

HISTORY NEWS

ISSUE 369 | DECEMBER 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

PEOPLE POWER: PETITIONS IN THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Date: Tuesday 23 January, 2024

Time: 1pm – 2pm

Speaker: Patrick Ferry, NAA

Cost: Free

Event type: Hybrid

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

Petitioning government is a fundamental right in Australia's democracy. This seminar will explore citizen activism through petitions submitted to the Australian Government. The National Archives collection includes a wide range of petitions relating to a number of areas for change including land rights for First Australians, equal voting rights and the internment of enemy aliens. Not all petitions relate to the big issues, with some asking for intervention on more local or personal issues.

Those who attend in person can also visit the National Archives' *Disrupt Persist Invent* touring exhibition, which explores the many ways people have achieved social change in Australia.



CURATOR'S TOUR OF GARRYOWEN'S MELBOURNE WITH DR LIZ RUSHEN

Date: Tuesday 6 February 2024

Time: 2pm – 3:30pm

Cost: Free

Event type: in person

Followed by 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.

WESTERN TREATMENT PLANT TOUR

Date: Tuesday 26 March

Time: 8:45am – 12:45pm

Cost: \$55

Event type: in person

Venue: tour starts and ends at the RHSV

The Western Treatment Plant can only be accessed through an organised bus tour so this is a rare opportunity for RHSV members. Experience the Western Treatment Plant at Werribee, and discover the historical and environmental importance of this fascinating site. The Western Treatment Plant was added to the Victorian Heritage Register in 2021, recognising its historical, archaeological and technical significance. The historic Western Treatment Plant in Werribee is a world leader in environmentally-friendly sewage treatment, and one of Victoria's

most unlikely hidden treasures.

This vast site is home to more than just sewage treatment facilities – doubling as a working farm and internationally-recognised bird habitat. Here, agriculture and biodiversity meet resource recovery, education and ecotourism, supporting Melbourne's renowned liveability.

We will have two brilliant guides for the day. Firstly, whilst we drive from the RHSV to Cocoroc, historian Tony Dingle, who has researched and written extensively about Melbourne's water and sewerage, will explain the historical importance of this treatment plant and then we'll pick up a guide at the Treatment Plant to give us the contemporary information.



What's on is continued
on page 7

History News

History News is the bi-monthly newsletter of the RHSV
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COVER IMAGE:

Bryant & May Complex (1909; Source Headland Properties)

See 'Heritage report: Bryant & May' on page 4

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President's report

Each time I reach a certain point while cresting a hill on the Great Ocean Road, I have a flow of pleasure, of wondrous familiarity. It is but a moment, but it is a powerful one, and a mere glimpse as the bushes seem to part for just an instance as the car speeds by. I sometimes regret those bushes, striving for the sky in their own way, fulfilling their destiny but obscuring a better and longer view. And it is a moment sometimes missed if the road calls for my greater attention.

The glimpse is of the Split Point Lighthouse at Aireys Inlet, which is beautiful in its whiteness against the blue sea, topped by a red dome for its beacon. I have never gone inside, always promising one day to do so, but I know its surrounds well. There are several gravel tracks leading from it, offering different vistas of the sea and Great Ocean Road coastline.

But actually, it is not Aireys or the lighthouse I am thinking about at these moments, they are but portents to my real destination, Lorne. As I crest another hill at Fairhaven I glimpse Point Grey the marker of Lorne in the distance, and after triumphing over Big Hill see Lorne more fully before me. This place is beautiful, the sweep of its beach line and line of its pier never tires for me. But it is really the deeper experiences and memories I have that beckon.

It is the same feeling that I get walking along William Street into A'Beckett Street Melbourne and approach the Drill Hall. It is an interesting exterior, not just an art deco army drill hall of the 1930s, of

which few survive, but a low-lying relief amidst the towering glass mountains surrounding it.

That feeling intensifies as I move through the foyer and push aside the frosted glass doors, to what lays hidden behind. The rich texture of the flooring, the cavernous space beyond the desk, with its wood panels and brick sentinels, call me.

But associations rather than spaces underpin my feelings. This is where history lives! Our Garryowen Exhibition brings ideas of early Melbourne. The bookshop beckons with all sorts of delights as authors present their many visions of the past. Beyond are our collections: manuscripts offering unique past voices, our library shelves full of more visions of the past, and our images room with its 60,000+ hidden pleasures of past landscapes and people.

But then the reality of our place in this building as tenuous sinks in. This might be the headquarters of the RHSV, but we currently have no tenure. We are now repeating the long history of the RHSV. For the past 114 years, and for about 20 times over that period, we have been shifting from one place to the next, always dependent on the kindness of others.

Now the moment has come to set down roots and to seek a long lease from the Ministry of Planning, to make the Drill Hall our home for the foreseeable future. Only then when I stride along William Street, will I see before me, "OUR PLACE".

Peace to all the world at Christmas

Richard Broome

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Editor's note – 2024 feature , calling on ethnic based history groups.

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Most of our affiliated member historical societies are geographically-based; however, some represent different ethnicities with their common ties of race, language, nationality, or culture. In 2024 *History News* we would like to feature articles from these ethnically-based historical societies: the history of the arrival or settlement of 'your people' in Victoria and the work and challenges of your organisation.

Submissions for these feature articles can be sent at any time, though the earlier the better. They should be 200-800 words and include an image or two. Please send submissions or queries to *History News* editor: sbetridge@ooutlook.com

Sharon Betridge

Heritage report: Bryant & May



RHSV Councillor and Heritage Committee member Judy Smart, who prepared our submission opposing the proposed development of the former Bryant & May Industrial Complex, tells the story. Heritage Committee member Jeff Atkinson provides more information on the 'Heritage Matters' tab of the RHSV web site.

A recent matter of serious concern for the committee is a proposed high-rise development of the northern section of the Bryant & May industrial complex between Church Street and Walnut Street, Cremorne. Accordingly, we have made a strong submission urging Heritage Victoria to refuse a permit. As the Heritage Victoria Register states, the 'Former Bryant & May Industrial Complex' 'is a superb, largely intact Edwardian factory complex'. It 'is of historical significance as evidence of the development of industry in Melbourne from the early 20th century' and 'as a rare surviving example of modern factory conditions and amenities' reflecting the 'Quaker principles of the original English founders'. These principles were evident in the owners' provision of recreational and restaurant amenities for workers and a pleasant working environment. The Bryant & May tennis courts, the clock tower, and the kitchen and dining hall, all examples of the founders' philosophy, are still extant.

Once important as a large place of employment in working-class

■ Bryant & May Complex (1909) Church Street, Richmond, showing clocktower and chimney which would be obscured by proposed development (source Lovell Chen)

Richmond, this complex is not only significant to our industrial and social history but is now a treasured landmark for local residents as well as train travellers and visitors to Melbourne. While the proposed development does not threaten the heritage buildings themselves and includes sweeteners promising preservation and restoration works, these are negated by the bulk and height of the two proposed towers. At 12 and 13 levels, one in the form of an ultra-contemporary wedge, they would create a wall to the north and north west of the site, overwhelming the main buildings, isolating them from their surroundings, and obscuring views and sightlines of Bryant & May's two most important landmarks—the clock tower and the chimney stack.

We believe that protecting heritage sites also involves protecting the immediate surrounds and the airspace above them. Otherwise, they become hidden, isolated islands in a forest of high-rise buildings. Our submission to Heritage Victoria argues that the new buildings should be no higher than the main heritage buildings and that their design and the materials used should respond to those buildings rather than detract from and dominate them.

Judith Smart
Deputy Chair, RHSV Heritage Committee.

Heritage report: meeting with Minister Kilkenny

A reminder to all to complete the Heritage Council Survey sent out early in November. The survey closes on 13 December: https://engage.vic.gov.au/VHR_Future_Directions

On 25 September, the government announced major changes to the Melbourne planning scheme which will have far-reaching effects. They fast-track development proposals deemed of 'Significant Economic Development' or 'Significant Residential Development with Affordable Housing', as well as proposals conforming to certain standards and located within 800 metres of a railway station or an activity centre. All these will be decided by the Minister without reference to the local council and without any avenue of appeal.

We are concerned about how heritage will be treated under the new scheme. I had already requested a meeting with the Minister, and, on Thursday, 26 October, Ian Wight, Judy Smart and I met the Minister and the chief executive of planning. The Minister assured us of her interest in heritage. Under the new planning amendments, she promised, proposals will still be advertised, councils and impacted parties will be notified, submissions accepted, and the Heritage Overlay, where applicable, will apply as it has in the past. This is better than we feared but of course still leaves the decision in the hands of planners with no public access.

