

# Box Hill Historical Society Newsletter



Volume 22, Issue 4

August 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**

Details of the next meeting of the Society are as follows:

**Thursday, 18 August:** Annual General Meeting (See notice on page 3, below). Following the AGM, the Guest Speaker will be: **HELEN PAGE**

### ***'Restoring the Gardens of Boroondara Cemetery'***

Horticulturist, Helen Page, will give a presentation on the work done to restore the gardens at Boroondara Cemetery, Kew. A past chair of the Victorian branch of the Australian Garden History Society, and a trustee of the cemetery, Helen has spearheaded a programme with volunteers working on the restoration and improvement of the gardens at the cemetery.

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

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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/](http://www.vicnet.net.au/~bhhs/)**  
(or use a search engine)

and you can now email us at:

**[boxhillhistory@gmail.com](mailto:boxhillhistory@gmail.com)**

**Follow us on Facebook at**

[www.facebook.com/boxhillhistoricalsociety](http://www.facebook.com/boxhillhistoricalsociety)

## President's report — August 2016

The guest speaker at the June meeting was Robyn Calder, whose topic was 'Women's Cricket in Victoria'. My thanks are extended to Vice President William Orange for chairing this meeting in my absence.

The July meeting was a Members' Night when members spoke about their favourite history book, focusing on people, places or events. 'Thank you' to Grace Swiney, Cr Helen Harris OAM, Marjorie Morgan OAM, John Barnao, Ian Shand, William Orange, Philip Widmer, and Dr. Gary Presland for their presentations. Dr Presland also chaired this part of the meeting.

With Peter, I attended the AEHS meeting in June, which was held in Ringwood. [See report, page 6]

The Society was represented at the Annual Mayoral Community Dinner in July by Philip Widmer.

Some members of the Society were pleased to be present in the premises of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria on 8 July when the FNCV celebrated 20 years of ownership of their own hall in Blackburn, and the launch of their history of 135 years of community involvement in the natural environment. Dr Gary Presland is the author of the publication *Understanding Our Natural World: the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria 1880-2015*, which was launched by the President of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, Associate Professor Don Garden OAM. With at least 100 persons present this was a most successful and enjoyable function. All members are asked to consider nominating for the Society committee. There will be vacancies in the committee.

At the September 2015 Committee Meeting I indicated to the committee that at the 2016 Annual General Meeting I would not re-nominate for a position on the committee. Over 13 years as President I have found the position interesting and at times challenging, especially as I knew very little of how historical societies worked. I have attended many meetings. A great number of these were to do with our present venue in the Box Hill Town Hall Hub, when the building was being refurbished for community groups. As a member of the council Heritage Week sub-committee I attended meetings with other historical society representatives. Other meetings included those in which issues of history in which council had an interest were discussed, eg. to do with the local war memorials. I have been extremely voluble at meetings of the AEHS, and did succeed in having regular meeting dates set prior to each meeting, as well as limited time spent on speaking to society reports. I have promoted the expectation that documents be prepared prior to AEHS meetings; and I have regularly reported back to our society. During my time as President, by invitation I have spoken at the RHSV and Colac Historical Society.

Thank you to all members for their ongoing support to the society and may the future of the society continue to be vital, vigorous and valuable to the history of Box Hill.

**Janet Galley OAM**  
**President**

### **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.

## 2016 Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the 52nd Annual General Meeting of the Box Hill Historical Society Inc. will be held on **Thursday 18 August 2016**, beginning at 8 p.m., in the Strabane Avenue Hall, Mont Albert North.

Business will include –

- Acceptance of Minutes of 2015 AGM;
- Annual Reports 2016;
- Financial Statement;
- Election of Office Bearers, committee members, and the Audit Committee;
- Any other business of which written notice has been received.

Nomination forms for office bearers and committee were distributed with the previous newsletter. Nomination will be accepted from the floor at the meeting. Please give consideration to nominating for the committee of the society.

