

Box Hill Historical Society Newsletter



Volume 22, Issue 2

April 2016

General Meetings of the BHHS are held on the 3rd Thursday of each month, beginning at 8 pm in the Strabane Chapel Hall 29 Strabane Avenue, Mont Albert North

Members and friends are always welcome.
Enquiries:

03 9285 4808

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For your diary

The year has started well, with a number of interesting and informative Society meetings and a couple of cemetery tours. We are pleased offer more of the same, in the next couple of months. Our syllabus organiser has put together a programme of speakers on a wide variety of subjects of relevance to our area. Details of the fnext meeting of the Society are as follows:

Thursday, 21 April: Guest Speaker: **Dorothy Thorpe**

'Reminiscences of Burwood'. Dorothy and her husband Tom have lived in Burwood for over 50 years. Dorothy will present a talk on her recollections of Burwood gathered over those years.

(For details relating to the other events confirmed to date for next year, and other forthcoming events, see page 3.)

Founded in 1963, the Box Hill Historical Society is affiliated with the

- * Royal Historical Society of Victoria
- * Association of Eastern Historical Societies

and is a

Place of Secondary Deposit for the Public Record Office of Victoria

The Society can now be found on the Web at:

www.vicnet.net.au/~bhhs/
(or use a search engine)

and you can now email us at:

boxhillhistory@gmail.com

Follow us on Facebook at

www.facebook.com/boxhillhistoricalsociety

President's report — April 2016

A well-attended February Meeting was addressed by Rev'd Dr Richard Mallaby, Minister of the Baptist Church, Box Hill, on the history of Chapel on Station Gallery. He also presented a copy of the publication *An Invitation to Wonder* of the first 10 years of the Chapel Gallery on Station. This is a welcome addition to the Society's library.

On a very warm March evening members and a number of visitors heard Society member John Barnao speak on The Fruit Business in Box Hill District. This address was well received, with John providing information about fruit and vegetables from the earliest times in Box Hill, Doncaster and Blackburn. Society members have again attended City of Whitehorse events including:

- the launch of the Whitehorse Art Space Exhibition, 'Scratch the surface'
- 2016 International Women's Day Morning Tea Reception hosted by the Mayor and the city's four female councillors.

The committee is pleased that Gill Madden has volunteered to fill a casual vacancy on the society committee. Gill continues to update the society Face Book page which is well received by those viewing.

Janet Galley OAM
President

BHHS Supper Roster 2016

The roster for August, September and November needs to be filled. It is suggested a small range of sweet, savoury and/or fruit foods be provided. (BOSTON BUN and JAM ROLLS are highly acceptable. We could even have FRUIT.) If unable to provide the supper on the night chosen it is your responsibility to arrange for someone else to do it. Any problems or questions please contact:

Philip Widmer (0403 419 522) ([text message](#) is acceptable if unable to get through by voice.) Please note: You may contact Mrs & Mr Woolworths, Coles, Aldi, Box Hill Central Market or another food purveyor for assistance in providing supper.

3rd Thurs/ Month (8pm)	Name
Feb 18	William Orange – THANKYOU!
Mar 17	Gill Madden – THANKYOU!
Apr 21	Ian Shand
May 19	Grace Swiney
June 16	Philip Widmer
July 21	John Barnao
Aug 18	
Sept 15	
Oct 20	Graeme Reynolds
Nov 17	

Suggestions?

The Committee welcomes suggestions from members for events to be held by the Box Hill Historical Society.

If you have any ideas for topics for talks or speakers, tours, or exhibition topics, please contact a member of the Committee.

Contributions?

A newsletter like this one functions best and is of most use and interest to members when it contains a wide range of pertinent information for its readers. To assist this exercise, the Editor is always looking for contributions about the Society, from our own members. If you have something you would like to include in an issue of the Newsletter—a photograph, some information you'd like to share—don't be shy; contact the Editor.

Mission Statement

The Box Hill Historical Society seeks to collect, preserve, facilitate access, research and communicate items that reflect life in and the development of Box Hill and district.

Geographical area of interest

The Collection is relevant to the suburbs of Box Hill, Box Hill North, Box Hill South, Mont Albert, Mont Albert North, Bennettswood and the parts of Burwood and Surrey Hills, which fall within the City of Whitehorse.

Forthcoming Society events

General Meetings:

Thursday, 19 May

Guest Speaker: **Sandy Nicholson**
'Notre Dame de Sion, Box Hill'

Notre Dame de Sion College was opened in Box Hill in 1928. Sandy Nicholson, the archivist, will give a presentation about the school, which is now known as Our Lady of Sion College.