The Minister also invited the RHSV to take part in the consultation for implementation of the new planning system. While we were pleased at this, we were still concerned that the lack of transparency in the new system will make it harder for us to protect heritage. We therefore suggested to the Minister that she reopen the Legislative Council Inquiry into the protections within the Victorian Planning Framework in preparation for the planned revision of the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

We raised concern about proposals to develop apartments on top of the historic streetscapes of Ballarat and Bendigo. The Minister emphasised her commitment to these heritage sites and to the Goldfields World Heritage listing and we are grateful for her assurances.

We are encouraged by the Minister's openness and we hope that heritage protection will benefit from this channel of communication.

Charles Sowerwine,
Chair, RHSV Heritage Committee.



■ This early photograph of the then Hotham Town Hall can be dated to between 1876 and 1879 as the clock, designed by Government Astronomer Robert Ellery, has not yet been installed in the tower. According to the Hotham History Project, the clock alone added 10% to the building's over-all cost. PROV: VPRS 14517/P1/44, R598.

Architecture in the Archives:

Connecting collections: the North Melbourne town hall

Each July, Open House Melbourne is an opportunity to celebrate Melbourne architecture and design through the sharing of knowledge, historical insights and innovative ideas for Melbourne's future. The theme for Open House Melbourne 2023 was 'Collective City'. Central to this is the concept of connectivity: connecting people, communities, places and even collections.

Inspired by this, the National Archives of Australia (PROV) collaborated with the Hotham History Project and North Melbourne Library to connect historical architectural drawings, property records, photographs and other information from their collections. The 'Connecting Collections' display focuses on public buildings, facilities and infrastructure which have served to connect local communities, thereby contributing to the development of Melbourne as a 'collective city'. Amongst the buildings featured in the display is the iconic former North Melbourne Town Hall. Located prominently on the corner of Errol and Queensberry Streets, the former North Melbourne Town Hall and adjoining

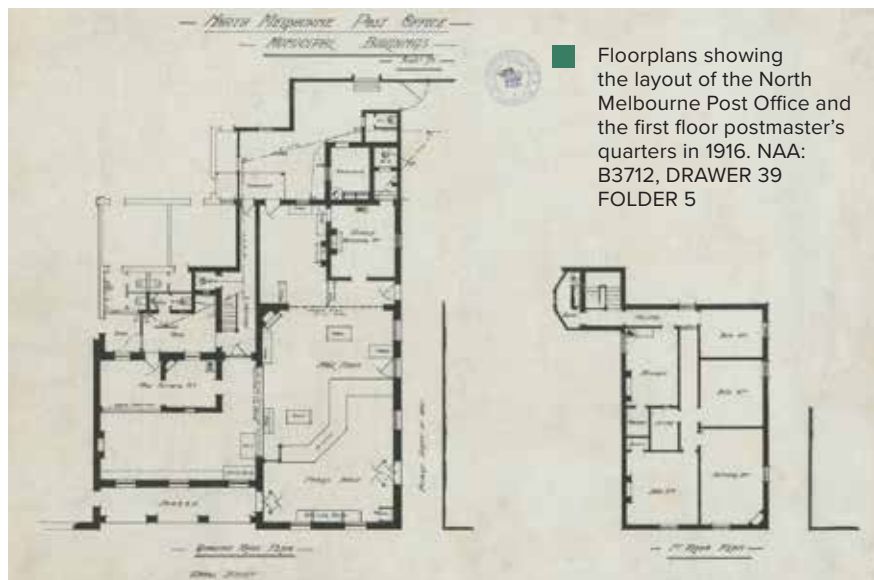
municipal buildings were designed by George Johnson and built between 1875 and 1888. Johnson's ornate and timelessly elegant design, costing approximately £20,000 at that time, has been characterised architecturally as 'free classical' and 'Italianate with French Second Empire elements'. The Victorian Heritage Register describes it as 'an outstanding and intact example of the grand town halls which were built in the inner suburbs of Melbourne in the 1870s and 1880s ... as a demonstration of the wealth of Melbourne, and its inner suburbs, in the period after the gold rushes'.

The building has long been a significant community facility connecting North Melbourne residents. Until 1905 the building housed the local Hotham / North Melbourne Council's chambers, together with a courtroom, post and telegraph office, the North Melbourne Free Library and Mechanics' Institute and various shops. A large hall and 'supper room' became popular venues for local community meetings, dances and even wedding receptions.

As the home of the North Melbourne Post Office, the building has played a significant role in connecting the North Melbourne community with the rest of Melbourne and the wider world for nearly 150 years. The then Hotham Post and Telegraph Office was relocated to this 'new' building in July 1876 with J McGibbon as postmaster. In 1887, the post office's name was officially changed to North Melbourne. After Federation, the post office was taken over by the Commonwealth Postmaster General's Department. The Australian Government's long association with the building via the post office continues to this day.

Please note: 'Collective City: Connecting Collections' exhibition is on display in the Victorian Archives Centre (VAC) Reading Room, 99 Shiel St, North Melbourne during opening hours until Friday January 5 January 2024. Phone: (03) 9348 5600 with any questions.

Patrick Ferry
State Manager, Victoria
National Archives of Australia



■ Floorplans showing the layout of the North Melbourne Post Office and the first floor postmaster's quarters in 1916. NAA: B3712, DRAWER 39 FOLDER 5

HSSC report: Succession planning, beginning with the people around you

Welcome to the first of a series of articles to tackle the most commonly reported concern of historical societies within Melbourne and certainly rural Victoria's smaller towns: 'Our member and volunteer numbers are static or declining; we're worried for our society's future'.

We of the RHSV's Historical Societies Support Committee (HSSC) know that a community's history-keepers are profoundly knowledgeable and dedicated to preserving what makes their people and place unique. Those same people are also, very often, retired, and therefore, they can donate as much time as they do. Even so, health and other life challenges accumulate with the years to the point that the good people cannot proceed with all they have done so well. Despair is, understandably, a first response. However, a key message of this series of HSSC articles is that 'now' is the time to overcome negative thinking and trends. 'Now' is the time for succession-planning, forward-thinking and open-minded, creative thinking.

Much of what follows draws upon HSSC members' observations of different historical societies' positive approaches. While some societies have attracted new members and volunteers through worthy promotions in local papers, Facebook and other social media, other societies report more success through personal approaches.

Your task? Commit yourself this very moment to finding, in the next 12 months, at least one new member from the people around you. Some strategies and supports follow:

1. Invite a good friend to an event or two. Allow them to see how excellent your society is, either for its historical richness, or friendly socialising possibilities, or both. Indeed, if you and your friend lament how rarely you see each other because 'the year runs away', then society events will help place firm dates in your diaries.
2. Bring a friend or relative, your age or younger, to an event or Open Day so they see what you do *inside* the building where you often go. Say outright that you hope they might join the society 'one day', not necessarily now but 'one day'. A long-term view can sometimes be necessary; quite possibly, their joining might not happen now but might in the future.

Moreover, loved ones might come to know where any locally significant items in your possession might be donated in the future if you or others cannot, or do not wish to, retain them.

3. Invite past members and volunteers who contributed to the life of your society to special commemorations or events with themes to which you know they had a connection. The people of the past might have discontinued membership or volunteering for a reason which no longer applies. If 'age has wearied them', perhaps they might undertake a more modest role. Either way, make them feel as special as they deserve; you are the beneficiaries of their energies. Those same people might also ask family members and friends who did not visit or join in the past to now do so ... and new members and volunteers might result.
4. Do not wait for local councillors or political representatives to choose to visit your society because, very likely, they will not. Rather, invite those people, specifically, to a morning or afternoon tea or luncheon, and demonstrate key facets of your society's knowledge, skills and collection. Be clever in what you highlight. Ask the visitors, then, to join or to encourage others they meet through their work. Build a relationship, perhaps not over-emphasising urgent needs on the first meeting, such as leaking gutters but, 'in time', you might do so and your new supporters might be more sympathetic with remedies, grants and other advice. They can also carry your positivity and publicity with them. For further information in this regard, see Federation of Australian Historical Societies, 'Local Government and History Societies': <https://www.history.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Local-Government-Partnership-FAHS.pdf>
5. Do you know people in your community soon to retire? Approach them in advance. Some people soon-to-retire or newly-retired wonder how to fill their days. In the best possible ways, 'fill their days' for them.
6. Indeed, do not wait for any 'local others' to come to you; go to them. Aside from the usual local newspaper and social media, go to local radio, television, other community groups, community noticeboards, and more. Do not look 'needy' for visitors, members or volunteers; rather, share what wonderful things you are doing, the awards you have won, the books

your society has published, and other successes whereby people are attracted to you and want to be part of your success story overall.