**Gary Presland**

*Hon. Secretary/Public Officer*

## Forthcoming Society events

**Thursday, 15 September:** Guest Speaker: Graham O'Rourke

*'George Coppin - the father of Australian theatre'*

George Coppin was a leading figure in Victoria for over half a century, a comedian and theatrical entrepreneur, politician and philanthropist. Graham O'Rourke's talk will focus on Coppin's acting career and theatrical pursuits.

## City of Whitehorse events

**2016 Heritage Week:** Thursday 8 – Thursday 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.

**2016 Spring Festival:** Sunday 16 October. Nunawading Centre

The Society will have an Information and Bookstall at this annual Whitehorse Council event.

A volunteer roster is being arranged and your assistance as a volunteer for our society will be much appreciated.

The two-hour shifts to be filled are 10.00 – 12.00; 12.00 – 2.00; 2.00 – 4.00.

Please contact the Heritage Centre or email to place your name on the roster with your preferred time.

Thank you.

## *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 at  
boxhillhistory@gmail.com

## **Correction**

In the June 2016 issue of the Newsletter (p. 1), Robyn Calder was referred to as 'A former State cricketer'. Robyn has written to point out that this is incorrect, and the Committee apologises for this error.

## **Vale**

Robert (Bob) Edward Millist 1921-2016 – a former member. He lived most of his life in Box Hill and was an electrician with a shop in Box Hill South.)

(Thanks to Vicki Goodall, who provided this information.)

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## Recent Speakers

**Robyn Calder, long time cricketer and life member and now Secretary of Box Hill Cricket Club**, gave an illustrated talk to the **June meeting** about the 'History of Women's Cricket in Victoria'. Last season women's cricket received major exposure with a Women's Twenty 20 Tournament in Melbourne as part of the Women's Big Bash League. Women have been playing organised cricket in Victoria for over 110 years. The first recorded women's match in Victoria was held in Bendigo in April 1874, following the tour of WG Grace with an All England side. A great deal of the reporting was devoted to what the women were wearing. Another match, again for charity, was held on the East Melbourne Cricket Ground between 'England' and 'Australia' in 1895, all the team members being local ladies. Miss May McDonnell scored a respectable 62 not out and took one wicket.

By the early 1900s there were at least 21 teams playing throughout inner Melbourne with a range of names including suburbs, churches and others such as *Forget-me-nots* and *Seafoam*. One of those early teams, Essendon, still participates as Essendon Maribyrnong Park. Frank Tate as Victoria's first Director of Education introduced physical education as part of the school curriculum, resulting in many of Melbourne's girls' schools adopting cricket as a sport.

Canon Ernest Hughes, Vicar of St Peter's Eastern Hill had a keen interest and he, along with verger Frank Gooley, helped organise the meeting in July 1905 that established the Victorian Ladies Cricket Association (VLCA). Vida Goldstein was the first president and membership was restricted to bona-fide teams within a 10 mile radius of the Melbourne GPO. The season opened with 21 teams including Hopetoun and Coldstream (named after the Coldstream Guards). A Church of England Ladies Cricket Association was also established. Clothing was restrictive, with long skirts and no pads or gloves except for the wicket keeper. Bowling was mainly underarm. The VLCA was wound up at the beginning of WW1 because of the demands on women of family, and the war effort. The Spanish 'flu epidemic immediately post-war further restricted public activity until 1921, when the Preston and St Peter's teams began playing matches at Yarra Park and Bell Park. The instigator was Lilla Brockelbank from VLCA days. The Victorian Women's Cricket Association was formed in 1923 with four foundation teams – St Elmo, Preston, Essendon and Semco. The YWCA became involved in 1929/30 and the competition began to grow.

