The Society was established around 1982 and began the preservation of many documents and photographs donated to the Society covering the townships of Monbulk, The Patch, Kallista and Sherbrooke and the families who pioneered these towns. Records of the history of these settlements date back to 1893. The collection also includes the publications of oral histories and

newspaper articles of local families. Much work has been done to record the history of settlement in the area that began in 1893 but there is more to do. We preserve any documents or photographs given to the Society for research and publication. We are located at the Living and Learning Centre, 'The Hub', 21 Main Street, Monbulk. Subject to their other commitments our team of volunteers meet each Wednesday morning, excluding school holidays, from 9:30am to 12pm.

<https://monbulkhistoricalsociety.org.au> or <https://www.facebook.com/monbulk.historical.society>

**NILLUMBIK:** If you have stories to share with us, we would like to hear them. Our archive needs your stories and recollections, photos, or, if you have them, family trees and family histories. Many in our district who went to Diamond Creek Primary School also had parents and grandparents who were students there too. The same applies to our local sporting teams, with generations of cricketers and footballers giving their time to make sure they are successful. Interesting articles and stories about other places are also very welcome, especially if they link back to our area. Please contact us: [nillumbikhistory.org.au](http://nillumbikhistory.org.au) - while you're there read some of our articles.

**PORT FAIRY:** The Society manages the Port Fairy Museum and Archives centre. In 1992 the Society negotiated with the Moyne Shire to lease the historic Courthouse building in Gipps Street, Port Fairy, which was renamed The History Centre and subsequently renamed as Port Fairy Museum and Archives. The Courthouse is one of over 60 buildings in Port Fairy classified by the National Trust as essential to the heritage of Victoria. It was built in 1859, the portico added in 1869 and a further three rooms added at the rear in 1874, to make the building as it is today. Our collection includes artefacts, objects, publications, photographs and other documentary materials related to our local history. The main courtroom houses a display of the original court furniture, with figures in costume. Five other rooms contain both permanent and temporary exhibitions on themes such as the early pioneers of the district, the whaling era in Port Fairy, local shipping and wrecks along the coast. Visit our website: <https://portfairyhistoricalsocietyinc.org.au/> and the Museum and archive Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/PortFairyHistoricalSociety>



**SALE:** Inspired by the presence of the Archibald Prize Exhibition at Gippsland Art Gallery, the Society presented new exhibitions and held additional well attended openings in October and November. The Foster Street Museum presented its '1870s Archibalds', with 'Sennotype' photographic portraits by early photographer Alfred Bock and others. There was also an exhibition on the commercial and community contribution of four generations of the Leslie family, which ran a large department store (and had links to the first female owner of a Melbourne Cup winner). The 1888 Water Tower, the newest museum, celebrates the history and pioneers of Sale's water supply, including Sale's role as a leader in utilising artesian water and provides stunning views across the city. The Sale Powder Magazine, the only remaining one of its type in Gippsland, was built 1864-1865 by the Victorian Government for the storage of black powder used to blast rock in gold mines. The Sale Railway Signal Box stands as a rare example of early railways infrastructure and feels like the signalman has just completed his shift and gone home. There are photographs and old railway equipment including operating railway signal levers and early telephones that were essential for the safe movement of trains. The exhibitions will continue into the new year. Museum opening hours and other information: [salemuseums.com](http://salemuseums.com)



**SNAKE VALLEY:** Looking for something to do over Christmas? Our Facebook page has a link to a great brochure we had made up in 2013 that includes a map of our local historical sites and points of interest along our Walking Trail:

<https://www.facebook.com/snakevalleyhistoricalsociety>. Lots of great photos and information too.

**WARRAGUL:** The Society was formed in 1967 to preserve the history of Warragul and District, which include the areas of the former Shires of Warragul, Buln Buln and Naracan. The Society's Museum is located in the Old Shire Hall at 72 Queen Street, Warragul. Run by a group of dedicated volunteers, the museum has a large collection of objects, photographs, records and a library. Entry is by a \$2 donation. The museum opens to the public on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month (February to November) from 2-4pm, every Thursday from 10am - 2pm and also by appointment. Closed during December and January.



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## RHSV collections: Seeing Red – colour and national identity in Melbourne architecture

**Left:** Helen Stitt. *'The Austral Building, 115 – 119 Collins Street, Melbourne'.* 2009.

**Right:** Henry Cooper. *'Collins Street looking east from Russell Street to the Treasury'.* c.1899.

This Henry Cooper photograph from the RHSV Collection (S-21), c.1899, shows the two blocks at the Spring Street end of Collins Street. A number of notable buildings are visible, but the image does not immediately reveal the architectural innovation which is its key subject.

