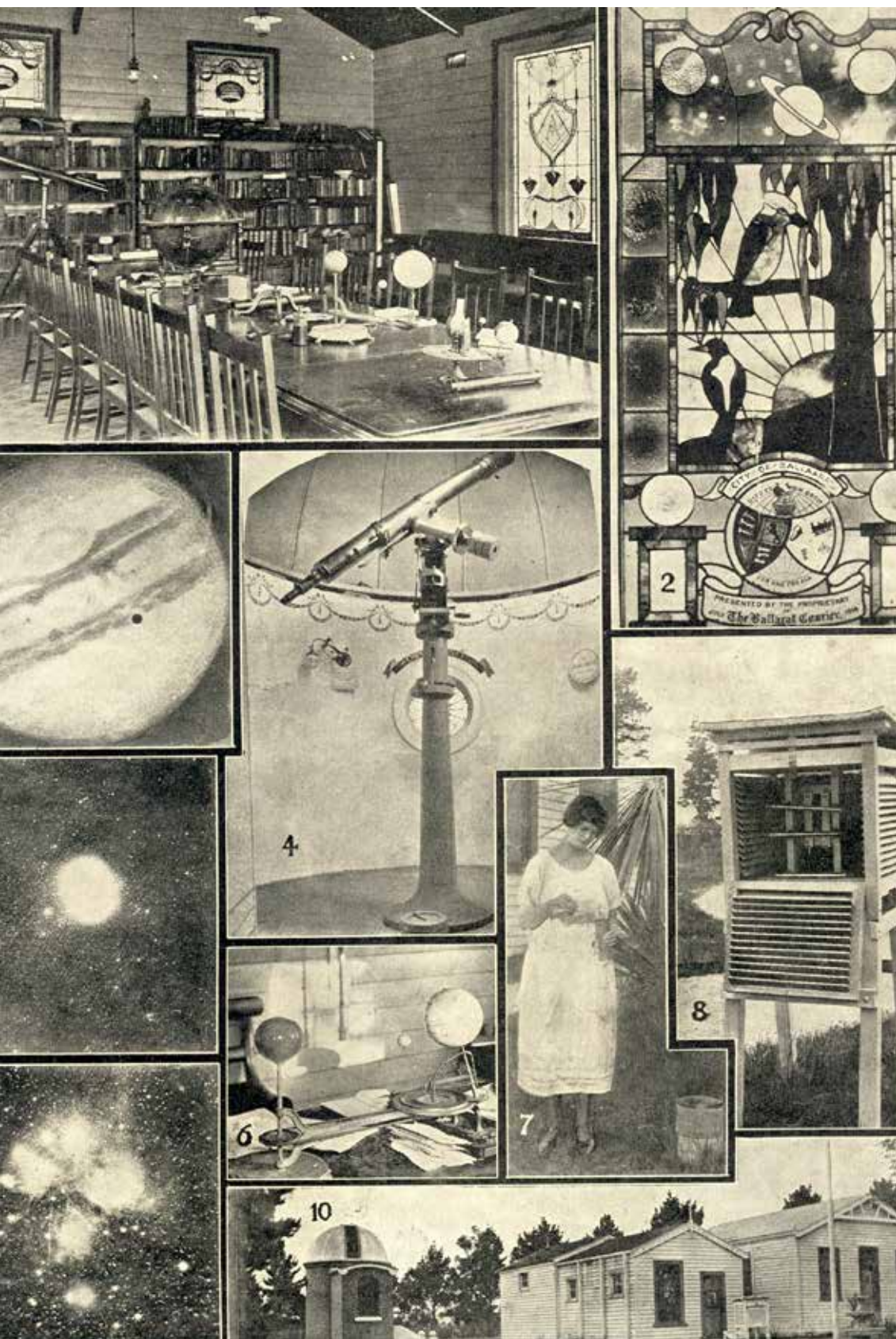


HISTORY NEWS

ISSUE 368 | OCTOBER 2023



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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

OFF THE DRAWING BOARD

Date: Tuesday 3 October

Time: 1pm – 2pm

Speaker: Patrick Ferry, NAA

Cost: FREE

Event type: Hybrid

Venue: Victorian Archives Centre,
99 Shiel St, North Melbourne 3051

For History Month, the National Archives of Australia are partnering once again with the RHSV to present, Off the Drawing Board, where members and friends can discover more about the history of their local community through Victorian architectural drawings.

Did you know that National Archives holds thousands of architectural drawings for public buildings across Australia and Victoria? Dating back as early as 1849, these drawings document not only famous Melbourne landmarks but also humbler suburban and rural facilities. Many of the drawings are also beautiful works of art in their own right.

TRIVIA AU GO-GO



Date: Friday 13 October

Time: From 5:30pm

Cost: \$25

Event type: In person

TRIVIA IS BACK! Andrew Lemon is once again putting us to the test. Fancy yourself a bit of a history buff? Of course you do! Time to get competitive and pit yourself against all the other history buffs

at the RHSV's world-famous Trivia au go-go. There are some great prizes and you will be fundraising for the RHSV at the same time.

Put together a table or come on your own – whatever works for you.

THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE IN HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Date: Tuesday 17 October

Time: 5:30pm for 6pm – 7pm

Cost: \$10 | \$20

Event type: Hybrid

Speakers: Kylie Andrews, Nicole Davis, Miranda Francis

As part of History Month, we partner with Professional Historians Association (Victoria & Tasmania) to host an event where three historians talk about a moment of amazing coincidence or serendipity in their research; it could be coming across a vital piece of information or finding just the right contact or network, seemingly by chance. It is always a great night to hear from young historians who cover a remarkably wide range of subjects.

The hosts for the evening are Andrew Lemon for the RHSV and Sophie Meagher for PHA.

MAKING IT HERE: STORIES OF FOUR ENTERPRISING IMMIGRANT ENGINEERS

Date: Thursday 19 October

Time: 5:30pm for 6–7pm

Event type: hybrid

Speaker: Emeritus Professor David Radcliffe

\$10 | \$20

Much has been written about the halcyon

days of manufacturing in Fishermans Bend during the post-war period. This talk explores its antecedents through the lives of four, largely forgotten, engineers who made significant contributions to the rise of manufacturing there during the first half of the 20th century: Otto Schumacher, Alfred Harman, Albert Longoni and Fred David.

They learnt their craft in America, Britain and Europe respectively before making their mark in Port Melbourne. Two founded manufacturing businesses there while the other two made pivotal contributions to existing firms.

LA TROBE SOCIETY HISTORY MONTH LECTURE

Date: Tuesday 24 October

Time: 5:30pm -7:30pm

Cost: \$25

Event type: in person

"Improving, Refining, and Elevating": the Melbourne Public Library Art Treasures Exhibition 1869, by John Botham, Chair of the Friends of La Trobe's Cottage. This talk rediscovers the old Great Hall of the Melbourne Public Library and its spectacular decoration by Edward La Trobe Bateman. The Art Treasures Exhibition is revealed through the lens of Charles Nettleton with the paintings brought to life, complete with acerbic comments by The Argus art critic James Smith.

