



History News

ISSUE 381 | DECEMBER 2025

FREEHOLD ALLOTMENTS IN THE
GRACE PARK ESTATE
HAWTHORN

TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION BY
C. J & T. HAM
Saturday, Feb. 16, on the ground at 3 o'clock.

Splendid Frontages. Excellent Depths. Building Conditions, brick or stone only. Adjoining Recreation Reserves,
Good Elevation. Select Neighbourhood. Frontages, except Glenferrie Road, one Municipal Swimming Baths,
Charming View. Perfect Drainage. residence only on each allotment, of minimum cost of £750. Public Gardens, and
Contiguous to 3 Railway Stations

TITLE CERTIFICATE. Solicitors: Messrs. LYNCH and McDONALD, 481 Bourke Street.

Terms: 10 per cent. Deposit, 15 per cent. in Seven Days, Balance at One, Two, and Three Years at 4 1/2 per cent., with right to pay off at any time.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

[Heritage report:
Brunswick Brickworks](#)

[HSSC: Networks](#)

[Windows on history:
Lady with the pearls](#)

[Library collection:
Historical fiction for
historians](#)

[RHSV appoints Dr Steven
Cooke as new Executive
Director](#)

[The sad tale of Digger the
wallaby](#)

[Locations with botanical
names: Part five](#)

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.



CATALOGUING CLINIC BILLIBELLARY INDIGENOUS HISTORY LECTURE 2026: PRESENTED BY MARCIA LANGTON

Date: Tuesday 24 February 2026
Time: 5.30-7pm
Cost: \$10.00 / \$20.00
Event type: in person / on Zoom
Bookings: essential
Book online or call or email on
+3 9326 9288
office@historyvictoria.org.au

We are delighted to invite our members and friends to join us for the 5th annual Billibellary Indigenous History Lecture. Our 2026 lecture will be delivered by distinguished academic Professor Marcia Langton AO, and with MC Richard Broome AM.



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: the historic heart of the city. 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

Cataloguing Clinics are finished for 2025. They will be returning in February 2026.

EXHIBITION: THE BURYING OF MELBOURNE

The Royal Historical Society of Victoria organises and hosts exhibitions throughout the year which showcase some of the fascinating items in its collection. The Society also exhibits travelling exhibitions from other organisations. All exhibitions are fully accessible and are located on the ground floor of the Drill Hall, 239 A'Beckett St, Melbourne and can be viewed 9am – 5pm Monday-Friday (excluding public holidays)

In the RHSV Main Gallery, The Burying of Melbourne

Exhibition, curated by Dr David Thompson, designed by Susan Fitzgerald, will remain on display until March 2026, alongside a black and white historical photograph of men in suits and hats standing around what appears to be an archaeological excavation site.



History News

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

EDITOR Sharon Betridge
DESIGN & ARTWORK Centreforce Pty Ltd
5975 8600
PRINTED BY Jossimo Print 0404 148 632
Items for publication should be sent to the Editor
EMAIL sbetridge@outlook.com
History News copy closes 2nd of the month: January, March, May, July, September and November, unless in consultation with the editor. RHSV welcomes submission of articles for inclusion in *History News*. Publication and editing will be at the discretion of the editor and the Publications Committee as directed by our Terms of Reference.

COVER IMAGE: 'Freehold allotments in the Grace Park Estate, Hawthorn' (c.1870). See 'Windows on history: Lady with the pearls', pages 12-13 for more information.
Melbourne: Stillwell & Co. Image courtesy of State Library Victoria <https://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/167930>
PRINT POST APPROVED
PP336663/00011 ISSN 1326-269
PRESIDENT Robert Pascoe
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Dr Steven Cooke
COLLECTIONS MANAGER & VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR Jillian Hiscock
ARCHIVES MANAGER Cathy Dodson

COLLECTIONS OFFICER (IMAGES) Claudia Donovan
ARCHIVES OFFICER Bronte Laffin-Vines
ADMINISTRATION OFFICER Chelsea Pinkard
MARKETING OFFICER Jo Feely
BOOKKEEPER Kristen Adnams

History House 239 A'Beckett Street
Melbourne 3000
Office & Library Hours: Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm
P: 9326 9288 W: www.historyvictoria.org.au
Email: office@historyvictoria.org.au
ABN 36 520 675 471 Registration No. A2529

President's Report: Cathy Butcher

Mention Rothbury to most Australians and they think of the Hunter Valley winery famous for its reds. In the Butcher family the New South Wales township of Rothbury has a very special meaning, for it was here in 1929, during a coalmining strike, that Norman Brown was shot by a stray police bullet. Cathy Butcher's maternal grandfather, William Ernest Joseph Rampling, born in 1907 at West Maitland, was there the day the miner was killed.

Cathy has impeccable labour history roots on the other side of her family tree as well, for her paternal grandfather was a timber worker, William Mitchell Butcher.

Cathy's own involvement in the labour movement has been equally significant. She was the Occupational Health & Safety Manager at the Trades and Labour Council ACT, and later was employed in similar work for the Australian Council of Trade Unions in Melbourne. From 2000 until 2015 she was the Occupational Health & Safety Co-ordinator for the Victorian Trades Hall Council. In 2013 she gained the Victorian WorkCover Authority's award for Outstanding Leadership and Contribution to Health & Safety.

Cathy Butcher transitioned easily to the RHSV, drawing on her administrative skills and workplace safety experience to promote good governance at the RHSV and thus the well-being of the society as a whole. Recruited as a volunteer by Richard Broome in 2018, she joined the RHSV Council in February 2019 as Assistant Secretary to work with the longstanding Secretary Carole Woods.

Richard Broome remembers the moment clearly: 'Cathy has been fabulous for our

governance, which is why I invited her to join Council: initially to go through our minutes to find, as the Anglicans would say, 'the things we ought to have done and those things we ought not to have done'.

Reliable, conscientious, and cooperative, she soon proved herself indispensable to the work of the Executive and Finance Committee and Council. Richard Broome again: 'She has a great level of focus and tenacity about issues and applied this to our governance'. She took meticulous minutes and was the lead contributor to the Australian Museums and Galleries Association (AMaGA) renewal of Museum Accreditation in 2019. Increasingly she focused on revision of the Constitution, by-laws, terms of reference for committees, development of a Charter and many other significant administrative tasks.

Following the retirement of Carole Woods in October 2023 after 14 years in the role in, Cathy Butcher became RHSV Secretary, with her position formalised at the AGM in 2024, and continued her exemplary work. She assisted the Executive Officer in many ways, including with staff recruitment through interviews and appraisals. She gave sound advice to Council as she scrutinised policies and proposals. A team player, she was highly esteemed by her Council colleagues and the day volunteers alike.

After a quarter century in Kensington, Cathy Butcher has moved to Belmont, a place where she has nestled in happily as a proud grandmother, and is enjoying the next phase of her life to the full.

Like Richard Broome, who enjoys his wine, Cathy Butcher is the kind of richly flavoured and reliable red only the Hunter Valley can produce.

Robert Pascoe

Contents

Regular features

What's on at RHSV
2

President's report
3

Heritage report: Brunswick
Brickworks, heritage, and the
new planning regime
4

HSSC: Networks
8-9

Around the Societies
10-11

Windows on history:
Lady with the pearls
12-13

Library collection: Historical
fiction for historians
16-17

Bookshop
18

Books received
19-20

News and feature articles

Royal Historical Society of
Victoria appoints Dr Steven
Cooke as new Executive
Director
5

The sad tale of Digger
the wallaby
6-7

Locations with botanical
names: Part five
14-15

Heritage report: Brunswick Brickworks, heritage, and the new planning regime

The government has obtained passage of enabling legislation for its radical reshaping of Victorian planning laws. The new zones will be put in place with the usual 'consultation' for each of the 60 Activity Centres and their surrounding 'Housing Choice and Transport Zone', plus regional centres. Is your home in one of these? Chances are pretty good it is. Check with your local council.

These consultations will consider only comparatively minor changes to the zones. The basic principle of 12–16 storey development in Activity Centres and 4–6 storeys in HCTZs will remain the norm. What will the new system look like in practice?

Readers of the *Age* (7 October 2025) were given a plausible scenario, by Rachael Dexter, with the example of the heritage-listed Brunswick Brickworks. The Hoffman Patent Brick & Tile Company began construction of a major brickmaking facility on Dawson Street in 1884. It soon employed 400 workers making the bricks that built Melbourne's northern suburbs. It remained in operation into the 1990s, when it was sold to a developer with an agreement to restore the key features and make them the focal point of the new housing project.

The Brickworks were listed on the Victorian Heritage Register in 1989, but, in a sadly familiar story, the developer time after time made agreements and even accepted subsidies to retain and use the heritage structures and time after time violated the agreements, demolishing heritage structures by neglect. The RHSV has been following this scandal for five years, led by Heritage Committee member Elisabeth Jackson. You can find an excellent report on the website of local MP Dr Tim Read. The VHR-listed industrial chimney, a Brunswick landmark, has been left unrepaired and crumbling dangerously, surrounded by years-old scaffolding which itself is now deteriorating dangerously. This



■ Hoffman Brickworks, showing the VHR-listed chimney, 8 storeys high, with the now derelict scaffolding (photo courtesy Brunswick's Historic Brickworks).

danger has led to a steep increase in insurance costs for residents. Heritage Victoria has been unable to make progress on this issue. Part of the problem is the recent staff cuts and the lack of enforcement officers: there are only 1.5 for all of Victoria!