7. Have a clearly visible presence at all possible local community or public events, such as street festivals, markets, elections and even Bunnings barbecues. Two societies have reported holding annual Bunnings barbecues and, while raising valuable funds, have learned over the hot-plate that, 'We didn't know you existed' or, 'You're just a couple of streets from us but we've never been in'. At all such events, display a banner and make available membership forms, details of upcoming events, local history publications and perhaps interesting items. Wear with pride clearly-labelled badges with your names and organisation.
8. Partner with other local groups that embrace history, even if in different ways. Boost your profile and attract more members, perhaps specialist speakers and different future leaders. Does the 'Men's Shed' have experts on old tools? Is there a community group that deals with near-lost domestic crafts, such as button-making? Is there a group that deals with heritage roses or preserves the native Australian environment? Could the local Information Centre be asked to promote and direct travelers to you as 'worth a visit', while the Information Centre staff there simultaneously learn about you?
9. Promote what you consider to be the benefits of membership and volunteering, or draw upon further strategies in the following resources: Maddi Wittman, 'Why Volunteering is Good for You', National Trust of Australia/Victoria, *Magazine*, No. 26, Autumn 2023, pp. 38-39. If you know a member, obtain the article. One article which is freely available and talks about the health benefits to a volunteer is by Nathan Smith, 'The Many Benefits of Volunteering', *Wellbeing*, Medibank, 16 June, 2023: <https://www.medibank.com.au/livebetter/be-magazine/wellbeing/the-many-benefits-of-volunteering/>
10. Once you have new members and volunteers, look after them. See: 'Planning, Recruiting, Managing and Retaining Volunteers' https://www.ourcommunity.com.au/management/view_help_sheet.do?articleid=737 or RHSV, 'Guide to Managing Historical Societies': <https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/people1.pdf> And, for succession-planning overall, see Federation of Australian Historical Societies, 'Succession Planning': <https://www.history.org.au/succession-planning/>

Good luck!

More in time,

Dr Rosalie Triolo

Chair HSSC | hssc@historyvictoria.org.au

What's on at RHSV

continued from page 2

3RD INDIGENOUS HISTORY LECTURE WITH PROFESSOR LYNETTE RUSSELL AM

Date: Tuesday 20 February

Time: 5:30pm for a 6pm – 7pm lecture

Cost: \$10 | \$20

Event type: Hybrid: in person and Zoom

We are delighted that eminent and award-winning historian, Professor Lynette Russell AM FASSA FAHA, who is both the Sir John Monash Distinguished Professor and ARC Kathleen Fitzpatrick Laureate Professor at Monash University's Indigenous Studies Centre, will deliver the third Indigenous History lecture, part of our Distinguished Lecture series. Russell's research is broadly anthropological history and she has published widely in the areas of theory, Indigenous histories, post-colonialism and representations of race, museum studies and popular culture.

Russell's Aboriginal ancestors were born on the lands of the Wotjobaluk people, and she is descended from convicts on the other side of her family; she is rather uniquely placed as an historian. All of her work is deeply interdisciplinary and collaborative. Russell has collaborated with scholars in archaeology, anthropology and environmental studies, and worked in various Aboriginal organisations. She holds or has held positions on committees and reference groups pertaining to Melbourne Museum, the State Library of Victoria and the Collections Council of Australia as well as being a former president of the Australian Historical Association. She is an elected member of AIATSIS and,

in 2023, was elected an International Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. She is the only Australian scholar to be elected to both the Royal Historical Society and the Royal Anthropological Institute, both in London. In addition, she has held two fellowships at Cambridge University and one at All Souls College, Oxford University. Russell believes fervently that every undergraduate should undertake Indigenous studies as an essential part of the curriculum and her passions are community outreach and the dissemination of knowledge, social justice, and the Essendon Football Club.

TRADES HALL TOUR

Date: Thursday 29 February

Time: 2pm – 4:30pm

Cost: \$25

Event type: in person

Venue: Victorian Trades Hall and Curtin Hotel

This 90 minute tour is a repeat of a tour we did in 2023 to the newly and fabulously restored Trades Hall. Our guide will once again be Antony Moore. Antony was a long-time union official with the Vehicle Division of the AMWU. Unfortunately, with the closing of Australia's car manufacturing plants, Antony no longer had a role, however, for the past 6 years, from the very start, he has been heavily involved in the renovations at Trades Hall: working alongside archaeologists, conservators and many other experts who have ensured that this important building and its cultural heritage are preserved. Antony is a passionate amateur historian and advocate for the building and its cultural heritage.

After Trades Hall we are crossing the road to the Curtin Hotel, a Labor stronghold, where we will be educated and entertained by David Cragg, Labour History Melbourne Vice President, former Trades Hall Assistant Secretary, a Life Member of the ALP, a Trustee of the Victorian Trades Hall & Literary Institute

and all-round labour history raconteur.



ROBYN ANNEAR TALKS CORNERS AND ORANGE PEEL

Date: Wednesday 20 March

Time: 5:30pm for a 6pm – 7pm lecture

Cost: \$10 | \$20

Event type: Hybrid, in person and Zoom

What better defines a city than its street corners? A corner gives you a starting point, a destination and a place to turn. It's furnished with pillar boxes, news-stands and tram stops, and lamp-posts for light and lounging. Where would you be likeliest to find a pub? At the corner, of course. And who better than Robyn Annear to usher you around the corners of Melbourne, and reveal their bizarre, baroque and mostly forgotten stories?

In this talk Robyn will introduce you to:

- street-corner 'galvanisers' who offered the thrill of electric shock at threepence a time
- the rude boys of the Fitzroy back streets who became the original 'larrikins'
- infants named for the corners on which they'd been abandoned
- a rogues' gallery of unruly women, incorrigible men and runaway horses
- ...and, of course, the civic reprobates who discarded orange peel in the streets, to the endangerment of life and limb.



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Opening Heathmont Kindergarten and Community Hall, 1952. Mrs Lavis (President), Miss Stubbs, Cr Horman, M.J. Harper, Cr B.J. Hubbard, Mrs Hubbard, Cr F.J. Corr, Mrs Corr, unidentified woman, Mrs J. Harper, Cr R.G. Lavis. Image courtesy of the Ringwood and District Historical Society. <https://victoriancollections.net.au/items/5d946e-5b21ea670f40ec2dd4>

Heathmont Centenary 1923-2023: the most important events in the history of Heathmont

In this centenary year since its naming, it is interesting to consider what have been the main events in the history of Heathmont. However, the exercise has many qualifications; indeed, so many that some folk may consider it pointless and even ahistorical.



Houghton & Byrne Pest Service Truck on Canterbury Road crossing Heathmont Railway Station Bridge 1954. Photo courtesy Vic. Roads and Ringwood and District Historical Society. <https://victoriancollections.net.au/items/5c1837d16b785e0ebc9c7bb6>

The first difficulty is our lack of information about events in the years when only First Nations people lived in the area. We have no dates of their particular events, and we do not know if their culture highlighted events in the same way as is now practised. Of course, there also was no named 'Heathmont' back then, but nor was there a 'Heathmont' when the Wielands, Pumps, Sharps, Washusens and others bought land and began orcharding before 1923.

Another major problem for this exercise is that any historical account includes far more than dated events. There are also evolutionary developments, fashions, styles, movements, attitudes and beliefs; often, to ascribe an exact date to such is unhelpful at best, and even impossible. Thus, some of the great social changes over the century affecting Heathmont and elsewhere have included the altered role and status of women, the rise and fall of religious observance, the dominance of the car, technological and electronic developments, medical advances and universal secondary education; each of which could well be judged as more important for Heathmont residents than any single local event.

Then again it hardly needs saying that any perspective on importance is subjective. It is hard to deny the importance of the 1926 opening of the railway station, but was building the

Methodist Church of greater impact than opening IGA or forming the Bowls Club? Was the closure of the milk bars and garages more important than winning an A Grade football premiership, the gift of Uambi Nature Reserve or the opening of Eastlink? And does Eastlink qualify, anyway, being outside Heathmont, despite the resulting acceleration of truck numbers on Canterbury Road driving through Heathmont? Where does COVID fit in, and World Wars I and II, and Eastland? Again, Eastland is not in Heathmont, it is over in Ringwood; however, surely, the opening of the region's first undercover shopping centre in 1967 impacted the lifestyles of those living in Heathmont.

And then there is the perennial chicken and egg conundrum; the Progress Association formed in 1946 and its major achievement, the community hall, opened in 1952: which date, or which event, was more important? Was forming the Baseball Club more important than it winning its first A Grade premiership? Obviously, no wins without formation, but without wins it might languish.

Furthermore, the full significance of any event cannot be known until its future, and that future might even be years after the event. A Heathmont East Primary School student introduced to Science in 2023 might one day find a universal cure for cancer. The subdivision which



■ **Left:** Heathmont Station, 2016. Image courtesy of Marcus Wong, 'Wongm's Rail Gallery: Photographs of trains and railway infrastructure from around Victoria'. https://railgallery.wongm.com/metro-trains-melbourne-burnley-group/F114_7352.jpg.html

Middle: Photograph, Heathmont Railway Station c.1926-30. Image courtesy of the Ringwood and District Historical Society. <https://victoriancollections.net.au/items/5c1832126b785e0eb-c9c6ec3>

Bottom: Heathmont, February 1960, Canterbury Road. Image courtesy of the Ringwood and district Historical Society <https://victoriancollections.net.au/items/5c1838456b785e0e-bc9c7c72>

created Armstrong Road in 1919 led to the boom of Heathmont East 50 years later. State and Council zoning decisions can alter the nature of the suburb. The 2022 closure of the only two butcher shops might foreshadow the collapse of any concept of village. The importance of respective events of 2022, and every other year, cannot be identified with any authority until we can see and discuss their impact in the future.

