



History NEWS

Your
Victorian Historical
Journal is enclosed

Issue No. 309 Nov-Dec 2013

Royal Historical Society of Victoria

Congratulations to winners and all participants of VCHA

The Victorian Community History Awards presentation ceremony for 2013 was held on 21 October at the Deakin Edge, Federation Square. As always the occasion hummed with anticipation and admiration as authors of local histories were acknowledged for their work.

Professor Geoffrey Blainey AC gave a thoughtful and inspiring address.

The VCHA has a distinctive egalitarian character. A small, innovative entry with strong community links compares well against a funded professional project. As is the nature of a competition there had to be a winner in the seven categories – but it is in the spirit of the awards that all entrants are warmly congratulated for their work.

Enclosed with this newsletter is a booklet recording the winners and commendations.

For a full list of entries go to www.prov.vic.gov.au or www.historyvictoria.org.au and click on the Programs Tab.

All entries become part of the RHSV collection.

The RHSV thanks the Victorian Government and PROV for their on-going support for these awards.

Congratulations to the following societies which are recipients of the Holsworth Local Heritage Trust 2013

Colac & District Historical Society Inc.

Dookie & District Historical Society

Hamilton History Centre Inc

Harcourt Valley Heritage & Tourist Centre Inc

Hastings-Western Port Historical Society Inc

Huntly & Districts' Historical Society Inc

Murchison & District Historical Society Inc

Tarnagulla & District Historical Society

Warnambool & District Historical Society Inc

The Holsworth Local Heritage Trust supports the publication of any specific or general local history or natural history in rural and regional Victoria.

Applications open on 1 March and close 31 July each year.

Application forms can be downloaded from the RHSV and ANZ Trustees websites.

Note: Those *Holsworth Fund* recipients yet to complete the acquittal of their grant must now send a copy of their publication to the RHSV, instead of the ANZ Trustees, as evidence that they have fulfilled their project.

SUMMER HOLIDAY CLOSURE

The RHSV will be closed from 3.00pm FRIDAY 20 DECEMBER and re-opening on MONDAY 13 JANUARY.

We wish everybody a happy and healthy holiday season.



Robin Vowels receives the Victorian Community History Award for *Victoria's Iron Lacework The Founders. Part A*

Thank you for supporting History Week 2013

History Week 2013 concluded on Sunday 27 October. It was a marvellous showcase of local history throughout the state. Historical Societies from Mallacoota to Warnambool and from the city of Melbourne to Swan Hill created events and welcomed visitors to engage with history.

Events included:

- Historical Emergency Services Expo: a rare opportunity to view emergency services vehicles from the Ambulance Historical Society, the Victorian Police Historical Society, the Fire Service Museum and the State Emergency Service Museum.
- The Friends of Black Powder Mill demonstrated the milling process and work that was carried out at the Albion Explosives Factory
- Whilst the Mallacoota WW2 Bunker Museum presented an exhibition "On The Home Front" looking at the home front between the two wars.

The RHSV was delighted to be able to support 50 Historical Societies with banner grants. These banners were used during History Week and will be used subsequently to promote historical societies.

We are grateful to the Vera Moore Foundation for supporting this program.

Witty and engaging

Thank you to the Professional Historians Association who presented *Flashback! - A witty and engaging History Week* event of discussions about why "well behaved women seldom make history"



Pictured L-R: Dr Richard Trembath, Dr Barabara Lemon, Michelle Raynor (ABC Radio National), Dr Liz Rushen and new RHSV councillor Lucy Bracey.

President's Report

RHSV President Assoc. Prof Don Garden writes:

The RHSV - Vital and Full of Vitality

Since the last *History News* there has been intense activity at the RHSV on a number of fronts which has shown just how vital and full of vitality we are as an organisation

This has been epitomised by the constant state of transition in the main hall area. The exhibition space was deconstructed in order to hold the book sale, and then reconstructed for the opening of the Archie Cowan drawings exhibition. However, part of the area has been hidden behind display boards to hide an invaluable recent 'bequest'. The National Trust has closed most of its library and has donated the books, etc, to the RHSV. They are soon to be integrated into our enriched library.

The RHSV library has also been deconstructed and reconstructed twice recently for filming – of an advertisement for *seek.com* and for part of an episode of the Dr Blake television series. In the latter, the library became the library of the 'Ballarat Historical Society'. The fees from these two ventures will enable the RHSV to purchase a much-needed new photocopier.

The Council has been vitalised by the addition of two new recruits, as profiled elsewhere in this *History News*, Lucy Bracey and Prof Chips Sowerwine. We welcome them warmly.

In September the RHSV learned that it was successful in gaining three years of funding from Arts Victoria under the new Organisations Investment Program. We thank Heidi Victoria, Minister for the Arts, for this ongoing support. Three years of funding gives

the RHSV certainty, and the opportunity to provide the best possible programs for its members – both individual members and historical societies.