What is evident is the popularity of the Renaissance Revival style. It had become very fashionable in 1830s London in buildings such as Charles Barry's Reform Club. Looking back to the design of the Italian Renaissance palazzo, a large three-storey urban residence, it was adopted as an urbane, flexible style for modern building types, such as Barry's gentlemen's club. It is readily identifiable through the tripartite division of the building facade into a rusticated lower level, more ornate middle storey or the piano nobile, and plainer attic storey, topped by a weighty and imposing cornice.

In Cooper's image, the foremost example of the Renaissance Revival style is J. J. Clark's Old Treasury Building (1858) on Spring Street, marking the termination of Collins Street. Others include the Oriental Hotel with its name marked on the side of the building at number 45 and William Salway's home and surgery for Dr J. G. Beaney (1887), a sliver of which is visible in the right foreground on the corner of Russell Street. Leonard Terry's Melbourne Club (1858), hidden behind the trees on the north side of the street at number 36, is another prominent example.

Other major buildings glimpsed in the background of the photograph include the Grosvenor Chambers (1888) at number 9, Australia's first custom-built complex of artists' studios, and the Freemasons Hall at number 25 with its prominent domes. None of these buildings is the hero of this photograph, however. That role is given to Nahum Barnet's Austral Building (1890), at 115 Collins Street, captured as the cable tram being pulled towards Spencer Street passes its door. The Austral towers over its neighbours, dominating the streetscape. It's the centre of the image but, apart from its scale and interesting list of tenants, Cooper's interest in the building is not immediately apparent.

Photographs in sepia, or black and white, emphasise form and style at the expense of other architectural characteristics. As

such they can be misleading. The Austral Building is highly unusual in being constructed of bold red brick, giving physical form to Barnet's belief that architecture should reflect its place. He argued that architecture should embody the colour and harmony of nature, reflecting the warm hues of the sunny Australian landscape.

Barnet was a vocal critic of the classicism of his day, which he saw as imitative and bland. Ten years before the Austral building was designed, Barnet wrote passionately in *The Argus* (29 July 1880, p3) anticipating the development of 'a Victorian style of architecture that would be singularly appropriate to this country' borne of 'the exigencies of the climate and the nature of the people'. He advocated for the use of colour in architecture. 'If terracotta were adopted in our facades, if the spandrels, pilasters and pediments were enriched with plaques, faience, or tiles, and, in short, if colour were more universally adopted, then life in this city would be tolerable and pleasurable alike to the aesthetic, the merchant and the vulgarian.'

Barnet deplored the use of bluestone and was particularly vitriolic about 'the monotony of Melbourne's great architectural curse – stucco [a lime or cement-based render]'. To Barnet, this blandness represented a tired architectural inheritance from Europe. He was scathing of the conservative Italianate classicism of the city declaring, 'from the great international shop on the north [the Exhibition Building] to the vice-regal cotton factory on the south [Government House], we are doomed to endure the blinding effect of the bald, bleached stucco. Nature has given to this city a wealth of colour, but art has given but little assistance to the handsome dame'.

As we can see in his design of the Austral facade, Barnet preferred a free classical composition of sculptural Mannerist elements, including oversized consoles and bold broken pediments, to represent Melbourne's 'youthful' dynamism. Unlike the other architects mentioned above, Barnet was not a British émigré, he was an Australian, born and raised in Swanston Street. His appeal for colour, originality and vigour in the city's architecture was heard. The patriotic efforts of Barnet's generation had a profound impact on the colour that emerged in Melbourne streets at the turn of the century.

# St Margaret's Church, Eltham

Eltham is the leafy suburb 25 kilometres northeast of Melbourne's CBD; noted for its mud brick buildings and creative culture, with Montsalvat its spiritual home. One of its great historical treasures is the 1861 Saint Margaret's Anglican Church, in honour of Margaret Queen of Scotland. It is strongly associated with Henry Dendy, commonly called the founder of Brighton, Ferguson and Urie pioneers in window manufacture in the colony of Port Phillip and Matcham Skipper, internationally renowned sculpturer.

Henry Dendy sold his ancestral lands in Surrey and Sussex and emigrated, with his wife Sarah, to Port Phillip as the only person to take advantage of a scheme referred to as *Special Survey*. He purchased land in Brighton which became known as the Brighton Estate and built a mansion called Brighton Park. In Brighton Henry played a primary role in the founding of Saint Andrews Anglican Church with a donation of 10 acres. The depression of 1843 saw land valuations plummet and Henry's bad debts accumulate. In 1845 he was declared insolvent. After leaving Brighton he and Sarah, with their young son Henry Junior, purchased a cottage and flour mill in Eltham.