Related to this is the problem of 'no date', because it didn't happen! For example, it is of historical significance that Heathmont has had none of the big three supermarkets, no Roman Catholic church or school, no private school, no skyscrapers nor McMansions, no place of tertiary education, no hotel or motel, no cemetery, hospital nor public swimming pool, no shopping mall and no EV charging unit. The failure to do x can be more important than the doing of y! For example, the recent Federal Government decision not to build a multi-storey station car park can surely be seen as an important event.

Yet it is inevitable and of considerable interest and some value that in a centenary year attention is given to identifying the most important events, both over all time and during the 100 years. This page provides insight to the discussion that Heathmont History Group is enjoying; we invite others to contribute their opinions and ideas. We shall keep you informed of our viewpoints, and even try to list the main events in order! Enjoy the challenge!

Gerry Robinson
Heathmont History Group

Author's postscript: *This article was written earlier in the year. Our lively discussions have been ongoing with our current thinking being 1. Railway station 1926 2. Community gathering to farewell the last orchardist 1966 3. Community hall 1952 4. First purpose-built shop 1946 5. H.E.Parker Reserve 1962.*

We continue to wrestle with the comparative status of the first electricity, water, sewerage, telephone, NBN. . . and we are aware of the permissive factors: the 1840s eastwards extension from Surrey Hills of Delaney's (Canterbury) Road and the 1880s railway line from Ringwood to Ferntree Gully. There are still various opinions, but also an agreement that the centenary of the naming of Heathmont has heightened the local awareness of our history.



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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. If your Society has a logo you would like attached to your information, please send along a high-resolution image. **FOR THE FEBRUARY 2024 ISSUE**, please send details to office@historyvictoria.org.au by 28th December 2023.

BUNGAREE AND DISTRICT: It's time to think about our plaques to be unveiled at our next Australia Day celebrations. If you know of anyone who would like to place a plaque on our wall to show that their family is one of many who has made Bungaree and district a great place to live, we would very much like to hear from you. Please contact our President Tom Reynolds (0419 769781) or Heather (0407 051376) and we can get things underway. We need the wording by mid-December at the latest as the monumental mason has holidays during January.



C J LA TROBE SOCIETY: A successful fund-raising appeal to members enabled the National Trust to restore two valuable La Trobe family portraits in their historic frames. These are of Lieutenant Governor Charles Joseph La Trobe's grandfather, Reverend Benjamin La Trobe (1728-86), who had connections with the evangelical circle opposing slavery; and of his father, Christian Ignatius La Trobe (1758-1836), musician and composer, promoter of Moravian Church missionary activity and supporter of William Wilberforce. The paintings may be viewed at La Trobe's Cottage, Kings Domain, on Sundays, 1-3.30pm until the end of April. www.latrobesociety.org.au



FITZROY: The Society caters for anyone interested in the history of the Fitzroy area. Anyone who is interested in joining is welcome. You don't have to live in the area to be a member of the Society. The Society conducts a lively program of events each year, including walks and talks. It also plays an active role in preserving Fitzroy's heritage. Members receive a regular newsletter which advises of upcoming events, reports on recent activities, and includes stories about many aspects of Fitzroy's history. <https://fitzroyhistorysociety.org.au/>

FRANKSTON: Ballam Park Homestead is now set up for Christmas, and the gardens are looking beautiful. The Tea Rooms are open every Sunday from 1-5pm excluding the 5th Sunday of the month. Guided tours through the house and museum are available every Sunday from 1-4pm excluding the 5th Sunday of the month. Admission: Adults \$8.00; Pensioners \$7.00; Children under 14 \$4.00; Children under 5 Free; Family (2 Adults, 2 Children) - \$20.00. Admission to the grounds of the homestead is free. EFTPOS is available.

KEW: In July, the Society provided tours for visitors to the Kew Court House during Open House Melbourne 2023. We also organised a lecture, followed by questions, by Norman Jackson, the project coordinator for the restoration of the Police Station and Court House from 2007 to 2011. Simultaneously, a new exhibition was opened which explores the history of the Kew Public Offices from the original planning stage in 1886, its functional operations from 1888 to 2002, the Save the Kew Court House campaign, and its reopening as a performing arts and community cultural centre in 2011. The exhibition will remain open for the remainder of the year and can be viewed on Fridays between 11am-1.00pm.

LILYDALE: Gun Alley project re-launched. After several years, we have now completed and uploaded our multi award winning Gun Alley project using the latest technology via Google maps. The site features video, audio, images and text about the people who lived in that small section of John Street, Lilydale locally called Gun Alley. Ruby Kwijas,

Terry Humphries, Reg Davies, Dorothy Holt and others tell their stories ranging from SP betting, Poon Kee to yabbing and swimming in the creek. The Gun Alley site can be accessed via the image at the foot of our LDHS home page. <https://lilydalehistorical.com.au/>

LINTON: The Linton Mechanics' Institute and Free Library Project is an ongoing project of the Society. The primary goal of the project is to restore the former Linton Free Library building, erected in 1874, so that it can once again be a focus for community life and activities. Internally, the library building remains much as it was when it first opened in the early 1870s. The Library project also aims to list, describe and display the book collection which remained in the library after its closure as a public library in 1975, and to make information about works in the collection accessible through the Victorian Collections website. www.lintonhistory.org.au



MALDON MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES: Featuring a David Relph Drape painting on the front cover, this year's calendar features a further twelve photographs from our unique collection and is a worthy purchase, either for your own use or an ideal Christmas gift. The calendar is available now by contacting the secretary, email at: secretary@maldonmuseum.com or by phoning 0427 752598. Available as: A4 size \$15 plus \$3.60 postage if required; A5 size \$8 plus \$2.40 postage: a maximum of two calendars per envelope if posting. Calendars can also be purchased at the Museum when open or ordered through the Secretary as above, and also at the Maldon Newsagency.



MELBOURNE MARITIME HERITAGE

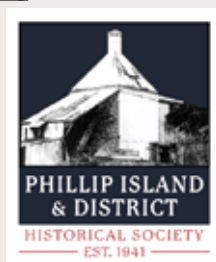
NETWORK: MMHN commissioned award-winning Wild Dog Publishing, author Carole Wilkinson and illustrator Prue Pittock to produce this hardcover, 40 page beautifully illustrated book *River to Bay: Victoria's Maritime History* exploring our maritime heritage which, of course, resulted in great change and prosperity in Victoria over the last 200 years. *River to Bay* was launched by Ted Baillieu, former premier, patron of the museum ship HMAS *Castlemaine* and chair of the Australian Heritage Council together with Nic Reece, Deputy Lord Mayor of Melbourne, at Docklands Library Theatre on 19 October. Please consider ordering the book (\$25) to raise awareness in any maritime stakeholders of the future and help MMHN move on to our next project. Email your order to: info@mmhn.org.au



MOUNT EVELYN: *The Woodlanders of Walden Hut* by Dr Janice Newton: editors Paula Herlihy and Karen Phillips. On the 16 September, we launched our new book. Afternoon tea, a special *Woodlander* launch cake and beautiful native Australian table decorations were all enjoyed by those in attendance; as well as pamphlets on the sign at the Walden Hut site, information about the history of the hut and site; an extraordinary display of antiquarian books by the Woodlanders, their mentors and followers mentioned in the book. Afterwards we drove down to view the newly erected sign at the site of Walden Hut.