The *Age* story, however, provides information about how the new Activity Centre zoning could affect the site. Previously, the developer was seeking to build an 8-storey apartment block at the site, but now residents have noted that the new zone suggests 16 storeys should be built there. The residents find it galling that the developer might be rewarded for bad behaviour, but more generally this is a perfect example of how the new system might give developers free rein. The new heights are prescribed without consideration of the surrounding area and specific context like the heritage struggle over the Brickworks. Heritage Victoria will have some say since the Brickworks are on the VHR, but their say is limited to the effect on the heritage sites; it does not include planning issues.

At the same time, the government is proposing legislation to sharply reduce the right to object to developments. Most projects will have only to tick the boxes to be approved, with no right of appeal. As Daniella White reports in the *Age* on the 28 October 2025, immediate neighbours may still have rights in the case of larger apartment blocks, but third parties such as the National Trust or the RHSV will lose their right to voice an opinion about inappropriate development.

What can we do in this new planning world? We at the RHSV are continuing to lobby the government to pay more attention to heritage. We have just lodged a major submission with the Department of Transport and Planning arguing that the new planning regime is contrary to the 1987 *Planning and Environment Act*. Looking forward, we plan to campaign

for the Heritage Overlay to be strengthened.

Our campaign will focus on two fronts. First, we need guidelines as to how the HO operates in the new system. The government repeats that the HO will continue to operate, but does not specify *how* it will operate in this new context? Who will determine the interface between the HO and new development in the Activity Centres and HCTZs? Second, we need to support local councils to carry out heritage studies by grants to poorer councils, especially in regional areas, and by restoring the Local Government Heritage Advisory section of Heritage Victoria.

Open slather planning is not the answer. It will not fix, for example, developers obtaining permits but not using them. Adam Carey and Patrick Hatch's 'This western suburb is ripe for a housing boom, council says. Developers disagree' in the *Age* in October 2025, in Footscray more than 20 sites with planning permits for more than 4000 apartments sit idle while developers wait for prices to rise. We risk losing heritage to create soulless development instead of using heritage to give focus and character to the new housing we so desperately need. Let's ensure that the Heritage Overlay does its job.

For further reading:

RHSV (2022) 'Demolition of Hoffman's Brickworks' <https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/heritage-matters-rhsv-heritage-committee/current-advocacy-projects/demolition-of-hoffmans-brickworks-buildings/>

Read, Tim 'Fix the chimney at Brickworks' (2025)

<https://timread.org.au/issue/remove-the-scaffolding-at-brickworks/>

Charles Sowerwine

3 November 2025.

Royal Historical Society of Victoria appoints Dr Steven Cooke as new Executive Director

After an extensive selection process, the RHSV Council is delighted to announce the appointment of Dr Steven Cooke as Executive Director.

Dr Cooke brings more than 30 years of experience in the cultural heritage sector, spanning both academia and leadership roles at some of Australia's most significant heritage institutions. Dr Cooke has held senior positions at iconic Victorian institutions including the Melbourne Holocaust Museum, the Shrine of Remembrance, and the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), where he managed heritage sites such as the Melbourne Maritime Museum, home of *Polly Woodside*. He has also served as Associate Professor of Cultural Heritage and Museum Studies at Deakin University, teaching the next generation of cultural heritage and

museum professionals and publishing extensively on heritage interpretation and difficult histories.

“On reading the RHSV’s strategic plan, I sum it up in one phrase: History with Purpose”, said Dr Cooke. “We are here to ignite curiosity and wonder, to inspire debate, to explore and question histories and how they shape both the present and the future. In today’s environment, where conversations about how we understand and share diverse histories are more important than ever, this mission resonates deeply. I’m very much looking forward to getting started and getting to know the fantastic team.”

The RHSV Council would like to thank Fiona Menzies for her work as interim Executive Officer, and Rosemary Cameron, former Executive Officer, for her many years of service to the Society.

About the Royal Historical Society of Victoria

The RHSV was formed in 1909 to advance how Victorians understand their history. It serves as a catalyst for the 340 historical societies in every part of the state.

Based in a heritage-listed drill hall at the corner of William and A’Beckett streets in Melbourne, the RHSV houses a significant archive and research library, and offers a range of public lectures, walking tours and exhibitions. It assists its 1,400 members to research and share Victoria’s rich and diverse histories.

Robert Pascoe

President



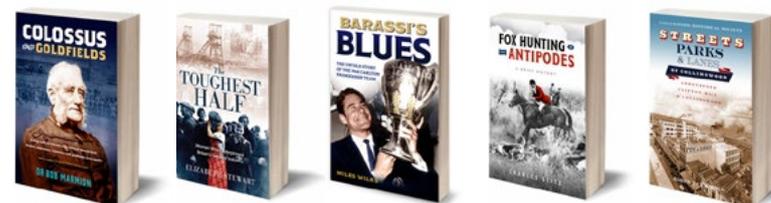
workingtype books

We partner with authors to create attractive and readable publications. Whether hardback, paperback or ebook, give your book lasting impact. Our workflow is simple and customisable. Extensive experience working with biographers and historians.

Call to discuss your project: 0412 622 138 | luke@workingtype.com.au

Services include:

- editing & proofing
- layout & graphics
- cover design
- ebook formatting
- print on demand
- print management



Excellent testimonials from hundreds of authors and organisations



The sad tale of Digger the wallaby



■ The Prince and Digger, from *The Prince of Wales' Book: a pictorial record of the voyages of HMS Renown 1919-1920* (1921) Hodder and Stoughton

Poor little “Digger”, the Wallaby ... although destined to enjoy fawning royal patronage, his brief marsupial life was not to have a happy ending.

During his 1920 Australian tour, Edward, Prince of Wales was presented with a pet wallaby while on a horseback ride from Sassafras to Monbulk in the Dandenong Ranges. The small creature became a favourite of the prince and his travelling companion to the then Lieutenant “Dickie” Lord Mountbatten (1900-79) and travelled with the prince on *HMS Renown* for the remainder of the tour.

Prince Edward’s visit was wildly popular with the Australian public. He earned the nickname “the Digger Prince”, and despite his limited World War I experience he was much liked by the returned servicemen of whom his extensive tour was in part designed to thank. Shouts of “Digger!” greeted him from the crowds across the country.

Known even then as something of a bounder and a cad, the 26-year-old heir to the throne was a noted philanderer. He also left a

written record which showed him ‘privately contemptuous of blustering officials and profoundly racist in his attitude towards Australia’s First Nations population’, according to the National Museum of Australia. ‘The Prince tired of Australia long before the itinerary wrapped up.’

Writing home to his paramour late on 30 May, after complaining about the busyness of his schedule, he recounted how he had motored out to ‘some hilly bush country’ with Prime Minister Billy Hughes, from whose farm in Sassafras the ride commenced:

I’m a little cheered as 2 girls (both very plain, angel!!!) who met us where we mounted the horses gave me a baby wallaby (small species of kangaroo) which we brought back & which is such a sweet little animal & is only 2 months old!!

He’s asleep on my bed now sweetie though I’m afraid he’ll have grown a lot before you see him if we can ever get him back alive!! If only he would remain tiny as he is now so as one can hold him in one’s arms... Dickie has gone crazy about him & he & I are going to keep him all to ourselves & not let any of the staff have anything

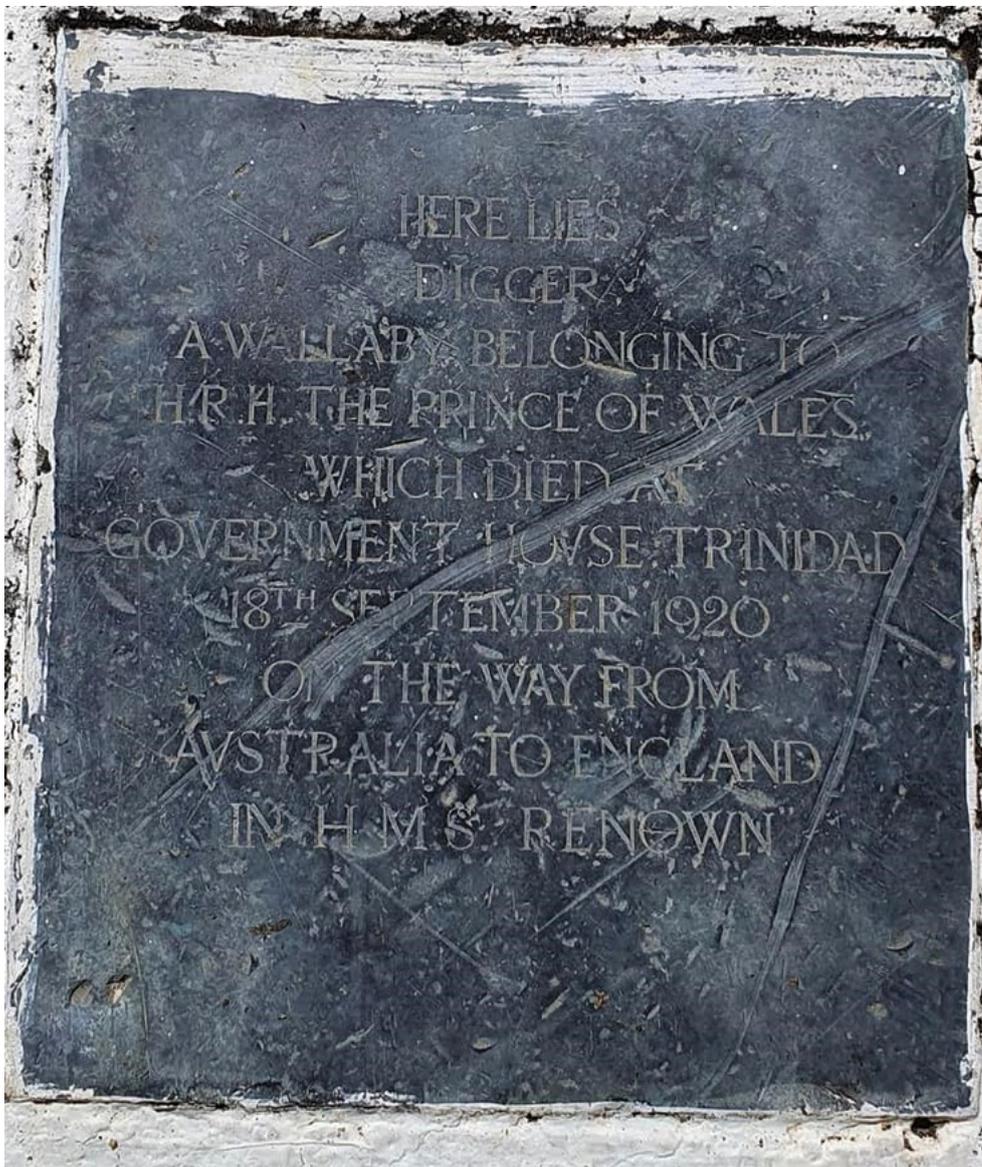
to do with him. We’ve appropriately christened him ‘Digger’!!