Henry was a primary force in the 1860 decision to build a Church of England in Eltham and he was appointed Chairman and Treasurer of the Church Committee. The committee refused to accept the land provided by the government and instead accepted Henry's kind offer of half an acre on which to build a church. Saint Margaret's opened its doors for Divine Service on 20 December 1861. The project of planning, building and furnishing the building, was on-time and within budget. Henry was project manager. Henry Dendy JP was a leading layperson of the church and a well-regarded citizen of the district. He spent five years in Brighton and left bankrupt, ten years in Eltham and left after a forced sale of the flour mill, and more time in Gippsland, living at the end of his life as

a pauper. He has been described as an honourable man but a poor businessman.

James Ferguson and James Urie were Scottish immigrants who settled in Port Phillip; their firm, Ferguson and Urie, made Saint Margaret's church windows. They were pioneers in the manufacture of stained glass in the colony. Many of the original church windows, plain with gold highlighting, remain to the present day. On 22 November 1861 Ferguson and Urie wrote to the Eltham church committee with the good news that, *the windows were ready except for the small one at the end*. What they referred to was a beautiful multi-coloured window to be set in the north wall of the church. They described it as, *the first of this sort that has been produced in this colony*.

It now has pride of place in the north wall of a 2014 modern extension of the church and is considered to be of great historical and spiritual value. The windows cost £30 and the small window a further £1. Urie and Ferguson windows are found in many churches, public buildings and private houses throughout Victoria and beyond. In 2000 Saint Margaret's received a grant from Heritage Victoria to restore all the windows in the church. The renovators were thrilled to discover the small window. It was sorely in need of repair. Later descendants of the Urie and Ferguson families visited the church. They were compiling a register of the company's windows. They were overjoyed to 'discover' the small window



in such a good state of repair and the original 'plain' windows.

Another great historical and spiritual treasure hangs on the north wall of the extended worship space. This is a very fine sculpture known as the Matcham Skipper Crucifix. It has hung in the church since 1966. The work clearly depicts a body crucified on a cross. However, this is surrounded by radiating spikes. Some see this as symbolic of the crown of thorns. Some as radiating light symbolic of the resurrection. In truth the work speaks of both crucifixion and resurrection. No reference has been found as to what the creator had in mind.

Matcham Skipper, a sculptor and jeweler, made a great contribution to the art of Australia, on the domestic as well as the international stage. He was a great mentor and teacher working from his studio at Montsalvat. This marvelous complex of grounds and buildings is adjacent to another great historical site, the Eltham cemetery. Matcham was married to the well-known artist Myra and together they had five artistic children. Matcham passed away in March 2011. Part of his significant legacy lives on in his magnificent Crucifix which is greatly treasured at Saint Margaret's and in Eltham.

## Dr. Geoffrey A Sandy

Parish Historian and Parish Archivist  
Eltham District Historical Society and the Anglican Historical Society (Diocese of Melbourne)





## Windows on history: Eltham

The stained glass in St Margaret's Anglican Church, Eltham has so much history packed into the windows set into its stone walls. In addition to the first diamond quarry windows of 1861, as noted in Dr Geoffrey Sandy's article, two windows were installed in the first decades of the twentieth century, in memory of three members of St Margaret's congregation, who made significant contributions to the rural community of Eltham.

The first window to be installed was the two-light, *St Margaret of Scotland* and *St Paul*, erected in honour of early Victorian colonists and long-time residents of Eltham, Walter and Elvira (née Dowle) Wippell. It was unveiled by former vicar, the Reverend E Pelham Chase in March 1918. On the same occasion a World War One Honour Board was dedicated by Archdeacon Hayman; at that time, more than 70 names were inscribed, thirteen marked as killed in service of their God, King and country.

Some years before St Margaret's was built, Walter and Elvira Wippell were married in 1856 at St John's Heidelberg, before taking up residence at Kangaroo Ground. Around 1860 the growing family moved to 'Woodrow', Eltham. Always interested in local affairs, Walter stood for council, unsuccessfully, in 1871, then

became the Shire of Eltham's auditor from about 1875. He served as Electoral Registrar and member of the roads board, positions he held for 40 years, only retiring shortly before his death, aged 77. Elvira predeceased her husband, in 1896, and Walter died in 1906. Elvira and Walter had a large family of five sons, and two daughters, one of whom was stillborn. Their surviving daughter Emily Sophia, known always as Lily, was married to Thomas Scarce at St Margaret's by the Reverend Pelham Chase in 1892.