(book directly on C J La Trobe Society website,

<https://www.latrobesociety.org.au/la-trobe-society-history-month-lecture-2023> or phone 9592 5616)

SHADES OF HAUNTED MELBOURNE

Date: Monday 30 October

Time: 6:30–7:30pm

Event type: in person

\$20 | \$25

A special Halloween performance – not to be missed!

Join historians Dr Jo Clyne and Dr David Waldron as they recount tales of haunted Melbourne through a highly original blend of historical research and magical stage illusion.

Tickets: through Trybooking.

<https://www.trybooking.com/CLKOD>

History News

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Ballarat Courier Christmas Special Edition (1921, 20 Dec.)
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What's on is continued
on page 13



President's report

On 8 September 2023 the Public Records Office Victoria and the RHSV received the wonderful news that funding for the 2023 Local History Grants Program was approved by the Victorian Department of Government Services. A total of 42 groups received grants in the 2022-23 round. Funding for the Victorian Community History Awards, including the main Premier's Prize, was also announced at the same time. In all \$423,000 was set aside to support both programs for 2023.

In the press release the Minister Danny Pearson said: 'It's important that we preserve our past and celebrate our history: it helps guide the way forward'. He added, 'Grants and awards recognise the amazing work that local groups and historians are doing every day and we're proud to support them'. I again wrote to the Minister Danny Pearson, this time thanking him for this important decision, on behalf of the history movement.

The decision has followed months of representations from the RHSV, many historical societies across the state, the History Council of Victoria, and other friends in the community and on both sides of politics. The History awards for 2023 were saved just in time. A rescheduling of application and judging deadlines will see the event for 2023 finalised. The results will be announced at a deferred ceremony in early 2024.

It is a wonderful outcome and the RHSV looks forward to again working in a successful partnership with the Keeper of Public Records, Justine Heazlewood, and her staff at the Public Records of Victoria.

Forty-two societies now know their grant application for assistance with digitisation of their archives, for other means of preserving and presenting their records, creating a walking tour or telling local digital stories, has been successful. Another three hundred societies know it may be possible to gain a grant in the future. Authors and other creatives across the state also know they can enter their work into the awards for 2023 and have a chance for wider exposure and recognition.

The decision reveals the power of working together for a good and obvious cause. These awards have been going for 25 years and need to continue. The task now is to secure a government commitment for ongoing funding for these significant grants and history awards for 2024 and beyond. The RHSV has asked for a meeting with Minister Pearson.

Stop Press: The EOFY giving was a great success. However, two projects have fallen short of their target. The restoration of the Thomas Clark painting of Boonwurrung man Ginnen (Jack Wetherly) is about \$1,000 short. The funding of the new book to bring Weston Bate's *Essential but Unplanned. The Story of Melbourne's Lanes* into the 21st century is at 80 per cent funded or about \$6,000 short. It would be wonderful if our May wish-list was fully realised. Can you help?

Richard Broome

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■ The 1857 Corkman Hotel (Carlton Inn). It was covered by both a Heritage Overlay and a Design and Development Overlay for a 12-storey building!

Heritage report: more power to the planning minister or real reform of planning?

By the time you read this, the state government will have unveiled new laws to centralise planning, curb Councils' planning powers and reduce neighbours' right to object. (Millar and Gordon, *The Age*, 19 April 2023) In the government's haste to unleash developers, what will happen to heritage? Are planning delays or heritage protections holding up building? Developers have hardly been starving. Drive anywhere in Melbourne, or for that matter in any regional city, and you will be lucky not to be stopped by construction.

The biggest impediment to development is developers land banking, holding onto land without building, waiting for value to rise and then on sell. In the Melbourne CBD alone, 'there are active permits for almost 100 sites which have not been acted on – 118 residential buildings and 22,000 apartments where work has not begun'. (Millar and Dexter, *The Age*, 24 June 2023) And beyond that, in the Melbourne local government area alone, 4,449 existing dwellings, which is five per cent of the total, are not in use. Heritage, on the other hand, is responsible for preventing very few developments. Heritage Victoria approves over 95 per cent of applications to modify or demolish buildings on the Victorian Heritage Register and local heritage overlay protections are, if anything, less likely to prevent development.

There is, to be sure, a case for more central planning. Until the Kennett government abolished it, the Board of Works had broad responsibility for the shape of the city as well as for the infrastructure which supported the city: which made sense. But the government wants to shift control over local developments to the Minister and the state planning bureaucracy. Their record to date is not good. They tend to set broad parameters to favour high-rise development without regard to the situation on the ground.

We had a dramatic example of this with the 1857 Corkman Hotel, also known as the Carlton Inn. Its illegal demolition in 2016 obscured the fact that the state planners had imposed a DDO (Design Development Overlay) providing for a 40-metre 12-storey tower on the site where there was already a Heritage Overlay to protect the Hotel.

Such ambiguity – could it be deliberate? – is regrettably not uncommon. It encourages developers to go for broke. If a Council rejects their application because of the Heritage Overlay, they go to VCAT on the basis of the DDO and get what they want. We have examples of this kind of planning in Southbank and Docklands, where the Kennett government allowed developers to make most decisions. The result has been some glamorous buildings but many dark canyon-like streets which create unpleasant neighbourhood. That is not what we need.

We need broad, democratic and transparent city-wide oversight to provide

a planning framework within which local authorities operate. A key would be to provide certainty about the scale and shape of development. At present, the state planners won't sign off on mandatory heights: they want "preferred" heights. A developer looks at a site with a "preferred" height of 10-12 storeys and thinks, 'what can I get from VCAT?' 15 storeys? If it's a big project and the Minister intervenes, it might be 20!

These policies encourage developers to pay more for sites in the hope of squeezing in more development, irrespective of good planning or heritage. That is what happened in the Corkman case. The developers looked at the site with its contradictory overlays and took a punt, paying too much for the property. That they then broke the law was exceptional, but the planning law raised their expectation of what they could get.

The current system encourages greed, bad planning, and disrespect for heritage. Increased ministerial powers would lead to more land-banking rather than more actual building and, even worse, more badly designed rabbit warrens rather than quality and affordable family homes and apartments. And in the rush, we risk losing more heritage and creating less liveable neighbourhoods.

Charles Sowerwine
Chair, Heritage Committee



■ **Top:** Jubilee Point and Back Beach, Sorrento

Rose Stereograph Co.,
[between 1920 and 1954?]

<http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/65117>

■ **Bottom:** Portion of Township, Sorrento

Rose Stereograph Co.,
[between 1920 and 1940?]

<http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/174875>

Childhood holidays, Sorrento

I am the middle daughter of three girls. During WWII my father was not in the armed services as the firm he worked for was a protected industry. This firm dealt with the upkeep of all army vehicles: cars, trucks and tanks. As Father was in a 'reserved occupation' he had no holidays. He received a few white feathers from people who thought he should be in the army.

During the 1940s, for a summer break for the family, Father would drive his old Essex car to Sorrento stacked with luggage inside and out plus the family. Having driven to Sorrento on Saturday, Father would return to Melbourne and work on Monday. He stayed with his sister during the week and drove down to join the family each weekend.

We stayed on the property of an old man who became a friend to Mother, my sisters and myself. My elder sister had

friends and a cousin her own age. There were riding schools in Sorrento then and they used to ride horses all around the area.

