

HISTORY NEWS

ISSUE 363 | DECEMBER 2022



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The real Santa Claus

Holidays: Daylesford & District

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What's on at RHSV

Where possible we offer all our events as hybrid: both in our premises at 239 A'Beckett St, Melbourne and via Zoom. Information on booking tickets to all our events can be found on our website

MARKETING 101

Date: Monday December 5

Time: 12:00-1:00 pm

Free, RSVP Now

ZOOM, join from anywhere in the world

Christina Browning, our RHSV Marketing Manager, brings a wealth of experience to the RHSV - and not just in social media. Christina started her working life as a journalist before segueing into marketing. The forums are low-key and they not recorded. You can bring your questions and problems and you can also ask Christina to tackle some specific issue in a future forum. They will be held on the 2nd Monday of each month from 12-1pm.

FLOS GREIG, AUSTRALIA'S FIRST WOMAN LAWYER WITH IOLA MATHEWS

Date: Tuesday March 21, 2023

Time: 7:00 pm

\$10-\$20

Hybrid event, join from anywhere in the world

When Grata Flos Matilda Greig walked into her first law school class at the University of Melbourne in 1897, it was illegal for women to become lawyers. But though the legal system did not even recognise her as a person, she won the right to practise and helped thousands of other women access justice. In defying the law, Greig literally changed its face.



The first woman to be admitted to legal practice in Australia, Greig was at the vanguard of 'the graceful incoming of a revolution' as described by then Chief Justice Sir John Madden, as he presided over the ceremony granting her admission to the Victorian bar in August 1905 (*The Advertiser*, 1905). Remarkable, courageous, adventurous, involved and articulate, Flos Greig stands as an important trail-blazer for Australian women.

We are delighted that Iola Mathews OAM, will deliver the 2023 Women's History Month Lecture, part of our Distinguished Speakers series. Iola, journalist and author, has written about her ancestors and her own life in several books. She will talk about her latest book *Flos Greig: Australia's First Woman Lawyer*, and will touch on *Chequered Lives: John Barton Hack and Stephen Hack and the early days of South Australia*, about her pioneer ancestors in South Australia, and *Winning for Women: A Personal Story*, about her time in the women's movement in the 1970s and 1980s.

SAVE THE DATE

We have a fabulous line-up of speakers for our Distinguished Lecturer series in the first half of 2023 so pencil these into your diaries now

Tuesday 21 February

Dr Rachel Standfield will deliver the RHSV Indigenous History Lecture

Tuesday 21 March

Iola Mathews will deliver the Women's History Month Lecture

Tuesday 18 April

Dr Ashleigh Green will deliver the AGL Shaw Lecture presented in partnership with the C J La Trobe Society

May date tbc

The Honourable Justice Christopher Maxwell AC will deliver the inaugural Paul Mullaly Lecture in Law and History

Tuesday 20 June

Dr Bart Ziino will deliver the Weston Bate Oration

We remind historical societies that March is Women's History Month and October is History Month so start planning events for those months. The Historical Society Support Committee has planned 4 workshops across rural and regional Victoria in 2023. In early February we'll be launching the exhibition, 'Well Built: Simmie & Co. Master Builders' curated by Dr Andrew Kilsby. Our monthly Zoom-based events, Cataloguing Clinics, History Writing Group and Marketing forums will return in 2023 and we are looking forward to continuing our joint presentations with the National Archives of Australia, Professional Historians Australia (Vic & Tas), the Genealogical Society of Victoria and Engineering Heritage Victoria. Also keep an eye out for some new-style events that we'll be introducing in the new year.

History News

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

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EMAIL sbetridge@outlook.com

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COVER IMAGE: Hollyrood House, c1920s, see page 4-5

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President's report

We are nearing the end of 2022, which in many ways has been a more difficult year than the two before it. The global economy has hit headwinds, exacerbated by Russian adventurism and illegality in Ukraine. A dreadful loss of life and destruction has resulted there, along with grain shortages and rising energy costs across the world. Covid was a black swan event. While Putin's invasion of Ukraine was not of the same magnitude of surprise, it still left most of us incredulous.

All Australians face the consequences of a prolonged pandemic, which is about to enter a new wave, and difficult world events. The RHSV has also experienced some difficulties, particularly in terms of our investments which have experienced a downturn. Fortunately, any loss is a paper one and hopefully temporary and cyclical. Our financial fundamentals remain solid, and our human capital, our staff and volunteers, are nothing short of excellent. We have gained a wonderful new crop of volunteers this year, some of whom I have been hard at work in the Drill Hall on our postcard and image collections: and having lots of fun. Several are working on our new edition of Weston Bate's Melbourne lanes book, which will be out in 2024.

Memberships remain about the same. Last report I suggested we all ask a friend to join or to donate. I practised what I preached referring in my request to our loss after next year of any government funding. I asked twelve friends and colleagues to become a member or to consider making a donation. A

magnificent eight of them joined. I hope you may have similar success.

As with each New Year we look forward to 2023 to be a brighter year. We will hit the ground running when Dr Rachel Standfield delivers the second Indigenous Lecture in February. Next May we launch a new distinguished biennial lecture in Law Week, the Paul Mullaly Lecture in Law and History. It will be given in 2023 by a distinguished member of the law profession, the Honourable Christopher Maxwell, former head of the Appeals Court. This lecture will alternate each year with the new Jones Lecture in Social History.

The *Victorian Historical Journal* for December 2022 is a special issue on the 1919 pandemic and other health emergencies, which we hope will interest and intrigue you. In 2023 there will be three issues of the *Victorian Historical Journal*, one a special issue dedicated to the papers from our successful History Month conference on the 1872 Education Act. *History News* will continue to intrigue us with great Victorian stories.

There is much to look forward to next year from the RHSV. Until then, please enjoy a safe and joyous Christmas with family and friends; remember those less fortunate than us; and block out even for just a moment, the wider problems of this troubled world.

Richard Broome AM

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The RHSV sends best wishes to all its members and friends for a merry Christmas a very happy New Year.

The RHSV will be closed for two weeks over Christmas. We close at 12noon on Friday 23 December and reopen on Monday 9 January 2023.



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Holidays: Daylesford & District

■ **Left:** View to Wombat Hill, Daylesford c1930
Above: Vincent Street, Daylesford c1950s

Whether by horse drawn coach, train or later motorcar, visitors approaching Daylesford were soon captivated by the looming hilltop appearing in the landscape. The township huddles around that ancient feature; known as Wombat Hill, perched some 600 Metres above sea level.

Holidays at Daylesford and Hepburn Springs have been popular for almost 150 years. Prior to the railway in 1880, this journey was for the hardy and determined traveler. A rather rough Cobb & Co. coach from Malmsbury Station brought visitors through forest and farmland to Daylesford.

Accommodation in those early days was primarily at hotels such as the Royal Mail, Volunteer and Prince of Wales. Once the railway was fully established visitor numbers grew rapidly and new guesthouses, expanded hotels and boarding houses developed.

The district boasted a number of waterfalls nestled in lush forest, each with walks and picnic spots. Visit the majestic botanic garden with rotunda, fern-gully walk and ample flower beds. The commanding views north to Mt Franklin, Mt Alexander and Mt Tarrengower ensured an energetic walk from town was well rewarded.

The town's commercial heart was tightly located along Vincent and Howe Streets.

Every possible need could be met at the many stores including dining rooms, tearooms, cake and confectionary shops, draperies, giftware stores, booksellers, plant nursery, furniture and of course the photographic businesses ready to capture or print your holiday pictures. Late night shopping with the local band playing from one of the hotel balconies was most popular with holiday makers in the 1920s.

The area was renowned for the mineral springs at Spring Creek (Hepburn Springs). The sparkling water was available to buy in Melbourne and other large towns across Victoria but freely available here. Other mineral springs including Daylesford, Eganstown and Glenlyon were soon developed as popular tourist attractions. Visitors were soon choosing their favourite mineral spring to drink.

Crowds of visitors gathered at the springs to "take the waters". People would compete and boast of the number of glasses they had drunk and how healthy they were feeling. The locals might suggest that the steep walk from the reserve to the guesthouses was contributing to their vigour.