On 21 October the Victorian Community History Awards were brought to a very satisfying prize-giving event at Federation Square. There is an impressive standard of historical work being demonstrated in the entries and I congratulate all involved. I thank both the people at the Public Records Office who were our co-organisers and the main RHSV personnel including Carole Woods, Don Gibb and Janice Haines.

History Week, principally organised by the RHSV, was a great success. Many events were held, culminating in a quick-fire series of talks on 27 October about women who have challenged female stereotypes. The event was organised by the Professional Historians Association.

Finally, the big news is that Kate Prinsley, Bill Russell and I met with Planning Minister Matthew Guy, our landlord, to discuss the RHSV's future at the Drill Hall. He assured us that the building is not on an asset sales list and that our occupancy is not under threat. There are to be further discussions about future plans, such as our desire to establish a History House. We profoundly thank all of the RHSV's supporters who have lobbied for us.

After all that, we may be vital but we are also a bit exhausted!

AN OPPORTUNITY

Victorian Historical Journal

The VHJ is produced twice a year by a committee that operates on an entirely voluntary basis.

PRODUCTION COORDINATOR

The Production Coordinator is an important member of the Publications Committee.

The Production Coordinator:

- converts the Word documents supplied by the editor into Adobe Indesign files,
- produces a final version of the entire journal after each component
- liaises with the graphic design firm, the RHSV Publications Committee and the editor where necessary on production and scheduling issues.

We welcome interest in this volunteer position. Contact Kate Prinsley at kateprinsley@historyvictoria.org.au or 9326 9288

FELLOWSHIP

APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN

Applications for the 2014 Hazel Rowley Literary Fellowship are now open.

The Fellowship awards \$10,000 to an Australian writer to support the writing and research of a new biographical work. It may be used to fund research, mentoring or travel, to develop a new proposal or to progress a manuscript for submission or presentation to potential publishers.

For more information contact Writers Victoria on:

(03) 9094 7836 or

info@writersvictoria.org.au

Welcome new Council members

The RHSV is delighted to welcome onto Council Lucy Bracey and Emeritus Professor Charles (Chips) Sowerwine:

Lucy Bracey has joined the Council as a representative of the Professional Historians Association of Victoria (PHA Vic), where she currently holds the position of co Vice-President. Lucy graduated with her Masters of Public History from Monash University in 2010 and has been working as a professional historian ever since.

Lucy is a member of Way Back When consulting historians, and has been involved in a range of different history projects including; commissioned histories, exhibitions, oral history projects and radio broadcasts. Her latest work was a thirty-year history of the Victorian AIDS Council/Gay Men's Health Centre. She is very excited to join the RHSV Council and hopes to foster stronger relationships between the RHSV and the wider history community.

Chips Sowerwine writes:

"I was raised in the suburbs of New York. I went to Paris to research my PhD and then came to a lectureship at the University of Melbourne in 1974 (!). I'm now Emeritus Professor of History. A political romance: Léon Gambetta, Léonie Léon and the making of the French Republic, 1872-82, with Susan Foley, appeared last year (London, 2012). A third edition of *France since 1870: Culture, Society and the Making of the Republic* (London, 2001, 2009) is supposed to appear in 2015. I have a longstanding interest in urbanism, transport and heritage issues in Melbourne. The seventh edition of my *Wandering Scholar's Guide to Melbourne* has just been published by the University of Melbourne. I was President of the Public Transport Users' Association, in which my greatest achievement was saving the clocks at Flinders Street Station and leading the campaign against the 1980 Lonie Report which recommended closing eight tram lines, six suburban rail lines and all regional rail except Geelong. I was later Vice-President of the Bicycle Institute of Victoria. I was involved in the first heritage study of Fitzroy in 1979 and I'm proud to have been named Fitzroy Citizen of the Year in 1987. I'm honoured to have been named a Councillor of the RHSV. I hope to support the Society's work of encouraging local, regional and Victorian histories and historians. Although my name is Charles and I publish under that name, I've been called Chips since my birth, so if I meet you, do call me Chips."

Vicroads Centenary Exhibition

AT THE RHSV NOVEMBER 26 – DECEMBER 20

VicRoads is celebrating its milestone 100th birthday this year. The Country Roads Board, or CRB as it was known, was established on March 26, 1913, so this year Vic Roads is taking the opportunity of honouring its past and looking to its future.

For ten decades, VicRoads has contributed to economic prosperity and social wellbeing by making existing roads operate more efficiently and reliably. VicRoads and its predecessors have been connecting people to their families, jobs and recreation by developing and maintaining Victoria's arterial road network.

Until the mid 90s the roads authority had a permanent photographer on the staff and the resulting 80,000 + images in the archive are

a rich visual history of the state of Victoria and documentation of how it was connected through the development of roads and structures.

As part of the Centenary celebration, a selected display of these images will be held from 26 November to 20 December at the Royal Historical Society of Victoria (239 A'Beckett Street Melbourne).