His then mistress, Mrs Freda “Fredie” Dudley Ward (1894-1983) was a married English socialite, and their entanglement lasted from 1918 until 1929. Some of Edward’s extensive passionate correspondence with Mrs Ward, a cache of 263 letters, forms the basis of *Letters from a Prince: Edward, Prince of Wales to Mrs Freda Dudley Ward, March 1918-January 1921* (1998).

Besotted with the tiny creature, Edward reportedly set about teaching Digger, of all things, how to jump:

The story goes that in the evening, after the presentation, the Prince was found on all fours in a room, at Government House teaching the wallaby to jump over an improvised hurdle, and since then each day, in his idle moments, he puts the wallaby through its tricks, including jumping lessons. What the wallaby thinks about the performance has not yet been ascertained. (Daily News, Perth 5.6.1920)

Meanwhile, another “pet” identified in a Melbourne paper’s ‘Tittle-Tattle’ column was ‘a breezy little brunette [who] has been the favorite partner of HRH at dances in



Left: Inscription on Digger's grave, 'The Office of the President of the Republic of T&T'

<https://www.facebook.com/profile/100064534549298/search/?q=digger>

Above: Commemorative button 1920, National Museum of Australia

Melbourne. The story goes that a lady was dancing at the first Federal Government House ball, when the Royal guest touched her on the shoulder, and asked if she would dance with him. Her reply was: "Oh, rather," and many fox-trots followed...The girl in question comes from one of the squatting families, and can provide the Prince with ideal conversation upon his favorite subject, the horse.'

Digger was not the only creature entrusted to Edward's care during his Australian tour. Apparently, he was also gifted all manner of birds including a cockatoo, emu chicks and parrots, a Tasmanian devil and a kangaroo held in what was dubbed the *HMS Renown* menagerie.

But Digger was his favourite and there was much sadness when the special correspondent of the Australian Press Association aboard the vessel for its return voyage to England reported that the wallaby had died at Trinidad in the West Indies, then a British colony.

Let out for exercise in the gardens of Government House, Digger expired after eating some apparently poisonous herbage on 18 September 1920. Despite the administration

of castor oil, brandy and much care, the animal died that evening. In a letter to Freddie the following morning, Edward bemoaned

Poor little 'Digger' (the wallaby) I was so keen to get home anyway for you to see, died while we were at dinner, also poisoned!! Some filthy grass or plant he must have eaten when he escaped into the bush for an hour this morning & we are all quite upset & shall miss him terribly on the ship!! He was such a sweet little animal & it's so tragic that he should have pegged out only 3 weeks from England!

Digger, the wallaby from Sassafras, was buried with some ceremony in the grounds of Government House with a commemorative plaque worded by Edward himself.

A century later, the Office of the President of Trinidad and Tobago marked the centenary of Digger's death with a Facebook post: 'In commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of the death of Digger. You were loved. You are remembered.' Digger's grave remains in the grounds of what is now the President's House just outside the presidential waiting room.

See also: National Museum Australia 'Royal Tour 1920' <https://www.nma.gov.au/explore/blog/royal-tour-1920>

Note, an earlier version of this story appeared in the *Mountain Tales* newsletter of the Mt Dandenong and District Historical Society.

John Schauble

Historical Societies Support Committee (HSSC)



F.E. Hiscocks & Co. (1874). 'Map of the Gipps Land district', Victoria. George Robinson, Melbourne. https://find.slv.vic.gov.au/permalink/61SLV_INST/ogp0nb/alma997859753607636

The HSSC comprises twelve passionate local historians who, combined, bring a wealth of experience and insights to the Committee. Going forward we hope to share some of these insights through HSSC members contributing articles. In this issue Graham Goulding OAM shares with us some of the key benefits of historical society networks with a focus on the Gippsland Region.

Craige Proctor,
Chair, HSSC

The value of networks

Networks create valuable links between historical societies and thus provide a whole range of benefits. Just one example of a number of networks which exist across Victoria is the Gippsland Association of Affiliated Historical Societies (GAAHS).

The Gippsland network was formed in 1976 so next year will be the 50th anniversary of its foundation. It began with six member groups and has grown to 28. Membership subscriptions have remained at \$15 a year for a long period of time because email has allowed the cost of operation to remain low, thus providing a service without being a burden on a member society's budget.

Gippsland covers a large area, stretching 400 km from Drouin in the west to Mallacoota in the east. So, within the region there are four sub-groups which also meet regularly: Latrobe Combined, focused on the Latrobe Valley; the Wellington Network based around Sale; East Gippsland Network based in Bairnsdale; and South Gippsland centred on Leongatha. Each Network operates in its own way and under different financial arrangements.

The format of the GAAHS network meetings has not changed much at all over 49 years. At the AGM each society provides a report on the previous year's activities, the RHSV's HSSC representatives provide a report and the Secretary/Treasurer provides a report. This is followed by an activity or presentation which members enjoy as they learn about an aspect of history of the district where the meeting is held or more generally across the region. For example, at a Yarram meeting we learned about the history of the theatre in which we were meeting. In Sale we had an author talk about a recently published book on Angus McMillan. The meetings move about the Gippsland region with the aim of encouraging all groups to participate in the meetings even if only every two or three years.

So, what are the benefits of membership? Being connected to the history community is the major benefit. We mix with fellow history lovers and learn from their stories, whether these be about history generally or about the society to which they belong. This can be especially helpful in times of change when we are all grappling with the necessary adjustments to the way we operate. Think of the change brought

Keeping Gippsland history alive

MORE than 40 historical society members from across Gippsland attended a meeting at Sale on May 17.

Guest speaker at the Gippsland Association of Affiliated Historical Societies was local author Rob Christie, who spoke on his publication *A Convenient Scapgoat*. The book explores the claims about explorer and early settler Angus McMillan and assesses the likelihood, or not, of his involvement in various conflicts with first nations people.

The meeting noted the work illustrated the many complex aspects of research and interpretation in historical works.

Each of the historical societies present outlined the year's highlights for their organisation and noted achievements and upcoming events.

Sale historian Peter Synan presented three outstanding service awards to Alan Lawler, president of Warragul, and to Josephine and Malcolm Dickson of Warragul, recognising their long term dedication to preserving, sharing and celebrating the local history and heritage of their local area.

New executives are secretary Jacque Hocking and treasurer Ian Hollingsworth from Bairnsdale. The 2026 meeting will be held at Erica.

Following the meeting, many visitors inspected the Foster Street Museum, Sale Water Tower and Sale Powder Magazine.

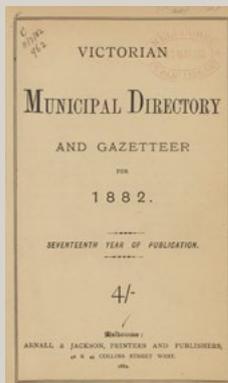


Above: The Gippsland Association of Affiliated Historical Societies held a meeting in Sale on the 17th May 2025. The Gippsland Times reported on the event on 4 June 2025.

Image to the left, 'Yarragul president Alan Lawler, was unable to attend the GAAHS meetings vice-president Elizabeth Wynne accepted his outstanding service award from Peter Synan'.

To the right, 'Josephine and Malcolm Dickson were recognised for the long-term service and dedication to local history at the Warragul Historical Society with awards presented by Sale historian Peter Synan'.

'Gippsland history', Heather Lang Facebook post (2025, June 10) <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=2015571498969572&set=gm.4265967086966619&id=orvanity-1755971574632862>



about by the internet and Facebook, the recent changes requiring a report to the Australian Taxation Office or the continuing changes to computer software and cataloguing systems.