The window was commissioned by Lily Scarce on behalf of her siblings, and designed and made by the English-trained artist, William Montgomery, in his Melbourne studio. The designs were in the Early English style, which Montgomery preferred for the architectural canopy and bases, setting the lavishly decorated figures against an arras (curtain) and treed landscape in the distant background. Mrs Scarce was invoiced £63 on 24 January 1918; she paid the full amount promptly on 7 February.

It seems that the Wippell window was well-received as, two years later, William Montgomery was once again commissioned to design, make and install a single light as a tribute to Caroline Ada Wingrove. Miss Wingrove died suddenly on 19 June 1919, just as she





was preparing to leave home for the Sunday night service at St Margaret's, after life-long membership of the congregation.

Caroline was born in Eltham in 1869, just a few years after the little building opened, the eldest daughter of Katherine (née Nodin) and the Shire Secretary of Eltham, Charles Symons Wingrove - who would have presented the council books for auditing by Mr Wippell. Throughout most of her 50-year life, Miss Wingrove was a loved and respected worker for the church and community organisations and valued for her kindnesses and commitment to fund-raising bazaars and events at the church. On one occasion she hosted a Wattle Fair, alongside her father, in the grounds of the family home, which raised funds for repairs to the church in 1913.

Not long afterwards, Eltham was working hard to support the war effort. The Eltham branch of the Australian Red Cross Society was formed in July 1915, led throughout the war years by Lady Irvine, wife of Sir William Irvine, as President and Miss Wingrove as Honorary Treasurer. The forty-strong branch prepared comforts for men in the trenches and raised considerable funds through jumble sales and bazaars that were regularly held in the church schoolroom. 'Welcome Home' events for wounded soldiers were organised from November 1915, paid for by a special fund set up by Miss Wingrove and, after the war, the branch contributed to the Red Cross Convalescent Homes being established at Healesville and Mornington.

Caroline Ada Wingrove's memorial window depicted St Cecilia, the patron saint of music, no doubt selected by her family and friends in recognition of her abilities as a pianist and accompanist for many church concerts. St Cecilia is often based on Raphael's painting of the saint, but Montgomery, unlike Raphael's version in which the organ turns downward (in reality the pipes would actually fall out!), has chosen to picture her holding the little organ upright. The window was unveiled and dedicated in June 1920 in the presence of former vicar, Reverend E Pelham Chase, and incumbent the Reverend T H Sapsford. Both windows were conserved by Geoffrey Wallace Stained Glass in 2000 and continue to be treasured by congregations and admired by visitors for their beauty and historical significance.

**Dr Bronwyn Hughes OAM**



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Image: Garangula Gallery, Harden, NSW. Photo by David Henderson



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PB – 148pp, 167 Images  
\$28.00 See website for special combo prices.

Melbourne had two foundations. The first was in deep time as an Aboriginal place. The second was when European settlement began on the Yarra in 1835, a mere 185 years ago. Each decade of Melbourne's history has a chapter written by an expert historian. Lavishly illustrated from the RHSV collection.



## Adrift in Melbourne: Seven Walks with Robyn Annear

Robyn Annear (2021)  
HB – 288pp \$27.99

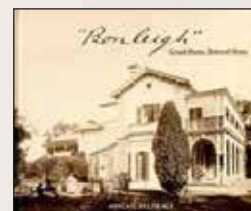
Melbourne's streets have always been marvellous: but the proud facades of the nineteenth-century boom aren't the half of it. This book contains a series of walks created by Robyn Annear to showcase the hidden histories we might scurry past every day, the buildings now gone and the extraordinary characters who inhabited them. frankly gossipy, this is a highly entertaining armchair guide to Melbourne's past.



## Australia's Ancient Aboriginal Past

Murray Johnson (2021)  
PB – 260pp \$39.95

This book places the Aboriginal occupation of Australia within a broad framework of human evolution and habitation. The author discusses pioneering studies and engages with current controversies, including the extinction of megafauna, land management practices, and social development over many millennia. Australian Aborigines are revealed in all their complexity.



## "Bonleigh": Grand Dame, Beloved Home

Abigail Belfrage (2020)  
HB – 240pp, 200+ images  
\$75

"Bonleigh", in Brighton was originally built on five acres that extended down to Port Phillip Bay. For her current owners, Jill Davies and Graeme Samuel, it was love at first sight when they were introduced to "Bonleigh". Jill commissioned Abi Belfrage to research and write not just the history of the house and its owners but to tie it into a broader context, the social history of Melbourne.