The exhibition explores the last ten decades of road history, featuring rarely seen images from Melbourne and regional Victoria.

Details of all activities are available at:

www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/centenary.



1913 Interest of school children in first car to reach Bullumwaal.



1947 Traffic and parking in Collins Street

Exhibition launch and talk – November 26

Spraying the Bitumen

presented by Sarah Rood and Katherine Sheedy

All members are warmly invited to the opening of the Centenary of Vic Roads exhibition:

To be held at the RHSV

239 A'Beckett Street

26 November

5.30 onwards

RSVP: centenary@roads.vic.gov.au

or: 9326 9288

To be followed by the talk.

See What's On
for more details

Office of Geographic Names News

Geographic Names News is now available online - the first edition since Land Victoria and the Office of Geographic Names became part of the new Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure.

As well as a message from the Registrar of Geographic Names, this issue includes information about:

- the ANZAC Commemorative Naming Project
- the RSL 98th annual state conference and the Office of Geographic Names' contribution
- enhancements to the VICNAMES, to capture the history of road names
- version 2 of the Guidelines for Geographic Names 2010 - Principle 1 (M) consulting with the public, and Principle 3 (G) reserving locality names
- auditing road names on plans of subdivision.

VICROADS CENTENARY
CONNECTING VICTORIANS FOR 100 YEARS
1913-2013
Sponsored by Longman Australia

YOU ARE INVITED

Please join us at the opening of 'VicRoads - Connecting Victorians for 100 years' - an exhibition of never-before-seen images.

Time: 5:30pm
Date: November 26
Location: Royal Historical Society of Victoria - 239 A'Beckett Street Melbourne
Refreshments: Provided

RSVP
Please RSVP by Monday 18 November to:
centenary@roads.vic.gov.au

Thanks to our supporters

BOOKS RECEIVED:

We note below relevant items sent to the Society. Interested groups or authors are invited to contribute to this valuable service to members in the News and through possible deposit in the library. Some items may later be reviewed in the Journal

John Ramsland, *Venturing Into No Man's Land, The Charmed Life of Joseph Maxwell VC World War I Hero*, Brolga Publishing, PO Box 12544, A'Beckett Street, Melbourne, 8006, 2012, pp. ix + 343, \$26-99. ISBN 9781922036636. Joe Maxwell, a young apprentice boilermaker in the Hunter Valley, joined the 1st AIF in 1915 and served throughout the war at Gallipoli, and on the Western Front, rising to the rank of lieutenant and being decorated many times; a DCM in 1917; and MC and bar in 1918; and finally : a VC all in France. War hero, his life when he returned to Australia was a chequered one: writer of a best-selling war memoir, *Hell's Bells and Mademoiselles* (first published 1932); a brief marriage and divorce; a period in gaol for failure to pay maintenance for his daughter; drifting employment mostly in manual jobs; ill-health related to his drinking. He died in 1971. The author forensically examines his military career and his life after the war. Always a great story teller, Ramsland sees this as his way of coping with depression. A valuable biography of a mostly forgotten war hero and knockabout Australian.

Norman Houghton, *Wombat Woodsmen, Sawmills and Timber Tramways of the Wombat State Forest 1853 to 2008*, Norman Houghton, PO Box 1128, Geelong, 3220, 2013, pp. iv + 166. ISBN 9780958301366. The author's knowledge of sawmills, timber tramways and long discontinued railways is unparalleled. Knowledge gained from intrepid bushwalking and careful search and examination of the records has produced a large number of well-illustrated books, often self-published. This one deals with the Wombat State Forest south and east of Daylesford. His work identifies the sites of mills, their ownership and operation period, and methods of timber extraction. The result is an excellent account of an extractive industry from the mid-19th century almost to the present. It adds greatly to his earlier work confined to the timber tramways and he uses the previously unavailable government files concerning forests. A considerable achievement.

Helen Stevens, *Somerset to Hobart in the 'Australasia', The Story of the Walden and Napper Families*, 388 Sylvaterre Rd, Pyramid Hill, 3575, 2011, pp. 93. A family history compilation focused on the descendants of John Walden and Hannah Napper, who emigrated from England in mid-19th century and spent their lives mostly in the

Sale area. Their many descendants spread to other parts including Western Australia and Pyramid Hill, and later Dandenong, There is a useful index of names.

Paul Terry, *In Search of Captain Moonlite, The Strange Life and Death of the Notorious Bushranger*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2013, pp. 255, \$29-99. ISBN 9781743315255. The life of Andrew George Scott aka Captain Moonlite, has long been the stuff of legends related to the story of bushrangers in Australia. Born in Ireland in 1845, Scott came to Victoria in 1868 after time with his family in New Zealand. His life ended when he was hung in Darlinghurst Gaol in 1880. In the intervening years, he had been an Anglican lay preacher at Bacchus Marsh and Mount Egerton, convicted of bank robbery, escaped from Ballarat prison, and taken to the road, eventually being involved in the pitched gun-battle at Wantabadgery Station near Gundagai in which a policeman was killed. A strange life indeed, full of mysteries. As the blurb maintains, he was 'charming,, articulate and intelligent', but also 'a thief, a liar and a chameleon'. Generally, a well-told story that examines his talents for leadership and claims about his sexuality as well as unravelling many of the myths. No index and a chronology of his life would have been very helpful.