PHILLIP ISLAND: On Thursday, 2 November 2023, the eagerly awaited opening of Cowes' new Cultural Centre, named Berninnet, marks a significant milestone as it opens its doors to the public for the first time. Our museum, located to the east of the library, boasts an interior which has been meticulously crafted, with a selection of our wonderful artefacts supported by exciting digital displays, with some minor refinements still in the works. We encourage everyone to explore the museum and immerse themselves in the exhibits which we have endeavoured to bring to life. We now have our digital films which are presently running in the museum, up on our YouTube channel. Please feel

free to watch and 'Like' <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDA8QncrWfz0-hrLagM5lsg>



PORT FAIRY: The Society launched their latest publication at the Port Fairy Show on 4 November. *Growing Up in Port Fairy* is the second book in the Reminiscences of Our Childhood series, compiling the stories of more past and present residents of Port Fairy. This book might just be better than the first edition! A great Christmas present for history lovers. This book, and many other publications, are available by contacting the Historical Society in Gipps Street. We are open on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 2-5pm. <https://portfairyhistoricalsocietyinc.org.au/>

PORT MELBOURNE: On our website story we present a condensed version of Albert Cation's memories of growing up in Port Melbourne in the middle of the 20th century. A longer version of 'Roar Like a Bull' is also available to be downloaded from the website. While you are on the website you might also like to read more borough memories in *Port Melbourne Recollections* by Jack Porritt. Jack was the son of George Porritt who ran a bookmakers' shop in Bay Street. We've also streamlined the procedure for downloading the free publications from the Society's website, so as well as Jack's recollections, you can also read *Port Sayings: What we heard in Bay Street*, *Grounds for dispute: a decade of disputation between the Victorian Football Association, various municipal councils and their football clubs* by Terry Keenan, Jan MacDonald's *Salt on the Window* and another recent addition, *A Triumvirate of Test Cricketers*. The free downloads can be accessed via the Shop menu on the website. www.pmhps.org.au



TALBOT ARTS and HISTORICAL

MUSEUM: On 5 October, the Museum was privileged and delighted to host a visit from the Governor of Victoria, Her Excellency the Honourable Professor Margaret Gardner AC. The Governor spent time having a tour of our buildings. She showed a keen interest in our social history collections in the main building, Communications Museum and Dunach school' education history. She also took time to look inside the former isolation hut and was interested to hear about the important role of Amherst Hospital in the treatment of tuberculosis. Throughout the visit she warmly engaged with Museum volunteers and in hearing of our local achievements and stories. We were also pleased to welcome the Central Goldfields Shire Council Mayor, Cr Grace La Vella, CEO Lucy Roffey and others who were representing the Shire. It was a great opportunity to showcase our local stories and collections to members of the Council team.

WARRAGUL: Meetings are held in the Old Shire Hall, 72 Queen Street, Warragul on the last Monday in each month at 7.30pm. The Museum is open Thursdays 10am-2pm and on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month 2-4pm. We are closed during December and January. Local history is featured throughout the building in a range of ways including a large display of objects of historical interest. Research queries are welcome. Our amazing display of photographs records our local history from 1878 and the images are available to purchase. <https://warragulhistory.org.au/>

WOADY YALOOK: The Society, located at Smythesdale, is looking for donations of authentic family, cultural and historical items relating to the Woody Yalook district which includes: Berringa, Black Hill, Brownsvale, Bunker's Hill, Canico, Cape Clear, Corindhap, Dereel, Derwent Jacks, Devil's Kitchen, Golden Lake, Grand Trunk, Haddon, Hillcrest, Illabarook, Italian Gully, Lucky Woman's, Monkey Gully, Newtown, Nintingbool, Piggoreet, Ross Creek, Sago Hill, Scarsdale, Smythes Creek, Smythesdale, Springdallah and Staffordshire Reef. New acquisitions are subject to an extensive process of analysis and review to ensure they represent the best possible fit with our existing collections, public programs and research priorities. If you have donations to make, please email: woadyyalookhistoricalsociety@gmail.com or visit in person on Wednesdays between 9am-3pm at the Society's office located at the Hub, 19 Heales Street, Smythesdale, Victoria.

Windows on history: St Katherine's Church at St Helena



Left: St Katherine's Church, St Helena.

Photo: Ray Brown 26.05.2013

Above: Inscription: 'In Memory of Anthony Beale, who built this Church. Died 4 Sept. 1865 Aged 75 yrs.'

'In Memory of his beloved Wife Katherine Rose, Died 5 August 1856 Aged 61 years'
Reproduction of Ferguson & Urie window c.1957

Photo: Ray Brown 26.05.2013

Twenty-one kilometres north of Melbourne, near Eltham, is the town of St Helena, which has unexpected historical links to the infamous French General and Emperor of France, Napoleon Bonaparte.

A paymaster of the East India Company, Major Anthony Beale, had been stationed on the historic island of St Helena where Napoleon Bonaparte was exiled after his defeat at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. Beale was born on the island and spent 46 years of his life there until the British Government took over administration in 1836. He and his family briefly returned to England, surviving on his pension from the East India Company. In about 1841 they came to Victoria via a short but tragic stop in Tasmania where his son Onesiphorus James Beale mysteriously disappeared on the 29th August 1839. His body was found drowned in the Esk river a month later and identified at the inquest by his tattoos.

Anthony took up land in the northeast of Melbourne near the River Plenty where he built his home named after the island of St Helena. His wife, Katherine Rose died at the St Helena estate in 1856 and two years later Beale built a small private chapel in the garden in memory of his beloved wife. Known as "Rose Chapel," it was a small one-room building with a fireplace and made of handmade bricks produced on the estate.

After Anthony's wife's death, his diaries tell of his despair and paint him as a lonely defeated man who spent much of his time in the tiny chapel until his death in September 1865; he was buried with Katherine and other family members in the adjoining church cemetery.

The chapel was later altered from a private family chapel to a parish church by Anthony Beale's son-in-law Charles Maplestone: who is well-known across Victoria for his public works as architect and lighthouse designer. Today known as St Katherine's, the church contains historic colonial stained glass windows. Two of the oldest windows were made

by the Ferguson, Urie & Lyon stained glass company in North Melbourne in 1869 for £18/10/. Maplestone was likely the instigator for the erection of these windows: a two-light stained glass window in the apse and a single light window in the south wall dedicated to his son Luther in 1869.

'The little church at St. Helena Park, near Eltham, built by the late Mr. Beale to the memory of his wife, and which, together with three acres of land, including a cemetery, has recently been presented by the family to the bishop, was re-opened on Sunday, 4th ultimo. A new chancel and vestry have been built and other improvements effected, and two beautiful stained-glass memorial windows, by Messrs. Ferguson and Urie, have also been added.'
Church of England Messenger for the Diocese of Melbourne (August 1869).

The Church was consecrated as 'St Katherine's' for the Church of England by Bishop Thornton of Ballarat on the 16th May 1876.



Above: Inscription: 'To the memory of Luther, third son of Charles Maplestone of Ivanhoe Lodge, who died at Anniskillen (sic.), Queensland, 18 Feb 1869 Aged 23 years.'

Top Right: St Katherine's before it burnt down c1895-1914: more likely after 1919
SLV: <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/458825>

Bottom Right: Reproduction of Ferguson & Urie window c1957
Photo: Ray Brown 26.05.2013



The church was destroyed by a bush fire in February 1957. None of the stained glass windows survived. The church secretary, Colonel F. W. MacLean made an ambitious proclamation at the ruins that: *"This church will be rebuilt exactly as it has stood for 100 years."* To their amazing luck, a Melbourne student named Kenneth Crozier had earlier chosen St Katherine's church as the subject for his thesis for his architecture degree. He had studied the building in detail and collected records for his research which included his own architectural drawings, photographs, furnishings, stained glass windows and historical black and white images of the

interior of St Katherine's taken prior to the fire, which show the Ferguson & Urie chancel window, the window on the south wall, and to the left of the chancel a World War 1 memorial window depicting the warrior St Michael, created by stained glass artist William Montgomery in 1919. As part of the reconstruction effort, detailed replicas of the original windows were re-created. I suspect these were done by the Brooks, Robinson & Co. stained glass company of Elizabeth Street Melbourne.

Under the supervision of Crozier, the reconstruction of the church began, and it was completed as faithfully as possible to the original except for modernised

ventilation. It was re-dedicated in November the same year as the fire. 'There will be no electric light. The church was never used for evening service and will still be lit by an old lamp brought from St. Helena by Major Beale.' (*Australian Women's Weekly*, November 1957).

Every year thousands of tourists still visit St Katherine's church to see the stained glass windows and its historic grave yard.

Further detail and photographs about the history of St Katherine's at St. Helena can be seen at:

fergusonandurie.wordpress.com

Ray J Brown

The Cheese family butchers

I started work as Historian in Residence at the RHSV in July 2023 and received a very warm welcome from interested members. My project investigates the development and experience of nineteenth-century shopkeeping, and many members made contact to suggest avenues of potential research. This included Phyllis and Ron Ward. The Cheese family of butchers are Phyllis' family, and so they passed on what they knew and I set out to find out more. It was serendipitous for me since the Cheese brothers operated in two of the suburbs that are the focus of my study: Hotham, now known as North Melbourne, and Footscray.

Harriet Caroline Painter (1808-1876), was born in Middlesex and married Edward William Cheese at age 19 in 1827. They had six children before Edward died in 1843. Four of the Cheese siblings came to the colony of Victoria: Mary (born c1828) ran a painting and house decorating business with her husband, James O'Shea, in Hotham; George (born c1834) was a ship steward who lived in Emerald Hill, today South Melbourne, between trips, before he died on the *Gothenburg* wreck on the Great Barrier Reef in 1875; James Thomas (born 1841); Richard (born c1842). Two other siblings settled in Quebec, Canada.