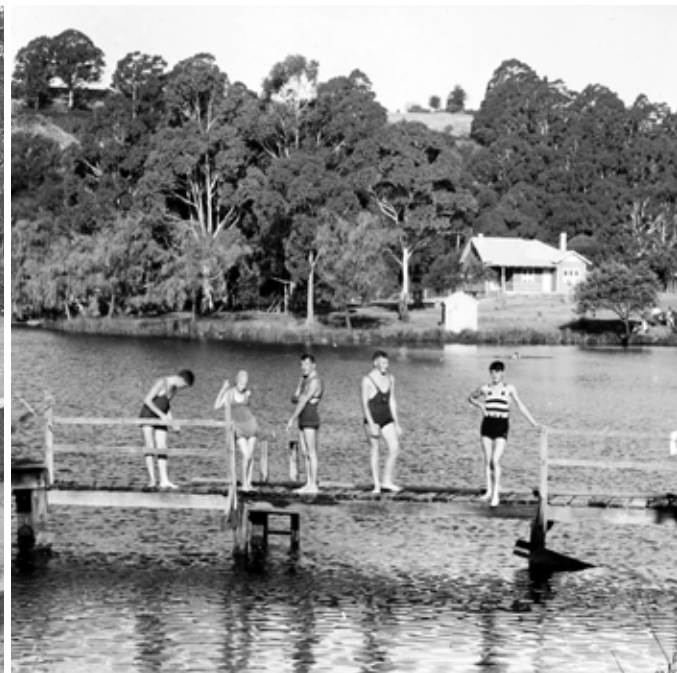
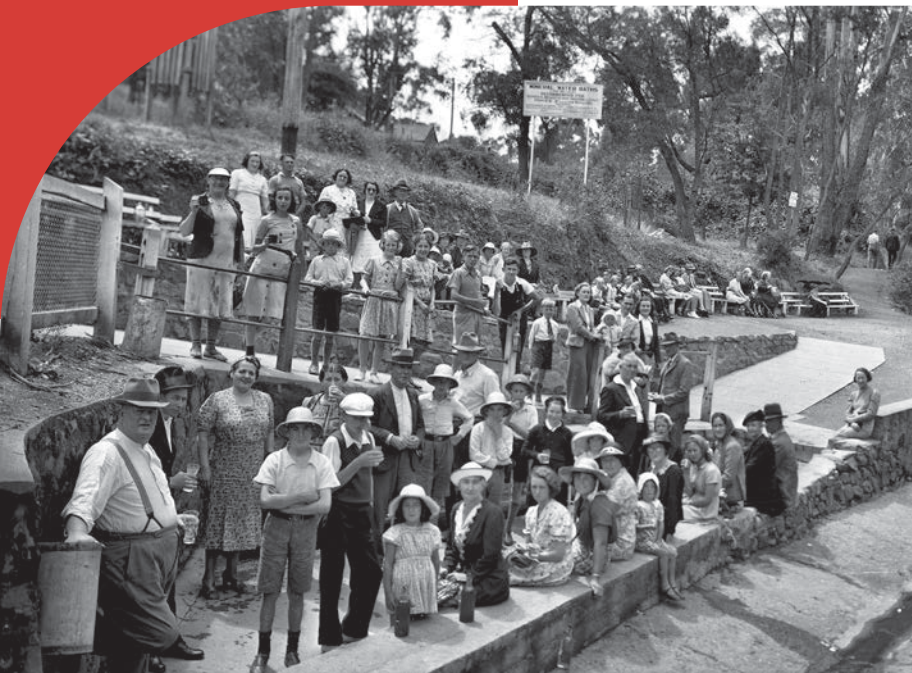
Swimming and boating were established at the Jubilee Lake on the southern outskirts of the town. Another lake was formed closer to the town in 1930, Lake Daylesford.

Accommodation proprietors strived to build a reputation. Visitors were simply happy to have a clean warm bed. In

peak tourist periods this might be on a verandah, in a sleep-out or even in a tent. Visitors came to have fun and join in with other people. Food was really the most important element by which to judge a good host. Guests were encouraged to gather for evening meals when stories could be told, the day's activities discussed and friendships formed or revisited.

Each guesthouse had a 'Host' or 'Hostess' who might be a regular visitor or the proprietor. Their task was to arrange the variety of activities for the guests. In the evenings there was entertainment: a sing-a-long around the piano, euchre card competitions, fancy dress parties and house concerts. Other events were organised between guesthouses to build on the 'fun' reputation of the area. Progressive dinners engaged visitors going from house to house while each host attempted to outdo the other. Singing and dancing in the street enlivened the town as people went between places. Local community groups would organise fundraising events, dances, suppers and sporting events to benefit the district and visitors.

Horse drawn carriages were still available for tourists up to the 1930s. Motor cabs and limousines were available to conduct private tours and picnic parties. Tours could be to Trentham Falls, Loddon Falls, Leonards Hill flower farm or to Crowe's farm at Porcupine Ridge for scones, strawberries and cream.



Outlying dances and concerts at Shepherds Flat, Eganstown, Musk Vale or Yandoit halls were often serviced by regular delivery trucks lined with timber bench seats roped to the side walls. Each event had residents well able to play accordion, piano or violin, and they would sing and entertain, provide a spread of food and benefit from the paying visitors who were there to enjoy themselves.

Daylesford boasted moving pictures at the Rex, Alpha and Star Cinemas while most Fridays and Saturdays the town hall hosted dances, concerts and fairs. Hepburn Springs had the Palais dance hall with its highly regarded sprung floor and adjoining supper rooms. Dancing competitions and instruction were all available to enhance the visitor experience.

The average visitor would plan their stay to include a checklist of key attractions to visit. The day would start with a hearty breakfast at their guesthouse, a lunch was packed, a 'billy' provided to heat

tea and a bottle to collect water. Off they went thinking nothing of a two or three hour walk to, for example, Deep Creek Spring or Woolnoughs Spring, exploring the countryside as they strolled, peering down deep mine shafts and investigating old ruins. Sampling the odd apple or pear hanging along a fence line somehow seemed quite acceptable.

On arriving at their destination there was a fire to set and a 'billy' to boil. Then relax and take in the view, enjoy your picnic lunch and walk down to sample the local mineral water. Finally the visitors would head back for dinner by six and be ready to share the day's adventure with fellow house guests.

Gary Lawrence
Curator

Daylesford & District Historical Society
Gathered from research for our past exhibition, *Happy Holidays, 2019*
Photographs from our collection.



■ **Top:** Cabs for hire, a group at Mt Franklin crater, c1910

Mid Left: Crowds gather at the mineral spring, Hepburn Springs reserve. c1940

Mid Right: Swimmers at Jubilee Lake c1940

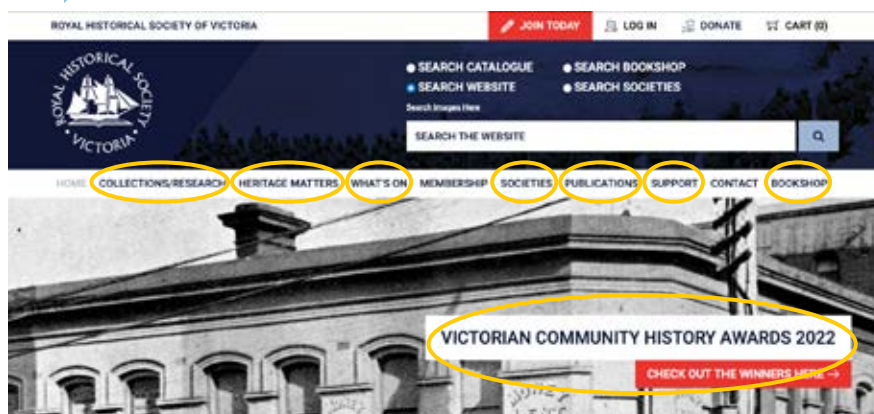
Above: Daylesford Soldiers Orchestra, c1930s

History Victoria Support Group's recommended holiday reading: the RHSV website

From the top of the RHSV web site

This article's title is half-humorous, the other half is quite serious considering that many of us enjoy fewer demands over the summer break. I confess to not having read every item in entirety on our website, but I know enough to report truthfully on its breadth and depth of practical as well as historical content. So, HVSG's encouragement this month is for you to enjoy some slow, cool browsing over the summer either in a loungeroom space or under a tree's shade. Pursue your individual and society's interests and needs and see where the links usefully lead. Here are some starting points.