Glenda Harriott (compiler and editor), *Waurm Ponds Yesterdays*, the author, 375 Cochranes Road, Waurm Ponds, 3216, pp. 115. A compilation of material about long-standing families of the area, its institutions especially its school, its clubs and activities, and its industries notably the rebirth of vineyards as well as the earlier importance of limestone quarries. Not indexed but with some interesting images.

Lenore Frost (ed.), *The Fine Homes of Essendon and Flemington 1846-1880*, Essendon Historical Society, Old Moonee Ponds Courthouse Museum, 768 Mt Alexander Rd, Moonee Ponds 3039, 2010, pp. 96. ISBN 9781876765064. An attractive publication that details the history of some 36 houses and their various owners taken from the period before land boom of the 1880s. Only nine are still standing. Splendidly illustrated with excellent photos including many by Charles Nettleton, and containing a very good index. There is much to commend in this joint production with multiple authors as well as splendid editing drawn from a vibrant historical society. An estimable model for others to follow.

June M Parrott, *Ada Elizabeth, The Story of a Kerr Family and Elizabeth Anne Tremayne, Her Higgins Tremayne Andrews Parrott Families*, June Parrott, 246 West Fyans Street, Newtown, 3220, 2012 and 2007, pp. x + 171, pp. xxii + 403. ISBN 9780646512440 and ISBN 0646441728.

Two exhaustive volumes dealing with the author's mother's and father's families. Extensively researched, amply illustrated and well-indexed, there is also some contextual discussion especially for the Geelong area where most of the Parrotts and their ancestors have lived since the 1840s.

Jack Mercer, *Hard Times, A Runaway's Adventures in the Americas, Transit Lounge*, Melbourne, 2013, pp. 368, \$29-99. ISBN 9781921924477. Jack Mercer wrote an account of his life and it is brought to publication by his grandson. Born in Archdale, he escaped from a brutal home environment in Ararat, briefly worked near Werribee, then left for the Americas experiencing shipwreck and rescue before ending up in various parts of South America, eventually reaching New York, improving his education and enlisting in Canada for the Royal Flying Corps and World War 1. His account covers this period. He later settled in Toronto but returned to Australia as an executive for an American company. A young man's adventure travel story, well told..

Ken James and Noel Davis, *The Boer War and the Castlemaine-Kyneton Districts*, the authors, 2013, pp. 462. A massive compilation of material, much drawn from local newspapers, about the areas of the title with an index of names, a list of all those who served, arranged both by district and unit. The material is presented under such headings as enlistments, farewells, community support, responses to the relief of Mafeking, news, letters (an extensive and interesting section), lectures, the wounded and ill, the deaths, peace, welcome home, and local memorials. A substantial source that tells much about the level of local involvement in a much forgotten war.

Mooroolbark History Group, *Celebrating Mooroolbark, Mooroolbark Community Centre and Festivals*, Mooroolbark History Group Inc., 2012, pp. 117. ISBN 9780987424006. The Mooroolbark Community Centre opened in 1980. A local history group was formed about five years ago and this is the publication of some of their work, designed to help fill some of the gaps in the preservation of the area's history. After a very brief account of early Mooroolbark, the focus is on the period since the opening of the community centre. Copiously illustrated with photos of events and people linked to the activities of the centre.

Following a report in *The Age*, 5 October 2013, that VCE students enrolled in Australian History had halved since 1995, whilst those enrolled in "Revolutions" had more than tripled in that time- Professor Stuart Macintyre wrote in *The Age*, 9 October 2013:

Our past need not be written off as history

If set in a wider world context, Australia's foundation could be fascinating to students.

In the 19th-century Australian school there were doubts that modern history was a fit subject for young minds. It was too recent, too tangled up with ancestral conflicts between Catholic and Protestant, Irish and English, which threatened to turn Australians against each other.

Educationists thought it safer to teach a less controversial history, one that used exemplary figures from the past to mark out a common heritage and instil a code of virtuous conduct. Hence the stories of patriots such as Horatio, Joan of Arc and William Tell, humanitarians such as William Wilberforce and Elizabeth Fry.

After Tony Abbott and Christopher Pyne criticised the new history curriculum for its partisan treatment of the country's past, there was an echo of such caution. Keith Windschuttle said that Australian history should not be part of the curriculum because it was all too political. To my surprise, my immediate thought was that he might be right.

I first became involved in preparing the curriculum in 2008 and was convinced from the outset that it should be based on world history. Asked by the National Curriculum Board (which has since become the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, ACARA) to prepare an initial framing paper for history, I said that if their studies were "to equip students to operate in the world in which they will live, they need to understand world history".