It is the two youngest children we are most interested in, James Thomas and Richard who were both butchers. The year of arrival of James Thomas Cheese in Victoria is unknown but the window of time can be narrowed to between 1851, when he is in the England census, and 1863, when he is listed as a resident of Curzon Street, Hotham. He is recorded in the Hotham Municipal Rate Books and the Street Directory as a butcher from 1863 to his death in 1914. From 1863–1871 the business was at 17 Curzon Street. From 1873, two locations in Hotham are listed for James Cheese: a residence at 13 Baillie Street and the shop on the corner of Provost and Curzon Streets. Both were rented. Then, by 1881, James owned property: a rental investment, a wood house of five rooms on Provost Street and two wood, three-room cottages on Molesworth Street. The two cottages stood next door to where James' family lived above their substantial brick shop attached to a six-room dwelling. In James'

probate record (1914) the Molesworth Street property is described as a two-storey brick shop and dwelling of eight rooms, with a brick and wood two-stalled stable and a separate, tenanted wooden cottage of four rooms.

James Thomas married Mary Ann Turnball in 1869 and they had four children. Though he never took over the butcher shop on Molesworth Street, their son John Arthur did continue in the butcher trade.

Richard Drayton Cheese is the other first-generation migrant who was a butcher. On 13 August 1858, aged approximately 16 and listed on the shipping roll as a butcher, Richard arrived in Port Phillip with his 50-year-old widowed mother, Caroline, née Painter (1808-1876). Richard married Ada Ann Greenlees at the age of 31 in 1873 in Footscray. He ran a butcher shop there on Whitehall Street and then Austin Street until he moved the business to 17 Curzon Street, Hotham in 1878. This had been the shop of his brother, James Thomas. Richard rented the house on Provost Street from his brother. In 1880, however, Richard filed for insolvency. By 1884 he had moved to Botany in NSW and set up a new butcher shop. He died suddenly in 1889 aged 47 of a brain aneurysm while at work at a butcher shop at 154 Pitt Street Sydney.

A whole raft of occupations comes under the historians' gaze in investigating shopkeepers. Many of those occupations, like butcher, are skilled trades. In essence, their trade was used to produce the goods then sold at the shopfront to

customers. Butchers could also work at abattoirs, wholesale distributors, meat markets and for proprietors of butcher stores. However, operating a butcher shop put the proprietor face to face with customers, creating a dual occupation as a skilled tradesperson and shopkeeper. The butcher's wife was crucial to its success. Molesworth Street, where the Cheese family operated for 30 years, was not the main shopping street of Hotham but it was a local thoroughfare. No doubt children from the side streets and servants from nearby genteel Hotham Hill would arrive to collect goods, with James and Mary Cheese carefully managing lines of credit. As an aspirational class, owning a shop with a residence attached, or nearby, could be a source of long-term financial security, that also tied a family to a local area. And yet, if a business failed, as Richard's did, leaving the district was common.

Key references

SLV: Sands & McDougall's directories; PROV: probate files, shipping lists, Municipal Rate Books; Ancestry.com. au: Census of England, birth, deaths and marriages; Trove: newspaper articles

My thanks to Phyl and Ron for contacting me about the Cheese family.

Dr Fiona Gatt

gattfiona@gmail.com

For more information on Fiona Gatt and her research at RHSV's Historian in Residence: <https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/new-rhsv-historian-in-residence/>

■ The site of the Cheese butcher shop on Curzon St (photo supplied by Ron and Phyllis Ward née Cheese).



Introducing the VicTas Uniting Church Historical Society

The Uniting Church in Australia has an exceptionally rich heritage courtesy of its three founding denominations, Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian, and life since 1977.

The society encourages the study of all aspects of church history, from its buildings and people to the story of its theology through the preservation of historical documents, artefacts and records. It publishes historical articles and lectures in its newsletters and its meetings feature guest speakers on a wide range of relevant topics and church tours.

Membership is \$40 (\$30 concession) and includes subscription to newsletters and the *Proceedings* journal.

For more information, contact the president, Ken Barelli, on 0418 317 942.

Victorian Synod Archives

Although the two are separate entities, the VicTas Uniting Church Historical Society works closely with the Victorian Synod Archives which were established in 1977 to be a central repository for the historical records of the Synod, Presbyteries and Parishes of Victoria.

Its large and valuable collection dates to the earliest years of the Colonies of Victoria and Tasmania. Many topics of public interest and social relevance have been discussed in reports of church courts, periodicals and special commissions.

Historians of most disciplines, secondary, tertiary and post graduate students, genealogists and family history enthusiasts will find useful resources in the Archives.

The Archives' online collection of almost 2000 items is housed at Victorian Collections. This digital resource showcases the vast array of material held by the Archives. In particular, it is a rich source of photographs relating to the religious and social outreach of the Uniting Church and its predecessors.

The Archives, located in 54 Serrell Street, Malvern East 3145, are open on Thursdays (except holidays) from 9.30am-3.00pm. There may be a small research fee if document retrieval is necessary. For bookings or to volunteer, phone 03 9571 5476 (Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays only) or email the Synod Archivist Dr Jenny Bars archives@victas.uca.org.au

Cheryl Griffin

UC Historical Society



Top: Moving Surrey Hills Methodist Church to its present position in Canterbury Road, 1908

Middle: Brighton Congregational Tennis Club 'Opening Day', 1900. Courtesy Victorian Synod Archives.

Bottom: Hawthorn Circuit combined choirs in Auburn Methodist Church, 1908.



Of lady demons and cooking with gas



THE METROPOLITAN GAS CO.

CALL attention to their **GAS COOKING STOVES**, that can be obtained on **Hire from 1/6 per month**, or can be **purchased** on easy terms at lowest prices.

RENTAL STOVES FIXED FREE OF CHARGE, AND KEPT IN ORDER BY THE COMPANY.

All information relating to Stoves given at the Company's show rooms, or by competent officers at consumers' residences. Stoves can be seen in **operation in the kitchen of the Gas Company**, where free demonstrations are given by Mrs. Ross.



The recent revolution in favor of Gas Stoves is evidenced by the many thousands now in use. Medical testimony has proved, after scientific tests, that food cooked by properly constructed Stoves is more nutritious and wholesome than that cooked by any other method.

STOVES properly adjusted and used are ECONOMICAL and LABOR SAVING.

Visit the
METROPOLITAN GAS CO'S SHOW ROOMS.

The projected demise of the gas cooktop in Victorian homes in coming years brings to mind the days when the domestic gas supply was seen as a godsend, relieving households of the need to use wood, coal or kerosene to fuel their stoves.

The gas cooker came into general use in Australia in 1873. Experimental appliances were developed in England as early as the 1820s and in Sydney in the 1840s, but it was not until the 1870s that established gas supplies in cities enabled the use of gas for cooking. Coal gas was first introduced for lighting, but gas cookers, gas water heaters and gas fires grew in popularity in the 1870s and 1880s. By 1900 there were 50 separate gasworks in Victoria. A great tussle for energy supremacy between gas and electricity began, reinvigorated when natural gas was introduced in the 1960s.

Cooking with gas was something entirely new in both domestic and commercial settings. The first locally published cookbook was *The Australian Cook: A complete manual of cookery suitable for the Australian colonies with especial reference to the gas cooking stove* by Alfred J. Wilkinson in 1876. Head chef at

Melbourne's Athenaeum Club, Wilkinson waxed lyrical over the convenience of a "fuel [which] conveys itself into our houses, requiring nothing but the spark of ignition to instantaneously supply us with the exact amount of heat we require for any given purpose of cookery". His book is now a great rarity, with only three known copies held publicly in Australia. A copy was offered for sale in London in May 2023 for A\$6000.

R.A. Walker was an early manufacturer of gas cookers in Melbourne. By 1880, the Metropolitan Gas Company was offering three models of Walker stoves. Other Australian and imported stoves saw gas in widespread use by the turn of the century.

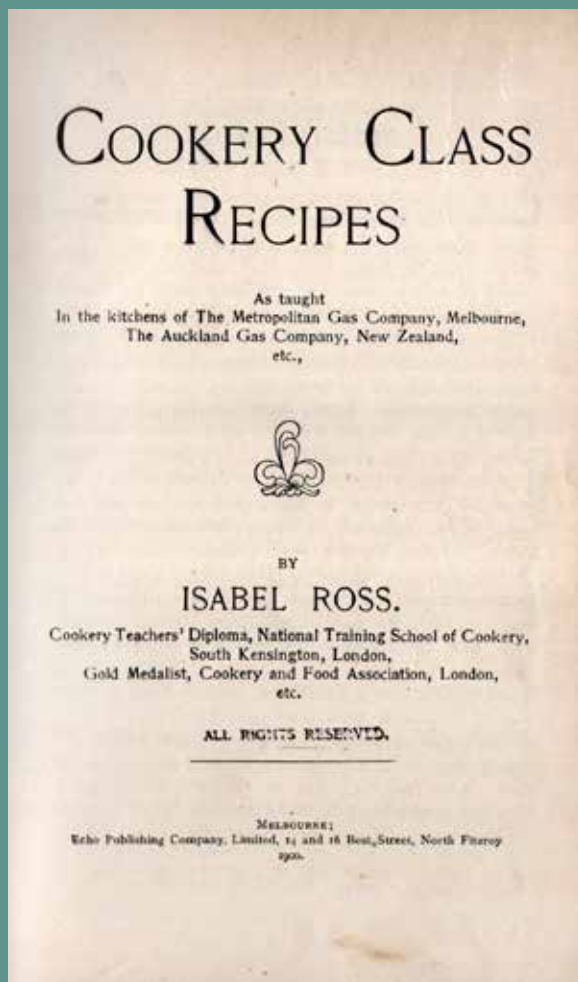
The relative cleanliness and convenience of gas cookers saw them gain favour over wood or coal fires in centres where there was a reticulated gas supply. Another factor was the Australian climate; solid fuel wood stoves made for extremely hot kitchens in summer.