Thursday, 16 June:

Guest Speaker: **Robyn Calder: 'Women's Cricket in Victoria'**

Thursday, 18 August: Annual General Meeting

Thursday, 15 September:

Guest Speaker: **Graham O'Rourke**
'George Coppin – founder of Australian Theatre'

Other events

City of Whitehorse 2016 HERITAGE WEEK, **8–15 September**

The theme of Heritage Week this year is 'Celebrating the Arts'. During the week our society will conduct a Box Hill Cemetery Tour, a Walk along the Artists' Trail in Box Hill South and our regular general meeting

Association of Eastern Historical Societies

A meeting was held on Saturday, 20 February at Mt Evelyn, hosted by the Mt Evelyn History Group. There was an attendance of some 33 people from Balwyn, Box Hill, Camberwell, Eltham, Knox, Mt. Evelyn, Ringwood, Sherbrooke Foothills, Surrey Hills, Upper Yarra Ranges, Warandyte, Waverley, Yarra Glen. Box Hill was represented by Janet Galley OAM and Peter Galley.

The guest speaker was Bronwyn Higgs who spoke on a recent publication with which she was involved — *The Happy Hermits/Diary of a Trip to Evelyn*.

The AEHS has agreed to purchase a public address system for their meetings.

The RHVS History Support is conducting seminars on Technology to advance a better understanding for society users. Their proposed publication on past memories of Melbourne is progressing towards publication.

The next AEHS meeting will be on Saturday, 30 April at Eltham.

Janet Galley OAM
President

Electronic copy of the Newsletter

Members are reminded that this Newsletter can be received in digital form, as an attachment to an email. When received in this way rather than through surface mail, the Society benefits by reducing the cost of both producing and posting the Newsletter. In addition, less paper will be used, which of course is good for the environment.

If you are interested in having your Newsletter mailed electronically, please send an email to that effect, to the Editor at presland.gary@gmail.com.

Alternatively you can email the Society:
boxhillhistory@gmail.com

Our volunteers

The volunteers at the Heritage Centre each Tuesday do magnificent work in data base entries, cataloguing, labels for newsletters/name tags, sorting maps, identifying photographs and generally undertaking tasks to ensure the society collection is as functional as possible. All volunteers attend regularly and their efforts are greatly valued and appreciated as have been the consumables for lunch and afternoon tea.

Recent Speakers

The speaker at the **February general meeting, the Rev'd Dr Richard Mallaby, co-pastor with his wife Anne, of Box Hill Baptist Church since 2004**, spoke about the **history of the church** and in particular their **Chapel on Station Gallery**. He began his illustrated talk by presenting the Society with a copy of the book published to mark the 10 years of operation of the gallery.

Box Hill Baptist Church was established on the corner of Station Street and Ellingworth Parade in 1901. The red brick building dates from 1925 and the wooden addition from the 1950s, when congregations were booming and more space was needed. The church hall, 'The Barn' served as a vehicle for outreach, including a weekly meal for the needy. Later ventures include Jubilee Housing (a low cost housing project) and Village Well Counselling. Box Hill Baptists were early in their involvement in these sorts of activities in the Baptist Union—the Mallabys heard of them while they were still working in Western Australia. On their appointment to Box Hill the Mallabys and their congregation started working towards moving some activities into the church building, and noticed that some four to five thousand people walked past the front door of the church each week day, and looked for a way to 'open the door' to the public. With Council's permission, the solid door was replaced with a glass door. The chapel area of the church had lain idle for about 20 years, so it was suggested that it could be used as a gallery space for artists to exhibit their work. The Mallabys investigated other examples of small galleries; Council agreed that use of the chapel as a gallery was part of church activities and with its consent and the appropriate heritage permits the gallery was opened in May 2005.

There have been 230 exhibitions over the ensuing decade. The exhibition changes every fortnight, with the church reserving six weeks for their own use. Functions are hosted in conjunction with exhibitions, in April there will be a Celtic harpist, and there is an annual Religious Art Prize exhibition on a set theme e.g. 'Living Water' and 'In the beginning'. Exhibitors mainly come from Melbourne and Victoria but there have been some from interstate and overseas. New and emerging artists are given a discount on the hire of the gallery space and there is a commission on sales. The gallery is manned by volunteers of whom there have been about 80 over the decade.

The church looks forward to keeping the church and gallery door open to the public into the future. (At the time of the talk there was an exhibition of pictures made with pressed flowers organised by BHHS member Marjorie Morgan.)

Member John Barnao spoke to the **March General Meeting** about **Orchards, fruit production and the sale of produce in Box Hill and the surrounding district**. He presented illustrations featuring the orchardists, fruiterers, equipment and locations where they traded. His father Vincent Barnao worked as a fruiterer for over 50 years in Box Hill (1930–1982)- in the last 2 decades, providing a home delivery service from a Kombi van for his customers around Box Hill.