I used to wander in the bush around the old house. I saw emus, wombats, wallabies, very quiet birds and ant eaters. I used to walk the sand path to the back beach to Jacob's Ladder: an old ladder attached to the cliff that took me down to the tiny bay to play, to find crabs and starfish in the tiny rock pools.

Father used to go shooting rabbits: good eating. My younger sister was quite a baby. Mother would walk us to the Bay to go swimming. As I grew older, from 12-16, I would go to the back beach and dream of being a champion swimmer and diver. This was never going to happen as I was afraid of the water.

Miss S Ross

HSSC report: sharing our regions' riches

A visit to RHSV's constantly updated home-page and its 'What's On' link will reveal a wealth of activities on offer at the RHSV in Melbourne and around the globe via Zoom. Fortunately, RHSV's premises are in central Melbourne and well-served by public transport. RHSV is proudly an important collecting, reference and knowledge-disseminating authority about Victoria's history and heritage, as well as advocate for the thoughtful preservation of Victoria's history.

Given all of the above, the new Historical Societies Support Committee's first seminar day for 2023, and first since COVID's lockdowns, was conveniently in Melbourne, offering practical advice sessions informed mainly by local historical contexts. Most attendees were Melburnians and 'in-person' although several Zoomed in from regional Victoria. We of the HSSC who organised the day were also keen to learn how a new model might work.

However, RHSV is not 'Melbourne alone', and Zoom cannot hope to be as engaging and sensory as the 'in-person viewing and listening experience'. Neither can it be so convivial without in-person discussion over plates of sandwiches and cakes with warm drinks in hand. Moreover, Zoom is not so reliable in remote parts of Victoria as Melburnians might believe.

Many of us on the HSSC are committed to supporting rural Victoria in its efforts to collect, protect and share Victoria's heritage and historical riches. The regions experience many of the problems which Melbourne societies and networks face, however, in the more remote areas, have smaller population pools across bigger distances for the scope and diversity of work required.

This article emphasises RHSV's commitment to members in Victoria's regions well beyond Melbourne. What follows is a taste of what HSSC members as helpers and presenters, as well as RHSV staff and three 'regions', have planned and already experienced this year, as well as an invitation to other societies and wider regions to consider what they might be able to offer in 2024

Regional weekend Seminars

There have been two Victorian regional HSSC weekend seminar events in 2023, Birchip/Nullawil/Donald and Morwell, with one more planned before year's end. The weekends can be flexible and creative in definition; indeed, creative thinking is encouraged.

'The Fridays'

Travel to HSSC destinations to 'stay the night before' has been common by out-of-towners who wish to wake fresh in the seminar's regional location. Where possible, local hosts and Melbourne RHSV presenters, helpers and attendees have met over dinner or privately enjoyed local hospitality on the Friday night.

Even so, Nullawil Historical Society and Museum took 'the Friday before' to a higher level, offering as part of the Birchip seminar weekend an afternoon tour of its historic buildings, followed by an on-site and most reasonably priced home-cooked country buffet dinner. Locals and visitors networked well in a fascinating and informal setting and knew something of each other when they met again on the seminar day in Birchip.

'The Saturdays'

The Saturday programs are shaped by different factors.

Firstly, individual societies and regional representatives who have been approached to host, or have volunteered to do so, are asked by HSSC representatives for what they think their members would most benefit from as well as enjoy experiencing. The decision-makers are, of course, invited to nominate locals as presenters but, almost exclusively, they report that they want presenters whom they have not heard speak before.

The discussions soon focus on challenges which need to be overcome if the society is not only to survive, but flourish: 'Given xxx, how can we ...?'. HSSC provides four further prompts if needed. One is a list of practical topics that it has learned through diverse communications across recent years which have become especially important considerations for societies, such as effective and legally compliant management practices and attracting members. The second is a list of topics which address the different Victorian history topics. In both cases, the lists are supported by the names of

speakers known to address such topics well. The third prompt is the programs of HSSC seminars recently concluded. The fourth, rarely needed, is topics and speakers that have been well-evaluated by attendees at other RHSV-managed, but not HSSC, events.

After the discussions which are of great value in themselves, a day seminar program is devised and promoted by different means to all RHSV members Victoria-wide, and also promoted in some locations by local radio and newspapers.

The practical topics delivered and planned across 2023 have been of the following kinds, with some requested more than once:

- Attracting new visitors and members
- Recruiting, leading and retaining volunteers
- Managing collections and archives
- Undertaking research
- Writing to be read: publications and fascinating stories
- Family history research and writing: case studies
- Writing exhibition captions and self-guided tours
- Heritage protection: an overview
- Planning and leading walking tours.

The topics of historical content are tailored to their locations as have been requested or offered: they have included Aboriginal as well as early colonial settler women's histories.

The hosting historical societies have also gone to great lengths to present their exhibitions and share collections on request in breaks during and at the closing of the Saturdays, featuring objects especially relevant to their location.

Saturdays have usually concluded with dinners at local leading eateries and have again been wonderful opportunities to learn from and socialise with the best possible local and out-of-town like-minds.

'The Sundays'

Structured and unstructured activities devised by the hosts and others have become the final and fascinating facet of HSSC regional weekends.

'Structured' activities have been of kinds such as:

- Tours of nearby local historical society exhibitions and collections; Donald

Historical Society opened its doors across the Sunday morning, with morning tea and an exhibition viewing for locals and any others returning home in that direction after the Birchip HSSC weekend.

- A tour of a local leading industrial or agricultural place of activity, such as Morwell's PowerWorks Energy Education Centre as part of the Morwell HSSC weekend.
- Visits to a place of local cultural significance, such as Morwell's Maltese Community Centre and Museum, with its elements of 'the Maltese in Gippsland and Australia' and an optional 3-course Maltese lunch.

'Unstructured' activities have been of kinds such as:

- Provision of a recommended self-walking tours with a marked map in hand, either one that a historical society usually dispenses at low-cost or might include as part of the registration fee.
- Local self-driving tours in similar arrangements.
- Basic recommendations of where people might visit or eat if they have time and depending on direction to travel. Overwhelmingly, the host societies have been keen to meet visitors' needs with the best possible advice. They have also had local tourism brochures available for those seeking additional visits or travels afield.

2024

HSSC already has the names of some regions and societies keen to host seminar weekends of the above kinds in 2024 and beyond; the HSSC is still keen to hear from anyone in rural Victoria who thinks they have something to offer.

The 2023 lists of possible topics, and other supports to help you commence any thinking and planning, are available from Rosalie now. Updated lists, although likely to be very similar, will be distributed to network leaders in 2024.

More in time,

Dr Rosalie Triolo

Chair HSSC (RHSV)

Email: hssc@historyvictoria.org.au



Left: Constance Coleman. Self-portrait. Undated. Donated to Wanderslore Sanctuary by Bill Coleman. Photo: G. Davies

Below: pages from *Bellbirds and other poems*, with lino cut artwork.



Constance "Connie" Coleman: artist, conservationist, poet and teacher

Henrietta Constance "Connie" Coleman was born in Melbourne on 21 October 1903 and died on 22 May 1990. She was an artist, conservationist, teacher, and in 1982 she published her book *Bellbirds and other poems*, illustrated with her lino cuts.