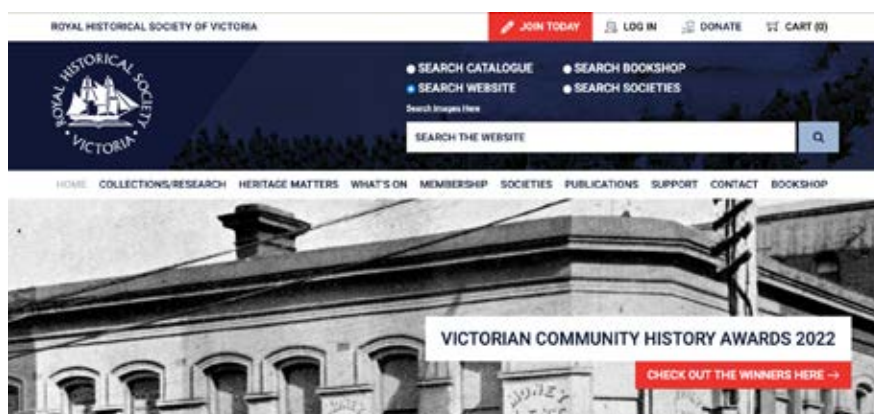
then scroll to the bottom of the RHSV website for links to more information.



RHSV home page

RHSV's home page offers snapshots on upcoming events, physical and digital exhibitions, publications on diverse topics, and achievements and challenges in 'history and heritage matters':

<https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/>



RHSV Objectives and Policies

Everything on the website aligns with RHSV Objectives and Policies: <https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/about/society-objectives/>.

However, more 'tailored' searches by overall category, then dropdown boxes into individual articles, provide wisdom on matters that surely, across a year, occupy your own and your society's thinking.



What's on

'What's On' showcases further details of events, including exhibitions and RHSV training seminars on matters such as cataloguing and marketing, and a section where you can publicise your own event:

<https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/rhsv-events/>

Especially creative in its messages is the 'Stay @ Home Festival'. No need for Covid or a lockdown for you to enjoy the reading here, as well as encouragements to undertake your own writing and creative activities:

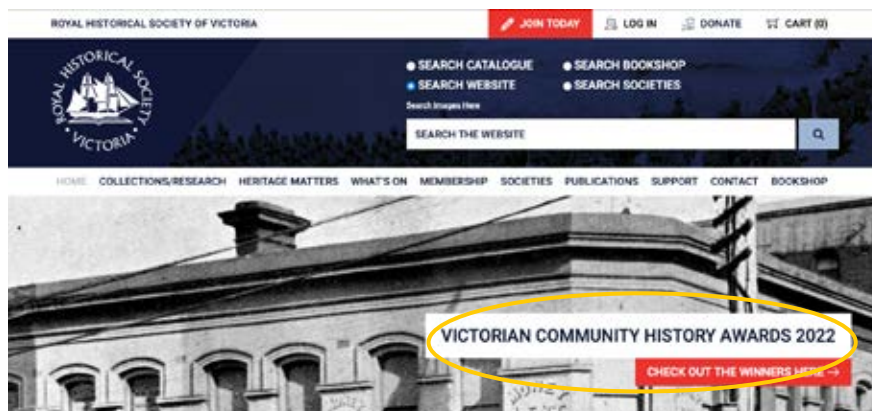
<https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/stay-at-home-festival/>



Community History Awards

In terms of writing, you might eventually enter your work in the Victorian Community History Award:

<https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/?s=community+history+awards>



Holsworth Grants

You might contemplate if a Holsworth Grant could support you:

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

Women's History Month, History Month and Podcasts

You might begin planning for Women's History Month (March) or History Month (October), or you might close your eyes altogether and listen comfortably to podcasts:

https://www.historycouncilvic.org.au/womens_history_month

<https://historymonth.org.au/>

<https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/resources/lecture-podcasts/>

Collections and Research

Find out about the current RHSV resource collection and its unique qualities as well as the needs within specific collecting policy guidelines. There are also 'boutique' collection exemplars, including the very summery 'Collections Lounge' which is more of an informal, non-curated area where members share their work. Importantly, there is advice on how to conduct your own research or commission RHSV to do so on your behalf:

<https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/search-collection/about-the-collection/>

Heritage Matters

This page contains current and archived heritage advocacy stories where the wins will inspire and the losses will give cause all the more to agitate. The stories, themselves, contain advice, whereas the National Trust Advocacy Toolkit provides a more formal set of strategies in five valuable guides:

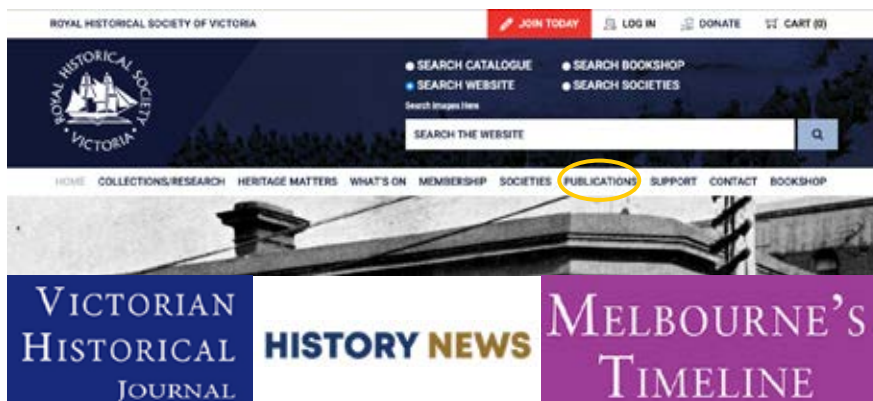
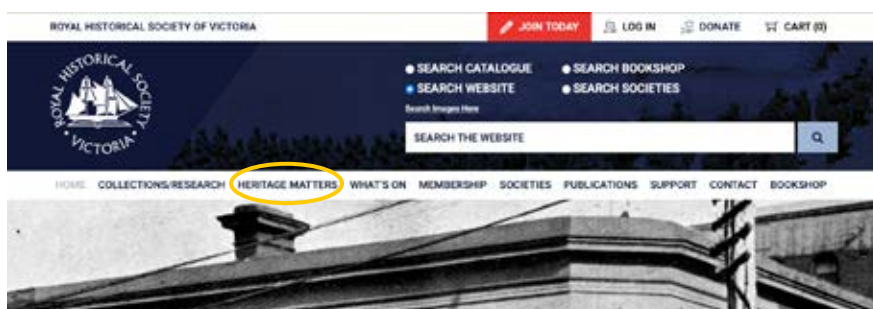
<https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/heritage-matters-rhsv-heritage-committee/current-advocacy-projects/>

Publications

The RHSV's own publications offer a wealth of reading of all kinds. The affectionately-named 'VHJ' is proudly Australia's second-longest running professional Australian historical journal. You can also enjoy lighter reads such as this newsletter, the colourful 'guides', the Annual Reports which showcase RHSV achievements each 12 months, and a now free-to-download guide to support your own writing:

<https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/publications/>

HOLSWORTH LOCAL HERITAGE GRANTS



Bookshop

A logical next visit is the RHSV 'Bookshop' being the only specialist purveyor of publications embracing Victoria's history. If by some strange chance any of the readings suggested above have not appealed, something in the bookshop surely will:

<https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/bookshop/>



Support: Membership, Volunteer, Donations, financial and of resources

There are, of course, quick links at the top and the bottom of the home page, and further details on being a member under 'Membership' and being a volunteer or donor under 'Support':

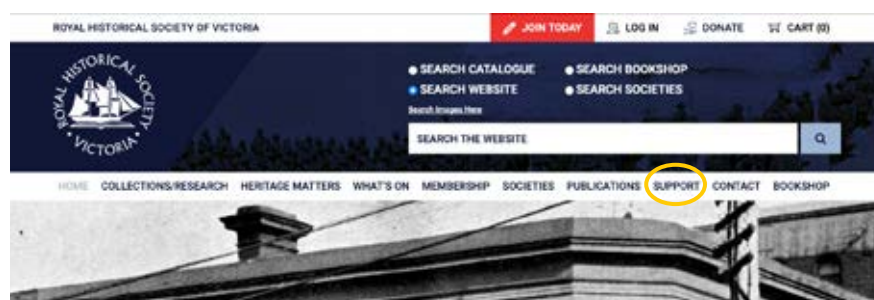
<https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/membership/>

<https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/support/become-a-volunteer/>

<https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/support/donate-financially/>

<https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/support/bequests/>

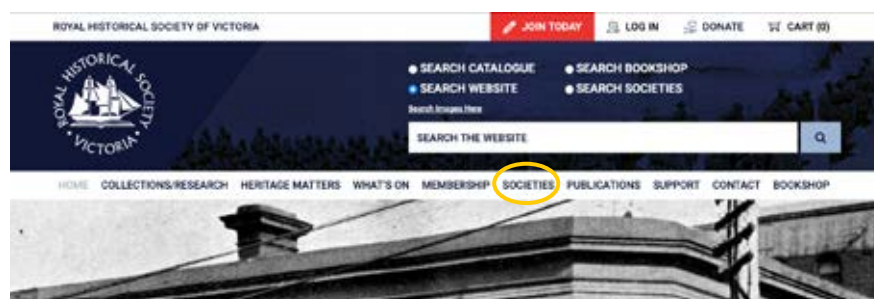
<https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/donate-items/>



