



History News

ISSUE 379 | AUGUST 2025



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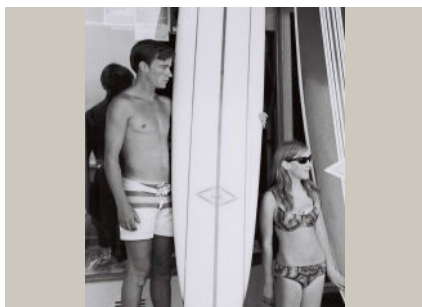
Robert Burns Festival, Camperdown

2024 donors

The Pebble Church at Carapooee:
a new life for a bush church

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.



HISTORY MONTH

History Month is October

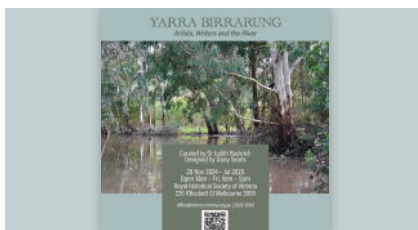
In History Month, October 2025, we are celebrating Victoria's living history 1950-2000.

From jellied salads to decimal currency, disco flares and rotary phones, it's not just the past that's worthy of remembrance and protection. History isn't only found in museums and archives: it lives in our everyday experiences, cultural practices, and the memories we continue to create. Throughout October, the Royal Historical Society of Victoria invites historical societies, schools, libraries, museums, community archives, cultural centres, and all heritage institutions across the state to take part in exploring how the recent past connects to our heritage traditions and helps us understand who we are today. From food to politics, music to the ways we communicate, all tell stories of our collective journey.

Join us for History Month 2025 as we celebrate the transitions, transformations, and continuities that have shaped our present landscape.

You can upload your events to the History Month website here: <https://historymonth.org.au/>

Photo: Trevor Lemke, Lorne, 1960s



EXHIBITION: YARRA BIRRARUNG: ARTISTS, WRITERS AND THE RIVER EXHIBITION

Closing Date: Friday 22 August

Open: Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm

Cost: Free

Event type: In person

If you haven't yet immersed yourself in this wonderful exhibition, you only have a few weeks left to catch it. Curator Dr Judith Buckrich examines life on the Yarra through the lens of artists and writers in our current exhibition, *Yarra Birrarung: Artists, Writers and the River*. The exhibition explores how life has flourished on the river, including recreation, industry and land use, as well as infrastructure, natural history and social history. Despite much despoiling, our river remains the vital artery of the city and beyond to the Yarra Ranges. Just as it was the fulcrum of Wurundjeri life, it continues to inspire and fulfil our lives.

FATHERING: AN AUSTRALIAN HISTORY BOOK LAUNCH

Date: Friday 29 August

Time: 3.30-7pm

Cost: Free

Event type: In person

There is a mini festival of events reflecting the topics discussed in this book and they

culminate in the book launch at 6pm by the Honourable Ged Kearney. Full program and booking can be found on the RHSV website. There will be a crèche for childminding for those attending the event.

'THE BURYING OF MELBOURNE' EXHIBITION LAUNCH

Date: Thursday 4 September

Time: 5.30-7pm

Cost: Free

Event type: In person

In the mid-1850s some areas of the Melbourne CBD were buried under a layer of clay at the direction of Melbourne City Council, a rather extraordinary event that until recently appears to have been largely forgotten. It is only in recent years that archaeologists carrying out the excavations required prior to developments in the city have uncovered evidence of the clay layer. A study commissioned by Heritage Victoria found that the burying was part of efforts by the City Council to control flooding, caused largely by the original laying out of Melbourne's street grid without due consideration of the flow of water over the underlying topography. The depositing of the clay layer, metres thick in some places, had a significant effect on the lives and circumstances of those affected but did result in the sealing off of a layer of archaeology stemming from the earliest days of European settlement. This exhibition, *The Burying of Melbourne*, tells the story of events leading up to the burial and looks at some of the archaeology discovered beneath the clay.

The exhibition will run until mid-March 2026.

What's on is continued
on page 6



History News

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

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COVER IMAGE: Cooper, R.C. 'Mayoral Ball, Hawthorn Town Hall', 9th May, 1961 courtesy of Boroondara Library Service (Boroondara Heritage Collection), see pages 12-13

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President's Report: thank you, Richard Broome

In the same way that we construct family trees to document the names of our ancestors, there is a lovely tradition among European scientists of recording their scholarly predecessors. The idea is simple enough. Name the person who supervised your doctorate. Think about what they gave you in terms of your intellectual growth and your career aspirations. Find out who supervised their doctorate; then that person's supervisor, and so on, back as far as possible. This genealogy does not quite sum up who you are, just as our family tree is not a full statement of who we ended up being, but it provides tantalising clues to our lives and passions as historians. Many members of our RHSV have university degrees in history and learned from their teachers, who in turn learned from their teachers. As Newton wrote in 1675, 'If I have seen further than others, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.'

Our recently retired giant, Richard Broome, undertook his doctoral studies at the University of Sydney under the tutelage of Dr Heather Radi. Hers is not a household name, but among historians she stood tall. Raised on a selector's farm at Mount Tamborine, in Yugamba Country, she worked as a research assistant for Gordon Greenwood at the University of Queensland and wrote her first PhD under his supervision.

Radi was born Heather Joan Curtis. Her thesis dealt with the political development of Australia during the 1920s. You can read it online via that university's library website. More importantly, she and other women in Greenwood's department did most of the department's research. The men then published it under their own names.

Small wonder that several of Australia's leading feminist scholars, like Radi, grew up in that profoundly gendered environment! Returning from London, Radi obtained her own academic lectureship back in Australia. At Sydney she taught the first undergraduate subject in the history of Aboriginal political struggle. She was a popular colleague. Radi was always helping others throughout her academic career at both Sydney and UNSW. She contributed chapters on 1920s Australia; she willingly edited the work of others; and she threw herself into the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* project based at the ANU. She helped start the feminist history journal, *Refractory Girl*.

Her supervisor Greenwood was a product of the London School of Economics, where he had undertaken his PhD under

the guidance of the famous Harold Laski. Greenwood encouraged Radi to study also at the LSE, where she completed a second PhD.

From Laski, Greenwood inherited his ability to chair a major academic department. He was as mercurial in his ideological outlook as Laski had been. Laski, for his part, was appointed, without a doctorate, to the LSE chair of government in 1926, aged just 33. Apart from Greenwood, he supervised dozens of students from all corners of the globe. What can you recognise in Richard Broome's career that reminds you of these scholarly predecessors?

Broome is passionate about giving everyone a fair go. He was well-suited to the egalitarian ethos of La Trobe University and then brought that sense of fairness to his work as my predecessor in the role of RHSV president. The RHSV is now a much broader church than the one he inherited. Broome has Radi's skill in assisting others with text, helping them see what they want to say, in their own words.

Most of all, Broome has an unflinching commitment to having the First Nations story told, no matter what. When Radi invited him in 1977 to write what became *Aboriginal Australians* (2010), she was setting him on a journey which brought him to this fine organisation and a presidency that we can now celebrate.

Thank you, Richard Broome. Your scholarly ancestors would be pleased with what you have achieved.

Robert Pascoe



From LHS Richard Broome, Nicole Davis, Helen Stitt, Simon Owens with the late Phillip Brady holding *The Story of Melbourne's Lanes*. Promoting the book on 3AW's iconic radio talk back 'Remember When', 13 October 2024.

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NATIONAL
TRUST

Heritage report: National Trust of Australia (Victoria) and Royal Historical Society of Victoria Joint Statement; more housing and heritage must go hand in hand

The National Trust of Australia (Victoria) and the Royal Historical Society of Victoria jointly call on the Victorian Government to ensure that the state's planning reforms deliver more housing without sacrificing the heritage, character, and green spaces which make our neighbourhoods liveable and loved.

We support the goal of increasing housing supply, particularly in areas close to jobs, services, and public transport. However, we are deeply concerned that the current approach, particularly the introduction of the new Housing Choice and Transport Zone (HCTZ), risks undermining the very qualities that make Victoria's cities and towns desirable places to live.

The government's own expert panel has warned that the HCTZ should not be applied to areas covered by a Heritage Overlay or Neighbourhood Character Overlay because the new zones will override these protections, threatening the demolition of heritage buildings and the erosion of neighbourhood identity.

We reject the divisive rhetoric of NIMBY versus YIMBY. Instead, we advocate for **TIMBY – Thoughtfully In My Back Yard**: a balanced, inclusive approach which delivers more housing while respecting heritage, character, and community values.

Our Four Key Recommendations

1. **Protect Heritage Areas from Blanket Rezoning:** Heritage Overlays must be exempt from the new Housing Choice and Transport Zone rezoning.

These areas should remain within the Neighbourhood Residential Zone to prevent the loss of valued heritage places and neighbourhood character. In the ten centres where the HCTZ has already been gazetted, new mechanisms to ensure proper respect of the Heritage Overlay must be introduced.