On a regional level, the Network can provide opportunities for region-wide projects, enabling the collection and distribution of historical information. A couple of examples illustrate this point. Linda Barraclough took on the task of collecting the information on local government published in the Municipal Directories from the time Directories were established until their demise. A huge task, but one which provided abundant historical information. Societies helped by sourcing and scanning the relevant information. GAAHS was able to facilitate the distribution of the directory material. GAAHS also acts as a distribution point for society newsletters or material advertising events held by particular societies.

The Network meetings can provide a sounding board for ideas, some of which may take hold and flourish while others might fail to gain traction. One project pursued for a few years was the idea of building a Gippsland regional archive. Societies saw the benefit of saving

records of region-wide significance, which don't belong to the PROV and cross the boundaries of the member societies. Despite the effort made, this didn't eventuate. Another project created a history trail pamphlet with the cost shared between the participating societies.

Directories listing the details of member groups can also be useful for networks. GAAHS has a Gippsland directory which is updated every year and distributed to members by email. It has served a number of purposes. It makes it much easier to contact another group when your own group wishes to speak to someone and you have up-to-date details readily available. When someone wishes to contact a number of societies, the entire directory can be emailed so that they can make contact with anyone they wish. This has proven useful where there are presentations or publications which the person wishes to make known to historical societies.

Workshops and conferences are facilitated by and beneficial to networks. Over the years, the GAAHS Network has organised workshops on a variety of topics such as grant writing, digitising records, cataloguing, disaster management and conservation. GAAHS has also worked with

the local University. In earlier days history conferences organised by the University were supported and in more recent times the University library organised workshops through the Gippsland and Regional Studies Centre.

Networks can also help find the best home for storage of historical information or artefacts. At the GAAHS AGM there is an item exchange. If a society believes that an item is best located with another society it is passed on at the AGM. This has been very successful.

GAAHS networks provide an additional level of recognition to society members. GAAHS instituted an Awards Program in 2012 to give recognition to those who have provided outstanding service to their society or the region or for an outstanding project. The awards provide an opportunity to recognise and celebrate achievements across the Network. Often the presentation is made by a local dignitary.

Thus, networks can work their magic and make valuable contributions to the preservation and celebration of our history.

Graham Goulding OAM

HSSC member

hssc@historyvictoria.org.au

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 February 2026 issue, please send details to office@historyvictoria.org.au by 8 December 2025.

BALLARAT AND DISTRICT GENEALOGICAL:

The Society are following on from their successful Irish and Scottish Heritage seminars. We now want to explore why our ancestors came to Australia, their experiences on their journey here and what they did when they arrived, not just in Ballarat but beyond. Join us for our all day seminar, 9am-4pm Saturday 7 February, at the Ballarat North Community Centre, Walker Street, Ballarat. There will be six guest presenters on a range of relevant topics: Why did they emigrate? How did they get here? What were their occupations? Where did they live? Were they in the military? Plus further research guides and references. Cost \$35pp. Bookings and enquiries to:

secretary@ballaratgenealogy.org.au

BOX HILL: Where are we? Suite 7, Town Hall Hub, 27 Bank Street, Box Hill, at the rear of Town Hall. The Society's Local History Room is open every Tuesday, except Public Holidays, 11am-4pm. Meetings are usually held 2pm on the 3rd Sunday in the month, in the Bert Lewis Meeting Room of Box Hill Library, which is just east of the Town Hall, at 1040 Whitehorse Road, Box Hill. Details of meetings and speakers will be found under the News section of our website, and on our Facebook page:

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



DANDENONG: Until 20 February 2026 we have 'The Place to Be: the Dandenong Town Hall' exhibition at Benga, 66 McCrae Street in Dandenong and associated events. For 135 years, the historic Dandenong Town Hall, now the beloved Drum Theatre, has stood as the beating heart of the community. From its uncertain beginnings in 1890, it has been a stage for every chapter of local life: where futures were debated, young soldiers were farewelled, new Australians found their place, and where music, dance and celebration echoed through the walls. In times of disaster,

it offered shelter; in times of need, it inspired hope. This special exhibition invites you to journey through its rich history: exploring photographs, stories, fashion and memories. Find more information on the South Eastern Historical Association Facebook page:

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



DAYLESFORD: Our 'Hatch, Match and Despatch' exhibition based on the significant events of births, weddings and funerals has opened. It features many items from our collection, and a few loaned items. The exhibition is open on Saturdays, 11am-3pm at the museum at 100 Vincent Street, Daylesford.

daylesfordmuseum.net

DONCASTER TEMPLESTOWE: We are celebrating a new chapter with the official opening of the new Schramms Cottage Museum Visitor Centre. The building and precinct upgrade is officially open and will help the Society preserve the history of Manningham for generations to come. We hope that you can come and have a look at the museum complex with its new pathways at Muriel Green Drive, off Victoria Street, Doncaster East. Sundays 2-5pm, last entry 4.30pm.

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



KILMORE: The new format for our regular pre-loved Book Sale appears to be successful. The books are now on permanent display in the old, now transformed, industrial kitchen. Buyers access the sale area from the rear courtyard. We raised over \$2000 in funding for the Society in the October sale, and many

visitors left with a smile and bags of books. The date of the next sale will be announced on our web site and through our *Telegraph* newsletter.

kilmorehistoricalsociety.org



LILYDALE: Calling all family historians! Do you or your family have a story you would like to share? Did you grow up in Lilydale or the surrounding district? Has your family lived in the area for generations? If so, we'd love to hear from you. Whether it's a long tale or a short memory, with or without photos, your story matters. Share it with us to help preserve our local history; your contribution may be included in our research archives and could be featured in our quarterly newsletter. Email your story to info@lilydalehistorical.com.au Or drop it off in person at the Old Lilydale Courthouse, 61 Castella Street, Lilydale on Sundays or Mondays between 11am-4pm. The courthouse closes on 15 December and reopens 18 January 2026.

[facebook.com/LilydaleandDistrictHistoricalSocietyInc/](https://www.facebook.com/LilydaleandDistrictHistoricalSocietyInc/)

MALVERN: We now have 8172 Facebook followers who are enjoying all the images posted each week. Thank you Nikki! Recent popular posts have related to Glendearg Grove 1997, Warrigal Road 1936, Glenferrie Road Malvern 1915, and the paddle steamer *Alexandra* on the Yarra between Toorak and Burnley c.1910. Visit and follow our page at

[facebook.com/malvernhistoricalsocietystonnington](https://www.facebook.com/malvernhistoricalsocietystonnington)



MIDDLE PARK AND ALBERT PARK: Meeting dates for 2026: 20 April, 13 July, 7 September and AGM 7 November 2026. Check our website for upcoming speakers and events.
middleparkandalbertparkhistory.org.au

MONBULK: The great 'Monbulk Dutch Project 2026'. The Society is teaming up with the Lilydale Historical Society to celebrate the lives and contributions of Dutch migrants in the Yarra Ranges. An event will be held on Sunday 26 April. Following on from this event the Society will produce a book looking more specifically at the Dutch families who settled in the Monbulk, Silvan, Kallista, The Patch and Sherbrooke areas from the 1930s to the 1970s. We will be looking for the stories of how they came to the area along with what they experienced and did here. We are also looking for photos, particularly to accompany the stories. If you belong to a family of Dutch heritage that has been in the wider Monbulk community since at least 1980 and are interested in telling your or their story then we would love to hear from you. Check our website and facebook pages for more information.

monbulkhistoricalsociety.org.au



MORWELL: Our last Gathering of Members was a bit different with a presentation by long time Morwell Dentist Dr Christopher Billings talking on the publication of his memoirs *Poncing Around: the Stage in Tights*. Chris spent nearly 50 years involved in what was the Latrobe Light Opera Society and now the Latrobe Theatre Players. It was an interesting presentation. Chris' book is at the Society. We had successful BBQs at Bunnings in August and October. Thanks to all the members who volunteer their time.

The Society will have a break from the end of November, recommencing in February 2026.

morwellhistoricalsociety.org.au



PHILLIP ISLAND: There's much to look forward to in 2026! We'll begin the year with our Gathering of Neighbours on Monday 26 January at Rhyll Hall and Park, a wonderful opportunity for our community to come together, enjoy good company, and celebrate the special place we call home. You'll find more details on our website and facebook pages. In autumn, we'll take part in the National Trust's Heritage Festival from 18 April to 18 May, celebrating this year's theme, 'Change'. Our exhibition will explore how our island has evolved through time, pairing striking historical images with their modern-day counterparts - a thoughtful look at what has changed and what remains.