The first viable orchard established in the area was in 1848- the Crossman's in Box Hill North, near Koonung Creek. By the 1850s the clearing of land had gathered pace, with German families, including that of Johann Gottlieb Thiele of *Friedensruhe*, establishing the earliest orchards in Doncaster (site called Waldau). The first German settlers cleared land and produced charcoal for industry. Beginning with vegetable growing to meet immediate needs, they progressed to large-scale fruit production.

In 1882, the steam railway service to Box Hill opened and George Sim was one of the first to take advantage of rising property values, subdividing his orchard for residential use. Along the Maroondah corridor around Box Hill, more houses were then built as the price of land surged. Meanwhile, Doncaster's orchards were expanding- its well-drained sloping land, situated within close reach of Melbourne's markets. By the 1920s, the Box Hill orchards were in rapid decline (although some remained into the immediate post-WWII years). The Koonwarra Estate at Laburnum was the last of Blackburn's orchards.

Recent Speakers (cont.)

Prior to WWI, horses did all the haulage of produce- to the Box Hill Market (established by T.R.B. Morton in 1895) and the Queen Victoria Market catering for wider Melbourne. 'Sleeping on the Dray' was a common practice (allowing drivers to rest or sleep on the journey). As horses were familiar with the routes, they became the first 'driverless vehicles'. By 1928, 50% of the horses were gone and by the mid-1950s almost all had given way to mechanised transport. Pioneering orchardists were innovative and enterprising. Jack Russell built the 'Bave U', a mechanical sprayer in Box Hill, together with Daniel Harvey who manufactured the Petty Plough and many other newly developed inventions suited to local conditions, such as fruit washers and graders. Reticulated water distribution for orchards was developed by Frederick Thiele, and pine trees were planted as windbreaks. Pests like starlings were managed in part through the payment of a Government bounty. And for pocket money, grey beetles were gathered by children for 3d per 100.

Most early settlers had little agricultural experience and suffered great hardship. Widow Serpells capably continued the operation of her family orchard after the death of her husband.

In earlier times, there was no refrigeration so fruit was stored in cellars, in the shade or under straw. The first 1880s refrigerated cool stores were originally reserved for meat and butter. Edwin Lawford built a cool store in 1904 and others followed, including the West Doncaster Co-Op. Notable in Box Hill was the cool store at 40 Dorking Road (after 1947 fire, converted to an Iceworks), and the Blue Moon Co-operative became a major employer in Blackburn. Orchardists often gained access to a cool store through membership of co-operatives. (Schramm's Cottage, opposite Ruffey Lake Park, holds a big collection of orchard equipment and has extensive displays in its packing shed museum and orchard cottage.)

Amongst the first fruiterers in Box Hill were Leonard Fairhall, George Horkins and Fred Watkins. As well as fruit and vegetables they produced and sold lemonade. Prior to WWI, few Victorians had seen a banana, let alone tasted one. In 1926, the first Italian fruitshop, run by Girolamo (Gerry) and Adelina Cincotta, received a boost by the appearance of bananas imported via coastal shipping from Queensland. As they had to be picked green, an effective ripening process took time to develop. Those that arrived ripe were given priority for unloading at the Queen Street Wharf (an area today known as Banana Alley).

After the arrival of the Cincottas, assisted by his brother Sam at 604 Station Street, other Italian shopkeepers followed in Box Hill- Joe & Pina Defina, Don & Assunta Vozzo & Charlie Vetere, the brothers Giuseppe and Jack Russo, Antonio & Felicia Ferlazzo, Domenico & Antonietta Lepore (888 Canterbury Rd, Box Hill South), and Remo & Rita Alaimo (Cnr Station St & Woodhouse Grove).

An interesting aspect of the Italian fruiterers of 1950s – 1970s Melbourne and Sydney is that over 80% of them originated from a single location- the volcanically active Aeolian Islands (*Isole Eolie*), a small archipelago, located off Sicily's northern coast. In conclusion, it was noted that Petty's Orchard in Doncaster still operates, specialising in old apple varieties. Aumann's Orchard in Harris Gully Road, Warrandyte has just been sold, and Whitehorse Council is preparing plans for the future management of the former Strathdon Orchard in Forest Hill, where scores of remnant old trees still remain.

William R Orange

Acquisitions Committee

The Acquisitions Committee met in February where a number of items were considered. The stand out item at this meeting was the DVD of Box Hill donated by Gary Bruce. Gary took an original 1960s film made by his cousins Bob and Harold Bruce and added his own current day images to create a then-and-now style movie. Running for 15 minutes a number of well known places are shown as well as some less documented spots. The DVD originally appeared on our Facebook page and attracted a huge response.