2. **Embed Heritage Expertise in Planning:** The Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) must include designated heritage professionals to support local governments in assessing and managing heritage impacts within the planning system.
3. **Ensure Consistent Protection of Trees, Nature and Green Spaces:** Introduce uniform statewide protections for significant trees and green spaces to preserve the environmental and aesthetic values of local communities.
4. **Implementation Tools for Housing Development in Heritage Contexts:** Expedited planning approval programs must include specific guidance for developments in heritage areas, ensuring that new housing complements and enhances existing heritage fabric.

We urge the Victorian Government to adopt a thoughtful and inclusive approach to planning reform—one that recognises that heritage is not a barrier to housing, but a foundation for building vibrant, attractive, and enduring communities.

Collette Brennan, CEO
National Trust of Australia (Victoria)

Charles Sowerwine, Chair, Heritage Committee

Royal Historical Society of Victoria
9 July 2025

Quotes attributable to Collette Brennan, CEO, National Trust of Australia (Victoria) & Charles Sowerwine, Heritage Committee Chair, Royal Historical Society of Victoria.

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Benvenuti a tutti: the Multicultural Collections Seminar in 2025

The Honourable Marco Fedi, CEO of CO.AS.IT., the Italian welfare organisation in Carlton, welcomed some 80 guests to the seminar on 'Multicultural Collections and the State Library of Victoria' (SLV). This seminar was held at CO.AS.IT. on Saturday 17 May, the eve of International Museum Day and was listed on the website of the International Council of Museums (ICOM).

The seminar was organised by the State Library User Organisations' Council (SLUOC), a longstanding users' group drawn from various societies that aims to support and enhance the SLV and, in the case of this seminar, to provide a unique opportunity for connection between the SLV and diverse multicultural collections in Victoria.

The RHSV sends a representative to SLUOC. Six RHSV Councillors attended the seminar, two RHSV Councillors played leading roles on the seminar committee.

Seminar presenters included: David Garrioch, Emeritus Professor of French history and president of SLUOC, who opened the seminar; Dr Teresa De Fazio OAM, a former commissioner for the Victorian Multicultural Commission, explored the identity issues confronting many immigrants severed from the culture of their home countries; Elizabeth Triarico, manager of the Italian Historical Society and Museo italiano, focused on cooperation between the State Library and CO.AS.IT. for the exhibition 'Victoria's Italians 1900–1945' which the then Minister for the Arts, the Hon. Race Mathews, opened at the library in 1985; Teresa De Fazio skillfully chaired the Discussion Panel, interviewing Mark Wang, CEO, Chinese Museum of Australia, Dr

Mahmoud Mohammed, Manager, Collections and Conservation, Islamic Museum of Australia, Elizabeth Triarico, Manager, Museo Italiano, Esther Gyorki, Head of Collections, Jewish Museum of Australia, Tammy Nguyen, CEO, Vietnamese Museum of Australia and Marusia Jarockyj, CEO, Ukrainian Museum of Australia; Toni Burton, Manager, Collection Curation and Engagement and Philanthropy at SLV, was the only one of three anticipated speakers from the library able to present at the seminar; Kath Brown, Director, People and Partnerships, kindly attended with little notice to assist Toni with questions.

The Discussion Panel reflected on the scope of their collections, issues such as storage and hopes of inspiring young generations. Tammy Nguyen viewed the proposed Vietnamese Museum with its emblematic architecture as a place of memory and healing; the collection was short on artefacts as so many people had fled without belongings. Marusia Jarockyj explained that the Ukrainian Museum, located in the parish hall behind the Ukrainian Cathedral in North Melbourne, was preserving and exhibiting many of the archives and artefacts of a culture under devastating Russian attack. All agreed that cooperation with the State Library would be highly beneficial. Three of the museums have had no involvement with the library so far.

In her fascinating talk, Toni Burton gave examples of how multiculturalism has enhanced the vast SLV collections. The images collection contains the photographs of Maggie Diaz, who was influenced by Spanish culture, while Morag Loh's valuable interviews with Chinese people may be found in the oral history collection. Multicultural holdings in manuscripts include the tiny goldfields diary of Jong Ah

Siug while rare books have Persian treasures. The library recently mounted the exhibition 'Luminous: A Thousand Years of Hebrew Manuscripts' assisted by the Jewish Museum of Australia, and 'Searching for Sanctuary' in conjunction with Barat Ali Batoor and the Hazara community. In another initiative, the library raised funds for multicultural children's books.

The seminar was a trail-blazing multicultural event and created a sense of fellowship among those present. Its success owed much to the commitment, contacts and unflagging enthusiasm of Elizabeth Triarico. Thanks to Elizabeth's podcast in Italian with SBS and the article in *Il Globo* by Teresa De Fazio, accounts of the seminar are now in the public arena. The seminar also gained assistance from the great generosity of Marco Fedi and CO.AS.IT., which provided the spacious venue, a photographer and splendid afternoon tea.

As guests dispersed at dusk into multicultural Carlton, aglow with the lights and the alfresco heaters of Italian restaurants, most hoped fervently that the momentum of the seminar would not be lost, and that this was not goodbye but arrivederci.

Carole Woods OAM FRHSV
Councillor, and Fellow of the RHSV



Discussion Panel and audience at the seminar, courtesy CO.AS.IT.

What's on at RHSV

> continued from page 2

2025 HUGH ANDERSON LECTURE

Date: Tuesday 9 September

Time: 5.30–7 pm

Cost: \$10/\$20

Event type: hybrid – both in person and Zoom

We are delighted that Professor Marilyn Lake will deliver the 2025 Hugh Anderson Lecture, in our Distinguished Lecture series.

In *National Life and Character: A Forecast* (1893 Charles Pearson, noting that China's population had already surpassed 400 million, wrote presciently that with 'civilisation equally diffused... the preponderance of China over any rival – even over the United States of America – is likely to be overwhelming'. The future would see China take 'its inevitable place as one of the great powers of the world'. Pearson's influential forecast shaped our foundational policy of White Australia: the 'great white walls' were erected to keep the Asiatic threat at bay. From the 1960s, however, Australians began to forge new ties with China, forging wide-ranging cultural, educational, economic and trade relationships. Asian histories and languages began to be taught in universities. Future diplomats were trained in Asian languages. Under the Whitlam government full diplomatic relations were established with Beijing. By the end of the 1970s, Hugh and Dawn Anderson had embarked on the first of their numerous trips to China. Hosted by the Chinese Writers Association, their deep cultural engagement with Chinese authors and literature was a key feature of Australian rapprochement with China. Marilyn Lake AO D.Litt, FAHA, FASSA

Marilyn Lake is an Honorary Professorial Fellow in History at the University of Melbourne, where, as an ARC Professorial Fellow between 2013 and 2016, she directed the 'Australia in the World' series of seminars, lectures and symposia. Prior to this appointment she was Charles La Trobe Professor in History at La Trobe University.

MAKING OURSELVES USEFUL: HISTORICAL SOCIETIES IN THE COMMUNITY

An RHSV Regional Seminar hosted by Bendigo Historical Society

Date: Sunday 7 September

Time: 9am – 4.30pm

Venue: Shamrock Hotel, Pall Mall, Bendigo

Event type: In person only

A senior curator from the History & Technology Department, Research Institute of Museums Victoria will be a keynote speaker. She has worked with community collection custodians and is familiar with the rich collections held in historical societies.

An afternoon forum will provide the opportunity to share your *usefulness* stories.

The Bendigo Historical Society will organise a walking tour 'Quirky Pall Mall & City Ghost signs' on Saturday 6 September 4.30pm.

Full program details and booking platform are available on the RHSV website.

GUIDED WALKING TOURS OF HISTORIC FLAGSTAFF GARDENS

Date: Every Monday (excluding public holidays) and at other times by arrangement

Time: 11am – 12:15pm

Cost: \$10

Event type: in person only

Guide: Chris Manchee

Bookings: essential on +3 9326 9288
office@historyvictoria.org.au

Join expert tour guide, Chris Manchee, on a guided history walking tour through the beautiful Flagstaff Gardens: Melbourne's historic heart. Visitors will climb Flagstaff Hill to consider its place in Melbourne's topography and pre-European history as well as its early role as a burial ground, flagstaff signalling station and magnetic and meteorological observatory. An absolute 'must do' walk for understanding the history and character of Melbourne.

CATALOGUING CLINICS

Date: Thursdays 28 August, Thurs 25 September

Time: 11am – 12noon

Cost: Free

Event type: Zoom only

Join Jillian Hiscock, the RHSV Collections Manager, each month in this informative and easy-going Zoom forum on all aspects of cataloguing collections for historical societies. Jillian has a different topic each month and is happy to be guided by those who attend as to what they would like covered in upcoming clinics. Bring your questions, no matter the topic; this is an interactive space where questions are encouraged. The RHSV does not endorse any particular cataloguing software as we believe it is horses for courses and Jillian will talk about issues which impact on cataloguing whether you are using cataloguing cards or software.

HISTORY WRITING GROUP

Date: Tuesday 26 August, Tuesday 23 September

Time: 11.30am – 1pm

Cost: Free

Event type: Hybrid, both in person and on Zoom

Information: office@historyvictoria.org.au

Join the talented and experienced Dr Chery Griffin as she guides a group of authors of history through the challenges that they face in bringing history to life.