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



PORT PHILLIP PIONEERS: 2026 events include: Meeting 2pm Saturday 14 March 2026: speaker, Dr Andrea Jean Baker, Senior Lecturer in Journalism, Monash University on Music in Early Melbourne. Dr Baker is an award-winning journalism scholar and journalist. Meeting 2pm Saturday 9 May 2026: speaker, Fiona Malcolm, Library Manager, The Melbourne Athenaeum on The Melbourne Athenaeum, originally known as the Melbourne Mechanics' Institution. The Melbourne Athenaeum Library has been operating in its current premises in Collins Street since 1842, housing over time the city's oldest lending library, a museum, a cinema, a theatre and other facilities. Meetings venue: Wesley Hall, St. Andrew's Uniting Church, 253A Burke Road, cnr. Malvern Road, Gardiner. Visitors Welcome. Talks are from 2pm. Doors open 1.30 pm. \$2 entry includes refreshments. Our meetings generally end around 4pm.

pppg.org.au



RED CLIFFS: The Society is based in the old Red Cliffs Court House building, which we run as a museum. Usually, the museum is open to the public on the first Sunday of the month between 10am-12pm, the same day as the Red Cliffs Country Market and Red Cliffs Historical Steam Railway, and by arrangement. Come and explore Red Cliffs' history through various historical items, photographs, newspaper articles, books, maps and other memorabilia. We also have books about the district for sale.

redcliffshistory.wordpress.com

STAWELL: The Old Pleasant Creek Courthouse Museum at 46 Longfield Street (Western Highway) Stawell is open Wednesday and Thursday 10am-4pm. The museum houses a vast collection of items, photographs and records dating back to the origins of the town from pre-Gold Rush when the entire area was a large pastoral run known as 'Concongella', to more recent years. The courthouse was built in 1860 and serviced a large area of the Western Victoria. It also served as the Gold Warden's Registry and later housed the Mounted Troopers before being used as a private home.

facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064455952211

WILLIAMSTOWN: The State Library of Victoria (SLV) does not have copies of the significant Williamstown the two volumes written by the late Bruce Tait: *Pubs of Williamstown* and *Streets of Williamstown*. We have been in touch with SLV, and they need our help. If you have copies of these books that you are prepared to part with, or know of someone else who does, please contact the society so we can help make sure that Williamstown history is not lost to sight.

williamstownhistsoc.org.au



Windows on history: Lady with the pearls

The outstanding collection of Federation style homes in Grace Park Estate, Hawthorn and surrounding suburbs has been well documented, and among the most notable is the concentration of houses designed by architect Christopher Alfred Cowper (1868-1954). South African born Cowper arrived in Melbourne in 1883, where he was articled to the Gothic Revivalist church architect, Evander McIvor. Despite turning to other fields of employment during the 1890s economic depression, he later returned to architecture, completing his own home at 14 Studley Park Road, Kew in 1907. The following year he purchased allotments at Grace Park, designing an estimated 33 homes from 1908 onwards, described by architectural historian George Tibbits as 'a sanctuary of houses in the Melbourne Queen Anne manner'. Noted for their Arts & Crafts qualities initially, although later tending towards the in-coming Bungalow style, they are recognisable by their Marseilles-tiled roofs, clusters of Tuscan columns, red brick and rough-cast render, deep entrance porches and, in some instances, candle-snuffer turrets. The generously proportioned interiors were enhanced by lead lights that filled entrance doorways and upper panels of windows.

The early 20th century home was more modest than the flamboyant Italianate mansions of the 1880s and although decorative glass continued to be a feature, it too was less elaborate. Sinuous Art Nouveau-inspired leadlight displaced the old grand multi-light window model with its fully painted figures, scenes of the 'old country' and its upside-down seasons that were so beloved during Melbourne's 'boom' period. Not simply decorative however, these new window designs were functional, filling rooms with light and framing views of wide lawns and garden beds, visually blurring the boundaries between indoor and outdoor spaces and adding to the sense of 'sanctuary'.

Cowper's designs were especially elegant: more about light than colour, with good quality glasses adding texture and distortion to the symmetrical designs. But there were occasions when Cowper's houses included an unusual additional window, sometimes a porthole, or a highlight to the side of the porch. Each window was slightly different but always featured the head and shoulders of a young girl, who came to be called the 'Lady with the Pearls'. Several variations on the theme have emerged but, with few exceptions, pearls are threaded through locks of her hair, form the strap of a bodice, or adorn a graceful neckline, with roses, daisies or a mirror clasped in her hand. Finely painted, the additional panel distinguishes each house as a 'Cowper' design, and from many others in the Queen Anne and Edwardian styles that are collectively known these days as 'Federation'.

One of Cowper's houses, 'Clomanto' in Barkers Road, Hawthorn East, was commissioned by William John Proctor, managing director of the Dunlop Tyre Company, and his wife Priscilla. Built in 1908 on a one-acre site on the corner of Higham Grove, formal gardens, a croquet green and tennis court as well as the spacious home, provided opportunities for many social occasions, especially for their growing daughters. After 1922, the family moved to another stylish property designed by Christopher Cowper, the recently built, large apartment building, 'Summerland Mansions', in St Kilda, where leadlight was no longer the fashion of the day.

'Clomantos' entrance porch and its glass are specifically noted in the Victorian Heritage Register: 'Pairs of plainly detailed columns above a hit-and-miss brickwork balustrade frame the outstanding semi-circular door opening within a fine brick arch. Glass fan and side lights are in exquisitely designed decorative leadlight'. As well as the impressive entrance, two iterations of the lady with the pearls adorn the building, one possibly installed during a later addition to the house.

The artist behind these intriguing designs remains unknown, however a recent discovery in medical rooms in Essendon gives a clue as to



Several Federation houses in Buckley Street Essendon are listed under a local heritage overlay and, like many of the Cowper houses in the eastern suburbs, receive local planning protection.



the origins of the design and its maker. The Buckley Street, Essendon house was designed in the Federation style, around the same time that Cowper was building on the Grace Park Estate, but the architect remains unknown. Originally named 'Leichardt', it was the home of Annie and Frederick G.B. Anderson (1881-1958), who married in 1909 and moved into their newly built residence the following year. The electoral roll lists Frederick as a 'glass cutter' in 1910, and therefore it is likely that Anderson saw the design for one of the Hawthorn windows at his place of employment and chose to reproduce it for his own Federation residence.

When Frederick set up his own business in 1930, he proudly announced himself in an advertisement in the *Advocate* as 'Artist in Leaded Glass... Stained Glass' and trumpeting his craftsmanship: 'Twenty Years with Brooks, Robinson'. Despite the economic downturn, the business appears to have prospered and a new company 'F.G. Anderson Pty



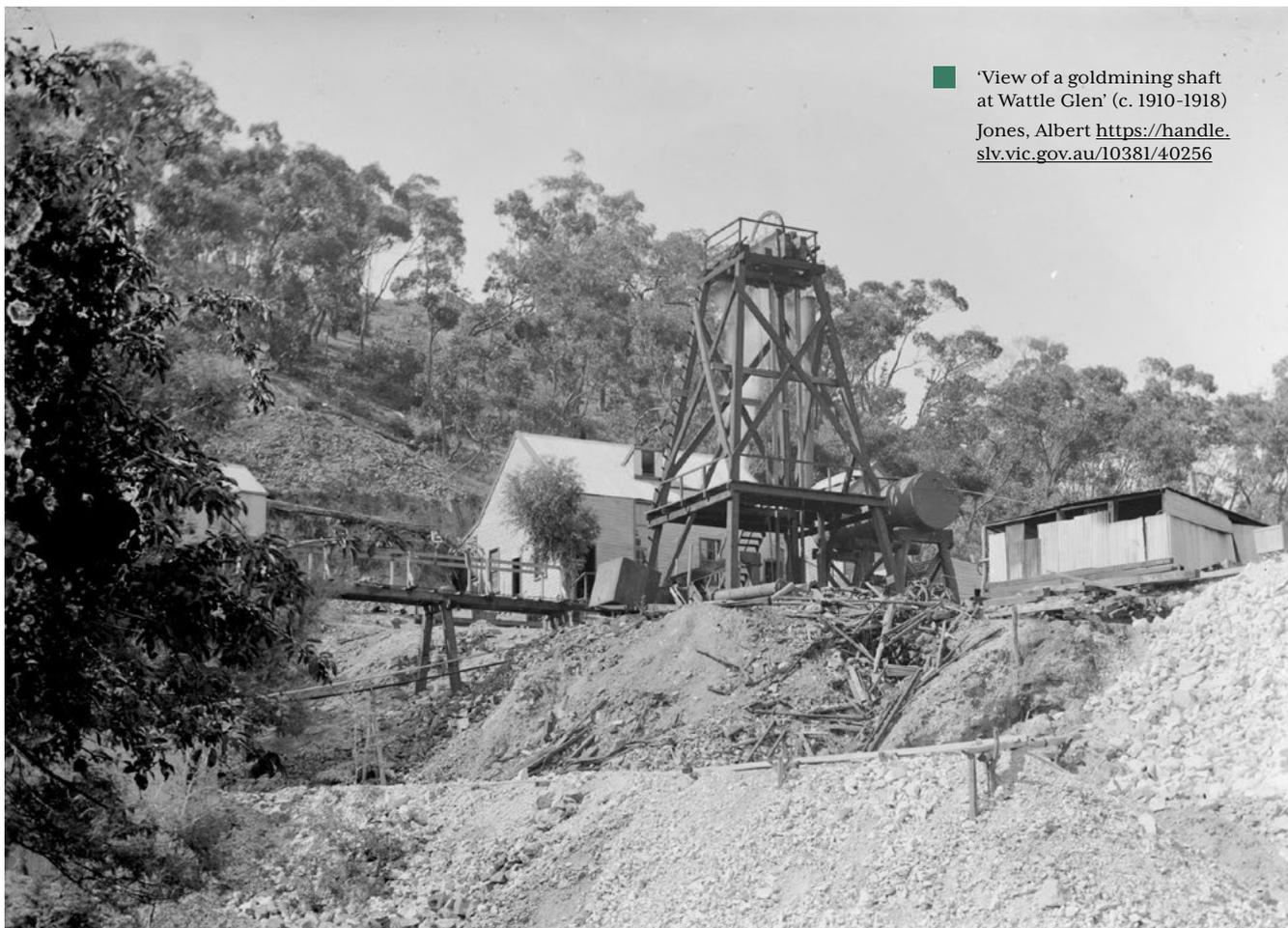
■ Lady with the pearls images courtesy of Carrie Westcott.