A railway line from Melbourne was extended to Lilydale in 1882, followed by the opening of the line to Warburton from Lilydale in 1901. There was a 'tourist deluge' as railway and mass market tourism was well underway.

The Coleman family didn't have a car, so the opening of the railway gave Constance's father William, a scene painter and foreman at J.C. Williamson's and an ardent fisherman, access to the Yarra River. William took the family by train to the Launching Place Hotel for about a week's holiday each Christmas.

He bought three one-acre blocks of land at Launching Place at an auction in 1920 and a few years later the family built a small room with two beds, an iron fireplace and a water tank. Later a verandah was added.

When her father died in 1932, Constance lived independently in a stable hayloft in the backyard of family friends. She painted, studied art for five years from 1927-31, and, in the early 1940s, trained to be a teacher at the Melbourne Teachers' College.

None of the family liked the city and they would go to Launching Place at every opportunity in brother Keith's car. When she was teaching at Bacchus Marsh during the war Constance went to Launching Place for her holidays. She learnt to drive after the war and took over Keith's Ford Deluxe.

In the 1930s she was a good friend and associate of Jessie Traill, a printmaker who had a printmaking studio at 114 Flinders Lane, Melbourne, and on whose press she printed many of her prints and bookplates. In 1934 Constance assisted Jessie Traill to paint the decorative mural depicting scenes from Charles Kingsley's *The Water Babies* in the Children's Ward of the Queen Victoria Hospital, Melbourne.

When Constance commenced teaching at the Lilydale Higher Elementary School the shack at Launching Place became her home from at least 1954. Over time, she bought adjoining blocks on her teacher's salary to create a 10-hectare packet of land she named 'Wanderslore' for the garden in Walter de la Mare's *Memoirs of a Midget*.

Continued on page 14....

Around the societies

Prepared by volunteer Glenda Beckley on behalf of the Historical Societies Support Committee.

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 DECEMBER 2023 ISSUE please send details to office@historyvictoria.org.au by 22 October 2023.

CASTLEMAINE: Wednesday 18 October 2023 we have the launch of the Cornish Association Archives at CHSI. The Cornish Association of Victoria transferred their library to the Castlemaine Historical Society in 2020. We are celebrating this important event by holding a joint official launch at the Former Court House. There will be displays of photographs, documents plus a database available for family history research as well as Cornish music and the opportunity to learn some Cornish language. The day's program includes morning tea at 10:30am at the Former Court House and at 11am a Driving Tour: travel by car or bus in convoy to a site with Cornish links. A Castlemaine Historical Society guide will talk about the historical significance of each place/site. Then at 1:15pm a Pasty Lunch, \$10.00: meat and vegetarian options available. (Sorry no gluten free options). Cakes and scones jam and cream will be available.

Pasty and Bus Bookings by Monday 9 October: cadorm@gmail.com Please indicate your preference for meat or vegetarian pasties and make tour bookings: bus \$15 per person or car travel \$10 per person.

COLAC: Saturday 21 October at 10am Camperdown Heritage Centre Western Victorian Association of Historical Societies Zone Meeting followed by Lunch and Heritage Walk; Wednesday 25 October meeting 7:30pm at Colac History Centre, COPACC Building, Gellibrand Street, Colac: speakers John and Liz McKenzie on Former Colac Businesses 'McKenzie Motors' and 'Ball & Croft'; Wednesday 22 November meeting 7:30pm at Colac History Centre: speaker Graeme Robb on 'Pea Pickers and Pea Harvesters' and the green pea Industry in Colac District. colachistoricalsociety.org.au



DONCASTER TEMPLESTOWE: As well as publishing through our quarterly newsletter, we publish continuous updates and new stories on our Website, Facebook and Instagram. Visit online, view and suggest additions

and corrections. Most recent updated pages include: "Friedensruh", 10 Waldau Court, Doncaster, featuring Dot Haynes' interview with Eric Collyer; The Upper Yarra Hotel and Finn's Reserve, Templestowe, featuring a new sketch of Finn's Pub; Church of Christ, Doncaster; Orchard of Memories of Olive Crouch-Napier and much more.

dt-hs.blogspot.com and [facebook.com/DoncasterTemplestoweHistoricalSociety](https://www.facebook.com/DoncasterTemplestoweHistoricalSociety)



ECHUCA: With many thanks to our sponsors, our 2024 Calendars are now available: only \$10. Drop into the museum or email us to secure your copy today. echucahistoricalsociety.org.au



GISBORNE AND MOUNT MACEDON DISTRICTS: The Society were successful in receiving a grant from the Bendigo Bank to the value of \$1027 to provide Volume 2 of Local History and One Hundred Year Ago articles to nine primary schools and four secondary colleges in our district. Each folder includes early settlers and Gisborne early history scenes from past articles: 164 local history articles and 44 one-hundred-years-ago articles. These folders have been supplied to each of the schools and colleges and we have supplied a USB which enables them to have the data in electronic format.

HORSHAM: Meeting and talk at the Mechanics Institute Building, 33 Pynsent Street, Horsham. Wednesday 12 October at 7pm: Old Horsham Films. On October 4 U3A are holding an event at the Town Hall between 10am and 4pm for local clubs to promote their clubs. All welcome.

KILMORE: Evening meetings are usually held at 7:30pm in the Old Post Office. Upcoming dates and speakers include: Tuesday 3 October 7:30pm the Ryan family from Pyalong; Saturday and Sunday 7-8 October BOOKSALE at 2 Powlett Street 10am to 3pm. Our website now has a 'Notice Board' where you can keep up to date with the latest news on activities, meetings, check on dates etc www.kilmorehistory.info and [facebook.com/kilmorehistory](https://www.facebook.com/kilmorehistory)



KNOX: Save the date: Ambleside Christmas Fair and Craft Market, Saturday 9 December 1-6pm at Ambleside Park and Homestead, 3 Olivebank Road, Ferntree Gully. Come along and enjoy the beautiful gardens of the Historic Homestead. Entry by Gold Coin donation. [facebook.com/profile.php?id=100062344342123](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100062344342123)



MARYBOROUGH MIDLANDS: An enormous amount of restoration work on Worsley Cottage has now been completed. Despite interruptions due to the unusually wet winter the specialist workmen have repaired cracks in the walls and returned the picture rails and skirting boards, installed a new floor and restored the overmantel to its original position. All work on the external walls has been completed; some interior tasks such as painting and minor repairs to the

kitchen are still under way. We're hoping to be able to open our Research Centre and Records Collection, at the rear of the property, in early October. Until that happens, we still don't have access to our landline, but we're contactable via our email address mmhs@outlook.com.au our webpage mmhs.net.au or facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064704275091. Our cottage garden, large sections of which were removed to enable repairs to the walls, will take many months to restore, and we expect that the huge task of setting up the displays, furniture and labelling inside Worsley Cottage won't be completed until late summer.

MORDIALLOC: The annual meeting of the society will take place at 2pm on Saturday 25 November 2023, at the Mentone Hub, Mentone Parade, Mentone: all welcome. Come and enjoy a cup of tea, refreshments, a chat and discover what is happening regarding preservation of our history.