There were several reasons for this decision. One is that history provides knowledge that is not bound by our own experience, nor by our own past. It takes us to other times and places, confronts us with the unfamiliar, enables us to see historical forces operating in different contexts.

Second, there is substantial evidence that many students find Australian history boring. Anna Clark's 2008 study, *History's Children*, drew on extensive interviews with teachers and students who said it was dreary and uneventful. Her findings are confirmed by the report (*The Age*, October 5) that numbers in year 12 Australian history have dwindled to a fifth of those enrolled in the *Revolutions* subject.

Finally, there is much to be gained by opening Australian history up to the world history in which it is better understood. Students will surely gain a deeper appreciation of the longevity and richness of the Aboriginal occupation of this country if they know about



First Australian settlers: convicts sent to Australia, as depicted by Augustus Earle.

the parallel stories of human settlement of other continents. The convicts make greater sense if they are seen to form part of a global system of forced labour movement that began in the 17th century.

It is by making Australian history part of a larger history that we can dispel the common view that it is insular and uninteresting, and by teaching that larger history that we can make sense of the past.

The world history approach won overwhelming support from teachers, teacher educators, the History Teachers Association of Australia, university historians and members of the public. At each stage of the curriculum development, ACARA conducted workshops, forums and consultations, received on-line submissions and met interested parties. A team of curriculum writers produced successive drafts that were circulated, discussed and amended until the eight states and territories agreed to the new history curriculum.

During that process there were compromises. The primary school curriculum now follows a very conventional sequence that works from the family, the locality and community to Australian settlement, colonial and national history. It allows comparison with other places and other times, but in my view missed the opportunity to go further.

In years 7 to 10 the curriculum then works from ancient history to the present, and years 9 to 10 are very Australian. Year 9, for example, includes a substantial study of the First World War that makes it seem the fighting was restricted to Asia Minor and Western Europe. Again it allows for comparisons, but the opportunity to locate Australia's participation in a global conflict was not taken. The reasons for this reinstatement were irresistible: what storm of criticism might follow if students were denied the chance to learn about Gallipoli and Pozieres?

Why, then, the recent suggestions from the Prime Minister and Minister for Education that it needs to be reconsidered?

There is first of all the criticism that it is slanted towards the left. In his appearance at the Press Club on the eve of the election, Tony Abbott claimed that Labor prime ministers outnumbered non-Labor ones. This statement is incorrect. Across 100 pages, the history curriculum names six prime ministers among scores of other Australians. Two of them were Labor leaders, Curtin and Chifley; three were non-Labor, Deakin, Reid and Menzies; the sixth, Hughes, led Labor and non-Labor ministries.

Such head counting in any case betrays a fundamental misunderstanding of the purpose of a curriculum document. It is neither a checklist nor a blueprint. It provides the teacher with a framework that guides the teaching.

The notion that the curriculum defines what will be taught, precisely and prescriptively, is a misapprehension. The underlying assumption that every student will learn, accept and remember it is an absurdity - if it were true, then the mistaken identification of the prime ministers would not have occurred. This transmission model is one that bedevils arguments over school history and does a disservice to the teacher.

Many readers will recall the last time a prime minister intervened in school history with an ill-conceived summit and a hand-picked group of writers whose work was submitted to a process of consultation based on the judgment of just one person - the prime minister. That exercise ended ignominiously and it is to be hoped it isn't repeated.

Stuart Macintyre is the Ernest Scott Professor of History at the University of Melbourne.

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MELBOURNE OBSERVATORY 150TH ANNIVERSARY

This year marks the 150 anniversary of Melbourne Observatory, situated in the grounds of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne. Several events will take place on the weekend of November 23 and 24 to celebrate this notable event.

The Observatory was:

- a globally significant astronomical observatory in the second half of the 19th century,
- vital to Melbourne and Victoria's early development by fixing accurate time and precise data points for mapping,
- the site for other key sciences, particularly meteorology and geomagnetics and, nearby, botany at the Herbarium and the RBG.

To this day the Observatory is impressive evidence of the wealth and significance of the "Marvellous Melbourne" of the time and, as a result, is a listed heritage icon.

To ensure all these aspects are captured properly in the celebrations, the Royal Botanic Gardens and the Astronomical Society of Victoria involved the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, Museum Victoria, the Bureau of Meteorology, the Royal Society of Victoria and Sydney Observatory in planning the events.