But it was just *how* to cook on a gas stove that flummoxed domestic matrons: or, for the well-to-do, their servants. A key problem was judging oven temperatures relative to the well-practised solid fuel equivalents. The solution for the gas companies

was to bring in 'lady demonstrators'. These were women trained in the domestic sciences, usually in England, brought to Australia at the behest of gas companies or stove manufacturers. The 'lady demons', as they were also known, gave free demonstrations to mainly female audiences on how to best use the appliances.

Lady demonstrators have been seen as a vanguard of women in business at a time when this remained uncommon. Historian Anne Clendinning has explored their role in England in some depth:

The lady demonstrators, professional, educated and middle class, were the first women employed in the gas industry ... scholars of women and work have neglected the lady demonstrators and their attempts to create a role for professional female personnel within a predominantly male



Left: Title page, inside cover page, from Isabel Ross, *Cookery Class Recipes* (1900), author's collection.

Right: Gas stove, Metters Early Kooka c.1926, courtesy Museums Victoria.

corporate world. A combination of sales assistants, domestic economy teachers and district health visitors, the demonstrators consciously incorporated aspects of all these occupations in their attempts to define and undertake this new form of female employment.

[Anne Clendinning (2000) "Deft fingers" and 'persuasive eloquence': the 'lady demons' of the English gas industry, 1888–1918', *Women's History Review*, 9:3, 501-537].

In Melbourne, at least two such 'lady demons' rose to some prominence. One was the entrepreneurial Mrs Isabel Ross, engaged principally by the Metropolitan Gas Company, but also others in Tasmania and New Zealand. Mrs Ross grew up in the Scottish Highlands and Hebrides. Widowed at a young age in 1872, she was compelled to provide for two young sons. She undertook diplomas at the National Training School of Cookery in South Kensington and was also a dual gold medallist at the Cookery and Food Association in London.

By the early-1890s, Mrs Ross had arrived in the colonies and was in much demand as a cookery demonstrator skilled in the use of gas cookers. She authored three books: *Original and Well-Certified Recipes in Economic Cookery* (1894), *Cookery Class*

Recipes (1900) and a later slim volume of jam recipes. She also gave private lessons in schools, hospitals and convents.

Cookery Class Recipes became a standard home text, alongside the popular *PMWU Cookbook* (first published in 1904). Mrs Ross introduced it with the advice that "it is now generally recognised that girls should be systematically trained in what is essentially a woman's business – the management of her own home". Her recipes were aimed at the home cook, none too fancy and with an emphasis on nutrition and a chapter on 'sick room cookery'.

Described as a woman of strong character, this no doubt worked against the pickpocket who tried to lift her purse at Princes Street Station in 1907. He was given a year in jail for his trouble. Mrs Ross was a native Gaelic speaker, a stern Presbyterian with firm views on religion but also noted as an entertaining conversationalist with a keen sense of humour. Isabel Ross continued to give cooking demonstrations until the end of World War 1. She spent her later years with her eldest son, Robert, in Broken Hill and died in Adelaide in 1926.

A second 'lady demon' used the role to leverage herself into polite Melbourne society. Miss Ethel Margaret Lovell-Wright, like Isabel Ross, was a gold medallist at the London School of

Domestic Economy and held a first-class diploma from the National School of Cookery. She came to Australia in 1908 to demonstrate 'Eureka' gas cookers for a British manufacturer, touring Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, and also New Zealand.

Marrying the City of Melbourne Surveyor, Adrien Mountain, and now styling herself as Mrs Lovell-Mountain, by the start of World War 1 she had become President of the College of Domestic Economy in Melbourne, precursor to the Emily McPherson College. The couple went on to run *Grendon*, an exclusive guest house in the Dandenongs, for almost 20 years and where this lady demon insisted upon being addressed as "Madame" by the staff.

Sources: Ray Proudley, (1987) *Circle of Influence: A history of the gas industry in Victoria, Melbourne*; Michael Symons, (1984) *One Continuous Picnic: A history of eating in Australia*; Isabel Ross, (1900) *Cookery Class Recipes*; Colin Bannerman, (1996) *A Friend in the Kitchen: Old Australian cookery books*; Books for Cooks, *Catalogue 2*, (2023) <https://anzaab.com/assets/catalogues/booksforcooks-catalogue2-2023-lr.pdf>; *Argus* 29.4.1927.

John Schauble



Highton Rotary and Fyansford's historic Paper Mill

Highton Rotary has welcomed over one thousand visitors on the highly acclaimed Fyansford Paper Mill Heritage Tour. Since 6 November 2022, the Rotary Club of Highton has been organising guided tours of the Fyansford Paper Mill, offering an immersive experience through the historic site's rich heritage.

The Fyansford Paper Mill, a site of immense historical significance, showcases the enduring story of paper-making and its various applications throughout the mill's 147-year history, spanning from 1876 to the present day. From its origins of transforming rags into high-grade paper products to its covert role as a sea mine facility for the Royal Australian Navy during World War II, visitors are taken on a captivating journey tracing the Fyansford Paper Mill's evolution.

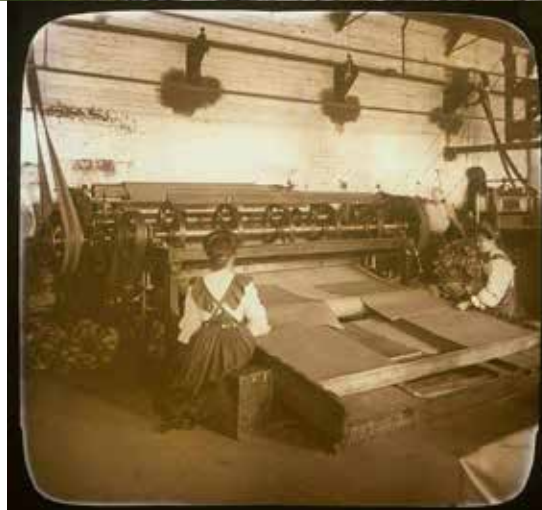
Situated within the Fyansford area, the bluestone buildings of the Heritage listed Fyansford Paper Mill are the only remaining intact old paper mill structures in Australia. The guided tours, conducted every Sunday, provide a rare opportunity for visitors to explore and appreciate this exceptional heritage site. Bookings for the tours can be made conveniently online at: <https://www.trybooking.com/CBZSH>

The Fyansford Paper Mill Heritage Tours serve a dual purpose. Not only do they offer an enriching experience for visitors, but they also contribute to the betterment of the community. All proceeds generated from the tours are utilised by the Highton Rotary to support local and international community projects, exemplifying the club's commitment to service.

Furthermore, the Rotary Club of Highton has been working collaboratively with the current owners and local authorities to restore sections of the Fyansford Paper Mill's bluestone water race. This restoration initiative aims to preserve the historical significance of the site and ensure that future generations can continue to appreciate and enjoy the journey through Fyansford's remarkable past.

The Rotary Club of Highton invites everyone to join them on the Fyansford Paper Mill Heritage Tour and embark on an extraordinary exploration of history and culture. Experience firsthand the captivating tales hidden within the walls of the mill and witness the Rotary Club's unwavering dedication to preserving heritage and serving the community.

For more information and contact details: <https://hightonrotary.com/page/..>



Top: Fyansford Mill, bird's eye view

Middle: Fyansford Paper Mill historical photo. Image courtesy of the City of Greater Geelong: <https://www.geelongaustralia.com.au/heritage/calendar/item/8dab54048f03a8c.aspx>



Bookshop

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Blues Portrait: a Profile of the Australian Blues Scene, Volume 4

Pauline Bailey (2023)

PB 390pp \$45

The fourth instalment in the *Blues Portrait* series, this volume continues to explore the stories of forty-two Australian blues musicians. Featuring both unconventional and traditional blues musicians, they talk about how they first heard the blues and how they have incorporated it into their own music. There is an emphasis on the unique paths of people becoming artists. Also discussed are the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic on the music industry, and the people within it.