Federation of Australian Historical Societies (FAHS)

In *Historical Society Matters*, Issue 58 (June 2025) of the FAHS's newsletter, we celebrate the diverse and inspiring work of historical societies across Australia. From commemorative events and community orations to innovative uses of technology and professional learning initiatives, this newsletter highlights the achievements of State and Territory societies and offers practical ideas for other societies to adopt. Readers will find stories of

successful partnerships, creative outreach, and thoughtful reflection on our shared heritage—each contributing to a vibrant, inclusive, and resilient national history and heritage sector. <https://www.history.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/FAHS-Newsletter-58-June-2025.pdf>

Rosalie Triolo
President: FAHS



Dr Robert Winstanley Barnes

(1942 - 2025) BA MA MLitt PhD FRHSV

We were saddened to hear of the death of Dr Robert Barnes on 25 June at his daughter's residence in Kin Kin in Queensland. Robert had a long history of community service, much of it in historical organisations, and notably the RHSV.

Robert was born and educated in Newcastle, NSW, where he commenced a lifetime's participation in a range of sports, including tennis which he played until he was in his seventies.

On leaving school he worked as an articled law clerk and subsequently for ICI Australia for fourteen years, including five years in Papua New Guinea. Robert's professional life continued essentially as a business administrator, working sequentially as CEO of the Australian Institute of Bankers, the Royal Australian Chemical Institute and the Municipal Association of Victoria, and as a Principal of the Board Advisory Group.

Robert's social and community activities were many and varied. For several decades he was a Justice of the Peace and Bail Justice. He enjoyed the convivial company of friends in a number of social clubs, including the Athenaeum Club, Rotary and the West Brighton Club. One of his joys was a long lunch, which usually ended with him telling a deliberately weak joke. He was also known for piloting friends

and colleagues in light aircraft, a skill he learned in 1969 while working in PNG. He flew a range of aircraft but was particularly delighted to have piloted a WWII Mustang.

Robert had a very keen interest in history. After he moved to Melbourne in 1972 he studied at Melbourne University for a BA and later a MA; the latter thesis in 1994 was on the ethics of the Australian pharmaceutical manufacturing industry. He also completed a MLitt at the University of New England. After he 'retired' in 2003 (in fact he continued part-time work) Robert commenced his PhD at Melbourne University, a naval biography of Captain John Hunter, the second Governor of NSW. Taking on the task with much enthusiasm he completed and submitted the thesis in near-record time and was conferred in 2006. He then converted the thesis for publication by NSW Press in 2009: *An Unlikely Leader*. He was rightly proud of these achievements.

The RHSV was a major outlet for Robert's participation in history. He became a member in 1979 and served as a Councillor 1981-89, 1998-2004 and 2012-21. He was Vice President 1985-89 and 2003-05, Treasurer 2012-18, Chair of the RHSV Foundation 2013-2016 and a member of the Membership Development Committee and the Fellowship Committee. He was made a Fellow in 2014.



Robert made a great contribution to community history groups in Sorrento where he had a holiday house. He joined the Nepean Historical Society in 1999 and became a member of the committee in 2004, serving as President from 2006-12. He continued voluntary work with NHS until moving to Queensland in 2023. In the early 2000s he was Chair of the Sorrento Bicentenary Committee which involved the organisation of a series of major events in 2003. He also served on the Point Nepean Trust and other community groups on the Mornington Peninsula.

Dr Robert Barnes was a tall, distinguished man who made a significant contribution to community history and was a good and loyal friend. He had two sons and a daughter.

Don Garden,
with input from Carole Woods and Laurece Morgillo



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HSSC Network Leaders Day: takeaways for all

On 23 May the Historical Societies Support Committee staged its second Network Leaders Day in Melbourne. As with the event in 2024, the focus of this Seminar Day was to enable Network leaders to glean ideas for navigating challenging times for historical societies and to take these ideas and blueprints back to their constituent member groups. Common to all presentations were strategies for promoting any group's relevance and resilience. Network leaders are in a privileged position as they know 'what's going on out there' but keeping up with initiatives and opportunities for success can be challenging if not daunting.

We were fortunate to have outgoing RHSV President Emeritus Professor Richard Broome AM FHRSV formally open the event with his as-ever inspirational and aspirational reflections on the work and passion of local historians.

In her presentation 'No time, no money, no resources: challenges for Historical Societies', Robyn Vincin began by highlighting a number of societies which have, unfortunately, had to fold. She focussed on the importance of networks and their members developing strategies to stave off closure, to identifying priorities, support networks and 'buddies', securing offsite storage for ever-growing collections, working with other like organisations and encouraging 'champions' to help steer these strategies and innovations. Perhaps it is Networks which can tap into these 'champions' at the more local level? Robyn stressed that doing things 'differently' can help a struggling society turn things around, her closing comment resonating with many: 'If you always do what you've always done, you will always get what you always got'.

Graham Goulding OAM and yours truly then presented on what some Networks are doing in very specific ways, and what they could do, to respond to these challenges. Graham, representing the Gippsland Association of Affiliated Historical Societies (GAAHS), argued that networks act as conduits and distribution centres, especially now that all societies utilise email for e-bulletins and promotion of events or exhibitions by member groups. Some years ago, GAAHS adopted

an awards program with member societies being encouraged to nominate individuals or groups for their contributions. The Gippsland History Award is bestowed on someone who has worked across more than one society. This is a valued feature of the Network as it gives recognition where it's due. Full-day conferences and workshops are a valuable way of engaging with groups within a network. As President of the Western Victorian Association of Historical Societies, I focussed on societies engaging with unlikely bodies such as an LGA's Youth Council and the local media, especially in regional areas, to maintain a society's profile and community engagement.

In 'Attracting young people to local history, now and in the future' Dr Rosalie Triolo OAM FRHSV reminded us that today few young people learn by listening or by reading words. If we wish to engage with younger people, we should deploy a simple 'inquiry methodology' based around using objects or images in a collection and posing clever questions to draw young people into making intelligent guesses about items in a collection, gradually unpacking the story behind an item and then drawing conclusions about the time, place and people the object exemplifies. We should not only hope to entice young people to be curious but *we* need to listen to *them* and structure our 'talking' around *their* contributions. Rosalie's grandmother's 'Snakes and Ladders' game from around 1900 drew the audience into an engaging collaborative conversation, a really simple but very useful takeaway for attendees.

The RHSV and HSSC are always keen to include in our events, whenever possible, representatives of First Nations organisations who can support our understanding by working with them. We were fortunate to have Professor Aleryk 'Al' Fricker, Director of the National Indigenous Knowledges Education Research and Innovation (NIKERI) Institute, Deakin University present 'Working 'good way' with First Nations stakeholders. Al, a proud Dja Dja Wurrung man, engaged the audience with a personal perspective as a young indigenous Australian whose stories did not align comfortably with the stories traditionally told by historical societies and the broader Australian community. Al took us on a sometimes-confronting journey back in time to 'The Great Australian



Rachael Cottle, Association of Eastern Historical Societies, and Craige Proctor.

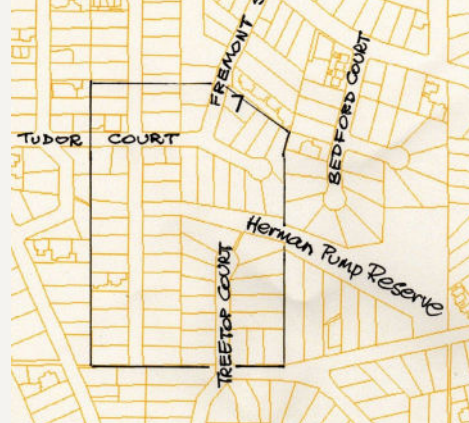
Silence' in regard to First Nations people and their stories and culture, to 'decolonisation' and the more recent 'Culture Wars'. Al left attendees with a roadmap for 'working good way' including the importance of self-reflection: what is our relationship with the past and what is our aim by engaging with it? He encouraged consideration of moving on to prioritising relationships with First Nations people for the sake of the relationship rather than as a transaction. Such relationships evolve from trust and this needs to be worked for; it does not just happen. Additionally, Al advised that as historians we should recognise and honour the expertise of First Nations stakeholders through recompensing them appropriately.

The Forum 'Cultivating hope: empowering historical societies for the future' was led by RHSV Executive Officer Rosemary Cameron and myself. Many strategies, some simple and others more challenging, were offered to network leaders: joining forces with surrounding groups and inviting others to meetings (many societies still seeing themselves as 'closed shops'); micro-networking at the local level; facilitating competence and providing training with using Zoom to open up attendance at meetings; learning how Artificial Intelligence (AI) will impact on the work of historical societies going forward; exploring and utilising newer social media platforms such as Instagram which has a very different demographic compared with the Facebook; creating a Network Speakers List along the lines of the HSSC's very successful Speakers List; developing podcasts and YouTube channels, increasingly a very important way of reaching out to different communities and thus potentially new members; taking advantage of the Historical Societies Support Committee whose members generally love being asked to present at events such as AGMs and other heritage events.

Feedback from attendees was very positive with many 'takeaways' hopefully heading back to Network member groups.

Craige Proctor
Chair, HSSC
hssc@historyvictoria.org.au

A local-history reflection, Shadow of a Bulldozer



In 1946, just after World War II, ex-serviceman Harry Willis of Caulfield and his wife May realised their dream of acquiring a farm.