NARRE WARREN FAMILY HISTORY: Please join us on Sunday 29 October from 10am at Dandenong Community Cemetery, Kirkham Road, Dandenong. We will present stories of Casey Cardinia early settlers and others who followed them to the district, who are remembered in this cemetery. Cost is \$10 for adults, bookings to cemeterytours@nwfhg.org.au or treasurer@nwfhg.org.au. There will be light refreshments at the end of the 90-minute walk. A book of the walk will be available for sale on the day.

PORT PHILLIP PIONEERS:

Meetings venue: Wesley Hall, Saint Andrew's Uniting Church, 253A Burke Road (corner Malvern Road), Gardiner: visitors welcome. Doors open at 1:30pm and talks will commence at 2pm: two dollars entry includes refreshments. Our meetings generally end around 4pm. Our next meeting is Saturday 11 November 2023, with speaker Gary Presland on 'Earliest Contacts between Europeans and the Indigenous inhabitants of the Port Phillip District'.

www.portphillippioneersgroup.org.au



RYE: We happily advise the society's museum has reopened. Located in the grounds of the Rye Primary School on the corner of Lyons and Collingwood Streets, the museum was officially reopened on Sunday 6 August. Open hours are Sundays from 2-4pm. Come for a visit and look at the refurbishment and discover the treasures it holds.

ryehistoricalociety.au and facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064820256125

WESTERN VICTORIA ASSOCIATION:

Southern Zone meeting on Saturday 21 October, hosted by Camperdown and District Historical Society, Camperdown Heritage Centre, 243 Manifold Street, Camperdown. Rooms will be open from 9am.

9:30am: Registration and refreshments; 10am: Southern Zone meeting; 12 noon: light buffet style luncheon. A free guided Heritage Buildings walk will be available after lunch. Cost is \$10 per person for morning tea and lunch. RSVP Monday 16 October 2023 camperdowndhs@gmail.com www.westernhistorian.org.au



WHITTLESEA: Annual General Meeting Sunday 15 October 2023, Whittlesea Bowls Club, 101 Church Street, Whittlesea. Commencing with lunch at 12pm. Pay for your own meal and drinks. The AGM will start at 1:30pm followed by guest speaker Mrs Lucy Ellem, author, art historian and co-founder of Plenty Valley Arts.

Theme: 'The history & development of Plenty Valley Arts'.

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Windows on history: 'Let there be light'

One of the most unexpected sites for stained glass is probably an observatory where darkness is essential to let the stars shine. To be seen to advantage however, stained glass requires transmitted light, and yet, at Ballarat's Municipal Observatory and Museum, there exists a striking collection of decorative windows that were installed in three of their buildings from 1914 onwards.

The observatory was founded on the philanthropy of James Oddie, who was, amongst other things, a successful digger, participant at the Eureka meetings, house and land agent and banker, the first Mayor of Ballarat and founder of the Ballarat Fine Art Gallery. Importantly for this story, he was vice-president on the Council of the Ballarat School of Mines (SMB), that was established in 1870 to further science and mining education in this affluent and growing community. Only a year later, and keen to add astronomy to the SMB curriculum, Oddie secured suitable land on Mount Pleasant for the erection of an observatory. In those enterprising times, the observatory was built, equipped and officially opened by May 1886 under the stewardship of retired mariner, Captain Henry Evans Baker. He properly sited the transit room with its retracting roof, built

and maintained telescopes and ancillary paraphernalia and, with astronomy lecturer Mr Wall, instructed pupils in the well-appointed lecture hall. While the observatory thrived in its first few years, the financial crash of the 1890s ended Oddie's banking career along with his generosity to the cultural life of Ballarat, and he died in far less affluent circumstances in 1911.

In 1913, the observatory was transferred from the School of Mines to the Ballarat East Town Council and John Brittain, Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society in England and lecturer in astronomy at the SMB, was appointed Superintendent; a position he held until his death in 1943. It can be no coincidence that the installation of a series of stained-glass windows was a deliberate decision at a time of Brittain's management and these eye-catching additions were designed, not only to enhance the buildings, but also to gain the backing of local organisations and businesses as the observatory moved into a new phase of its history.

One of the first windows was commissioned by *The Ballarat Courier* in 1914, which also brought publicity for the observatory through its pages. The window design set a pattern for those that followed, almost all of which included symbols of the night sky with stars and

■ Photo courtesy of Ballarat Observatory <https://ballaratobservatory.org.au/>



■ **Top:** Ballarat Observatory, Courier Window. Photo courtesy of Judith Bailey, Manager.

Bottom: Ballarat Observatory, Lucas Window. Photo courtesy of Judith Bailey, Manager.



planets. The distinctly Australian central panel, a kookaburra and magpie in a eucalypt tree with the rising sun in the background, was unusual then, becoming much more popular in Australian homes a decade later. At the base of the window was the Town of Ballarat East's crest with the inscription 'Presented by the Proprietary of The Ballarat Courier July 1914'.

The City of Ballarat window (1916) continued the repetition of rising suns, moons, planets and stars within the wide border, but the central panel was a stylised shield, with a floral motif at its centre. A similar border surrounded the window presented by the Sebastopol Cambrian Society and the Welsh residents of 1917, but the central motif here pictured the lamp of knowledge and a book, surrounded by a laurel wreath, in recognition John Brittain's reinvigoration of the observatory. Borders were omitted from the Masonic Lodges and Independent Order of Oddfellows Lodges windows in 1915, and it is likely that it was these two windows that were the subject of debate at a Ballarat East Council meeting, where it was resolved that the cost of installation would be borne by the town, provided this did not exceed £5!

In 1918, a new building was designed by civil and mining engineer, George Richards, another of the observatory's benefactors. Richards' design was typical of the domed style of opening roof we associate with observatories. It was built to house a new telescope, built by Messrs Jelbart Bros, at a cost of £250, no doubt adding to the importance of the Ballarat precinct. More decorative glass was included in the Jelbart building; three small circular windows designed as a simple wheel leadlight, and a round-headed window in the porch, with the words, 'Wisdom Strength Beauty' illuminated on the wall above it. The image of the world now fills the upper section and this motif that was repeated when the circular windows were replaced as part of the Ballarat Astronomical Society refurbishment in the 1950s. Photographs held by the Ballarat Historical Society and Federation University show that stained glass panels were also in the upper door panels to all three main buildings, but these have long since been replaced with solid doors.

Tribute was paid to George Richards when, in 1929, his widow arranged for

a window in his memory that pictured *Night and Day*, symbolised by the owl and a flight of bluebirds placed on either side of a globe of the world and a Latin text across the upper border translates as 'Let There be Light'. The window formed a pair with an earlier one that commemorated Mrs Eleanor Lucas, and installed by the Lucas girls, most famously known for raising the funds to construct Ballarat's Memorial Arch and Avenue of Honour. It was Mrs Lucas who set up the garment-making enterprise that became one of Ballarat's most successful businesses. In this instance, stars adorn the glass quarries in the background, while the central image depicts a globe, astronomical instruments and the names of many prominent historical figures from philosophy and the sciences. Damaged by vandals in the 1980s, and duly reported in *The Courier*, the window was restored by local stained-glass firm, W. J. Robson & Sons Pty Ltd, still in operation in 2023.