Societies

But, perhaps, I have left the best to last: 'Societies'. The benefits of affiliation and insurance with RHSV are explained fully:

<https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/societies/>



History Victoria Support Group Resources

But I foremost draw attention to the wealth of practical advice under 'HVSG Resources' where you will find the 'Guide to Managing Historical Societies' and 'Other Resources'. Here, you will find topics as diverse as making archive boxes through to social media impact. Very often as HVSG Convenor, I am able to answer inquiries that come my way simply by linking correspondents to the information here:

<https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/societies/hvsg-resources/>

HVSG RESOURCES

The HVSG team and I have discovered across 2022 how much wonderful work preserving and promoting Victoria's history and heritage is underway Victoria-wide. We have enjoyed working with you in different ways and look forward to 2023. You have certainly earned a little nap in the cool of your loungeroom or

under the tree but we hope that your explorations of what's on offer will also provide the comfort of knowing already what to do and how, when your new year gets underway.

More in time,
Dr Rosalie Triolo
Convenor HSVG (RHSV)
Email: hvsg@historyvictoria.org.au

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 2023 ISSUE please send details to office@historyvictoria.org.au by 2 January 2023.

AVOCA: At the start of October, our committee members were invited to join other Avoca Community groups and clubs for an expo at the Avoca Town Hall. The event was organised by Advance Avoca Inc and the Pyrenees Shire. It was a wonderful opportunity to showcase the Society and introduce attendees to our activities and extensive range of historical records.

BRUNSWICK: Highlights of our very busy year: we updated our constitution; we have a new website; we established a Facebook page; we were successful in securing a Commonwealth Grant of \$4500 for IT equipment; we held well attended monthly meetings; volunteers met weekly at Brunswick Library to work on updating *It happened in Brunswick*; we held regular working bees to organise and record the items in our collection; we have reprinted two publications, *Frame by frame: a history of Brunswick's picture theatres* (2010) and *It happened in Brunswick, 1837-1987* (1987) and we have held three sets of Sydney Road History Walks in partnership with the Sydney Road Brunswick Association and a fourth set will be held in early November. Currently, we are also working on a new edition of *The street names of Brunswick: the story behind the sign*.

brunswickhistory.org.au

<https://www.facebook.com/brunswickcommunityhistorygroup/>



**Brunswick
Community
History Group Inc**

BUNGAREE AND DISTRICT: Another new year is quickly coming upon us and we then look forward to another great Australia Day when we unveil plaques on our heritage wall. We hope to have two more plaques unveiled. The wall is often visited by members of the public and is a lasting monument to all the people who have made Bungaree and District a great place to live.

facebook.com/groups/148332039088712

HEALESVILLE: The Society has engaged with Healesville High School, and the September newsletter is the first example of the co-operation between the Society and the school. With the initiative and involvement of Deputy Principal, Laura Mitchell, a member of a long standing, well known Healesville family, we have established a link between the two, where students from the School will help with the presentation of the newsletter and later with digitisation of our archival material.

MALDON MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES: Available now: Maldon Museum and Archives 2023 Calendar. Newly created 2023 Calendar features 12 photographs from our unique collection and printed on 160gsm satin finish paper; this will make an ideal Christmas gift for yourself, friends and family! Available in two sizes and fit in to A4 and A5 size envelopes for mailing. Large A4 (opens to A3) is available for \$15 (\$18 posted); Small A5 (opens to A4) is available for \$8 (\$10 posted). In stock now at the Museum, or contact Secretary on 0427 752 598 or email secretary@maldonmuseum.com.au to arrange purchase.

MIDDLE PARK: The Society is pleased to announce the publication of the fourth book in its historical series, this time *Albert Park: Gardens to the Sea*. The book is available from the Avenue Bookshop and can be ordered from our website. This publication leads to a long called for major change in focus for the MPHG which, with members' approval at the forthcoming AGM, will expand into Albert Park. <https://middleparkhistoryg.wixsite.com/mphg>



PHILLIP ISLAND: The full colour glossy booklet entitled *Walk Around the Block in Cowes*, 'Walk Number 1' is completed and now available to our members for the heavily discounted price of \$5; \$15 for non-members. It can be picked up at the Chapel Street premises or can be sent which will incur postage costs.

If you would like a copy please email: j.gittus43@gmail.com

PORT MELBOURNE: The end of an era. A crowd lined the Port Melbourne foreshore on the evening of Saturday 22 October 2022 to farewell the *Spirit of Tasmania*, Society members among them. The familiar rhythm of her coming and going and the sound of the horn will be sorely missed.



ROMSEY AND LANCEFIELD DISTRICTS: We are planning a really interesting and exciting 2023 and we want as many of you as possible to be part of it. Along with the talks we host every year, we are planning to put together some small exhibitions in the Courthouse about many of the lives lived in and around Romsey and Lancefield.

When I talk about the lives, I mean our lives, your parent's, grandparent's and great grandparent's lives. It is the stories around those lives, what they did, how they earned a living, who they married, how they rode a horse 6 miles to and home from school, that fascinate us all and so they need to be told. And we need your help to do that. We are also hoping to start work with a number of other historical societies to present some projects about regional Victoria and our history to the State Government for development for the 2026 Commonwealth Games.

The RHSV History Victoria Bookshop

We stock everything related to Victorian history in all its many guises – the latest releases, classics, children's books, books that aren't sold anywhere else, coffee-table books and second-hand books. We have a particular focus on Indigenous history.

- Australia Post cut-off for domestic delivery is Friday 16 December
- Click and Collect available until noon on Friday 23 December
- We gift wrap and send books anywhere in the world.

Historyvictoria.org.au/bookshop/

03 9326 9288

At 239 A'Beckett St, Melbourne
we are open M-F 9am – 5pm.

SANDRINGHAM: We are very pleased to have made a fresh start in our successful move to new premises at 15 Melrose Street, Sandringham. It is indeed a fresh start for the Society as we anticipate soon being reunited with our Collection; for four years it has been inaccessible, kept in storage in no less than three different locations. It is also a fresh start to feel we are settled in one location and will not have to move again until we make our last move into the refurbished Masonic Hall. We are advised that this will be around July 2024.

<https://sandringhamhistorical.org.au/>



SEYMOUR: The Society has had water up to about a foot throughout the building and because of this we have to move out for about eight months so the floors can be replaced; this is going to be a long process. Currently we have people trying to dry out the personal files and a lot of wet resources. We are doing our best to save items but some are beyond repair: mainly books and photos. If you have any time free we would be grateful for some volunteers to help with this load. The Society will not be open for about ten months... maybe longer.

SOUTH EASTERN: Getting to Know your Family History: a series of talks on the third Thursday of the month, starting 16 February, 2023. Presented by Jane Rivett-Carnac, President of the Narre Warren & District Family History Group and Heather Arnold, President of the Koo Wee Rup Swamp Historical Society. Venue: Koo Wee Rup Swamp Historical Society Museum, 325 Rossiter Road, cr Henry Street, Koo Wee Rup. Talks run from 11am until 12pm. Gold coin donation appreciated. No bookings required. Parking is available at rear of museum.

STAWELL: The Society has been very busy and productive this year. Works included, but were not limited to: In October, the Stawell Genealogy Group "Biarri" disbanded, and we agreed to accept their information, books and furniture. This required much sorting, setting up shelves etc. Records such as funeral sheets, cemetery and death certificates are being integrated into our systems, both digitally and physically. We have had 151 enquiries. Museum visitors numbered 134, with several large groups: St. Arnaud Visitor Information Centre volunteers, members of the Eastern Ranges Retirees Group, 40 students from St. Patrick's Primary School and 5 Shire Councillors. Kate, in charge of the museum and also Publicity Officer, organises these groups as well as updating the Society's details on internet sites. We have installed new shelving, moved display boards from the front

room to the mining room and rehung the 1866, 1905 and 1990 panoramas in the kitchen area. We continue to catalogue items, scan and digitise the photos. And so very much more. Thanks to our many wonderful volunteers.

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064455952211>



ST JOHN AMBULANCE: Meetings of the Society are open to the public. There is no charge for attendance. The presentations begin at 10:30 at the St John Museum, The Esplanade, Williamstown Beach. Our next meeting is on 19 January, 2023 and a paper will be presented by Professor Richard Southby. The paper is titled 'The Priory in the United States and the establishment of the St John Volunteer Corps'.