They settled with their three children on ten acres in the Heathmont area of Ringwood, at what was then the end of Fremont Street. The farmhouse still stands at number 7, with several alterations and additions. Their land was cut by "the creek": then un-named, now, with the creek in underground barrel drains, it is a recreation reserve named in 1963 after the settler Herman Pump (1896).

The slope to the creek from the south, where Treetop Court is now, is very steep indeed. Harry and May worked full time away from the farm, he in the city, she was well-known locally as "Sister Willis". It was a mixed farm, with a market garden, flower garden, poultry sheds, and lemon and cherry orchards. Treetop Court is on the site of the orchards. With much difficulty the Court was formed down the severe slope in the mid 1950s. In 1955 the Willis family moved from the farmhouse in Fremont Street to a new home at Royal Avenue, Heathmont, and subsequently left Heathmont.

On the basis of his experiences in his orchard, in 1959 Harry Willis, orchardist of the area soon to become Treetop Court, wrote a Three Act play entitled *Shadow of a Bulldozer*. Set in the 1950s in 'orchard country on the outskirts of Melbourne' and obviously based on local Heathmont experiences, it is the story of lifelong orchardist 'Jim Webster' lamenting the local changes as bulldozers turn orchards into suburban building blocks. 'Jim' is determined to resist the changes and continue fruit-growing with the help of his two sons, 'Fred' and 'Eric', but the sons wish to follow their own career paths and lifestyles, away from the orchard. The cast also includes Jim's wife 'Alice', his friend and ex-orchardist 'Doug Pike', and 'Rose', Fred's wife. 'Don Davison' is the name Willis gives to the stereotyped estate agent urging sub-division of the orchard.

Here are some extracts from the play:

ACT ONE

Jim *But they are wonderful trees. He's the best peach bloke in the district. . . Look at that bulldozer rooting those trees out. I never thought I'd live to see bulldozers knocking fruit trees over in this district.*

What about this bloke that bought your place? Who is he?

Doug *He's one of those city fruit-growers. Doesn't know the difference between a Johnny and a Granny. . . He's a stockbroker. . . one of those jokers who sells you shares in crook gold mines . . . Well, the boot's on the other foot this time. I sold him a crook orchard.*

Fred *I'm sick of spraying. I'm sick of the whole joint. You're always on my back . . . You've been on my back since I was a kid. You got me working in the orchard as soon as I could walk.*

Jim *I worked harder than you on this place when I was a kid and I work harder now.*

ACT TWO

Davison *What a glorious position you've got here! It's magnificent! Absolutely magnificent! . . . I never knew there was a position like this in the district . . . It's marvellous! It's beautiful.*

Rose *I think the trees are always at their loveliest in the Spring, don't you, with all the new growth and the blossom?*

Davison *Yes, of course the trees are superb, Mrs Webster. But I was really meaning the position from the subdivision point of view . . . Just look at the contour of the land.*

Perfect for drainage. Ideal for roads. See all that wide valley out there? In the next few years it's going to go ahead with tremendous strides. The progress is going to be amazing. All those orchards and gardens and small farms will be wiped out. They'll disappear almost overnight and their place will be taken by thousands and thousands of new houses and big modern shopping centres and supermarkets. . . Values of property will treble overnight.

Jim *What are you doing here?*

Davison *I've just completed arrangements with Mr. Schultz regarding his subdivision, yours is the property next to his. Isn't it natural that I should come to see you?*

Jim *No*

Davison *I'll be up to see Mr. Schultz tomorrow. I'll pop in then.*

Jim *Pop in? If you don't pop off I'll chuck you out. Do you understand that?*

ACT THREE

Doug *I've been robbed. That City joker that bought my place has taken me on. He said he'd make a fortune out of my place and by cripes he has. I work the guts out of myself on the orchard all my life and he comes along and without doing a tap of work makes a fortune out of it. Sold it for a Drive-In-Theatre.*

Jim *This whole thing's got me beat. My father planted this orchard when he didn't have two bob in the world. And he was thinking of me and you when he planted it. He went out and worked on the roads and sunk dams to make money while the trees were growing. And he looked after his young trees as well. And I helped him. I liked helping him. The orchard was mine too. All my life I've worked on this plot of ground.*

I've never been away from this place except when I was at the first war. When the war was over I couldn't get back here quick enough. But my sons haven't liked helping me. I've had to keep on their tails all the time. Why should that be?

Rose *It's not us, father. It's the times. Everything is changing.*

Jim *By gawd! I'm not going to let it beat me. I'll employ people. I'll get pickers and pruners and men to do the spraying. And if they don't work, I'll give 'em the sack.*

I don't care how many bulldozers they bring into the district. I'm going to keep going.

Alice *And I'll keep going with you.*

Harry Willis

Sent in by Gerry Robinson
Heathmont History Group

Around the societies

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

We welcome societies to submit an article or event details 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 October 2025 issue, please send details to office@historyvictoria.org.au by 22 August 2025.

BENALLA: The Benalla Costume and Kelly Museum has been closed for two and a half years while the local council carried out extensions to the building. The Society took the opportunity to completely redesign and refurbish the museum. In May this year at a well-attended ceremony the museum was officially re-opened by Annabelle Cleeland MP, the local State member, assisted by the Benalla Rural City Council Mayor, Society President Ellen Crocker, and Emma Harvey representing Creative Victoria, the major provider of funds for the project.

COBURG: All talks are on Wednesdays at 8pm and are held in the Coburg Library Meeting Room. 20 August: AGM chaired by Merri-Bek Mayor. September 17: Sydney Road Coburg businesses, 'the Lofts and the Congletons' by Ivan Lofts, Ann Congleton and others. October 15: 'Coburg metal trades and foundries' by Matt Churchward.

facebook.com/CoburgHistoricalSociety



ELTHAM DISTRICT: Society Meetings. 9 August, 2-4pm at the Eltham Senior Citizens' Centre, Library Pl, Eltham, Dr Judith Buckridge, 'Yarra Birrarung: Artists, Writers and the River'. September 6 at 2pm-4.30pm, Heritage Excursion, St Helena Cemetery.

elthamhistory.wordpress.com



ESSENDON: Grand, Old Moonee Ponds Heritage Walk #2. Sunday 19 October, commencing at 2pm. Step back in time on this guided heritage walk, exploring the grand mansions of Essendon and Moonee Ponds. The walk will explore how grand homes have come to find new purposes, including Earlsbrae which stands at the centre of Lowther Hall and Gillespie's Mansion which became St Columba's College and PEGS's Wahgunyah; while others have since vanished from our suburb. Price is \$20 for EHS members and \$25 for non-members. The walk will have a guide, and a booklet will also be provided. Book at Trybooking at

<https://www.trybooking.com/DCWKS> See our website for more information

esshisoc.org.au



KILMORE: We have received one of the physically largest donations we have ever seen: a pair of industrial bellows. These are heavy enough to require four of us to manoeuvre them. The design and materials suggest mid to later 19th century, and they were likely hand made by a blacksmith, whose identity remains unknown, as the donor did not have much information on their provenance. We have received several pictures of the demolition of the Mechanics' Institute, and two interesting videos: one of the 1999 Community Fair in Kilmore, the other of the 2000 opening of the Research Centre in the Old Post Office. We also received several panoramas from the 1937 Kilmore Centenary, some showing local residents wearing historical costumes.

kilmorehistoricalsociety.org



LEONGATHA: The Mechanics Institute Hall is home to the society at 10 McCartin St Leongatha. This beautiful building was constructed in 1912 and is a fine example of the architecture of the time. The three spacious rooms have pressed metal ceilings, and the front room has exquisite stained glass windows. The interior walls are unique being made of river reeds and plaster. The large rear section was a billiard room used by many in the community from 1912 to 1982. Since moving into the Mechanics' Institute, a museum has been established and many interesting displays related to the area's history have been mounted. The rooms are open Thursdays and Fridays between 12-4pm.

leongathahistory.org.au

MARYSVILLE AND DISTRICT: Although another good year, like many societies we face some potential challenges in the year ahead. There has been a noticeable reduction in the number of visitors to the Society's History Centre and the reasons for this are many and varied, however, the committee is always looking at ways of promoting the Society to a wider audience and to attract more visitors. A milestone was achieved during the year with the loading of the Society's archival items onto Victorian Collections. The Society now has some 7000 items loaded onto the system and this remains an ongoing project, which will eventually see all of the Society's collection being fully catalogued and digitally saved. We also maintain an active Facebook page which generates considerable discussion at

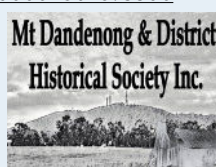
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MOUNT DANDENONG AND DISTRICT: The Society aims to collect, preserve and share the rich history of the district: currently it maintains a small collection of significant local history material. The society is especially interested in the communities of Mount Dandenong, Kalorama, Olinda, Sassafras, Ferny Creek, and Tremont. These are the ridgetop villages on the mountain range clearly

visible from metropolitan Melbourne. The society meets each month and welcomes new members with an interest in local history. We have some limited volunteer capacity to assist with private research. Many of our stories here have appeared on the society's Facebook page at

facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064802973300



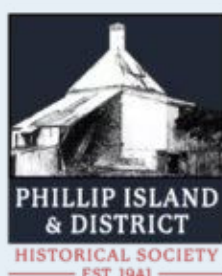
PAYNESVILLE MARITIME MUSEUM:

The Museum's Display Centre is located in Raymond Street behind the playground at Gilsenan Reserve, Paynesville. The museum will be open Sunday 10 August 10am-12noon, then resume regular opening hours in September.

facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064278994571

PHILLIP ISLAND: This month we celebrate the imminent opening of the new Phillip Island Hospital with a nod to the first hospital on Phillip Island, the beloved Warley Hospital. Over the course of the next month, we will be displaying in our museum an assortment of memorabilia, artefacts and stories from Warley Hospital days to mark the occasion. We also reflect the recent death of one of our most esteemed members, John Jansson. A life member of the Society and former President, John's contribution to preserving the history of Phillip Island will never be forgotten. His passion and dedication to our cause have left an indelible mark on the Society, and we will always remember his legacy.

phillipislandhistory.org.au/category/news/



TERANG AND DISTRICT: Our meetings are held the 4th Monday of the month at 7.30pm at the Terang Senior Citizens Hall, the Promenade. Our next meeting is August 25. The museum is open on the 3rd Sunday of the month from 1-4pm in the former Dixie School Building-Museum Complex, Former Terang College Primary Campus, School Road, Terang. Next Open Sunday is 17 August.

teranghistory.org.au



WARRACKNABEAL: The Society is dedicated to preserving the history of Warracknabeal and surrounding districts, from the lives of early inhabitants through to the present time. Warracknabeal is located in the heart of the Victorian wheat belt and the Society's collection celebrates Victoria's farming heritage and the people who contributed to its success. Today the landscape is dotted with iconic grain silos which now make up part of Victoria's Silo Art Trail. The historical centre is at 81 Scott Street, Warracknabeal. Admission: Family \$5, Adult \$3, Child \$1. Opening hours: 2-4pm daily (except Saturday)

warracknabealhistory.org.au

WHITTLESEA: Upcoming events: Sunday 17 August: Speaker and 'Open Forum' at the Whittlesea Bowls Club, 101 Church Street. All welcome to come to hear our speaker and join us for our open forum. Thursday 21 August: Family History Month talk, 'Farming families in Whittlesea' at the Whittlesea Library, 57-61 Laurel St. Keep an eye on our Facebook page at facebook.com/whittleseahistoricalsociety



WODONGA AND DISTRICT: We look forward to seeing you and showing you our extensive collection at Bonegilla Migrant Experience, Hut 97, 132 Bonegilla Road, Bonegilla. Saturday, Sunday, Monday and Wednesday 10am- 3pm.

The Society meets on the first Tuesday of each month, except January and November, at 2pm in Wodonga Football Club Rooms, Vermont Street, Wodonga. Visitors welcome. Follow us on Facebook at

facebook.com/profile.php?id=100063484423124



Windows on history: Hawthorn proclaims its prosperity

Hawthorn Town Hall, in Burwood Road, Hawthorn, received a crowning touch to its new civic building in mid-1890, when a spectacular stained-glass window was installed in the stairwell. Its classical style complemented the architecture, and its subject, 'Prosperity', referenced the growth and affluence of Hawthorn as one of Melbourne's most sought after districts during those years. The window was the gift of the building's architect, John Beswicke (1847-1925), designed and made by stained-glass artist, William Montgomery (1850-1927).

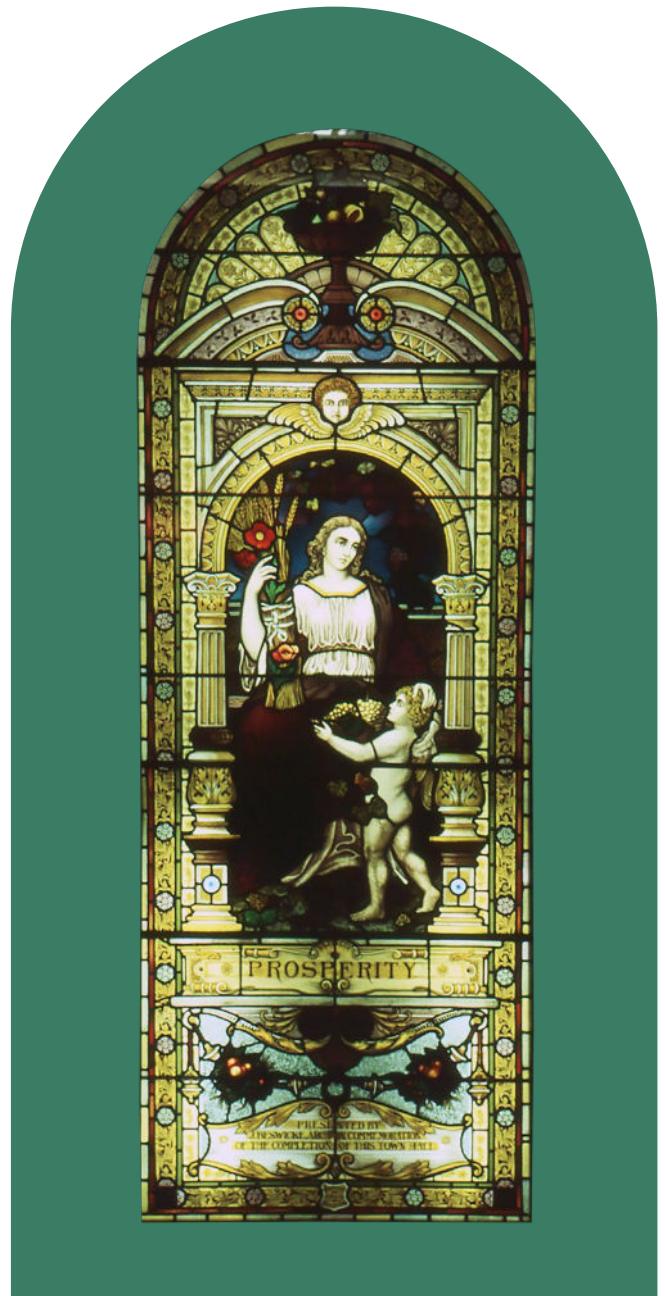
Hawthorn had been proclaimed a 'town' in 1887 and, as the existing municipal building was considered inadequate, a design competition for a new town hall was instigated. Beswicke had considerable experience in the field of civic architecture, notably when Wilson and Beswicke in partnership designed the prize-winning municipal buildings for Brighton, and for Malvern, both in 1885. John Beswicke's winning design for Hawthorn was described in the *Melbourne Age* as 'two stories in height and contains the ordinary municipal apartments, a police station and a post and telegraph office'. Its principal ground floor space was the large hall, which was the venue for the grand ball that marked the opening of the building in October 1889, while the second floor held the mayor's room, council chamber and a free library among other spaces.

John Beswicke was born at rural 'Moodi Yallo', now Mordialloc, the eldest child of Englishman, Charles Beswicke and his Irish-born wife, Eliza, the daughter of neighbours, Margaret and George Keys. George was the recipient of a Crown Grant in the district, and the wider Keys family was remembered in the naming of Keysborough.

In 1864, when John was 16, he was articled to the Melbourne architectural and surveying firm, Crouch and Wilson, where the drawing and writing skills of the hopeful architect were an asset.

Crouch and Wilson regularly incorporated stained glass into their designs, and consistently supported the North Melbourne stained-glass firm, Ferguson & Urie, for the majority of their many Wesleyan and Presbyterian churches in Victoria and Tasmania. While church work was a significant aspect of their practice, the firm won the competition for Melbourne's General Post Office (1858), the Victorian Asylum and School for the Blind (1868), the Victorian Deaf and Dumb Institute (1866), and numerous shops and private residences. Their first town hall design was for Prahran in 1864.

Beswicke became a valued member of the firm and, after the retirement of Thomas Crouch in 1882, he was admitted to partnership with Ralph Wilson. In 1886, Beswicke travelled to



Europe to study multi-storey building developments and the mechanical services they required. He was a keen photographer and, according to Alexander Sutherland's *Victoria and Its Metropolis: Past and Present* (1888), Beswicke brought back 'an interesting collection of views of the finest examples of architecture in Europe'. His keen eye would also have recognised new trends in stained glass, which had embraced the lighter palette of Arts & Crafts and Aesthetic styles that were gracing new mansions, public buildings, and replacing the 'dim religious light' previously favoured for windows in religious buildings.

Returning to Melbourne on the *SS Preussen* in December 1886, there was an outbreak of cholera and the Beswicke family was incarcerated at the Point Nepean quarantine station. It was an eventful six-week quarantine period: Beswicke received word that his partner Ralph Wilson died on 2 December but could not gain early release, despite the urgency to tend to business matters. Much more distressing was the death of Ada, the Beswicks' five-month-old daughter on 29 December.