The firm's founder, William Robson worked in Melbourne as the chief leadlighter for Anglo-Australian glass artist, William Montgomery, whose knowledge and exemplary craftsmanship assisted his immigration to Australia in the 1880s. Robson made many of the observatory windows, based on the Art Nouveau style that the firm was producing for domestic locations across the Ballarat region. But it seems possible that other firms were also involved, as an inscription underneath *Wisdom Strength Beauty* stated that it was 'presented by Brooks, Robinson & Co', and the *Courier* window and *Night and Day* are attributed to another local firm, Stansfield and Smith, that was taken over by Oliver Davey in 1966-67; its leadlight operation closed soon afterwards.

The significance of the Ballarat Municipal Observatory and Museum was recognised when it was listed on Victoria's Heritage Register in 1988 and classified by the National Trust of Australia (Vic) in 1989. In both cases, the stained-glass windows are specifically noted in the statements of significance as integral to the buildings. Visit the observatory website at <https://ballaratobservatory.org.au/> for more information. Better still, make a trip to see the stars from Mount Pleasant in Ballarat and include daylight time to appreciate the exceptional, if unlikely collection of stained-glass windows.

Bronwyn Hughes OAM

Library collection: three rare books in the RHSV collection

In late July this year Rare Book Week was held for the first time since 2019. There was a really interesting program of events and the RHSV contributed with a presentation on three rare books from our collection. The theme of the talk was about the extraordinary survival of the original diaries, journals and an atlas.

In 1925, when the Victorian Branch of the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) closed after 41 years their archive and library were absorbed by the RHSV although most of their glorious books were not catalogued for almost 100 years as they were not Victorian history and therefore not germane to the RHSV collection. Our three rare books are from this rich RGS trove.

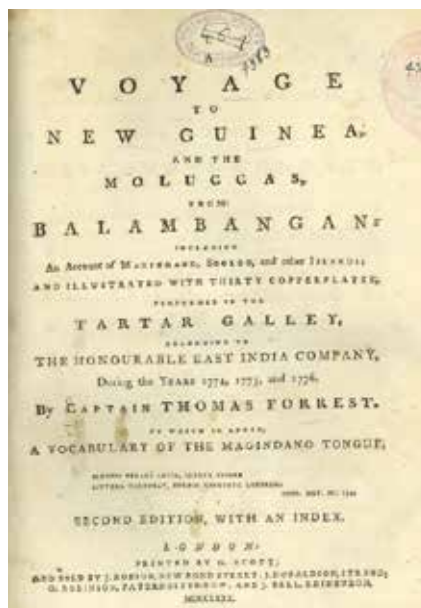
A Herman Moll atlas, 1719



The first book is a “Moll atlas” and it appears that our copy was published in 1719. The atlas is in a parlous state; the covers are damaged and separated from the spine and a number of maps are missing.

Cartographer, engraver and publisher Herman Moll was a charter member of London's elite social circle, which congregated at Jonathan's Coffee House, Cornhill. It included scientist Robert Hooke, archaeologist William Stuckley, authors Jonathan Swift and Daniel Defoe, and pirates William Dampier, Woodes Rogers and William Hacke. From these friends, Moll gained a great deal of privileged information which he was able to use in his cartographic works. Moll was so famous that his atlas is mentioned by name in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*.

Thomas Forrest's *A voyage to New Guinea and the Moluccas, from Balambagan, 1779*



Title page of Thomas Forrest's 1779 publication

The second item I presented was Thomas Forrest's '*A voyage to New Guinea and the Moluccas, from Balambagan: including an account of Magindano, Sooloo, and other islands*'. Forrest (c1729-1802) was a Scottish born navigator, cartographer, and explorer in the service of the East India Company. He seems to have served in the Royal Navy for some time, and then joined the British *East India Company Marine* and stayed with them for more than thirty years. He travelled around the islands mentioned in 1774, 1775, and 1776 and, choosing not to use a standard European-style boat for his journey, he travelled in a native 'Tartar galley' with local sailors. He was constantly at risk from and at the mercy of the local politics, suspicious locals, slave traders, pirates and the Spanish and the Dutch who, as his journey became more well-known, increased the number of their patrol long boats trying to catch him. Forrest sailed for London in July 1776 where he presented a report on his voyage to New Guinea to the Directors. He received a mixed reception. While the Company granted him permission to publish the journal and maps of the

voyage, they were not prepared to bear the cost of the plates. His expenses for the voyage of the Tartar remained unsettled for almost three years. He did receive some advance funds as he was 'in distress for money'. He went back to sea and was given command of a brig which was sailing to India; dying in Calcutta somewhere between 1801 and 1804.

La Pérouse's voyages, 1780s



The *Astrolabe* and the *Boussole* possibly near Alaska, 1786. (2023) https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_Boussole_et_l'Astrolabe [4 Sept 2023]

Finally, we have a more famous explorer whose publication, *A voyage round the world, performed in the years 1785, 1786, 1787, and 1788* by the *Boussole* and *Astrolabe*, under the command of J. F. G. de La Pérouse, faced many challenges before and after its publication.

In 1783 King Louis XVI began to draft an itinerary for an expedition to the Pacific seeking to complete Cook's unfinished work there and establish trade contacts. In 1785 La Pérouse was chosen to lead that expedition, and set sail in two ships. After stopping at Alaska, California, Macao, Manila, Korea, Sakhalin Island and Kamchatka he headed for New Holland. Whenever opportunity arose, personal letters, drawings by the artists and documents were forwarded to France. The first instalment was sent by sea from Macao; the second travelled overland with one of his officers, who arrived in Paris on 17th October 1788 after an epic journey across Russia. In Samoa, on the way to New Holland, eleven of his crew were killed whilst they were seeking water on the island. The final despatches were sent courtesy of Governor Phillip. Pérouse arrived in Botany Bay around the

What's on at RHSV

continued from page 2

26 January 1788 and established a camp there where they stayed for 6 weeks. The First Fleet was already there, having arrived 7 or 8 days earlier. Pérouse was able to give the British his journals, charts, artwork and letters. They were carried by Naval Lieutenant John Shortland on the *Alexander* to Britain and eventually arrived in France in 1791.

On the 10th March Pérouse set sail and was never seen or heard of again until 1828 when it was confirmed that the expedition was wrecked on an island north of the New Hebrides.

In 1791 France was in the throes of the Revolution which delayed publication of this book until it was eventually approved by the Constituent Assembly. To be approved, the material had to be edited to remove all references to the French king and the various titles and practices which had vanished when the monarchy was abolished. Then financial problems delayed the publication further and political conditions changed with Robespierre being overthrown. Finally, it was published in 1797. The un-redacted original journal was 'lost' in the French Archives Nationales until a researcher accidentally came across it inside a volume entitled *Scientific discoveries*.

These three items proved to be more than worth revisiting for their stories. It is also good to be reminded of the challenges which authors and compilers have faced to bring us the information they have gathered.

Jillian Hiscock

Collections Manager/Volunteer
Coordinator

CHARTING A COURSE: REFLECTIONS ON 35 YEARS AT THE HELM

Date: Tuesday 31 October

Time: 5–8pm

Event type: in person

Speaker: Dr Kevin Fewster

Following the 5 pm AGM of the Melbourne Maritime Heritage Network (MMHN), at 6 pm Dr Kevin Fewster, the patron of MMHN, will speak on his extraordinary 35-year international career in Maritime Museums including Director of Royal Museums Greenwich (RMG), the world's largest and most visited maritime museum precinct. Kevin will reflect on what are essential elements to consider in a successful maritime museum today and the issues these cultural institutions face.