## Dwellers of Fisherman's Flat: They Left Their Mark, They Left Things Behind Maggie Stowers (2020)

PB – 106pp \$35.00

The history is presented in a largely pictorial style with images from the Queenscliff Historical Museum collection. Descendants of fishing families have shared photographs and stories that have enriched the pages. The courageous acts of the fishermen who were members of the lifeboat crew and the activities of the fisherfolk women provide a glimpse into the life of the early fishing community.



## Fatal Contact: How Epidemics Nearly Wiped Out Australia's First Peoples

Peter Dowling (2021)  
PB – 306pp \$34.95

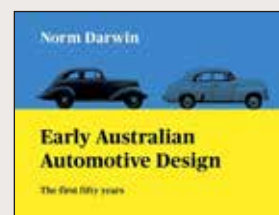
This book examines and explains the complexities of disease infection and immunology: which diseases were responsible for the Aboriginal population decline across Australia in the colonial period, when and where did they occur, how severe were they, how long did they last, which diseases were more devastating, and why were they so devastating?



## For honour and country: Victorian Chinese Australians in World War II

Edmond Chiu AM and Adil Soh-Li (2021)  
PB – 338pp \$39.95

This edition includes the text in both English and Chinese. Many Chinese Australians proudly enlisted and fought in WWII. Their stories of service, told here, reveal their patriotic determination and instances of outstanding courage. Some were to sacrifice their lives for their country.



## Early Australian Automotive Design: the First Fifty Years 1895 [to] 1953

Norman Darwin (2017)  
HB – 350pp \$59.95

*The Early Australian Automobile Design* is packed full of hundreds of photos, many of which have never been seen. It covers early inventors and tinkerers, designers and builders of early cars and motor bodies as well as development of the motor body building industry, establishment of Holden design office, the first designers and stylists.





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

Gregory C. Eccleston (2018)  
HB – 250pp, 225+ images  
\$145.00

This gorgeous large format book is generously illustrated with colour photographs and maps. Assistant Surveyor Granville Stapylton's intimate journal is here published as a faithful transcription from the original field books for the first time. This expedition followed the Lachlan, Murrumbidgee and Murray rivers before crossing into what is now Victoria and proceeded past the Grampians to the coast at Portland, before returning via Mount Macedont.



**Yiasou Yarraville, from  
heartache to heroes**

Olympia Koziaris (2021)  
PB – 283pp \$40.00

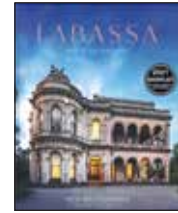
This book is the result of a 12-month collaboration within a large Greek diaspora community. An anthology of twenty unique stories from residents who have lived or worked in the Footscray area, focusing on Yarraville, a suburb with a strong Greek presence. These previously untold and unpublished histories span a seventy-year period, beginning in the 1950s and reaching into the present day.



**Historical Driver's Guide to  
the Great Ocean Road**

Ross Bastiaan (2017)  
PB – 36pp \$12.00

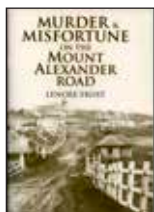
To celebrate the 75th anniversary of the opening of the Great Ocean Road, a series of commemorative bronze plaques were cast. The plaques feature information on the broad history of the road, a central detailed relief map of the area and information specific to the site they occupy. This traveller's guide to the Great Ocean Road is designed to follow the trail of these plaques along the world's largest war memorial.



**Labassa**

Vicki Shuttleworth (2020)  
HB – 190pp \$39.95

This lavishly designed book includes a foreword by Barry Jones AC, tells the story of remarkable survival. Labassa has endured nine owners, a conversion into flats, sixty years of sporadic maintenance and more than 700 residents. Author and historian Vicki Shuttleworth takes readers on a journey through A cavalcade of intriguing residents including millionaires, fraudsters, movie stars, refugees, artists and bohemians.



**Murder and misfortune on  
the Mount Alexander Road:  
Essendon, Moonee Ponds,  
Ascot Vale and Flemington,  
1840-1866**

Lenore Frost (1995)  
PB – 80pp \$10

Based on selected coronial inquests held in the district of Essendon, Moonee Ponds, Ascot Vale and Flemington between 1840 and 1866. The evidence presented at the inquests are eye-witness accounts of events in the early days of the settlement.