By coincidence, the English stained glass artist, William Montgomery, arrived in Melbourne on 18 December 1886, a passenger with his new wife, aboard the *SS Bothwell Castle*. Thankfully, the ship had no disease aboard and Montgomery disembarked at Sandridge (Port Melbourne) to set up his studio in

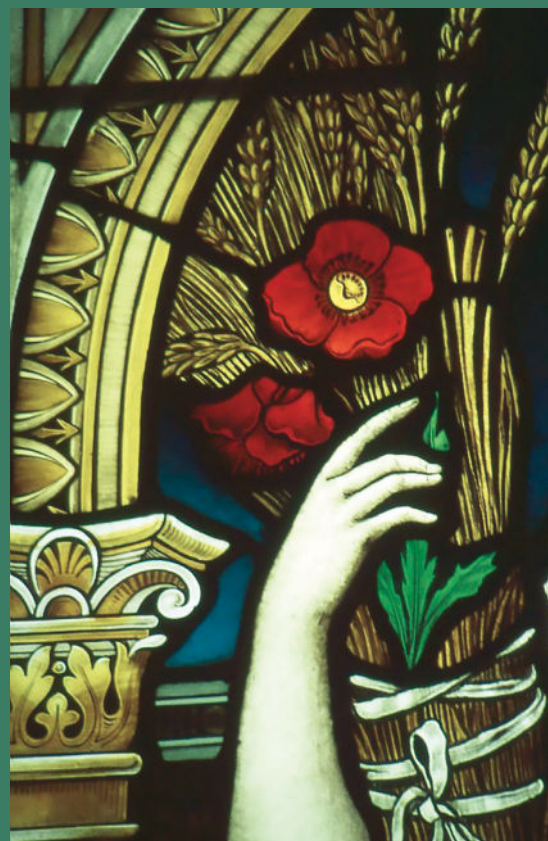


C. Rudd, Hawthorn Town Hall shortly after opening

Melbourne. Armed with several significant letters of introduction from clergy and clients in England and America, Montgomery was soon fully occupied with commissions for Catholic and Anglican churches in New South Wales and Victoria. With his sound training in stained glass, a seven-year apprenticeship at Newcastle-on-Tyne, three years at the South Kensington Art School, now the Royal College of Art, and experience at the Clayton & Bell studio, London, before seven years in Munich prior to emigrating, he soon caught the eye of local architects, John Beswicke among them. Montgomery was engaged by Beswicke to design the decorative stained glass for his new home, 'Rotha', in Harcourt Street, Hawthorn. Beswicke was undoubtedly pleased with the results as soon after Montgomery was engaged for the window in Hawthorn Town Hall.

Prosperity features a female figure, holding aloft a sheaf of wheat and poppies across her right arm, while her left hand rests on the head of a *putti*, a naked cherub holding a garland of grapes. The woman is simply but elegantly dressed, in contrast to the surrounding architectural canopy, borders and base panel of the window, simulating marble columns and arches topped by a footed-bowl of fruits, above the head of a cherub. The base panel continues the theme of abundance with the word, 'Prosperity' placed prominently above swags of fruit and the inscription 'Presented by J. Beswicke Arch. in Commemoration of the Completion of this Town Hall' below. Montgomery, who signed his public commissions, added a small shield in the base border which reads 'W. Montgomery 164 Flinders St. E. Melbourne'. *Prosperity* was well-named as Hawthorn was raised to the status of a city in October 1890, only four months after the installation of the stained-glass window.

Beswicke and Montgomery continued to collaborate for many years, despite the downturn in the economy that continued for



most of the 1890s. Although Hawthorn was the only town hall with a Beswicke stained-glass window, Montgomery produced windows for dozens of Beswicke houses, especially in Hawthorn. One of his last grand mansions was built in 1896, the red brick, Marseilles-tiled 'Redholme' in St Kilda Road, now renamed 'Warwillah', in Beswicke's idiosyncratic version of the new style, later known as Federation. As at Hawthorn, Montgomery's window on the stair-landing pictured a simply, elegantly-attired woman but without the Classical overtones of *putti* and ornamentation. Instead, this figure was accompanied by a bird of prey and illustrated the lines, 'A merlin sat upon her wrist Held by a leash of silken twist', from Sir Walter Scott's *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*.

The 1994 amalgamation of councils across Victoria saw Hawthorn become part of the City of Boroondara. In 2013, the town hall was re-purposed and became a creative hub, renamed the Hawthorn Arts Centre, where Montgomery's window remains as a marker of Hawthorn's 19th century prosperity.

Dr Bronwyn Hughes OAM



Robert Burns Festival, Camperdown 28-30 June 2025

The Camperdown Historical Society hosted four history lectures as its contribution to this annual festival, of which I gave one. They explored Camperdown's geological and volcanic history; Aboriginal tent boxers in the Western District; Von Guerard's ethnological collection in Berlin, and the fascinating life of Reverend Kay. After my lecture I presented CHS Secretary and amazing volunteer Maree Belyea with her RHSV Award of Merit certificate. Councillor and ex-Vice President Rosalie Triolo was in the audience to witness this celebration of community history.

Also present at this Saturday lecture series was RHSV member and ex-Vice President Allan Willingham. At an event on Sunday morning Allan gave a brief talk about a 19th century edition of Burns' poetry he had recently purchased. It contained a sketch of Burns which is the same likeness as the statue of Burns in Camperdown, the oldest statue of Burns in the world. It is now at an indoor site in the Civic Centre after being vandalised.

Richard Broome AM
former President RHSV

■ **Top:** Allan Willingham with his friend Robert Burns, and Allan's 19th century edition of Burns' poetry.

Right: Richard Broome presents Maree Belyea with her RHSV Award of Merit.



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The Pebble Church at Carapooee: a new life for a bush church

Driving south from St Arnaud towards Dunolly we pass through a locality known as Carapooee but which, in the late 1850s and 1860s, was the thriving gold mining settlement of Peter's Diggings. Sitting commandingly among the eucalypts is the iconic 'Pebble Church', formerly St Peter's Church of England, which has, for 155 years, graced this lovely site on traditional Djaja wurrung lands and abutting Carapooee Creek. In 2020 this architecturally unique church was given a new lease of life, albeit with a different purpose, and now provides an attraction for travellers and visitors to the region.

By 1859-60 there were around 1,300 miners on the local alluvial diggings and by 1865 there were two quartz crushing mills, three hotels and a brewery at Peter's Diggings as well as some pastoral and agricultural activity. Miners and others on the diggings lobbied for a church to be built to serve the spiritual needs of the burgeoning population. Services had been held in the schoolhouse in 1866 but the teacher of the day objected to religious services being held in a school. Services were then held in Edelsten's Hotel but others objected to services being held in a pub! A building fund was established, a parcel of land was donated and by January 1869 the building of the church was underway, the foundation stone being laid in May 1869. Situated on the border of Moolerr and Carapooee parishes, the church was sited to serve a scattered population.

In 1870 Peter's Diggings became Carapooee, a local First Nations term most likely alluding to the local quartz stones.

The church, designed by the Melbourne architect Leonard Terry who was favoured by the Church of England Diocese, is unique for a church, being constructed of brick faced white quartz water-washed stones and pebbles or 'cobbles'. Local residents provided

the stones, other construction materials and funds. Miners took time out from working their claims to cart the waste stone to the site. Children on the Diggings did their part, helping to collect stones from nearby Douglas's Hill and carting them to the site in wheelbarrows. This contribution of local labour eliminated transportation charges.

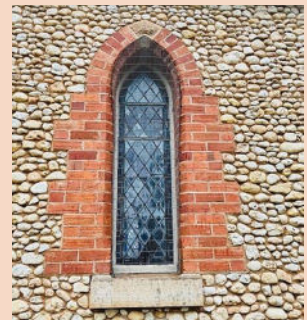
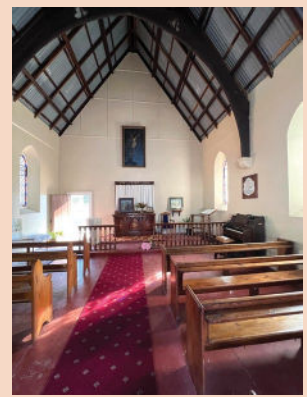
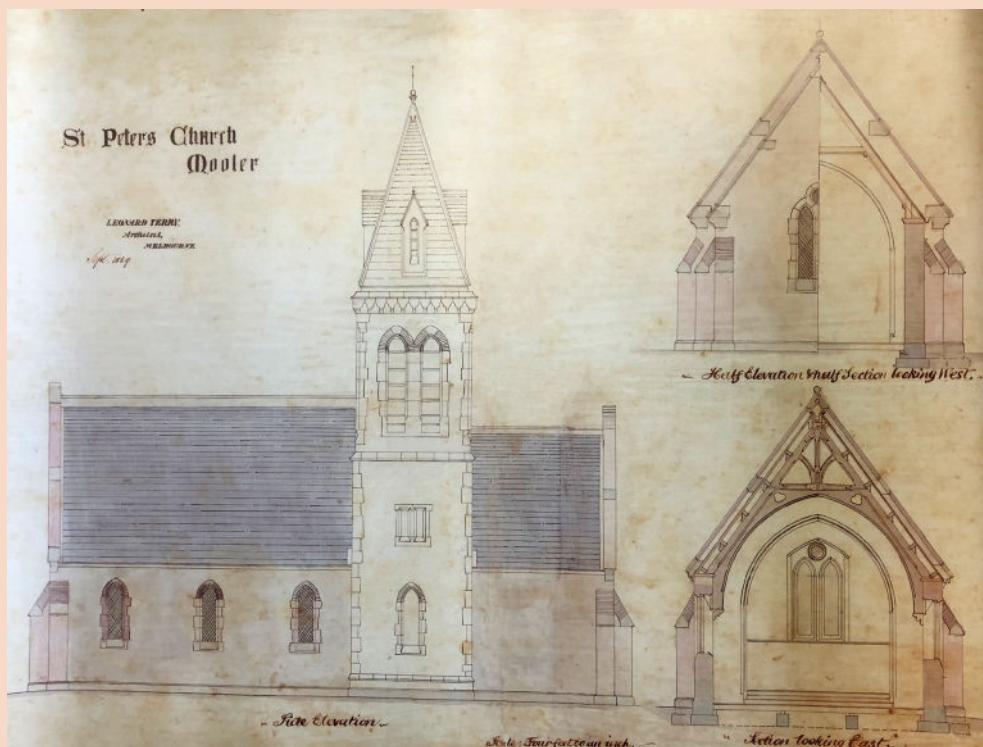
The church has red brick quoin work, buttresses and window surrounds. Built in the Gothic style, the new church reflected English vernacular building traditions, utilising local materials, and the pebbles are set into a pink-coloured mortar.