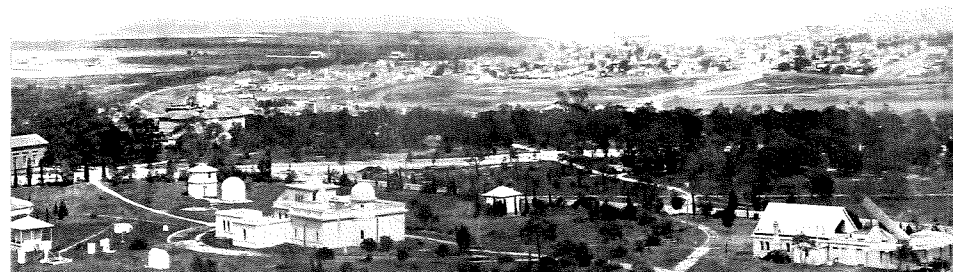
His Excellency the Governor, the Honourable Alex Chernov AC, QC, will launch the anniversary events and unveil a commemorative plaque on Saturday afternoon, November 23. In addition to the Governor, the Director of the RBG, Professor Tim Entwistle and the Deputy Lord Mayor of Melbourne, Cr Susan Riley, will speak.

"Appearances" will also be made by the

Governor at the time the Observatory opened, Sir Henry Barkly, and the then Government Astronomer, Robert Ellery. Costumed actors will draw from Barkly's and Ellery's own words to ensure an entertaining and historically accurate re-creation of the social and cultural context of "Marvellous Melbourne" and the scientific purpose and contribution of the Observatory.

The following day 24 November, "Colonial Astronomy" seminar, featuring a distinguished list of speakers drawn from the fields of astronomy, meteorology and geophysics—all of which were pursued on the site in the second half of the 19th century—will be held. Others, knowledgeable about the history and heritage values of the Observatory will also speak including the President of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, Associate Professor Don Garden, and Dr Barry Clark of the Astronomical Society of Victoria.

All the organisations involved in the Anniversary hope that it will not only mark past accomplishments but herald an era of revitalisation for the Observatory. Central to this is the planned return of the 1.2 metre Great Melbourne Telescope of 1869, then the largest fully steerable telescope in the world, to the Observatory and its availability for public viewing and education.



Panoramic view of Melbourne Observatory, circa 1875.

Source: Royal Astronomical Society

FIRE SERVICES LEVY

Have your say....

The Office of Tim Pallas MP, Member for Tarneit, Shadow Treasurer and Shadow Minister for Employment is collecting information on how the new Fire Services Property Levy is affecting historical societies.

Amy Mitchell, advisor to the Minister has written:

"Fire Services Property Levy

The Fire Services Property Levy (FSPL) was introduced by the Victorian Coalition Government in October 2012, following a recommendation from the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission which had in-principal bipartisan support at the time.

The FSPL replaces the previous Fire Services Levy, which was raised via insurance companies, and has been charged to all landowners from 1 July 2013, by local councils on behalf of the State Government.

Historical societies

It has been drawn to my attention that this scheme is causing particular difficulties for some members of the RHSV.

Local historical and genealogical societies contribute to the vitality and civic sensibility of both their local communities and our broader society.

They should not be placed under threat by a tax such as this. We would like to find out more about the effect that the FSPL is having on historical societies so that we can draw attention to it and place further pressure on the Government to review the operation of the FSPL so that it lives up to its promise of being fairer.

We believe the inequities and the social impact caused by faults in this legislation needs to be resolved.

If you are concerned about the amount your organisation is being charged under the Fire Services Property Levy (particularly as a proportion of your annual budget) and if this is affecting your activities, please contact my office on:

(03) 9742 6888 or email

tim.pallas@parliament.vic.gov.au."

Merton History Book Launch

It was a great day in the old Merton Hall on Saturday 26th October. After two years of sweat, blood and toil, the Merton History Group launched its first publication: *Merton – A History* to coincide with History Week 2013. Over 200 people packed the hall to hear speeches, look at displays, catch up with each other and buy a copy of the book. They also attended, in large numbers, tours of the local cemetery and the recently-refurbished Merton Hotel, complete with original Ned Kelly bullet hole in the door frame.

The day's climax came when Merton's oldest resident, 91 years young Rene Kipping, pulled the ribbon from a pile of books to launch the publication.

Merton – A History is 150 pages long, and jammed full of information about Merton's past, covering everything from Aboriginal days to the present day. Merton has seen a lot of changes since the first white people arrived in the late 1830s, and is still a thriving community with a lot of positive spirit. It was great to hear local politician Bill Sykes explain the funding available to restore the hall to its former glory, and urge the community to go through the process to achieve that aim.

Though the first print run was sold out on the day, a reprint has been ordered. Copies of the book are available through Carole Poussard, email csetford@iprimus.com.au phone (03) 5778 9625.



Anzac Centenary website launched

The Victorian Coalition Government has launched an Anzac Centenary website.

Designed to act as a one stop shop for learning about WW1 and sharing Victoria's stories the website will illustrate how Victorians can take part in the upcoming commemorations in their community.

The website is:

www.anzaccentenary.vic.gov.au

AROUND THE SOCIETIES

This column was compiled by Lenore Frost, Helen Boak and Elisabeth Jackson on behalf of History Victoria Support Group using information provided by societies, either by email or contained in their newsletters. For the February 2014 issue please send details of forthcoming events by 10 January to lenore10@hotmail.com.