**Major Fitz-Gerald and the  
Matter of War: an Anzac  
Archive**

John Scheckter (2021)  
PB – 156pp \$39.95

In 1915, Major Richard Francis Fitz-Gerald was the last Australian to leave an exposed position at Gallipoli, for which he was awarded the DSO. He then served on the Western Front. Everywhere he went, often while in danger, he collected materials that marked his experience. He wrote careful comments on everything he kept. *Major Fitz-Gerald and the Matter of War* personalises the difficult position of a front-line officer by closely examining the things he carried, collected, and preserved for the rest of his life.



**Making a Home: a History of  
Castlemaine**

Heather Holst (2014)  
PB – 262pp \$29.95

People came to Castlemaine in great numbers from the 1850s in search of the world-renowned gold of Forest Creek. Fewer fortunes were made than hopes were dashed, yet the town did become home for many of these adventurers. This is the story of what happened to those earlier people. It is about a particular place and time, and it is also the quintessential Australian settlement story.



**On a Wing and a Prayer**

Di Websdale-Morrissey (2020)  
PB – \$32.99

The thrilling tale of an aviation escapade dreamed up by Melbourne's Lord Mayor in the 1930s: a London to Melbourne air race that captured the world's attention and told a remarkable Australian story. This heroic race, considered the greatest single sporting event in the history of aviation, is a tale of eccentric characters, daring deeds and sublime courage.

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Give a  
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## Penguin Land

Gregor Buchanan (2015)  
PB – 155pp, 110 images \$25  
Summerland housing estate was the last place Phillip Island's threatened penguin colonies were to be found. Greg Buchanan traces the history of the penguins and Phillip Island and how John Cain's government bought back the land and turned a suburb into a national park.



## Remembering Melbourne 1850-1960

Editors: Richard Broome, Richard Barnden, Don Garden, Don Gibb, Elisabeth Jackson, Judith Smart (2016)  
HB – 366pp, 679 images \$35.00 See website for special combo prices

Every house and every business in Melbourne should have a copy of this magnificent homage to our marvellous city. Melbourne has been reshaped since the 1950s. This book captures what has been lost and forgotten, concealed and overlaid, demolished and reborn, in the transformation of a city's buildings and streetscapes. This book is a priceless trove of a city's memory.



## The Accidental Heiress: Journey of a Glencoe Squatter's Daughter

John Berger and Carol Grbich (2020)  
HB – 144pp \$30.00

Wealthy squatter, Edward Leake, at age 42, fell in love with a girl, already pregnant and married to a bullocky. They married after the bullocky mysteriously disappeared. The couple's first-born, Letitia, inherited Glencoe station, a vast pastoral empire, at the age of seven after Edward's death. Following a massive and unpleasant court case Letitia became the sole beneficiary of this estate.



## The Ghosts Have Never Left: Victorian Gold Rush Towns and the Stories they Could Tell

John and Marie Watt (2020)  
PB – 270pp, 134+ images \$39.99

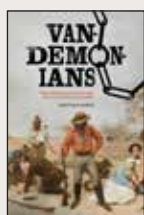
In words and images this beautiful book captures both the glory days and haunting reminders of 21 Victorian gold rush towns, which today are either small, sleepy, or non-existent. The lights of Cobb & Co, the pen of Henry Handel Richardson, the sinking of the HMAS Sydney, and the birth of an iconic wine, all have a link to at least one of the towns explored.



## The Pebbled Beach at Pentecost: a Novel

Andrew Lemon (2021)  
PB – 422pp \$29.95

Vernon Lee Walker, a young Englishman from industrial Wolverhampton, meets his death on a beach on Pentecost Island in the South Pacific on the eve of Christmas 1887. Why did Vernon die, in what circumstances, and who was responsible? An historian finds Vernon's letters home to England, spanning a dozen years. With decreasing frequency, these follow his trajectory, first in Melbourne and Sydney, then as he yields to the spell of the Pacific.



## Vandemonians: the Repressed History of Colonial Victoria

Janet McCalman (2021)  
PB – 343pp \$39.99

It was meant to be 'Victoria the Free', uncontaminated by the convict stain. Yet they came in their tens of thousands as soon as they were cut free or able to bolt. More than half of all those transported to Van Diemen's Land as convicts would one day live in Victoria. There they were demonised as Vandemonians. In this eagerly awaited book, Janet McCalman examines this transported population from the cradle to the grave.