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Windows on history: The real Santa Claus?

At this time of year, we are accustomed to seeing the rotund jolly man in the white fur-trimmed red suit in stores and shopping malls where he greets children and listens to their hopes for gifts on Christmas Day. Largely a Victorian child-centric reinvention of a much older tradition, Father Christmas, or Santa Claus, lives on in 21st century Australia.

The prototype for Father Christmas is loosely based on St Nicholas of Myra, described in Hall's *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art* as one of the 'most popular' Christian saints, the patron of children, sailors and travellers, and guardian of nubile maidens. But he is rarely the subject of stained glass in Australian churches. Even in Europe he is no longer listed on the Catholic Church calendar of saints, although the Church allows local recognition, especially around his Feast Day, 6 December, when suitably dressed stand-ins exhort the children to behave 'or else'.

The origins of the 'real' Saint Nicholas remain uncertain, but he was Bishop of Myra in Asia Minor in the 4th century, and his remains were removed to Bari in Italy in the 11th century, but numerous other stories have grown into apocryphal legends, some of them finding expression in windows.

The three examples cited in this article depict St Nicholas as Bishop, mitre on his head and holding his pastoral staff. The window at St Nicholas's Anglican Church, Mordialloc, pictures one of the less well-known legends, with Nicholas standing at the prow of a small boat, and with three golden balls cradled in his right arm. It refers to the legend that the saint provided an impoverished nobleman's

three daughters with bags of money on three successive nights: a dowry that saved them from a life of prostitution. The window, donated to mark the church's centenary in 1968, was designed by émigré artist, Bela Kozák. The simplified, colourful portrayal of the saint reflects Kozák's European modernist training in Hungary before he came to Australia in the 1950s.

St Nicholas is most often invoked as the patron saint of seafarers, as in stained glass at Naval Chapels: HMAS *Kuttabul* at Garden Island, NSW; HMAS *Cerberus* at Crib Point Vic; and the small round-headed window in St Peter's Chapel in the Mission to Seafarers, Melbourne. In the latter, St Nicholas is shown firmly grasping a large anchor with his left hand. Behind the saint is a cloudy sky and a ship making full sail on the heavy sea. The dedication below tells of a family's loss, made more directly apparent by the tiny portrait of William Digges La Touche Balden, a 17-year-old English midshipman, who lost his life in August 1945. The tragic event occurred when fumes escaped a tank in the hold of the SS *Samarkand* while it was in port at Corio; three other crew were asphyxiated, and five others injured. Balden's parents commissioned William Aikman, well-known for his Arts and Crafts style of stained glass, to create the memorial that was installed in St Peter's porch, to be seen by all who enter and leave the chapel.

The window that comes closest to the Santa Claus story, simply because it includes children, is in the transept of Ballarat's Christ Church Anglican Cathedral. The legend behind the image is rather gruesome, however, and begins at a time of famine when Nicholas was lodging with an innkeeper who



■ Ballarat Christ Church
Cathedral St Nicholas



Left: William Digges La Touche Balden, Missions to Seafarers, Melbourne
Right: St Nicholas, Missions to Seafarers, Melbourne

“

The window that comes closest to the Santa Claus story, simply because it includes children, is in the transept of Ballarat's Christ Church Anglican Cathedral.

”

had murdered three children in order to feed his guests. Nicholas, in full bishop's regalia, brings them back to life, making the sign of the cross over them as they stand naked in the pickling tub. In this narrow window, the artist, William Montgomery, has included only two children and omitted the repentant innkeeper altogether, but otherwise it follows the legend. Hall's *Dictionary* suggests that the story evolved from a tale that Nicholas saved three soldiers from unjust execution. This legend appears in medieval glass, where the soldiers stand in a distant tower prison but, over time, they became three 'children' to explain the discrepancy in size.

The window was installed as part of alterations and improvements to the cathedral in 1923. It was the gift of the Christ Church and Ellerslie branches of the Ministering Children's League, founded in Britain by the Countess

of Meath in 1884. A Victorian branch established in 1890, not long before the economic depression that would engulf the state for the rest of the decade. The objectives of the League were to promote kindness, unselfishness and the habit of usefulness, and to provide necessities to the poor; it was one of many organisations that aimed to 'rescue and rehabilitate' children at that time. In 1895, the League established Cottage by the Sea in the new Beverley Ussher designed building at Queenscliff, which continues today. One imagines that St Nicholas may well approve.

Dr Bronwyn Hughes OAM
drbronwynhughes@gmail.com



St Nicholas's Anglican Church, Mordialloc



Head for the hills ... holidays in the Dandenong Ranges

The golden years of guest houses or boarding houses in the Dandenong Ranges spanned the early 1900s until the 1940s.

The early years

Enterprising settlers looking to supplement their unreliable agricultural incomes soon realised that visitors from Melbourne could not comfortably make the trip in a day and required somewhere to stay. Some family homes were extended or reconfigured to allow for guest accommodation while other settlers invested in purpose-built guest houses or boarding houses that could cater for very large numbers in luxurious settings.

Newspaper advertisements for guest accommodation began appearing in newspapers as early as 1899. *The Melbourne and Suburban Hotel and Boarding-House Guide & Tourist's Handbook of 1910* lists 28 established guest houses or boarding houses in the Dandenongs and there were many more that didn't advertise.

Joseph Guttman, co-founder of the Olinda Township, was the district's first unashamed entrepreneur. Historian Helen Coulson credits him with coining the phrase "Olinda the Beautiful" that

he used on every possible occasion to publicise the town. Guttman built his 1904 guest house, 'The Hospice', in the Olinda main street. Joseph Guttman did not scrimp on advertising, often running multiple adverts with catchy phrases in the holiday sections of newspapers, for example 'Olinda is free from influenza' (*Argus* 1919). In 1916 'The Hospice' was renamed 'ANZAC House' and the Gutmans became the Goodmans. 'The Hospice' was offered for sale several times and finally burned down in 1924.

Originally the home of early settler Isaac Jeeves who owned land in the Kalorama Valley (Mt Dandenong North), 'Shiloah' was enlarged to take guests in the early 1900s. It was situated close to a beautiful fern gully and Isaac and his family capitalised on this by setting out walking tracks through the ferns. They charged 1/- to walk through and this included afternoon tea in a garden setting. 'Shiloah' was a popular guest house as well as a tourist attraction.

When railway lines opened to Ferntree Gully and Croydon, visitors from Melbourne soon began arriving seeking fresh mountain air and beautiful scenery. They would be met at the station by horse drawn coaches and ferried up the mountain. This was a lot more comfortable at the Ferntree Gully end where a road had been constructed in 1891.

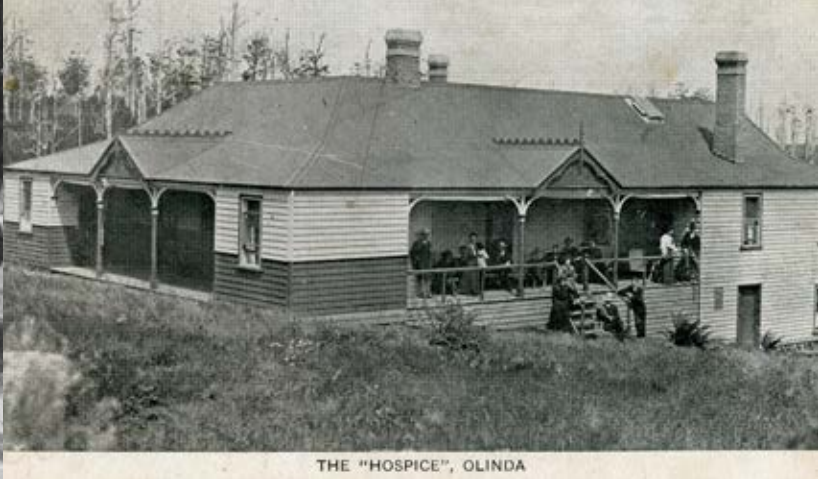
From the Croydon end travellers had to negotiate a steep, winding, muddy road up the north-western face of the mountain that reached the top at the Kalorama Five Ways junction.

The arrival of the motor car made travel more comfortable and large service cars began picking up the guest house patrons at the stations. In the mid-1920s the Country Road Board's new road from Montrose to Ferntree Gully, now the Mount Dandenong Tourist Road, made travel a lot safer, faster and more enjoyable.