Ltd, 51 A'Beckett Street Melbourne' was incorporated with capital of £2000. Frederick and his wife were listed as joint shareholders. With this strong connection manufacture of the *Lady with the Pearls* can be cautiously attributed to Brooks, Robinson & Co, although the skilled designer remains elusive.

Several Federation houses in Buckley Street Essendon are listed under a local heritage overlay and, like many of the Cowper houses in the eastern suburbs, receive local planning protection. Happily, the unheralded lead lights and painted glass in these homes are recognised by owners and occupiers for their significance, integral to the building fabric, and treasured by generations of custodians.

Dr Bronwyn Hughes OAM

With thanks to Carrie Westcott at Arcadia Leadlights who has conserved so many *Lady of the Pearls* in Boroondara and to Anne Black for re-discovering the previously unknown gem in Essendon.



■ 'View of a goldmining shaft at Wattle Glen' (c. 1910-1918)

Jones, Albert <https://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/40256>

Locations with botanical names: part five

In our October 2024 issue of *History News* we included Heathmont History Group's, 'Locations with botanical names: part one': Boronia, Box Hill, Clematis, and Ferntree Gully. Then, in December 2024 we had, Ferny Creek, Glen Iris, Hawthorn and Heatherdale. In June this year we included Briar Hill, Heatherton and Heathmont, then in October last we included Laburnum and Lilydale. In this issue we have part five: Montrose, Oak Park, Oakleigh, Rosebud, and Wattle Glen.

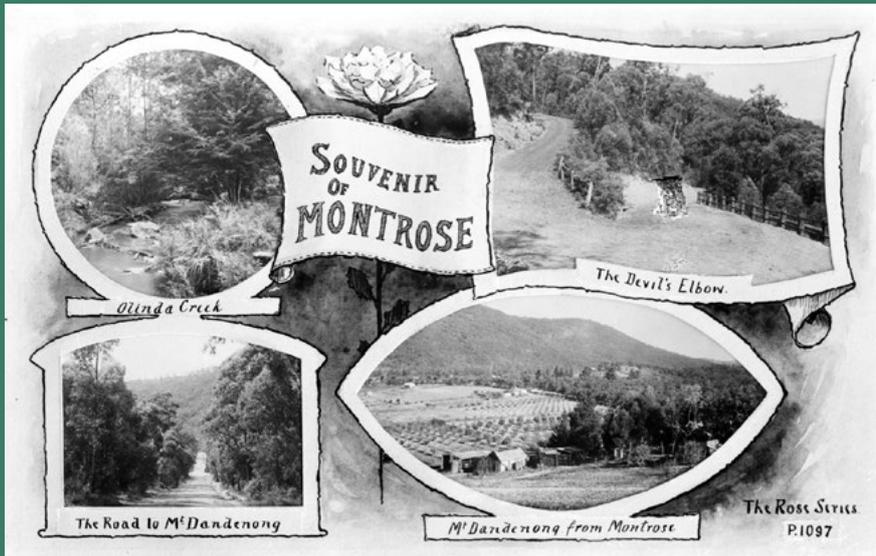
Montrose

Montrose is a Scottish town, formerly a flourishing seaport, now a coastal resort town with a population about 12,000. A picturesque town with the fifth oldest golf course in the world and the widest high street in Scotland, it is now an important commercial port for the oil and gas industry. Our Montrose, originally "Double Pits", later known as South Mooroolbark, was named Montrose in the early 1890s by local landowner James Walker, whose son had a store named 'Rose Mont' in Colchester Road, Kilsyth. Of course, this does not deny any connection Walker might have made with the town in Scotland.

Oak Park

The imposing 'Oak Park' mansion, now 7 Oak Park Court, Oak Park, (number 9 is the stables) stands on the outstanding hill crest where John Pascoe Fawcner, one of

the early pioneers of Melbourne, built his country home. In 1839, as a country estate, he bought 780 acres, naming it 'Belle Vue Park', between Moonee Ponds Creek and Old Sydney Road, now Pascoe Vale Road. Fawcner lived there between 1840 and 1855. The suburbs Fawcner and Pascoe Vale are evidence of his local standing. The single storey part of the mansion is the original building. The garden originally featured magnificent oak trees, planted in 1840. One remains, a *Quercus Robur*, in Josephine Street, with a National Trust plaque at its foot. The estate was sold in 1879 to Joseph English, who renamed it 'Oak Park', extended the mansion, which soon gave its name to its surrounds. The railway line went through the area in 1872, but the Oak Park railway station was not built until the housing boom of the 1950s. When Oak Park Primary School was opened in 1954 seedling oaks were planted in the school grounds, taken from trees on the Oak Park property.



Left: Souvenir of Montrose' (c.1920-1954) An early 19th century postcard of the area around Montrose. Rose Stereograph Co., photographer.
https://find.slv.vic.gov.au/permalink/61SLV_INST/lvv1f/alma9917328613607636

Right Top: 'Belle Vue Park'/'Oak Park', Oak Park. Double storey house with old single storey portion at side. Collins, John T., (c.1967-1971). Courtesy State Library Victoria



Right Middle: Darge, Algernon, (1912) '... Exterior, Berry & Co., Oakleigh Railway Stores, Oakleigh'
<https://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/318615>

Right Bottom: The bathing beach Rosebud. (c.1920-1950) Rose Stereograph Co.

https://find.slv.vic.gov.au/permalink/61SLV_INST/lvv1f/alma9917701333607636

Oakleigh

In her very interesting book, *Taking its place: a History Oakleigh marking its sesquicentenary, 1853-2003* (2004), Helen Gobbi writes, 'No definitive reason exists to the choice of the name Oakleigh, approved by the Executive Council from the plans submitted by Hoddle on the eve of his retirement'. Conjecture has the name as descriptive, chosen in favour of the large number of black she-oaks in the undulating terrain, and the lea/leigh, a Scottish work for the depression between shallow hills.

Rosebud

Nor is our other Rose named directly after the flower, for Rosebud was not so named because of its local botanical excellence, but rather after the coastal schooner *Rosebud*. Built in 1842, *Rosebud* was well known coastal trader captained by Master Thomas Fenwick. In 1855 it sank in a gale, wrecked on a sandbar, and subsequently its name was given to the coastal township.

Wattle Glen

Early folk in the Diamond River Valley were seeking gold in the 1850s, and subsequently there was some orcharding there. In 1912, the railway station opened. When the primary school opened in 1922, it was named Wattle Glen, and since then it has been the name for the station and the small township.

Gerry Robinson

Heathmont History Group





Library collection: Historical fiction for historians

■ Elevated view of Eastern Market [also known as Paddy's Market] at the corner of Exhibition and Bourke Streets, with Haymarket Hotel on right, covered market area in left background; stall-holders and customers at edge of road, horse-drawn vehicles on road.

Philp, James Buckingham and Troedel, Charles [1864] 'The Eastern Market from top of Whittington Tavern'. (The Melbourne album)

https://rosetta.slv.vic.gov.au/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_func=stream&dps_pid=FLI6203857

Mary Helena Fortune (1883-1911) was an Irish born Australian journalist and author who is regarded as the first woman to write detective fiction. While recently cataloguing a collection of her memoirs and journalism, I was reminded of the range of personal narratives we have in our collection. What these collections often do is to introduce us to the sights and sounds of life in a particular time frame.

"Well, are you going down Bourke Street tonight?"

"Down Bourke Street? What for?"

"What for?" With a wide-open stare, and the most plainly expressed disgust at my verdancy, "for a walk to be sure, and to see Paddy's market. Why, *everybody* goes down Bourke Street on a Saturday night."

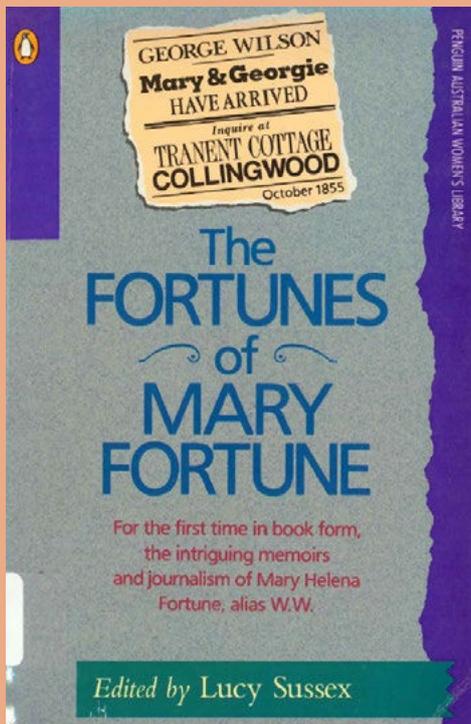
You can almost hear that conversation now with the Irish use of 'to be sure', Mary starts to come alive to us.