## Vera Deakin and the Red Cross

Carole Woods (2020)  
HB – 244pp, 66 images \$35.00 See website for special combo prices

*Vera Deakin and the Red Cross* chronicles the extraordinary life of a woman who became a humanitarian activist, unintentional feminist and trailblazer during a time of war and unrest. Vera was honoured during her lifetime, but was later largely forgotten. Carole Woods has rescued her from relative obscurity and revealed her as a strong woman, a notable Deakin in her own right.



## Victorian Railways: the Spirit of Blue & Gold

Nick Anchen (2021)  
HB – 336pp, 260 images \$99.95

*Victorian Railways* explores a bygone era. It showcases the Victorian Railways as it was from the 1950s to the 1980s, through a spectacular array of Kodachrome images from some of Australia's most artistic photographers, as well as interviews from over 40 former railway employees.



### **Waterfalls on the Otway Ranges**

Anthony Car (2021)  
HB – 336pp \$55.00

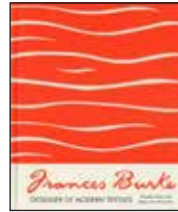
This book documents and covers 226 waterfalls located in the Otway Ranges. It contains historic articles and accounts. Information on each waterfall is documented including name, location, height, and other important data. Every waterfall has a photo displayed. Historic photos are also included for many of the famous waterfalls in the Otway Ranges. Detailed maps are featured with suggested waterfalls to visit.



### **The Women of Little Lon: Sex workers in Nineteenth-Century Melbourne**

Barbara Minchinton (2021)  
PB – 294pp \$32.99

Sex workers in nineteenth-century Melbourne were judged morally corrupt by the respectable world. But theirs was a thriving trade, with links to the police and political leaders of the day; and the leading brothels were usually managed by women. Who were they? What did their daily lives look like? Drawing on archaeological digs, rare archival material and family records, historian Barbara Minchinton brings the fascinating world of 'Little Lon' to life.



### **Frances Burke: Designer of Modern Textiles**

Nanette Carter and Robyn Oswald-Jacobs (2021)  
HB - 230pp \$69.99

A richly illustrated celebration of Frances Burke, Australia's most influential and celebrated textile designer of the 20th century. Burke collaborated with leading architects and interior designers, including Robin Boyd, her fabrics making arresting contributions to influential modern buildings and contributing so much to the felt experience of Australian life.



### **The Brilliant Boy: Doc Evatt and the Great Australian Dissent**

Gideon Haigh (2021)  
HB – 378pp \$39.99

'Doc' Evatt is remembered as the hapless and divisive opposition leader during the long ascendancy of his great rival Menzies. Yet long before we spoke of 'public intellectuals', Evatt was one: a dashing advocate, an inspired jurist, an outspoken opinion maker and one of our first popular historians. In this incisive book, Gideon Haigh rediscovers the most brilliant Australian of his day.

## **For young historians**



### **Gold (Our Past)**

Charles Hope (2015)  
PB – Children's Book \$14.99

In the 1850s Australia was gripped by gold fever. People came from all over the world to find their fortune. Gold shaped the history of Australia. This illustrated book explores the past and helps children discover the fascinating world of gold.



### **Putting Australia on the map**

Carole Wilkinson (2020)  
HB – Children's Book \$24.99

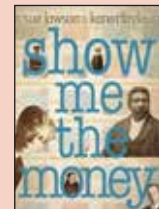
Australia is a big place. It covers 7.7 million square kilometres. You would think it would be easy to find, but it stayed hidden from everyone but its First People for a very long time. Australia's coastline was discovered piece by piece. Mapping the coastline was a task that took hundreds of years. See who got it right and who didn't as, bit by bit, the outline of Australia appeared in Putting Australia on the Map.



### **Annie's War: the Story of One Boroondara Family's Wartime Experience**

Lucy Bracey (2019)  
PB – Children's Book \$25.00

Gregory Mackay's handsome illustrations supplement the family story of seven-year-old Annie Slade. Annie's father has joined up to fight the distant war in Europe. But the war touches those at home too. This is Annie's story of growing up in Kew in a country at war but far removed, at a time when newspapers carried the great and increasingly tragic news of the day.



### **Show Me the Money**

Sue Lawson and Karen Tayleur (2020)  
HB – Children's Book \$24.99

The next time you hand over your money, take a moment to really look at that coin or note. Why is there a clear strip on each note? Who are those people and what is their story? And what's the deal with the Queen? This book helps children learn about who and what is on Australian money.

# Books received

## John Schauble

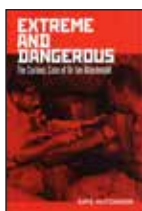
Authors, publishers and Historical Societies are invited to contribute books to the RHSV for the library and for consideration for inclusion in Books Received.