North-west of St Arnaud is Valentine Mogg's Swanwater Station, several of the outbuildings of which are also constructed of quartz pebbles in the same manner, but there is no other church in Victoria of a similar construction.

The stained glass windows are of plain, red, and blue glass and were supplied by the Colonial Victorian stained glass firm, Ferguson & Urie of North Melbourne. Originally the church was to have been crucifix-shaped with a chancel and vestry at the rear and a lofty tower and belfry but these plans were not proceeded with due to decreasing numbers of parishioners. The rear wall is not faced with stones and pebbles, this 'temporary' wall being a reminder that the church was conceived to be a bigger building. The church was listed on the Heritage Victoria Register in 2008, and a blue plaque greets visitors at the entrance.

The first service in the new church was held in July 1870 although the first wedding had taken place the month before. Due to various delays, the interior of the church was not completed until 1874 and in October of that year the church was officially opened by the Dean of Melbourne. The final cost of the building was £710 with local contributions and labour having reduced the cost of construction and fitting out.

The Church of England invited other denominations to use the church and so it became a meeting place for the wider Carapooee



community, central to the social fabric of families for generations including throughout both world wars and a depression.

By 1924 the local businesses had closed and the church, along with the school, became a community gathering point for those who remained. Today the church is the only remaining building from the earlier Peter's Diggings and the earlier village of Carapooee is now farmland.

With dwindling numbers of parishioners and services being held irregularly, the Anglican Diocese of Bendigo resolved to sell the property by Expression of Interest. The last service took place in June 2019 and the church was deconsecrated. Then a great new adventure awaited the old church!

A group of community-minded local people decided that, rather than see the church falling into disrepair and not being used, it would make an ideal venue for community events including weddings, parties, festivals, concerts, and art displays.

Consequently, the Pebble Church Community Group was formed. The Group, comprising mainly Carapooee and St Arnaud district residents with generations-long connections with the church, solicited financial pledges not only from the local and surrounding communities but also from many descendants of people who had mined on the diggings, worked local farms and worshipped at St Peter's over almost a century and a half. Following negotiations with the Diocese, in September 2020 the Group secured the church for the use and enjoyment of the community. One of the next steps was for this Group to become an incorporated association and the Pebble Church Heritage Association Inc. (PCHAI) was born and a committee of management established. Two membership tiers were decided on with children up to the age of 15 being deemed 'Little Pebbles'!

In April 2021 the PCHAI held a garden party in the church's grounds to mark the return of the church to the community. Joan Harman, local caretaker of the church for the previous 30

years, officially re-opened the church, ushering in its new life.

In less than four years the PCHAI has been extremely pro-active in bringing to fruition its goal of making the church a social asset and local community hub. PCHAI produces an excellent newsletter, *The Pebble Church Press*, which continues to document the buildings and locality's history, conducts working bees and Open Days, and is busy securing grants for essential works and upgrades. Setting-sensitive heritage signage with QR codes have been erected, directing visitors to the group's website, Facebook and Instagram pages. The Association recently secured funding for the creation of a goldfields-themed mural by a local artist to adorn a nearby tank. In 2024 the committee of management was fortunate to receive large-scale copies of the original architectural plans for the church and the aspirational lofty tower and steeple. In 2025 the PCHAI shared with St Arnaud CFA the Northern Grampians Shire Council's Australia Day Community Group of the Year Award.

PCHAI members welcome individuals and groups to visit the Pebble Church by appointment; all members love to show off their pride and joy in the bush. Should you visit, it will not be too difficult, given the Pebble Church's isolated position among the eucalypts, to imagine you can hear the sounds of horses galloping past and the cacophony of the toiling miners and their families on the former diggings.

To read and see more about the church and the work of the PCHAI, check out the Association's website at <https://www.pebblechurch.com.au/>

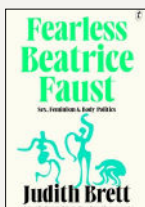
Craige Proctor

PCHAI Committee Member

Bookshop

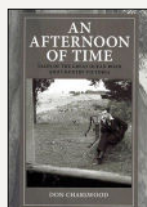
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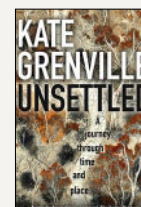
Fearless Beatrice Faust: Sex, Feminism & Body Politics
Judith Brett (2025)
Paperback, \$36.99

Faust was the transformative activist, writer and intellectual who founded the Women's Electoral Lobby in Melbourne in 1972. She campaigned for abortion law reform, and thought, talked and wrote about feminism, from the sexual revolution of the 1960s through to the neoliberal 1990s, always with her own demanding body as her guide. Brett creates a compelling and psychologically nuanced portrait of a gifted, argumentative woman who refused to be a victim.



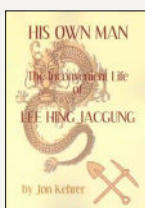
An Afternoon of Time: Tales of the Great Ocean Road and Country Victoria
Don Charlwood (2010)
Paperback, \$19.95

Partly based on the author's own experiences, these stories are united by the land and the people they describe and by the character of their narrator. Whether he is travelling through country haunted by the spirits of his ancestors, being a participant in adventures among familiar sites on the Great Ocean Road, working as a rabbit on a Western District farm, or taking part in a woolshed dance, he is intensely aware, both of the mood and scene, and of the past that underlies it.



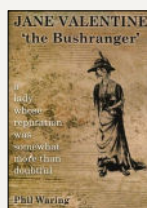
Unsettled: a Journey Through Time and Place
Kate Grenville (2024)
Paperback, \$36.99

Twenty years on from the publication of *The Secret River*, based on the story of her convict ancestor, Kate Grenville is still grappling with what it means to descend from people who were, as she puts it, 'on the sharp edge of the moving blade that was colonisation'. She decides to go on a kind of pilgrimage presenting the stories and the First Nations people back into the same frame, on the same country. This gripping book is the result of that journey.



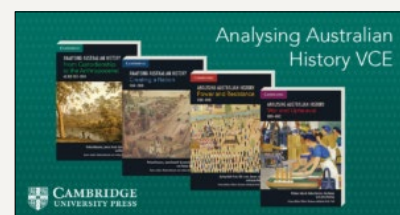
His Own Man: The Inconvenient Life of Lee Hing Jacgung
Jon Kehrer (2024)
Paperback, \$45.00

A story that transcends continents, from 19th Century China to California to Victoria's Mount Alexander Goldfields and Gippsland, Lee Hing Jacgung lived an adventurous and undoubtedly unique life. This well-researched and informative biography contains dozens of photographs, illustrations, tables, as well as detailed appendices and an index.



Jane Valentine: 'The Bushranger'
Phil Waring (2025)
Paperback, \$20.00

Jane Valentine's real name is not known. As a child she was transported to Hobart with her mother, and grew up an illiterate servant. In Victoria she changed her name many times. With a strong liking for drink, for short periods she would work as a housemaid before going on drunken sprees, being arrested and sent to gaol. Her nickname 'the Bushranger' was derived from her tendency to steal, as she was not known to have ever owned a firearm or have ridden a horse.



Analysing Australian History (series) War and Upheaval; Power and Resistance; Creating a Nation; From Custodianship to the Anthropocene
Kate Grenville (2024)
Paperback, \$39.95

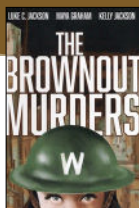
The Analysing Australian History series were written for the new VCE Australian History curriculum. "Fifteen teachers, academics and Cambridge University Press mounted a rescue mission, creating a four volume series, *Analysing Australian History* (2021), to provide texts for the new Year 12 Victorian Study Design in 2022. Some proceeds go to the Indigenous Reading Project."

Books received

John Schauble

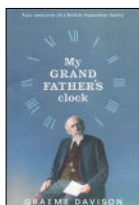
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Please note: these books listed are not necessarily offered to the bookshop by authors, please check the shop catalogue.