Diaries, journals, and letters are an important way to access a view of history from groups of people who were not always visible. Here at the RHSV we have catalogued a large number of them at the same Dewey number so they are browsable by date. They can be used when researching your family history to give a sense of what life was like for your ancestors. They can be used to provide 'colour' if you are writing fiction. And they can also be used to understand experiences

defined by gender, religion or nationality. For even more colour, the writer may have added drawings of what they are seeing. For example, Frederick Mackie, naturalist, school teacher and nurseryman toured the Australian colonies between 1852 and 1855, and while in Melbourne sketched two views from Flagstaff Hill of the infant city.

It is worth hunting out the two-volume work by Kay Walsh and Joy Hooton, *Australian Autobiographical Narratives: an annotated bibliography* (1993) as it gives you a wonderful sense of the range of material and the editors have written excellent overviews of the content. They have identified works from the 1700s through to 1900.

Some writers were sojourners, seeing themselves as temporary visitors, others write with a sense of seeing their new home. They may have kept diaries describing their experience of the long voyage, then continued recording their new life. In this case a



collection worth exploring is *Letters from Victorian Pioneers* (1898) a collection of 50 letters from squatters and other early settlers given to Governor La Trobe when he left Australia. As noted in the foreword, most of the themes are not about dramatic and sudden riches, but 'years of hope deferred'.

Back to Mary's Bourke Street which still sounds like a familiar space:

... Light in broad glares from the broad colour-lined windows – light streaming out from narrow doorways, and up from barred areas – light glowing strangely in great, round, red and green and blue, and golden lights through chemists' windows – and light, sending vividly illuminated letters out into the gleaming darkness...

Jillian Hiscock

Collections Manager/Volunteer Coordinator

Enhance your next book with an Index by Terri Mackenzie

Professional Back of Book Indexer
Member of Australian and New Zealand
Society of Indexers
Honorary Victorian Historical Journal Indexer
terriane@bigpond.com



terriane@bigpond.com



For all your publishing needs ...

PenFolk produces high quality books for historians

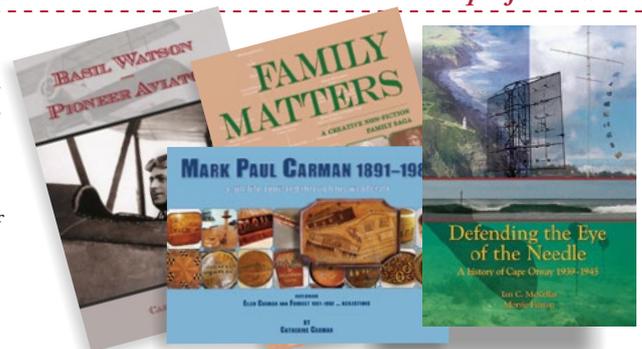
» Our service is adapted to suit your needs, and may include design and production of books, papers and charts; reproducing and retouching photos and documents; advice and assistance with writing; designing and compiling family tree charts. We can take you through all stages of your project, or provide guidance and assistance with specific elements.

» Our services include design and development; writing, editing and proof reading; illustration; graphic and photographic reproduction; training and support; consultation and advice; printing and delivery of the finished product.

We take pride in producing work of the highest possible quality, and provide a service that is personal, friendly, cooperative and confidential

Call for appointment 0488 749 121

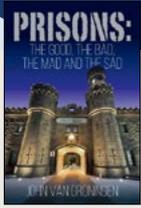
21 Ronley Street
Blackburn Vic 3130
publish@penfolk.com.au
www.penfolk.com.au



Bookshop

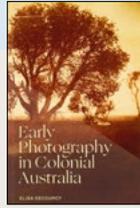
Explore our bookshop at www.historyvictoria.org.au/bookshop/

Or pop in to the RHSV to browse our new and second-hand books. You can also order via phone (03 9326 9288). Australia Post delivers books ordered on-line or you can choose Click 'n' Collect. We can also do gift vouchers and gift wrapping.



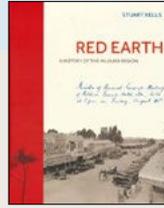
Prisons: The Good, the Bad, the Mad and the Sad
John Van Groningen, \$32.99, PB

A selective trawl of Van Groningen's 40-plus years of involvement with and experiences with prisons and prison administration in California and Victoria. It includes, but is not limited to, stories about prisoners, prison officers, prison incidents and events. These include the normal but seldom written about events, incidents and observations that were part and parcel of his life from base grade prison officer 'walking the floor' (California) to his ultimate role as Commissioner of Corrections for the State of Victoria (Australia).



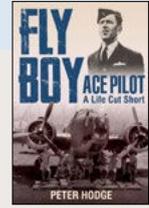
Early Photography in Colonial Australia
Elisa DeCourcy, \$39.99, PB

From its mid-nineteenth-century beginnings photography was more than just a new technology; it was deeply implicated in the colonial project. The invention of photographic technology coincided with the rise of imperial control across the Pacific. DeCourcy places photographs in conversation with prints, sketches and watercolours to explore how the foreign medium adapted to the Australian environment. Cameras were put to work, visually redacting First Nations custodianship and knowledge of Country to celebrate colonial construction and expeditions.



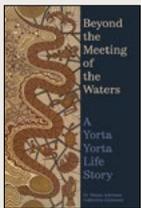
Red Earth: A History of the Mildura Region
Stuart Kells, \$49.99, HB

'Mildura' is a Latje Latje word meaning 'red earth' or 'red banks', a reference to the intermittent stretches of red in the cliffs and banks of the Murray River near the junction with the Darling. Kells captures the richness of the pre-colonial history, the migrant experience. The district was a canvas for arts and culture, and other unique developments that shaped the region and influenced Australia and the world.



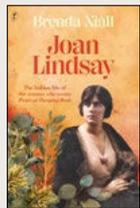
Fly Boy: Ace Pilot: a Life Cut Short
Peter Hodge, \$35.00, PB

The life of Parker "Joe" Hodge was a Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) pilot who lost his life in the Netherlands East Indies during World War II. Born in Beechworth, Joe's journey is marked by unwavering determination, exemplified by his persistence through five applications before realising his dream of joining Australia's elite air force. Enriched with personal anecdotes and captivating photographs, many taken by Joe himself, the story illuminates Australia's often-overlooked campaign in the Netherlands East Indies.



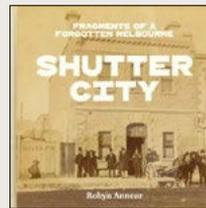
Beyond the Meeting of the Waters: A Yorta Yorta Life Story
Dr Wayne Atkinson and Catherine Guinness, \$49.99, PB

'Storyline' is the word used to describe the way First Nations stories relate to each other, like veins running across the land. Yorta Yorta Elder Wayne Atkinson's storyline begins, like thousands of generations before him, on the banks of a river. It would take him to the halls of higher learning and a lifetime of activism to further the empowerment of his people. A penetrating and deeply humane insight into the power of voice, the spear of the pen and the potential of collective organisation.



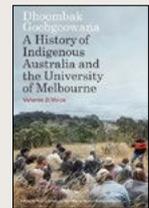
Joan Lindsay: The Hidden Life of the Woman Who Wrote Picnic at Hanging Rock
Brenda Niall, \$36.99, PB

Picnic at Hanging Rock has captivated generations. But the woman behind the novel is as much an enigma as the disappearance of the fictitious schoolgirls. Joan Lindsay, wife of painter and National Gallery of Victoria director Daryl Lindsay, sacrificed her own artistic talent in deference to her husband. She gave up painting, wrote little and played the charming hostess at the Lindsay country house on the Mornington Peninsula, giving no indication of the literary brilliance that would emerge late in her life.



Shutter City: Fragments of a Forgotten Melbourne
Robyn Annear, \$49.99, HB

City street views spanning the hurly-burly decades of the 1850s to 1870s, between the gold rushes and Marvellous Melbourne. Robyn Annear peers into every shadowy corner to reveal postcard streetscapes, packed with hidden-in-plain-sight historical detail: barbers' poles, drinking fountains, the three gilded balls of a pawnbroker's sign, gleaming white cups at a coffee stall, street-vendors' carts, neighbourhood dogs (and a cat), assorted ghosts, and ladders – lots of ladders. Her lively and insightful commentary weaves the street views into a vivid narrative of a near-forgotten Melbourne and the photographers who captured it.



Dhoombak Goobgoowana: A History of Indigenous Australia and the University of Melbourne, Volume 2, Voice
edited by Ross L. Jones, James Waghorne and Marcia Langton, \$39.99, PB

This second volume reveals the pivotal role played by First Nations people in the history of the University of Melbourne. It traces the University's role in ignoring and quietening First Nations peoples' voices, and the reverberations created by those voices that broke through, showing how collections of art and cultural objects have transitioned from texts for western interpretation to expressions of self-identity. It documents the Indigenous pioneers who gained admission to the University as students more than a century after it was established, and then later as staff.

Books received

John Schauble

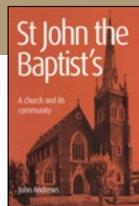
Authors, publishers and Historical Societies are invited to contribute books to the RHSV for the library and for consideration for inclusion in 'Books Received'.

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



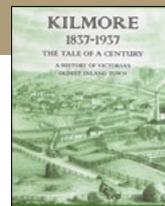
On Flagstaff Hill: A History of the City of Melbourne Bowls Club. Alex McDermott, Hotham History Project Inc, Melbourne, 2024, pp. i-275, ISBN 9780992297824.