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



**Empire's Noble Son.** Daryl Moran, ASPG, Calwell ACT, 2019 pp.iii-298, ISBN 9781925908671.

Lyle Buntine MC began his service in the medical corps before becoming one of 600 young Australians who served with the Royal Flying Corps during World War 1. At a time when the fragile flying machines themselves were often the root cause of accidents, Buntine survived long enough to have been shot down six times. His demise eventually came on a training flight in Scotland in 1917 shortly before he was to be repatriated to Australia. The son of the principal of Caulfield Grammar, his death was mourned not just by family but by that wider community. The family preserved the letters, papers and memorabilia, now held in the school archive, of Buntine's short eventful life.



**Extreme and Dangerous: the Curious Case of Dr Ian Macdonald.** Kate Hutchison, Australian Scholarly Publishing, North Melbourne, 2020 pp.v-196, ISBN 9781925984859.

When, a little over a decade ago, Kate Hutchison read in her father's ASIO file that he was 'extreme' and 'dangerous', she found it difficult to reconcile this with the Ian Macdonald she knew as a caring medical practitioner in Melbourne's post-war inner suburbs. Both her father and mother, Molly, had been communists since the 1930s, and remained so their whole lives, in the deeply idealistic fashion of many members of the Australian communist movement before the Stalinist horrors. In tracing her father's pursuit by the intelligence authorities, especially during the war, Hutchison exposes a story as troubling for its implications today as it was bizarre even for that time.



**Becoming John Curtin and James Scullin: the Making of the Modern Labor Party: 1876 – 1921** Liam Byrne, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2020 pp.vi-187, ISBN 9780522876465.

Times of crisis demand great leadership. John Curtin and James Scullin were Australian Prime Ministers whose tenure spanned just such times. Curtin is revered to this day as one of Australia's greatest leaders, dying in office just months before victory over Japan in 1945. Curtin reframed Australia's relationship with the world. Scullin was denied such a chance from within the ALP as he struggled to drag Australia out of the Great Depression. This account charts the rise of these two working-class autodidacts in Victoria, their growth with the nascent Australian Labor Party and their attempts to build a better Australia. Their stories are in stark contrast to what passes for political leadership in modern times.



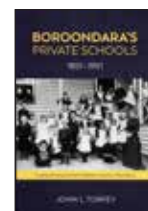
**Made in Lancashire: a Collective Biography of Assisted Migrants from Lancashire to Victoria 1852-1853.** Richard Turner, Monash University Publishing, Clayton, 2021, pp.v-244, ISBN 9781922464361.

At the height of the Victorian goldrush in the early 1850s, tens of thousands of assisted migrants made their way from Britain to Victoria. Among them was a relatively small number from Lancashire. Richard Turner has focused on those who arrived between 1852 and 1853, a small cohort within the hundreds and representing just one per cent of those given assisted passage. In this collective biography, he traces their stories – not because they became famous or even influential but because of the foundational role they played across the infant colony over the next generation. These Lancastrians 'ran the gamut from the prosperous to the humbly competent', an interesting subset in an emerging society.



**Geelong's Changing Landscape: Ecology, Development and Conservation.** David S. Jones and Phillip B. Roos (eds), CSIRO Publishing, Clayton South, 2019 pp.v-324, ISBN 9780643103603.

The changes and challenges to Victoria's environment, especially over the past 75 years, have been enormous. Nowhere is this more evident perhaps than in urban and peri-urban Geelong. This study is important as it traverses both the state's second largest urban environment and the delicate coastal setting of the Bellarine Peninsula from before the time of European settlement through to the current demands for land, lifestyle and a rejuvenation of a declining industrial base. Part history, part ecological survey, the work draws on the expertise of multi-disciplinary contributors. It looks at the ecological and cultural demands upon the landscape and explores ways in which the changes and challenges of the future might be met.



**Boroondara's Private Schools 1851 to 1951: a Century of Non-Government Education in Boroondara** John L. Torpey, Hawthorn Historical Society, Hawthorn, 2021, pp.vii-194, ISBN 9780645228014.

The provision of education in Victoria has a rich history. The emerging wealthy, middle-class suburbs that now comprise the city of Boroondara have long been a domain of private schools. There were some 118 private schools in the district, of which just 24 survive. The emphasis of the private system during the study period was upon preparing boys for the professions or at least commerce, while for girls it was readying them for marriage. The book contains a short but useful introduction to the evolution of the Victorian education system, profiles of early influencers and brief descriptions of the individual schools.