Initially the promise of fresh mountain air and spectacular views was enough to lure visitors to the Dandenongs with guest house proprietors making sure that walking tracks were cleared and food was plentiful. However, as time went on, guest houses offered entertainments such as sports events, concerts, dances and parties to ensure visitors returned year after year. Larger guest houses opposed each other in annual events such as cricket and tennis matches.

Newspapers of the day ran advertisements for guest houses in the Dandenong Ranges while also publishing articles about guest house activities; who was there and what they were doing.

Easter and Christmas were the peak periods with accommodation often



THE "HOSPICE", OLINDA

■ 'Bella Vista' guest house.



booked out but guest houses also catered for weekenders and many offered meals for travellers.

Women take the lead

It is interesting to note that the majority of guest houses were run by women. Often they were single women with exceptional managerial, financial and social skills who, through their own enterprise, built successful businesses that generated both a steady income and community respect.

Sisters Eliza Jane and Grace Murdoch, aunts of Sir Keith Murdoch, ran 'Braco Park' in Sassafras for 10 years until it became a Red Cross Nurses Convalescent Home. It was later sold to Theresa Techow, who had previously run two other guest houses, and renamed 'Clovelly'.

Ellis and Eliza Jeeves took over 'Mountjoy' at Mt Dandenong North in 1908 and it became a prominent guest house with its commanding views and busy coach yards. After the death of Ellis in 1921, Eliza Jeeves ran the business singlehandedly for over 20 years.

The magnificent guest house 'Bella Vista' was built at Olinda by Edmund Boulter in 1903. In the late 1920s, 'Bella Vista' was purchased and run by the Bremner family until the 1930s

when Grace Boulter, of the original Boulter family, regained ownership and successfully ran 'Bella Vista'.

The decline

The economic climate of the Great Depression created a steady decline in guest house patronage that was exacerbated by motorists taking advantage of the new road linking Montrose with Ferntree Gully to embark on easy day trips to the Dandenongs. The *Healesville and Yarra Glen Guardian* reported, in April 1928, that over '1000 cars pass through the Five Ways junction at Kalorama' in one day. This mobility eventually caused many guest houses to close as people seeking a holiday destination could travel much further afield.

The guest houses that remained were larger and more opulent, highlighting electricity and hot and cold running water in their advertisements.

Unfortunately, very few of the original buildings remain today, most falling victim to fires.

Today

A new generation of travellers are seeking short term accommodation in the Dandenong Ranges, enjoying the walks and the fresh mountain air while staying

in establishments that are inviting but on a much smaller scale than the grand guest houses of the past.

Wendy Britt

Mt Dandenong & District Historical Society Inc.



■ A page from Bella Vista visitors' book



RHSV collections: These Joyous Sands, Jean Field's Sorrento

The RHSV Images Collection is rich in photographs and postcards of Victorian holiday destinations, with Sorrento in particular a great favourite at the turn of the century. In researching the history of Sorrento from the time of these early 20th century images, I became intrigued by a slim volume in the RHSV library, *These Joyous Sands*, written by local historian Jean Florence Field. First published in 1959, *These Joyous Sands* tells the history of the lower Mornington Peninsula, from Arthurs Seat to Portsea. Its chief focus is Sorrento, site of the first British settlement in Victoria in 1803, and a place of great personal significance to Field. Written in an engaging style, Field's voice is original; she often converses directly with the reader, using beautifully descriptive language. Her narrative interested me on a number of counts: her focus on imaginatively engaging the reader with the experiences of early European settlers, the book's autobiographical content, her inclusion of oral history, her early interest in environmental history, and her advocacy for the retention of built heritage.

Field's interest in the experiences of pioneers was personal, as her English grandfather William Adeney had emigrated in 1842, establishing the 'Chocolyn' run on the eastern side of Lake Colongulac, near Camperdown, in

Western Victoria. Adeney recorded his life in detailed journals, now held in the State Library of Victoria. The talent for crafting a compelling narrative seems to have been a family trait, as Field described her father, Stanwell Alfred Adeney, as 'the prince of storytellers, who in my youth gave me a lifelong interest in Victorian history'. Born in 1908 to "Stanley" and his wife Florence at the family mansion 'Clifton', on 16 acres facing Cotham Road, Kew, Field's acquaintance with Sorrento began in 1916 when her father rented a 'comfortable limestone villa, 'Craigie', facing the front beach'. The family purchased it the following year, thus making Sorrento an annual holiday destination for the young Jean.

Much had changed in Sorrento by 1916, since the township was surveyed in 1869 and the pier built in 1870. George Selth Coppin (1819-1906) was chiefly responsible for its transformation into a buzzing summer seaside resort through a series of business initiatives. Coppin, an English emigrant, had a rich and varied career in Australia as a comic actor, entrepreneur and politician. His Sorrento developments started with the formation of the Ocean Amphitheatre Company in 1874, which built the foreshore baths, surfaced the road to the back beach, 'the Ocean Amphitheatre', and built the back beach rotunda. In the same year,

he founded the Sorrento and Queenscliff Steam Navigation Company to transport holiday-makers from Sandridge (Port Melbourne) by paddle steamer on 'popular fares'. One of these vessels can be seen in this 1906 postcard, above, of the Sorrento Pier [PC-0707]. Coppin was also responsible for the development of the Sorrento Continental Hotel (1875) and the Sorrento Tramway Company (1889 – 1921), whose steam trams replaced earlier horse-drawn transport taking passengers from Constitution Hotel, behind the front pier, to the Continental Hotel on the main street and then across to the back beach, as seen in this Rose Stereographs postcard [PC-0713], right image, next page. With the successful realisation of these ventures, the tourist infrastructure of the town was complete. By 1876, three steamers were running to Sorrento and landing more than 1,000 passengers a day.

Jean Field paints a lively picture of the tail-end of Coppin's Sorrento in recounting her childhood holidays, which lasted from mid-December to Easter. They started with the day-long journey from Melbourne made in the family's tourer, which accommodated Jean, her parents, her two siblings, a governess, a maid and one of the family's six dogs. Field's history is enriched by oral accounts she recorded from a wide variety of locals



over a long association with Sorrento. Her childhood summer days started with being woken by the 'gentle putt-putt as the fishing boats left at dawn'. She and her sister Doreen would then walk to Ma Skelton's pink ivy geranium-covered cottage to fill their billy-can with milk from her two jersey cows. If they arrived home without spilling any, they were rewarded with threepence to spend on ice cream later, purchased from the cart of 'dear old Mr. Schlipalius' at the beach. William Schlipalius, an émigré from the Balkans, ran a much-loved ice cream business in Sorrento from 1911 to the 1960s, known as 'Slippy's'.

The Adeney children had season tickets to the foreshore baths, fenced to 'exclude large fish'. The proprietor, Mr Erlandsen, ran red flags to denote male bathing times and white flags to indicate female bathing times. Refreshments were available at the Rustic Retreat café afterwards.

The main event of the Sorrento day was the arrival of the steamers, which the children ran to greet at the first sound of their sirens. Field captured the scene in characteristically lively prose, 'cabs and horse-drawn drags (waggonettes) plied from the pier to the various hotels and guest houses, whose own porters... came to meet the boats each day, and one could hardly hear oneself speak for the shouting of "Cabby, lady?" "Going to the Sorrento Hotel?" "Well, this way, lady", etc., etc., and up on the cliff nearby the little steam tram would hoot impatiently, ready to carry the sight-seers to the back beach for threepence a time'. Refreshments, walks, tea-dances and bathing awaited the tourists at the Sorrento back beach. Another excitement was the late afternoon delivery of *The Herald* by bi-plane, with the pilot dropping the hessian-wrapped bundle 'with considerable accuracy' on the side of the road near the front beach before 'waving us a cheery good-bye and setting the little plane's nose for Melbourne'.

A summer entertainment Field describes, that was 'all the rage at that time' was 'moonlight picnics'. She recounts, 'at eight o'clock one of the tram cars, to which had been hitched two robust cab horses, used to start from Stringers' Store Corner, and run backwards and forwards to the back beach until midnight... When the tide was low and the moon in the right quarter we used to go crayfishing at night, letting down a net with the last of the ham bone in it, and nearly always had a good haul, which we cooked there and then on the beach in a large tin of sea water'.