Helena Rubinstein: the Australian Years

Angus Trumble (2023)

PB 285pp \$34.99

Helena Rubinstein's name at the height of her career was synonymous with glamour, with salons in Paris, London and New York, and with beauty products sold around the world. However, this is the story of her lesser-known early years spent in the laneways of Melbourne and the dusty streets of Coleraine, where she lay the foundations of a global empire. Dive into the captivating tale of the first global cosmetics empire, the fascinating woman who built it and the past she preferred to leave behind.



Killing for Country: a Family Story

David Marr (2023)

PB 432pp \$39.99

David Marr was shocked to discover forebears who served with the brutal Native Police in the bloodiest years on the frontier. *Killing for Country* is the result: a soul-searching Australian history. This is a richly detailed saga of politics and power in the colonial world, of land seized, and the violence let loose as squatters and their allies fought for possession of the country: a war still unresolved in today's Australia. Within these pages is a gripping reckoning with the bloody history of Australia's frontier wars.

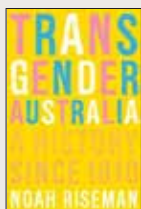


Lights Everlasting: Australia's Commemorative Stained Glass from the Boer War to Vietnam

Bronwyn Hughes (2023)

PB 255pp \$79.95

Glass has remained relevant across every age and culture since its discovery, but the role of stained glass in war memorials has been largely overlooked. Bronwyn Hughes fills this gap in this brilliantly illustrated book. She details the 'biographies' of many windows in churches, schools and other public places, capturing the most important of what remains, and highlighting the unique way in which stained glass tells the story of Australia in architectural, religious, cultural and war history.

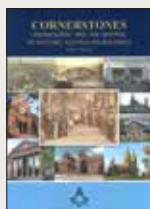


Transgender Australia: a History Since 1910

Noah Riseman (2023)

PB 248pp \$40

This first book on Australian trans history, charts the changing social, medical, legal and lived experiences of trans and gender-diverse people in Australia since 1910. Drawing on over a hundred oral history interviews, previously unexamined documents and media reports, it highlights how trans people have tried to live authentically while navigating a society that often treated them like outcasts. It explores both progress and ongoing battles, simultaneously celebrating the ways that transgender participation has enriched our lives in all its cultural diversity.

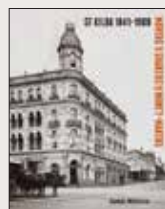


Cornerstones: Freemasonry and the Opening of Historic Australian Buildings

James Nicolas (2023)

PB 179pp \$30

James Nicolas discovers that many non-Masonic buildings in the 19th century were opened with Masonic ceremonies. These buildings were primarily historic in nature, including Mechanics Institutes, Town Halls, bridges, schools, hospitals and churches. Interestingly, the Masonic aspect was frequently a key part of the opening ceremony. Nicolas looks at these histories, including the opposition to them highlighted in newspapers. He also looks at the erasure of Freemasonry from contemporary histories of the opening of these buildings.



St Kilda 1841-1900: Movers and Shakers and Money-Makers

Carmel McKenzie (2023)

HC 196pp \$59.95

The wealthiest suburb in nineteenth-century Melbourne, 'Aristocratic St Kilda' gloried in its reputation as a bastion of privilege and power. This is the vivid backstory to contemporary St Kilda, the beneficiary of the suburb's extraordinary nineteenth-century rise and fall. Meticulously researched, featuring 185 photos and illustrations, and packed with anecdotes from primary sources, this work leaves readers with a rich appreciation of the way nineteenth-century St Kilda reflected and affected the social, political and economic history of Victoria.



From Gold to Federation: Exhibitions and the Australian Quest for Modernity, 1851-1901

Peter H Hoffenberg (2023)

PB pp \$49.95

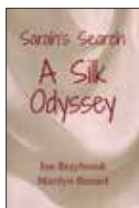
Starting with the 1851 Great Exhibition in London, Australians participated keenly as visitors, organisers, exhibitors and judges at world fairs. These immensely popular exhibitions were vitally important for enhancing intercolonial and international trade; they presented eye-opening displays of Australian commercial products, natural resources and natural history to the public in Australia and the world at large. *From Gold to Federation* describes how huge exhibitions reflected an emerging national identity and promoted the interests of strongly growing colonial economies.

Books received

John Schauble

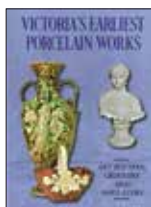
Authors, publishers and Historical Societies are invited to contribute books to the RHSV for the library and for consideration for inclusion in 'Books Received'.

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



Sarah's Search: a Silk Odyssey. Ian Braybrook and Marilyn Bennet, Marilyn Bennet Publishing, Castlemaine, 2017, pp. v-159, ISBN 9870994437020.

The Victorian countryside is dotted with mulberry trees, some dating back dozens of years. For most, the prize was the delicious fruit, but in the late nineteenth century two women had a different vision for these trees. Sarah Florentina Bladen Neill and Jessie Grover set out in 1874 to establish silk production centred on Mount Alexander in central Victoria. The formation of the Ladies Sericultural Company was not the first attempt to establish silkworms in Australia, but it must rank among the most determined. Even with substantial capital, the challenge was overwhelming and the company foundered after almost 20 years. An interesting and unusual insight into our agricultural history.

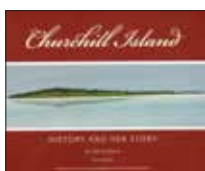


Victoria's Earliest Porcelain Works. Gregory Hill, the author, Melbourne, 2023, pp. iii-244, ISBN 9870646869926. Greg Hill has added further to his authoritative accounts of Victoria's pottery history with this volume tracing the early years of the local porcelain industry. Much of the production was of a utilitarian nature: the classic porcelain electric jugs, the mundane electrical insulators and fuses, casseroles and chamber pots. But there were also highly decorative items such as vases, Dresden ware, bowls, fine china and ornaments. There are entries here on largely forgotten but influential producers like John Elischer, brands like Nilsen and THB, along with the more celebrated art ceramicists William Ricketts and Merric Boyd. This is another work of significant scholarship which looks back to an era when everyday functional objects were produced locally.



They Rescued Us: Aboriginal Heroes on Country. Fred Cahir, BHS Publishing, Ballarat, 2023, pp. 1-234, ISBN 9871876478568.

In the face of dispossession, Australia's First Nations people proved not only resilient but generous to European colonists. Fred Cahir, who teaches at Federation University in Ballarat, pays tribute to this paradox in this examination of the ways in which Aboriginal people saved many early, and some later, new Australians from peril. He notes it was implicit in many colonists' ability to survive in the Australian bush, that they acknowledged and trusted Aboriginal knowledge about their environment. Saving settlers was a deeply human response by Aboriginal people. That humanity was hardly ever reciprocated. While the skill of Indigenous trackers is well-known, Cahir also examines knowledge of fire in the landscape as a saving grace.



Churchill Island: History and Her Story. Patricia Baird, Friends of Churchill Island Society Inc, San Remo, 2021, pp. 1-166, ISBN 9870646846712.

This is the third edition of the late Patricia Baird's homage to an island and the women who lived there over the 19th and 20th centuries. Undertaken by Christine Grayden and David Maunders, this revision brings up to date the story of this intriguing island nestled next to Phillip Island in Western Port. Situated on Bunurong country it became the site of Victoria's first European vegetable garden and wheat crop, planted by explorers in 1801. The 50.7-hectare island was farmed continuously from 1860 before passing into public ownership in 1976. Today it functions as a working heritage farm. The tiny island has a remarkably rich and sometimes contested history.



Bellarine Women and the 1891 Suffrage Petition. Lorraine Stokes, the author, Portarlington, 2022, pp. 1-152, ISBN 9870646858890.

The story of the 1891 petition, in favour of women's suffrage, presented to the Victorian Parliament is now well-known. It would be another 17 years before the vote was extended to women. The individual stories of all but a few of the signatories to the 'monster petition', which took ten weeks to collect from 800 towns and suburbs, are less known. This book is an attempt to recreate the lives of almost one hundred signatories from the Bellarine Peninsula, placing them in the context of the petition. Many of these women were almost invisible; there was scant data to work with, but it makes for a fascinating local insight.



Life As We Knew It: the Extraordinary Story of Australia's Pandemic. Aisha Dow and Melissa Cunningham, Scribe Publications, Brunswick, 2023, pp. 1-325, ISBN 9871761380037.

If daily journalism is the 'first rough draft of history', then books written by journalists in the immediate aftermath of events are surely the second draft. Myriad interpretations of this lived communal experience add an extra challenge to those chroniclers seeking to place the whole into some kind of perspective. This book, written by two *Age* journalists, is an interpretive record of the pandemic in Australia. It contains much to reflect upon: for example the estimate by Victoria's sometime deputy chief health officer Professor Allen Cheng, that had Victoria not locked down hard and fast in 2020 up to 20,000 more people would have died.