ROSS MCMULLIN ON 'LIFE SO FULL OF PROMISE'

Date: TUESDAY 14 NOVEMBER

Time: 5:30pm for 6–7pm

Event type: hybrid

\$10 | \$20

An event with Ross McMullin is always much anticipated. Ross is an award-winning historian and biographer, a renowned storyteller, an entertaining speaker and a longstanding RHSV member.

His book, *Farewell, Dear People: Biographies of Australia's Lost Generation* was awarded the Prime Minister's Prize for Australian History, and in his new sequel *Life So Full of Promise*, Ross has again combined prodigious research and narrative flair in a collection of interwoven family stories about forgotten Australians who had radiant potential.

The rich cast of characters in *Life So Full of Promise* includes a popular doctor, a brilliant cricketer and an exceptionally talented barrister who was a potential prime minister.

CONVICTION POLITICS: A DIGITAL INVESTIGATION OF THE CONVICT ROOTS OF AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRACY

Date: Saturday 18 November

Time: 1:30pm – 4:00pm

Cost: Free

Speaker: Tony Moore

Event type: Hybrid

Refreshments: afternoon tea

This event is organised by the Descendants of Convicts Group Inc (DOCS) together with the RHSV.

'Conviction Politics' is an international digital history project exploring the impact of radicals and rebels transported as political convicts to their place of exile in Australia.

Project leader, Associate Professor Tony Moore from Monash University, will take us through the project's discoveries, media and exhibition, including screening a selection of short documentaries. The project reveals how Australia's first 'unfree' workforce resisted exploitation and subordination through inventive solidarity in the face of coercion, while a vanguard of rebels, liberal pamphleteers, industrial protestors and radical agitators changed the political direction of the Australian colonies.

CONZINC RIOTINTO

Date: Tuesday 21 November

Time: 5:30pm for 6pm – 7pm

Speaker: Robert Porter

Cost: \$10 | \$20

Event type: hybrid

Join Rob Porter as he talks about two large British mining houses that expanded their operations to Australia in the 1950s and 1960s. In 1962, Rio Tinto merged with Consolidated Zinc to form Conzinc Riotinto of Australia (CRA). The company faced a range of challenges: its interaction with indigenous populations, the violent insurrection which eventually closed the Bougainville operation, as well as balancing an Australian management committed to CRA becoming a majority-owned and increasingly independent major Australian resources company, and the requirements of the major shareholder based in London.

CURATOR'S TOUR OF GARRYOWEN'S MELBOURNE

Date: Tuesday 28 November

Time: 2pm – 3:30pm

Cost: Free

Event type: In person

Curator: Dr Liz Rushen

Refreshments: afternoon tea

Historian Dr Liz Rushen will take you behind the scenes of our current exhibition, *Garryowen's Melbourne* which Liz curated. The exhibition grew out of the research Liz had done for her book, *Garryowen Unmasked: The Life of Edmund Finn*, which was launched earlier this year and was aided by her deep knowledge of the RHSV collection and its treasures.

Constance "Connie" Coleman: artist, conservationist, poet and teacher ...

continued
from page 7

Realising that the property might be broken up on her death, Constance gifted Wanderslore to the Trust for Nature in 1987-8 as a sanctuary reserve for the conservation of wildlife and native plants. She lived in the cottage for the rest of her life. She also gave \$10,000 to the Trust to provide a fund towards maintenance of the property. The Trust regards Wanderslore as an important remnant of Yarra Valley foothills bushland in excellent condition, large enough to allow plant regeneration and to support fauna. It has 'Land for Wildlife' status.

Her art agent Jim Alexander says that 'Constance was primarily a conservationist, like Neil Douglas, with whom she was friends, and a teacher; she loved her teaching'. On her retirement from Lilydale High, she began painting full-time.

Constance wrote of Wanderslore:

'Many years ago, I was met and befriended by a small bushland hillside which, with its two flanking valleys, gave me, and continues to give me, the benevolence of its tranquillity and companionship. More, it has allowed me to become aware of the rich tapestry of that interwoven life which it nurtures – awareness, which has been extended to the whole life structure of planet earth.

And this has become a life structure, a fragile web, that is being fragmented. So, I know fear! What of my hillside, its valleys, its inhabitants? What defences have they against the incursions of the bulldozer, and Man's business acumen?' (1982)

Following the closure of the Lilydale to Warburton railway line in 1965 she purchased a prefabricated Victorian Railways fettler's hut from the 1800s which had been used as the Launching



Top Left: Entry to Wanderslore Sanctuary, Connie's Studio, Launching Place. Photo: G. Davies, 2017

Top Right: Constance Coleman leading a walk at Wanderslore.

Bottom: Constance Coleman, Untitled (Valley landscape), watercolour on paper. Undated. Photo: G. Davies

Place Railway Station office; she moved it up the hill to be her painting and writing studio. The Studio is heritage listed by the Shire of Yarra Ranges. Its restoration by Trust For Nature in accordance with plans prepared on an honorary basis by architect Mark Burns has been possible through a grant from the John T Reid Charitable Trusts and donations from Friends.

Constance lived alone on her property and painted all her life until a stroke a few years before her death in 1990. She spent her last years at the Launching Place Nursing Home. There she typically and enthusiastically began new projects, such as potting up plants for sale in a small plant nursery she instigated at

the nursing home. She enrolled in a philosophy correspondence course at Hobart University. The epitaph on her Wesburn grave reads, 'EARTH CLOSE, EARTH WISE, CONTENT AM I'.

Article by Paula Herlihy, from information supplied by G. Davies and members of the Friends of Wanderslore Sanctuary.

Editors note: Friends of Wanderslore Sanctuary have recently received a grant from the Public Records Office of Victoria Local Grants Program, for a significant assessment of the work of Constance Coleman. So, we might hear more about the work of Constance as it relates to Victoria's history.

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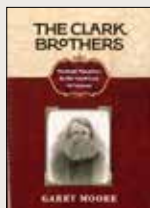
www.historyvictoria.org.au/bookshop/



Great Australian Places

Graham Seal (2023)
PB 340pp \$34.99

Graham Seal takes us on a storytelling tour, from iconic destinations to tiny settlements, remote landmarks and little-known corners of this vast continent. He discovers the true stories behind the immortal Aussie songs about the pub with no beer and the land where the crow flies backwards. He also visits sites precious to First Nations people. Whether you're planning a road trip or indulging in an evening of armchair travel, this book will surprise, amuse and entertain you.



The Clark Brothers: Strategic Squatters in the North East of Victoria

Garry Moore (2023)
PB 222pp \$45

Three brothers, John, William and Richard Clark, separately settled in the 1830s Port Phillip District. John settled on the left bank of the Goulburn River, now known as Mitchelton. William took up land at the junction of the Ovens and King Rivers, today the location of Wangaratta. Richard established himself on the Broken River at present day Benalla. This is the story of how each brother liberally assisted to establish the towns in which they resided.