Whilst celebrating the bounty of nature, a sorrow at environmental loss is a theme that runs through all Field's histories, accompanied by prescience of future loss. For a historian of her time, she was unusually vocal about the destruction of nature from 'man's despoiling hand'. From the first pages of *These Joyous Sands*, she traces the environmental history of the peninsula, recounting the near total depletion of banksia and she-oak for lime-burning, giving rise to the extensive tea tree scrub of today: partly researched through John Darbyshire's early Sorrento account in the RHSV collection, VF016262. She expresses regret at the overfishing of the large red crabs that were plentiful in her childhood, but had disappeared by her middle age. Field's poetic descriptions of the geology and flora of Sorrento and the varied attractions of the changing seasons are ahead of their time in her consciousness of imminent loss. Her approach has more in common with the current phenomenon of 'nature writing' than the histories of her 1950s contemporaries.

Field was an active campaigner and advocated for the preservation of the peninsula's pioneering heritage on various fronts. The RHSV Collection holds a 1959 letter she wrote to RHSV Assistant Secretary, Alan Latham, proposing action against grave-robbing at the site of the old Point Nepean quarantine station. Field was unequivocal in her

condemnation of the 1954 destruction of Captain John Boswell Clark's 1850s shingle-roofed, stone cottage, on the Sorrento foreshore not far from the pier. Of this Scottish bothy-like dwelling, with its low front door less than 170cm high, she wrote, 'to the undying shame of those concerned, this priceless historic relic was demolished... to make room for modern extensions to the Koonya Hotel'. The cottage can be seen in this Rose Stereographs postcard, image above left, photographed from Coppin's holiday villa 'The Anchorage' [PC-0698]. It is on the far side of the Mornington Hotel, later re-named the Koonya, almost opposite the foreshore bandstand. Jean Field also campaigned for the establishment of a memorial to the pioneers of Sorrento, a vision that was realised in 1983 through the creation of the Pioneer Memorial Gardens on the corner of Ocean Beach and Melbourne Roads. A 1998 plaque in the gardens fittingly commemorates her as a life member of the Nepean Historical Society. Jean Field died two years later, in 2000.

These Joyous Sands is an interesting history, written in Field's strongly individual voice. The layering of oral history and autobiographical reminiscence over her analysis of carefully-researched written sources provides greater depth to her Sorrento history. Her environmental-consciousness is forward-thinking for the 1950s. The book's prose is lively, imaginative and poetic. In researching her life, I came across Professor Andrew May's account of her biography and publications in 'My Marvellous Melbourne', a Melbourne History Workshop podcast. This informed the biographical detail in this article and I highly recommend episode 4 if your interest in Jean Florence Field has been sparked by this introduction to her writing.

Helen Stitt

RHSV Collections Officer (Images)

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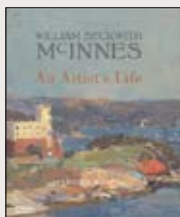
www.historyvictoria.org.au/bookshop/



Old Vintage Melbourne: 1960-1990

Chris Macheras (2022)
HC 160pp \$55

This captivating compilation of photographs taken between 1960 and 1990 provides a fascinating glimpse of a time that is familiar and yet different, when significant changes started to affect the city and its suburbs. As historic city buildings were demolished and streetscapes altered, Melbourne embraced modernity. The skyline grew, and so did suburban shopping centres. Under the impact of a rapidly rising population and large-scale migration, the city's distinctive and vibrant culture that we know today began to emerge.



William Beckwith McInnes: An Artist's Life

Margot Tasca (2022)
HC 232pp \$90

Margot Tasca's sympathetic, assiduously researched text, with numerous previously unpublished images, also traces the artist's personal and family life. Married to fellow artist Violet McInnes in 1915, they had six children and lived an idyllic life alongside other artists in Melbourne's bohemian suburb of Alphington. With 'movie-star' looks and a kind and generous personality his story, which is not without tragedy, is now told in this important publication which hopefully sheds some new light on an occasionally misunderstood period of Australian art history.



Country: Future Fire, Future Farming

Bruce Pascoe, William Leonard Gammage (2021)
PB 211pp \$24.99

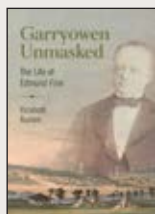
Part of the First Knowledges series, this book demonstrates how Aboriginal people cultivated the land through manipulation of water flows, vegetation and firestick practice. Not solely hunters and gatherers, the First Australians also farmed and stored food. They employed complex seasonal fire programs that protected Country and animals alike. In doing so, they avoided the killer fires that we fear today. It highlights the consequences of ignoring this deep history and living in unsustainable ways, detailing the techniques of First Nations peoples.



Black Lives, White Law: Locked Up and Locked Out in Australia

Russell Marks (2022)
PB 368pp \$34.99

In this ground-breaking book, Russell Marks investigates Australia's incarceration epidemic. What would happen if the institutions of Australian justice received the same scrutiny to which they routinely subject Indigenous Australians? Featuring vivid case studies and drawing on a deep sense of history, this book explores Australia's extraordinary record of locking up First Nations people. It examines Australia's system of criminal justice, the web of laws, courts, police and prisons, and how that system interacts with First Nations people and communities.



Garryowen Unmasked: The Life of Edmund Finn

Elizabeth Rushen (2022)
PB 195pp \$34.95
Edmund Finn (1819-98), Irish immigrant, journalist, raconteur and eyewitness to the development of the Port Phillip District, is best known as 'Garryowen', author of *The Chronicles of Early Melbourne 1835-1852*. His lively writing, essential to any appreciation of pre-separation Victoria, brings to life this period and place. Yet little has been written about Finn, his actions or attitudes, or the influences that shaped him. Finn's exposure to troubled times in Ireland during his youth was a major influence on his later politics.



We Are Australians

Duncan Smith and Nicole Godwin Illustrated by Jandamarra Cadd (2022)
HC 32pp \$24.99

This children's book explores what it truly means to be an Australian citizen. For those born in Australia, it's easy to take citizenship and its responsibilities for granted, but there is much more to being an Australian citizen. The book reflects our rich First Nations history and encourages readers to walk forward together, stamping our feet to wake up the ancestors and listen deeply to stories. With illustrations by Jandamarra Cadd, this book is a feast for the eyes as well as the soul.



Gippsland Murders and Murder Mysteries

Alby Adams (2021 2nd ed)
PB - 185pp \$38.95

Few crimes incense society as much as cold-blooded murder, so it is probably not surprising that murder, more than most other crimes, captures the imagination. This book concentrates on those murders that generated considerable interest in their time. Sometimes the interest was generated by the atrocious nature of the crime; other times by the curiosity of an unsolved murder; and, occasionally, by the legal permutations which produced unexpected and sensational outcomes at trial. The murders thus described start in 1841 and continue until present time.



A Railway to Cudgewa

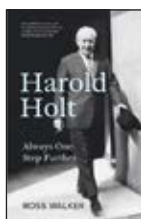
Nick Anchen (2022)
HC 122pp \$69.95
The spectacular mountain railway from Wodonga to Cudgewa in north-eastern Victoria was one of Australia's truly fascinating branch lines, and the most challenging to operate on the Victorian Railways. It was a railway of scenic splendour, famous for its towering wooden bridges, notoriously steep grades and K class steam locomotives. This lavishly illustrated publication includes over 100 colour and b&w photographs, and tells the story of the railway through the memories of Cudgewa railway enginemen, stationmasters, bridge gangers, cattle drovers and local residents.

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.

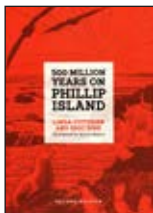
Please note: these books listed are not necessarily offered to the bookshop by authors, please check the online bookshop.



Harold Holt: Always One Step Further.

Ross Walker, La Trobe University Press, Collingwood, 2022, pp. 1-324, ISBN 9781760643836.

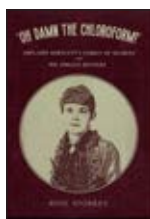
Harold Holt was the third Australian prime minister to die in office, but it was the circumstances of his demise that both shocked and intrigued. An acolyte of Robert Menzies and confidante of US President Lyndon B. Johnston, Holt had waited patiently for his tilt at leadership. After 30 years in parliament, he was elected unopposed in 1966. Holt's term as prime minister was marked by a more modern approach to politics: an end to the White Australia policy, the 1967 referendum and a commitment to the arts. However, Walker argues that Holt's essentially libertarian values were tested by the Vietnam War, as he committed increasing numbers of Australian troops. Holt, who loved the ocean, went missing, presumed drowned, off Cheviot Beach, Portsea in December 1967.



500 Million Years on Phillip Island.

Linda Cuttriss and Eric Bird, KMBay Press, Cowes, 2021, pp. vii-90, ISBN 9780646840185.