Flagstaff Hill is important in Melbourne's history for many reasons. For one group it is significant as home of their beloved bowls club. The City of Melbourne Bowls Club has occupied its location since 1878, the club itself dating back to the end of the gold rushes. Beginning as the West Melbourne Bowls Club, it has suffered the challenges and vagaries of all such organisations, not least a devastating fire which destroyed the club rooms, but luckily not its precious minute books, in 1994. Finally reinstated in handsome new rooms in 2009 after 15 years of exile, what should have been a source of joy for the club became a matter of angst for some.



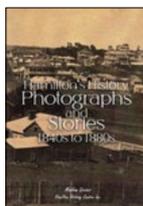
St John the Baptist's: A Church and its Community. John Andrews, Coventry Press, Bayswater, 2023, pp. 1-282, ISBN 9781922589354.

This story of a church and its community in Clifton Hill marks the centenary of the church's consecration in 1923. The story of the building itself and the parish date back to the 1870s. The solid bluestone edifice itself is a large part of this history, as is the story of its community. Beginning as a largely Irish congregation, transitioning through into a post-war one dominated by Italian immigrants and finally evolving into a smaller, although still vibrant one. This well-researched account examines all of the aspects of an active Catholic parish: education, sport, social justice, and communities. As such institutions become less central to people's lives, it is a valuable record.



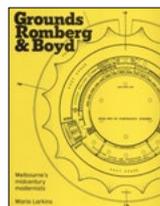
Kilmore 1837-1937: The Tale of a Century. J.A. Maher, Lowden Publishing Co., Donvale, 2025, pp. i-208, ISBN 9781920753221.

Lowden Publishing has taken to reissuing a selection of important numbers from its portfolio, which is significant as it keeps such minor such classics as *Kilmore 1837-1937* alive for another generation. This book has in fact been republished three times since it first appeared in 1938: in 1972, 2002 and now with some additional material in 2025. Kilmore was Victoria's oldest inland town, settled just a couple of years after Melbourne and became the key entry point to the north. Its importance waned as transport improved. This is one of a handful of early Victorian local histories which have stood the test of time and it remains an important source for contemporary historians.



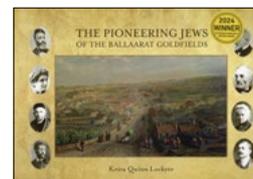
Hamilton's History: Photographs and Stories 1840s to 1880s. Marlene Greiner, Hamilton History Centre Inc., Hamilton, 2024, pp. 1-160, ISBN 9780645783513.

Hamilton has been a hub of the Western District since the mid-19th century, so it is not surprising that it has a notable photographic record. But photographs without stories are just mute images; the internet is awash with sites that scrape views of Victoria from public and private collections, add a caption and leave it at that. In this collection of just 24 images, each has been briefly introduced and its significance told through news reports, published and unpublished reminiscences, and other sources. What emerges is a series of tales focused on buildings or landscapes which tell very human, occasionally tragic, stories about the growth of the town. An interesting concept, effected with an excellent index.



Grounds Romberg & Boyd: Melbourne's Midcentury Modernists. Maria Larkins, Uro Publications, Melbourne, 2024, pp. 1-200, ISBN 9781922601278.

Frederick Romberg is perhaps the lesser known of the modernist architectural trio completed by Roy Grounds and Robin Boyd; but his work, like theirs, is nonetheless enduring. The architectural practice Gromboyd lasted just a decade, from 1953 to 1962. Collectively and individually their work was the genesis of both private and public buildings that continue to influence Melbourne and Australian life: the Sidney Myer Music Bowl, the National Art Gallery of Victoria, and the Australian Academy of Science in Canberra. After the team split, Boyd and Romberg began a new partnership although the latter would also take up an academic post interstate. An interesting insight into the firm's workings, replete with photographs, drawings and correspondence.



The Pioneering Jews of the Ballarat Goldfields: Six Degrees of Exploration. Keira Quinn Lockyer, the author, Ballarat, 2024, pp. 1-246 + pp.1-40, ISBN 9780995394063.

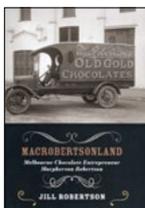
Ballarat is home to the oldest synagogue on the Australian mainland, eclipsed by one in Hobart. Attracted like so many others of different faiths and ethnicities, Ballarat's early Jewish settlers occupied positions across all strata of the new colonial society. This exploration of Ballarat's Jewish history is an eclectic one, not pretending to be a scholarly study but rooted instead in family history. From this it ballooned into research into more than 500 Jewish men who arrived in or were born in Ballarat during the gold rushes up to 1871. Distinctly homespun in style, the author locates this community in its broader context. Winner of a 2024 Victorian Community History Award.

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.



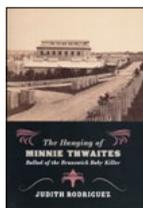
MacRobertsonland. Jill Robertson, Arcade Publications, Melbourne, 2024, pp.1-183, ISBN 9780980436792.

This is one of eight titles recently re-released under the revived RMIT University's Arcade Publications banner. These titles, published in A6 format, are cutely convenient and will slip happily into a coat pocket or bag. *MacRobertsonland*, first published 2010, is the story of Macpherson Robertson, confectioner, philanthropist and, in his day, one of Melbourne's best-known businessmen. Less well-remembered today than some of his contemporaries, his legacy is still evident across the city: think MacRobertson Girls High School, for one. His company, makers of the Cherry Ripe and Freddo Frog, has long since been swallowed up. Robertson loved technology and was an early adopter of motor transport and a champion of air travel for both business and leisure.



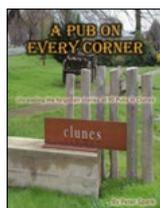
A Happy Place: The Story of Cooinda Terang, A 70th Anniversary History 1955 - 2025. Craige Proctor, Cooinda Terang Inc., Terang, 2025, pp.1-244, ISBN 9780646710730.

The story of 'Cooinda' in Terang is one of a day training centre in rural Victoria for people with intellectual disabilities. Tracing 70 years of the service, which started in 1955, it tells of ordinary people coming together to provide a service across a wide rural region at a time when such facilities were rare even in Melbourne. For a group of parents to band together to keep their children within their community was unusual. Many challenges have been embraced and resolved over the years include transport, many participants lived some distance from the centre, and, of course, funding. This is an inspiring and very human story of caring and growth, well told.



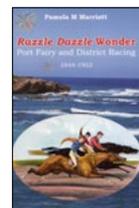
The Hanging of Minnie Thwaites. Judith Rodriguez, Arcade Publications, Melbourne, 2024, pp.1-160, ISBN 9780987171405.

Another in the Arcade reprint series is this account of Minnie Thwaites, the maiden name of Frances Knorr, hanged in Melbourne in January 1894 on a charge of infanticide. Thwaites gained notoriety as a "baby farmer", a heinous practice of taking in other women's unwanted babies for money. The bodies of Minnie's victims were found in shallow graves in the yards of rented houses. Judith Rodriguez was best known as a poet, although she engaged in various literary forms and this book reflects that variety. First published in 2012, it begins with a long ballad before switching to a more orthodox historical narrative and then back to verse balladry. Whatever the form, it is a grisly tale.



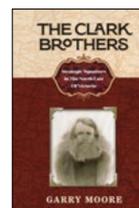
A Pub on Every Corner. Peter Spark, the author, Clunes, 2024, pp. xii-186, ISBN 9780646880136.

In these more enlightened times, as some would have it, the place of the pub in Australian communities is much diminished. Once they were essential as places to stay, have a meal and, of course, a drink. That Clunes once had 90 pubs seems almost inconceivable: today it has just one. As the author notes, there were pubs and there were ... pubs. In the 1850s and beyond, it was as much about accommodation as anything and while there were hotels without a bar, there were equally premises that were little more than sly grog shops. Much detailed research has gone into identifying these past pubs and their tales will be of interest to many a local.



Razzle Dazzle Wonder: Port Fairy and district racing 1844-1953. Pamela M. Marriott, the author, 2024, ISBN 9780646892283.

An account of racing in Port Fairy and District Racing from 1844 to 1953, this is one of several books by Pamela Marriott covering the history of south-west Victoria. Horse racing in the formative years of Port Fairy (previously Belfast) appears to have been spread across at least four courses in the district. The early days of *laissez faire* gallops were eventually halted by the imposition of rules and regulations by the Victorian Racing Club, and local racing was shunted off to Warrnambool where it survives to this day. This account is largely centred on excerpts and clippings from the local newspapers, an approach so easily facilitated these days by Trove. One for the racing aficionados, perhaps.



The Clark Brothers: Strategic Squatters in the North-east of Victoria. Garry Moore, the author, 2023, pp. vii-222, ISBN 9780645885521.

The sub-title of this book certainly describes John, William and Richard Clark. The impact of the squatting age would be swamped by the massive influx of gold seekers who defined the extraordinary growth of the colony in the 19th century, but the early squatters were intent on amassing vast fortunes, and many succeeded after overlanding from NSW to the north-east, to Gippsland and beyond. It came at a great cost, of course, to the First Nations people. In time, the Clark brothers each diversified their activities and became founding or central figures in the townships of Seymour, Benalla and Wangaratta. This thoroughly researched account of three pioneering brothers is significant.