White Russians, Red Peril: a Cold War History of Migration to Australia

Sheila Fitzpatrick (2021)
PB 368pp \$34.99

Making use of newly discovered Russian-language archives and drawing on a lifetime's study of Soviet history and politics, acclaimed author Sheila Fitzpatrick examines the early years of a diverse Russian-Australian community and how Australian and Soviet intelligence agencies attempted to track and influence them. While anti-communist 'White' Russians dreamed a war of liberation would overthrow the Soviet regime, a dissident minority admired its achievements and thought of returning home. This is immigration history at its vivid, grounded best.



Remembering Georges: Stories from Melbourne's Most Elegant Store

Annette Cooper (2014)
HC 376pp \$89.95

When Georges closed its doors on 5 October 1995, it had been trading for 115 years. This famous department store, situated in the "Paris End" of Collins Street, still lingers in the minds of many today. *Remembering Georges* documents the memories of staff and clients with the unique 'voice' of each interviewee shining through. Richly illustrated the book displays many of the fabulous images associated with Georges and reflects the style and elegance of the store itself.



My Grandfather's Clock: Four centuries of a British-Australian family

Graeme Davison (2023)
PB 320pp \$50

A great-aunt's bequest – a 200-year-old grandfather clock – sends historian Graeme Davison on a journey into his father's family's past. From their tribal homeland in the Scottish Borders he follows them to the garrison town of Carlisle, from industrial Birmingham to Edwardian Australia, and from the Great War to his own suburban childhood. Based on a lifetime of creative scholarship, *My Grandfather's Clock* is a moving testament to the power of family history.



Die Nibelungen-Besprechung [English Translation]

Lyrics by Adolf Wilke; written down and illustrated by Hans Wolter von Gruenewaldt (2023)
PB 24pp \$15

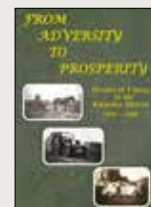
This publication, also available in the original German, is a record of a parody ballad describing the comical events of an evening during WWII amongst the German Prisoners of War confined at Camp 13 in Murchison. There were three editions of this production; Axel, son of Hans Wolter von Gruenewaldt, holds one, another is in the Tatura Wartime Camps Collection, and the third has been irrevocably lost.



Exploring Burke and Wills: Enigmas and curiosities

David Corke (2023)
PB 259pp \$56

This book does not tell the story of the Burke and Wills expedition. Instead, it is a historiography; exploring the issues in the well-known saga, asking questions and probing misunderstandings that have always been part of the tragedy. While it might be difficult to understand the actions of those men who suffered in an attempt to 'explore' a land, it is important to consider how evidence might be misinterpreted.



From Adversity to Prosperity: Decades of Change in the Katandra District 1930-1960

Katandra and District History Group (2023)
PB 234pp \$39

By 1936 changes in the Katandra District had begun with the effects of the depression easing and those settlers still farming being allotted more land. Then the 1950s showed production gains after WWII, which brought electricity to the region. Compiled from submissions by local families, this book is a true community history developing a comprehensive picture of an active dairying and orchards' farming community.

Books received

John Schauble

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

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



Engravers and Lithographers in Colonial Victoria: a directory. Thomas A. Darragh, Ancora Press, Melbourne, 2023, pp. vii-321, ISBN 9780648738527.

It is hard not to be just a little in awe of the scholarship involved in this book and one would hope that most of its limited edition of 100 copies will find their way into public research collections. Engraving and lithography were central to the production of illustrations for publication before the advent of photographic reproduction. This directory lists not just the firms involved but the individual artists and artisans. It also provides some brief introductory notes to the processes and, as an appendix, examples of some of the types of illustrations they would produce. An excellent reference.



Daniel Bunce (1812-1872): the Mallee; Leichhardt; the Goldfields; and Other Correspondence. Ian D. Clark, the author, Sydney, 2022, pp. 4-728, ISBN 97984069259809.

This is one of a recent series of works by Dr Ian Clark in which primary and secondary documents relating to lesser-known 19th century Victorians have been collected and published. The common thread of these works is their connection to First Nations peoples and individuals. Bunce was a botanist, collector and explorer; he accompanied Leichhardt on the second of his explorations of the inland, and also made more modest expeditions of Victoria's landscape in the 1840s and 1850s. At the core of this compilation is his journal, accounts of trips along the Murray and to the Mallee and observations of the goldfields in the early 1850s.



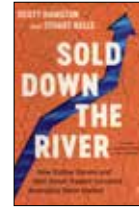
Line of Blood: the Truth of Alfred Howitt. Craig Horne, Melbourne Books, Melbourne, 2023, pp. 7-302, ISBN 9781922779052.

Alfred Howitt was a remarkable 19th century Victorian: explorer, police magistrate, bureaucrat, anthropologist, autodidact. When Burke and Wills went missing in central Australia, Howitt went to discover their fate. He would later compile a definitive contemporary record of the First Nations people of south-eastern Australia. He recorded local geology and ecology. His rich legacy is one to which both indigenous and non-indigenous Victorians continue to turn. But he was also a man of his time. By modern standards he could be called a racist. But his story and his "truth" is complex. This account by a distant descendant stirs up confronting aspects of Howitt's life and is bound to spark controversy.



The Years of Terror: Banbu-Deen Kulin and Colonists at Port Phillip 1835-1851. Marguerita Stephens with Fay Stewart-Muir, Australian Scholarly Publishing, Kew, 2023, pp. vii-498, ISBN 9781922669841.

This penetrating account of Kulin and colonists at Port Phillip between 1835 and 1851 is one of the most important works to emerge in recent years about the dispossession of the First Nations people of Victoria. It is based in large part upon a detailed interpretation of the journal of William Thomas, Assistant Protector of Aborigines. Thomas kept an extensive record of the people of Port Phillip, today considered of immense value. He was also, by all accounts a "good man", genuine in his concern and advocacy for the welfare of the local tribes even though constricted: a man of his time and an agent of the Crown.



Sold Down the River: How Robber Barons and Wall Street traders cornered Australia's Water Market. Scott Hamilton and Stuart Kells, Text Publishing, Melbourne, 2021, pp. viii-313, ISBN 9781922458124.

The Murray-Darling Basin is of enormous importance to Australia's survival in environmental, ecological and indigenous life. It is at the heart of Australia's food production. Water and its commodification have determined Australia's past and will continue to mediate its future. The advent of the Murray Darling Basin Plan in 2012 was meant to chart that future. The authors, both experts in public policy, argue it has gone disastrously wrong: for traditional custodians, farmers and the environment. Instead of equity it has spawned a ruthless market open to exploitation and to the buying and selling of water, that most precious resource in a parched landscape.



Searching for Elsewhere. Graeme Johanson, Ginninderra Press, Port Adelaide, 2023, pp. 5-303, ISBN 9781761095597.

Growing up in Melbourne in the 1950s and the rapidly changing 1960s was confusing enough for many young people. For Graeme Johanson, the added burden of growing up in suburban Canterbury within the conservative fundamentalist sect the Plymouth Brethren amplified this. Amid the ructions which beset the brethren themselves in the 1960s, his family was cast out and he finally severed ties with the Brethren in 1968 as he headed off to university. His story, told with both humour and kindness where sometimes none is due, is revelatory. On the back of this, that the reinvented Brethren and its business and political dealings should have come under scrutiny in recent years is perhaps no surprise.