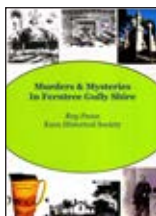
Phillip Island, or Millowl in the Bunurong language, is a jewel in the Victorian landscape, which itself makes it vulnerable to being loved or, more likely, exploited to death. This is the second edition of a natural history of the island stretching back 500 million years. It links the importance of the natural environment to human stewardship. Aside from its attractions as a tourist destination, the island has attracted First Nations people, sealers, fishers, farmers and those set on the conservation of its unique natural attractions. Many environmental challenges remain, from the eradication of weeds to the restoration of native habitat: all against the backdrop of 10,000 residents and more than 3 million visitors a year.



Oh Damn the Chloroform!: Adelaide Bartlett's Family of Secrets and the Pimlico Mystery.

Rose Storkey, Brown Dog Books, Bath, 2022, pp. 1-437, ISBN 9781839524769.

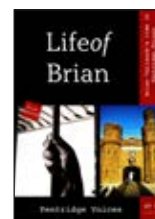
A murder mystery at Pimlico in central London in 1886 was a sensation in its day: a wife charged with murdering her husband, a *menage a trois* involving a clergyman, and a large dose of chloroform. Adelaide Bartlett, the accused and subsequently acquitted wife in this tale. Traced in this rambling account is a link to Adelaide's brother, George de Thouars, 22, a hapless actor turned bushranger in Gippsland. In 1880, George conducted an almost comical stick up at the Holey Plains station near Rosedale. He was captured and the sentence of 15 years jail was considered harsh, and he served just six. He later wrote an insider's account of life as a Pentridge prisoner.



Murders & Mysteries in Ferntree Gully Shire.

Ray Pearce, Knox Historical Society, Ferntree Gully, 2021, pp.1-100.

Before the old Shire of Ferntree Gully was split into the City of Knox and Shire of Sherbrooke in 1963 it covered an area stretching from Wantirna to Cockatoo. Ray Pearce has been documenting its history for many years and this selection of tales, which recounts more accidental deaths, suicides and missing persons than actual murders, is his latest addition. The thematic approach of 'murders of the district' has lately become a popular one in local history, but as Pearce points out, the old shire 'makes no claim to be the murder capital of anywhere'. Did Squizzy Taylor really hang out in Ferntree Gully? Who knows, but the phrase "taking a squiz" certainly had nothing to do with him.



Life of Brian: Brian Vallance's Time in Pentridge Prison.

Brian Vallance, Pentridge Voices, Melbourne, 2022, pp. 1-52, ISBN 9780645549706.

A more contemporary account of life in Pentridge can be found in this first publication of the Pentridge Voices project which aims to preserve at least some of the stories of H.M. Prison, Pentridge, which closed in 1997. Brian Vallance was by his own account "... born into the underworld". His decision to follow in his father's footsteps is one that on balance he clearly regrets. His stories from 16 years of imprisonment collectively form a salutary tale. Drugs, stabbings murder, boredom, waste ... all of these were part of life in prison, as were random acts of kindness and respect. In the end, at age 56, Vallance urges: "Don't be a criminal. It doesn't pay."

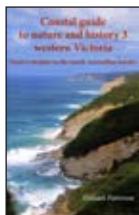


Pakenham Then and Now: A Pictorial History of Pakenham Spanning Many Generations.

Berwick-Pakenham Historical Society, Pakenham, 2022, pp. 1-112, ISBN 9781922418371.

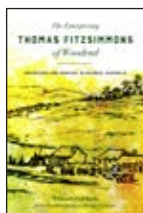
One of the poignant aspects of 'then and now' pictorial collections is the stark focus they play upon dreary and likely impermanent modern suburban tilt-slab construction. Pakenham long ago transitioned from farmland to a sweeping suburban and light industrial landscape to the south-east of Melbourne. This is the fourth volume of pictorial history to be produced by the society. 'Not much remains of early Pakenham', it notes. The juxtaposition of the old and new also reflects the few substantial structures Pakenham had to preserve. But it is not just about buildings and landscapes, the lives and stories of some of those who lived before are reflected here as well.

Books received



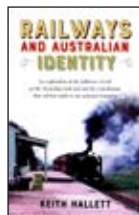
Coastal Guide to Nature and History 3, Western Victoria: Point Lonsdale to the South Australian Border. Graham Patterson, Coastal Guide Books, Briar Hill, 2022, pp.1-186, ISBN 9780992321734.

Some years ago, Brian Patterson set himself the target of walking the Victoria coastline. He completed the feat in 2018 and a by-product has been a series of guides, of which this is the latest. Covering the coast from Point Lonsdale to the South Australian border, it is both detailed and interesting in the way in which only guide books can be ... piquing the readers curiosity and desire to explore more. The author became interested in the places he was passing and while the history he gives of many of the places visited is just a snippet, it is both useful and ties the guide neatly together.



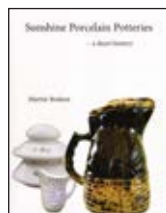
The enterprising Thomas Fitzsimmons of Woodend: Adventures and Survival in Colonial Australia. Paul Burke, Woodend and District Heritage Society Inc., Woodend, 2022, pp. i-148, ISBN 9780645456608.

This story of 'adventures and survival in colonial Australia' is a window to just how tough life was in 19th century Australia. While there is more than a little speculation around the detailed origins of Thomas and his family, the story strengthens when he takes up residence in Woodend north of Melbourne. Here he attains prominence, respect and a level of prosperity as a local publican, property owner, and community figure. Despite this he was jailed for five months upon conviction of manslaughter following a fight, lost an arm in a shooting accident and, after a life of business risk-taking, Thomas ended up insolvent and died suddenly aged 52. An interesting tale.



Railways and Australian Identity: An Exploration of the Influence of Rail on the Australian Soul and the Contribution that Rail has Made to our National Character. Keith Hallett, Brolga Publishing, Torquay, pp.1-89, ISBN 9780648697053.

Noting the need to change trains at Albury on the Sydney-Melbourne line forced by a change in rail gauge, the acerbic American author Mark Twain commented in 1895, "Think of the paralysis of intellect that gave that idea birth". It would be another 67 years before the journey could be made unbroken, but thousands of kilometres of broad-gauge rail line remain. The gauge issue is just one tale in this extended essay exploring the significance of railways in Australia. While the railways did not define the expansion of Australia in the same way as they did the US, Hallett points to their enormous significance and the possibility of a revived importance in future.



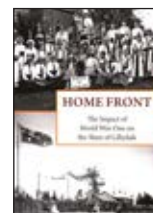
Sunshine Porcelain Potteries Pty Ltd: A Short History. Martin Brabon, the author, Bendigo, 2022. pp. i-243, ISBN 9780645453003.

At the heart of production by the Sunshine Porcelain Potteries were two items: electrical line insulators, used on power poles, and ceramic kettle jugs, once a feature of so many households. Both have since become of much interest to collectors, the latter in particular due to their often-striking glazes. The Drayton family took over the business during World War I and held it until the 1950s. It grew into a business that both excelled in its products and nurtured its 300 workers, some of whom remained with it for decades. Like many family-owned companies, this large pottery in Melbourne's west was as much a social enterprise as a manufacturing business. This is a thorough, often fascinating account.



The Big Garage: 1923-1988: 65 Years of Motoring History. Andrew J. Kilsby, the author, Melbourne, 2022, pp.1-105, ISBN 9780646859743.

The Big Garage was an institution for decades in Bairnsdale; indeed, the name trades on today. This is the story of how one family built a business that was central to the motoring public in East Gippsland for generations. John Nelson Capuano returned from World War I determined to restart his life in the booming automotive sector. His brother Ernest was in the automotive parts business in Melbourne. The Big Garage was the product of some early failures, reconstituted and employing subsequent generations of what became from 1941 the Capp family. It was for 50 years the GM-Holden dealership, but its enterprise expanded well beyond this.



Home Front: The Impact of World War One on the Shire of Lillydale. A.J. McAleer, Mt Evelyn RSL Sub-branch, Mt Evelyn, 2021. pp.iii-188, ISBN 9780648509936.

The impact of war on the civilians of nations in conflict is not always obvious, more so when those countries are far from the battle fronts. This was, of course, Australia in World War I. Anthony McAleer has been a keen historian of local military history in and around what was the Shire of Lillydale for many years. His latest study looks at the impact of the war upon a single municipality, beyond simply those it sent to war. Then, as now, this was an important area of agricultural production. The book examines the many dimensions of that conflict from conscription to anti-German sentiment, fundraising to Armistice celebrations, local sport, commerce and home life through a local prism.