The Brownout Murders. Luke C. Jackson, Maya Graham, and Kelly Jackson, Scribe, Brunswick, 2025, pp. 1-149, ISBN 9781925849585.

The story of the "brownout strangler" has been told many times. In 1942, Australia is at war and Melbourne is accommodating thousands of US troops. American GI Eddie Leonski would be hanged at Pentridge Prison in November that year after confessing to the murder of three women over a three-week period in May. This graphic novel is historical fiction and reinterprets events which occurred over 80 years ago. The point, of course, is that violence against women not only persists but does so even in a couple of recent tragic examples close to where Leonski's outrages happened. It's a fascinating use of a different medium to reinterpret history in a creative manner which will appeal to a new audience.



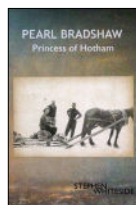
My Grandfather's Clock: Four Centuries of a British-Australian Family. Graeme Davison, The Miegunyah Press, Carlton, 2023, pp. xi-305, ISBN 9780522879582.

Graeme Davison has been delighting students of Australian history for decades and this second reflection upon his family origins is a beautifully written account of his Scottish origins and of post-war Melbourne. Growing up a plumber's son in Essendon, Davison was perhaps an unlikely candidate to become one of Australia's most eminent historians. But he was lucky with the trajectory of his state secondary education, with his family environment and the timing of his entry into tertiary study. That he also had a keen inquiring mind helped, of course! His more recent fascination with aerial Melbourne, the subject of his 2025 Weston Bate lecture at the RHSV, also features here.



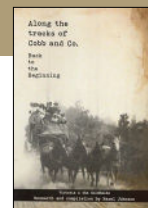
Celebrating 150 the Capital. City of Greater Bendigo, Bendigo, 2023, pp. 1-100, ISBN 9780645313130.

In an era that is fast coming to challenge the 1960s and 70s as the age of ripping heritage buildings down, here is a celebration of a building that escaped that fate to live on as a focus for community. 'The Capital' is one of Bendigo's iconic structures but it may well have gone the way of so many other 19th century structures but for some concerted public campaigning in the 1980s. After starting life as a Masonic Hall, it came to middle age as a theatre, concert hall and cinema languishing from the late 1970s until its rebirth as a regional arts centre in the 1990s. Wonderfully illustrated, this accessible account shows why such efforts and grand buildings matter.



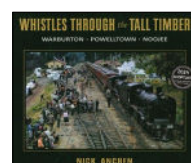
Pearl Bradshaw: Princess of Hotham. Stephen Whiteside, Busybird Publishing, Montmorency, 2025, pp. 1-115, ISBN 9781923216969.

This book of vignettes from an alpine life will be of special interest to those who remember more rugged and romantic days in the Victorian alps. Pearl Bradshaw and her husband Jim managed the Hotham Heights Chalet from 1937 until 1945, taking in nine winters and its destruction, and rebuilding, in the 1939 bushfires. The brief account of that event and their terrifying survival is a highlight in a series of brief episodes recounting life in the snow and some of the characters who pioneered skiing in Victoria. Based on interviews conducted in 1987 for another book about other lives in the alps, Pearl's story is one worth telling in its own right.



Back to the Beginning (Along the Tracks of Cobb and Co, book 4) Hazel Johnson, the author, Darling Heights, 2024, pp. 1-208, ISBN 978064597518.

The strong association of the great coaching company Cobb and Co with outback NSW and Queensland means that many have forgotten its origins were actually in Victoria. It is interesting that it has taken until the fourth volume in this series to return to home base. This is not so much a history of Cobb and Co, there are other volumes which speak to this, as a compilation of scattered contemporary accounts in which the author has sought to 'let history speak for itself'. It is generously illustrated in the main from public collections, but some images have only a tenuous connection to the subject. One for the transport aficionados.



Whistles Through the Tall Timber: Warburton - Powelltown - Noojee. Nick Anchen, Sierra Publishing, Melbourne, 2023, pp. 1-264, ISBN 9780648811046.

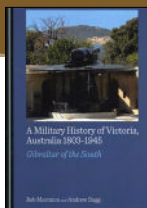
Nick Anchen is a train driver and prolific author of railways books, mostly focussed on Victoria. This is a beautifully produced book covering the railway history of the Upper Yarra Valley along the old Warburton line, the Little Yarra Valley through to Powelltown and over the hump to the Noojee line connecting Warragul. This is a spectacular pictorial record as very little of the physical network remains today. Anchen captures much of the social history of the towns and settlements along the routes, along with the recollections of those who lived and worked along the lines in the days of steam. Shortlisted in the 2024 Victorian Community History Awards.

Books received

John Schauble

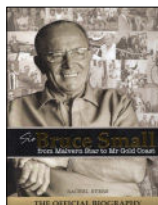
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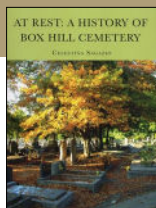
A Military History of Victoria, Australia 1803-1945: Gibraltar of the South. Bob Marmion and Andrew Daggs, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 2024, pp. vii-334, ISBN 9781036417024.

This is an important addition to the modest number of works dealing with Victoria's colonial military history. While many have perhaps heard of HMVS Cerberus and the fortifications in Port Phillip, there is of course a broader defence story to be told of the days before Federation. Victoria's early militarisation was almost entirely defensive. The fear of foreign invasion by sea, from the French, the Russians and later China and Japan, formed the basis for much of the thinking and design of colonial defence strategies. Marmion and Daggs advance a deeper analysis of the factors behind our early military buildup. A hefty price tag on this book means most will be consulting it at a library.



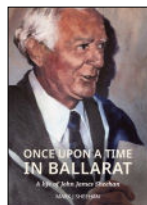
Sir Bruce Small: from Malvern Star to Mr Gold Coast. Rachel Syers, Debanne, Nerang Qld, 2023, pp. iv-301, ISBN 9780648367147.

Small, born in NSW, moved to Melbourne and worked in various jobs before buying a bicycle shop in Malvern and making a fortune as proprietor of Malvern Star bicycles. It was then his teaming up with talented young cyclist Hubert Opperman that cemented both their futures. The Victorian chapter of Small's life would last four decades until he 'retired' to mayoralty and golden bikini girl promotions on the Gold Coast; where he became a successful politician and property developer. The early years of bikes and business in Melbourne will be of most interest here in this belated hagiographic official account.



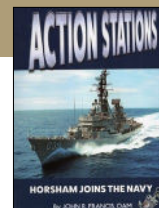
At Rest: a History of Box Hill Cemetery. Celestina Sagazio, Box Hill Cemetery Trust, Box Hill, 2023, pp. 1-250, ISBN 9780645976908.

Marking the 150th anniversary of the Box Hill Cemetery, this book is unusual in the sense that the focus is not so much upon those who are interred or memorialised, as upon the story of the cemetery itself. Cemeteries are, as Sagazio concludes, 'time capsules of our fascinating history' and Box Hill is no exception. While those of note who are buried here are mentioned, also remembered is the very first burial in 1873, that of infant Jessie Lavinia Smith, aged three weeks. Just as interesting as the past is the future for urban cemeteries as they reach capacity. These issues are canvassed here too in a detailed and interesting account.



Once Upon a Time in Ballarat. Mark J. Sheehan, Seriously History Press, 2024, pp. ix-110, ISBN 9780645996135.

This biography of J.J. Sheehan, a Victorian Labor member and ever so briefly minister, is an interesting insight. Written by his son, the story of Jack Sheehan speaks to the Victorian Labor movement of the mid-20th century, and is one of upheaval and divided loyalties between church and state. Sheehan was a teacher, school principal, soldier and MLA for Ballarat from 1952 to 1955. He was Minister for Housing in the final John Cain snr government for just 58 days. A Catholic, Sheehan stayed true to the Labor cause during the tumult of the 1955 split and it cost him his seat and friendships and even his place of worship. A story of the times worth reading.



Action Stations: Horsham Joins the Navy. John R. Francis, the author, Canberra, 2023, pp. 1-452, ISBN 9780646877518.

The first thing you notice about this A4 format book is its whopping 1.8kg weight! The second is that it's about Horsham, the best part of 300km from the sea, and its connection ... to the navy. Here are the stories of 2013 naval volunteers from a landlocked city and surrounds who have served in the Royal Australian Navy before and after the author, who himself served in the 1960s and 1970s. The story of each of these servicemen and women is told, including something of their lives after the navy. But beyond the individuals and their connection to Horsham, there are also accounts of the vessels and bases upon which they served and the actions in which they participated.



Know My Story. Lella Caride (curator), Green Olives Press, Brighton, 2023, pp. 1-89, ISBN 9780645104844.

Subtitled 'Migrant women changing the cultural landscape of Dandenong', this small book is centred on the stories of ten women from vastly different cultures, faiths and backgrounds. It speaks to their achievements in forging new communities in this diverse part of greater Melbourne. The book is part of a three-component project created by Wellsprings for Women. The other components are digitised portraits and a short-form documentary. The arrival of some of these women in the most distressing circumstances imaginable, some from places of war, repression and poverty further informs their will to make the world a better place despite their origins. There are stories here of humility and hope, connection and empowerment. Inspiring stories.