AVOCA: The September edition of *Pyrenees Pioneers* includes notice of the Annual General Meeting to be held on Friday 15 November. The newsletter also includes information about local resident George Hugh Templeton who died as a result of wounds received at the battle of Polygon Wood in France in 1917.

BALNARRING: In the August issue of *Snippets* one of many interesting articles describes the gift of a Magic Lantern, including 100 glass slides, to the Reverend Edwards. This gift was used throughout the Parish not only for entertainment but also during religious services including at Coolart, the centre for social and religious activities.

BALWYN: On Thursday 14 November at 8pm at the Balwyn Evergreen Centre, 45 Talbot Avenue, Balwyn, the guest speaker will be Dr Ross McMullin on his book *Farewell, Dear People: Biographies of Australia's Lost Generation*. His book recently won the 2013 Prime Minister's Award for non-fiction. Enquiries: bhs@balwynevergreen.org.au.

BENALLA: The VicRoads travelling exhibition, "VicRoads - Connecting Victoria for 100 Years" will be at the Museum in Gallery 3 from Friday 6 to 25 November. See <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~benmus> or phone 03 5762 1749.

BRIGHTON CEMETORIANS: The September *Newsletter* features a number of stories about Irish folk buried in the Brighton Cemetery, many of them market gardeners in Benteigh. It also mentions a walk on Saturday 9 November at 2 pm, visiting people who were involved in the Crimean War. Enquiries: info@brightoncemetorians.org or phone 9558 4248.

BRUNSWICK: For a great day out visit Bridie O'Reilly Irish Pub for lunch at Noon on 7 December 2013, on the corner of Sydney and Brunswick Roads. Then stay for an interesting meeting at 1.30 pm when State School 1213's history from 1877 to 1970s will be celebrated. If you require further information email: brunswickhistoryinc@yahoo.com.

CAMBERWELL: On Thursday 28 November Trevor Hart will give a talk entitled "Wandering through the History of Camberwell". Trevor Hart is editor of *Camberwell History* and a former president of CHS. Meetings are held in The Blackwood Room, Camberwell Town Hall building, 8 Inglesby Road, Camberwell at 8.00pm. Enquiries: enquiries@chs.org.au.

CAMPERDOWN: Visit historic Gnotuk

House and Garden on Tuesday 3 December, departing 6 pm from the Heritage Centre in shared cars. BYO picnic tea. Bookings: Heather on 5593 9313 or 0409 903 588.

CARISBROOK: A History and Heritage Exhibition was held at the Town Hall on the weekend of 14-15 November, with a students' activity day on 16 October. Attendance over the weekend was about 250, plus 250 students the next day. About 300 photos from the collection were used, on corflute backings and mounted in display frames.

CINEMA AND THEATRE: The society is looking for material such as cinema tickets, photos, admission records, details of the local cinema or hall, or advertising material for cinemas around Australia. Further information can be obtained from Queensland Convenor, Steve Maggs 0413805320 or via our website www.caths.org.au.

COBURG: The Coburg Historical Society newsletter *Search* for September 2013 includes a report of the Annual General Meeting and a lengthy obituary for Athol Attwater – a long-term Coburg Councillor and community activist.

DAYLESFORD: A grant from the Holsworth Trust has enabled the cataloguing group to produce a *Cemetery Walk* booklet showing many early graves in Daylesford Cemetery, with some background information about each person, and many photos. Booklets can be purchased for \$5 at the Museum - 100 Vincent Street, Daylesford 3460 Email: history@daylesford.net.

DUNOLLY: The Goldfields Historical and Arts Society will hold their Christmas breakup at the Bealiba Reservoir on Monday 18 November from 11 am. If the weather is unfavourable the Bealiba Hall will be used.

ECHUCA: We been researching and writing a new book based on "Letters from the Front" from Echuca and Moama soldiers as published in the *Riverine Herald* during WW1. Our aim is to have the book published in December 2014 and to be available for sale in April 2015. If you have any photos or information regarding local soldiers who served at Gallipoli please contact John or Jan at Museum 54801325.

ELTHAM: The September newsletter of the Eltham District Historical Society includes information on the Shire of Eltham Pioneers Photograph Project. Early photographs of the district were collected and copied in 1971 as part of the Shire centenary and these can now be seen at Eltham Library.

GEELONG: *Investigator*; the magazine of the Geelong Historical Society Vo.48, no. 3 includes a chronology of items from the *Geelong Advertiser* 1913 and an article about local woman, Mary Anne Benallack, who served as a nurse in World War 1.

HAMILTON: We received a grant for

\$3548 in the 2013 Local History Grants program which enabled us to have our microfilm copies of the Hamilton Rates (1926-1970) and a small number of issues of the *Hamilton Spectator* (1860-1879) put into a digitised form and stored on CD. Enquiries: hamiltonhistory@anson.com.au or phone 03 55724933.