Robyn Doble
Hon. Archivist

Archivist's update

The weeks fly by and there is a steady stream of visitors on Tuesdays, email enquiries to research and answer and donations arriving which have to be processed. And volunteers to keep occupied.

We have had an enquiry about the location of a 'retired gentlemen's home' in Middleborough Road in 1920. So far we've drawn a blank with our Collection. Does anyone have any knowledge of this place?

We have completed an application this week for a City of Whitehorse Community Grant—something we do every year. This time we're looking for some money to print postcards in the same format as the ones we have for the Society but these promote the cemetery tours. As well we would like another computer and printer as the number of volunteers on a Tuesday limits our access at times.

We have recently received a mock up copy of part one of the history of the Box Hill Football Club 1888-1950. A volume dense with history, images and football results. Some 20 images from our Collection are included and we are pleased to have the opportunity to check we have been acknowledged correctly. Armin Richter and John Ure are to be congratulated for undertaking the massive task of documenting 125 years of football in Box Hill.

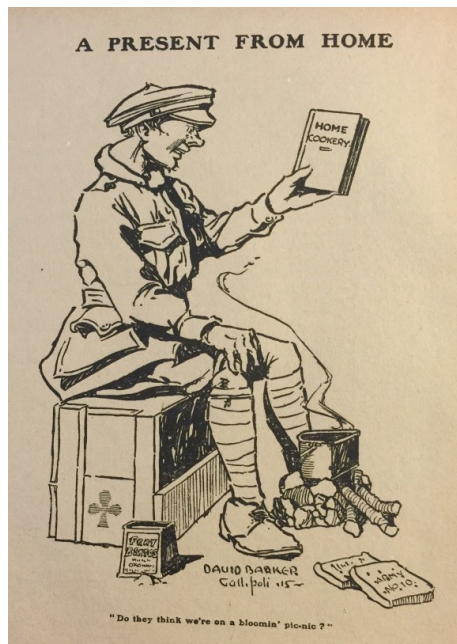
A few weeks ago we received an interesting donation, one that is perhaps out of our collecting scope but is too attractive and charming to resist. It is a model of the Box Hill Ice Works delivery truck around 1930. Photos can be seen on our Facebook page.

Robyn Doble
Hon. Archivist

Box Hill Cemetery Tour

Saturday 30 April, 2.00 pm, after ANZAC DAY

Remembering ... WW1 personnel: A Box Hill Cemetery tour conducted and researched by members of the Box Hill and Surrey Hills Historical Societies



This remarkable book was created under fire and in extreme hardship. It contains original sketches, drawings, photos, poems and stories produced by both officers and men, including WW1 historian Charles E W Bean, who was one of the editors.

Seen as providing a diversion for soldiers facing a harsh winter in the trenches, it was completed between 15 November and 8 December 1915, even as evacuation plans were being finalised. During this time there were two blizzards and, on 27 November, many of the Anzacs awoke to see snow for the first time in their lives. Withdrawal from Gallipoli was completed by 9 January 1916.

Cartoons such as this one reflect the humour and irony that came to be associated with soldiers of the AIF.

Cartoon from the Anzac book

When WW1 was declared, Box Hill and Surrey Hills were essentially rudimentary urban settlements servicing a rural population. The response of these communities to the call to Australia and Empire was extraordinary. The AIF Project website (<https://www.aif.adfa.edu.au/index.html>) lists 278 Box Hill residents, 75 residents from Mont Albert and 327 residents from Surrey Hills as enlistees in the AIF.

On Sat 30 April, 2016, we will visit about 11 graves and memorials to WW1 service personnel with close associations to Box Hill and Surrey Hills.

Date: Sat 30 April. Time: 2pm (tour lasts about 2 hours) Cost:\$12 Please meet next to the Cemetery Office, in the centre of the cemetery. Please dress for the weather conditions, wear sturdy shoes and bring own refreshments if required. Car parking is available outside the cemetery, in Whitehorse Reserve off Whitehorse Rd – then walk across the footbridge into the cemetery, or in Reserve Rd off Middleborough Rd.

BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL: phone, or text, Philip Widmer (BHHS) ph: 0403 419 522, or phone the Heritage Centre 9285 4808 (please leave contact details), or email boxhillhistory@gmail.com or Facebook, www.facebook.com/boxhillhistoricalsociety

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Committee: Dr Colin Barraclough, Robyn Doble,
Gill Madden, Philip Widmer



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Society
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Box Hill Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the City of Whitehorse for its support with grants, discounts on hall hire, concessional use of premises in the Box Hill Town Hall and its willing assistance with our exhibitions in the Box Hill Town Hall Art Space.