HAWTHORN: Hawthorn Historical Society will celebrate its centenary in 2014 and is considering how to celebrate this. Its Annual General Meeting will be held on 10 November at 2.30 pm and will feature Major General Michael O'Brien speaking about the "Lost Soldiers of the Fromelles".

KEILOR: 150 Year Celebrations in Keilor will include a Fairy Garden Party on Sunday 17 November, 10 am to 3 pm, \$10 per person at 51 Overnewton Rd, Keilor. Bookings required, Overnewton Castle, 9331 6367. See www.overnewtoncastle.com.au.

KILMORE: Kilmore Historical Society has launched its latest publication *Sydney Street - Kilmore; past and present*. This is available for \$10 at the Society or Kilmore Bookstore.

KOROIT: The Koroit and District Historical Society newsletter for August 2013 includes an article on Koroit Country Women's Association memorabilia. Koroit CWA has recently been re-formed after a gap of 40 years. The Society is gathering information on soldiers listed on the Koroit Primary School Roll of Honour, 1914-1918.

LA TROBE SOCIETY: Distinguished soprano Merlyn Quaife, AM and a delightful choir will present traditional Christmas carols at La Trobe's Cottage, King's Domain, on Monday 16 December, 6.30-8.30 p.m. Festive refreshments will be served. Admission \$15, \$30 families, payable at the gate. All welcome. Enquiries: 9646 2112. www.latrobesociety.org.au.

LINTON: The Linton and District Historical Society is embarking on restoration works for the two heritage buildings it uses and has had some success in applying for grants for this purpose. The Society has commenced work on its next publishing project which will be a book of historical photographs of the district.

MIDDLE PARK: The October *Newsletter*, No 8, features the architectural style of terraces, together with an accompanying article on cast iron decoration in Melbourne. The next general meeting will be held on Monday 2 December at the Mary Kehoe Centre, 224 Danks St, Albert Park at 4.20 pm. Enquiries: middleparkhistorygroup@gmail.com.

MOORABBIN: A spark plug retrieved from Harry Hawker's

aircraft at Loughshinney, Ireland in 1913 was forwarded to the society via the Australian ambassador. The Society could not hold an item that was to be of National importance at the Box Cottage, so it has been delivered to Point Cook. Enquiries: 9555 3320.

NAVAL: A commemorative service for HMAS Goorangai, "Lost with all Hands", will be held on Sunday 17 November at the Ocean View Reserve, Queenscliff. Marchers fall in at King Street, at 11.15. The service will commence at 11.30 am and lunch at the RSL Hall in King St at 12.30 pm. Bookings essential at \$25 per head. Contact your ship or Unit association. Dress: Medals please.

NHILL: The August- September newsletter of the Nhill and District Historical Society includes extracts from the 1882 editions of the local newspaper which has recently been digitised. It also includes the President's Annual Report.

PORT FAIRY: Port Fairy Historical Society has a Facebook page and this has been used to reach a broader audience and gather new information about the history of the area. The September/October newsletter also includes an account of local pioneer John Hooper.

PRAHRAN HISTORICAL: The society is very excited to report the emergence of the missing first Council minutes book for the Prahran Council, covering 1856 to 1860. At the first meeting on 25 February, Councillor Sargood was elected Chairman. For further details see the September-October 2013 Newsletter, or email pahranhistoricalsociety@yahoo.com.au.

STAWELL: Stawell Historical Society has received a grant of \$2000 from the Stawell Gold Mines which will be used towards the cost of a book on the history of gold mining in Stawell. The book is being compiled by society member, Greg Cameron.

TRAFALGAR: The *Trafalgar and District Historical Society Gazette* for August 2013 includes an account of 125 years of football in Trafalgar and a history of the Trafalgar Traders' Association.

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WARRAGUL: One of the most interesting items in the society collection is the Miller brothers' album containing 48 photos, showing public, commercial and private buildings. The Miller brothers were building contractors. Some of the buildings date from the early 1880s. Enquiries: 03 5623 2644 or 5622 3425.

WARRANDYTE: The current exhibition in the society's museum is "Warrandyte Then and Now". The images feature changes in the built environment over the last 70 years. The next meeting of the society will be held on Monday 18 November a 7.30 pm. Enquiries: 9844 4176.

WAVERLEY: *History Here*, the journal of the society, contains an article on the locality name of Wellington in the City of Monash. The article includes a photograph of the Wellington School from the turn of the 20th century, a 1945 aerial survey photograph, and a plan of the Wellington Township. Enquiries: 9802 9332.

History

NEWS

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ESTABLISHED 1909

President	Don Garden
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Design and Artwork: John Gillespie 0419 135 332

Printed by: First Class Mailing 9555 9997

The RHSV acknowledges the support of the Victorian
Government through Arts Victoria

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Victoria

Items for publication should be sent to the
Executive Officer, RHSV
email: office@historyvictoria.org.au
Copy closes 10th of the month

PRINT POST APPROVED PP336663/00011
ISSN 1326-2696