Sports available to women were limited, women's sports journalists were engaged by the daily papers and 3LO, factory sporting competitions began fielding women's cricket teams and the England Women's team toured in 1934 – all of which contributed to the popularity of the game for women. Peggy Antonio, an accomplished batswoman, emerged as a star of the press and Betty Wilson emerged as a young talented cricketer. Mont Albert Cricket Club first fielded a women's team in 1934/35. Dress standards changed to allow white shirts and skirts, cricket boots, pads and batting gloves; later, culottes were adopted and a lighter five ounce ball introduced. Factory teams were known to poach players, offering employment as an inducement. Semco is remembered as having the best afternoon teas in its factory canteen. BHHS member Lorraine Taylor played at Semco Park and was also a member of the Box Hill Methodist Women's Cricket Club, formed in 1956. (Jill Greenwood and her sister, contemporaries of Ian Broadhead at Box Hill State School, were early members of this club.) The Pioneers Victorian Ladies Cricket Association was formed in 1931 by former members of the VLCA, to run a yearly social match, and the Australian Women's Cricket Council to run interstate tournaments. Patriotic teams played during WW2 but many teams folded or went into recess.

During the 1950s numbers of teams and players were increasing again. The Box Hill Methodist Women's team played on the Box Hill Grammar School oval until 1965 (when the ground was lost). Victorian Betty Wilson, who began playing pre-WW2, played in 11 tests, and in February 1958 became the first cricketer to score 100 *and* take 10 wickets (including a hat trick) in a test match against England.

Promotion by the VWCA enlisted more clubs with more games being played so that by the 1980s (when the speaker began playing with Doncaster) there were more than 100 teams playing around Melbourne – now there are about 40. In 1982, women's cricket found a home at

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## Recent Speakers (cont.)

Aberfeldie (also known as *Aberfloody*) Park with playing grounds and an office. The Women's Cricket World Cup hosted in Victoria in 1988 was the biggest event in the history of women's cricket in this state. Lorraine Taylor was the paid assistant secretary of the VWCA with a space in a 'spare room' at the Victorian Cricket Association in Jolimont. In 1992/93 women's cricket returned to Box Hill and a turf competition. Rapid changes over the next two decades have seen affiliation of the VWCA with the VCA and integration in 2014, and the women's state team fully funded. The centenary of women's cricket in Victoria was marked in April 2005 at Eastern Hill, and in 2015/16 the Box Hill team were premiers and the premiership match televised. Junior girls' competitions are blossoming and club cricket goes on.

The **July General Meeting** had multiple speakers, comprised of eight members talking about their favourite history book under the general heading 'History between the covers'. The session was chaired by the Secretary, who also began the short presentations. The first four presenters took a nautical theme.

**Gary Presland** spoke about the story of a whaling expedition out of the island of Nantucket in the 1820s on the ship *Essex*, as related in the book *In the heart of the sea*.

**John Barnao** used a volume of reprinted articles from the *London Illustrated News* as his guide, to talk about the Catalpa Rescue in 1876. In this series of events Irish sympathisers in New York raised money to support a 'rescue mission' to retrieve some Irish 'troublemakers' from imprisonment in Fremantle Gaol in Western Australia.

**Marjorie Morgan** continued the nautical theme, beginning with a reference to Don Charlwood's *The long farewell*, based on shipboard diaries, and going on to relate her work with Andrew Lemon on *Poor souls, they perished. The Cataraqui: Australia's worst shipwreck*. The sinking took place on King Island in August 1845. The story of the shipwreck is being covered in the BBC documentary series 'Coast' and Marjorie and her daughter recently took part in the filming of the segment on King Island.

**Ian Shand** talked about his work in progress, 'A History of the Smith's Beach Association', a residents' group formed on Phillip Island 40 years ago. The Smith family were stonemasons from Kyneton and had a residence on Smith's Beach. Some topics covered were the successful advocacy for the substitution of a contained sewerage treatment plant for an offshore outfall; the objection to a major residential and commercial development around the Phillip Island Racecourse; and the relocation of a tip and transfer station proposed for a site adjacent to the race track.

**William Orange** diverged from the nautical theme to talk about the book *The Surgeon of Crowthorne* by Simon Winchester. The story revolves around an American soldier-surgeon William Chester Minor, the murder of George Merritt and Oxford English Dictionary compiler James Murray, and how Minor came to be a major contributor of words for the dictionary, with the encouragement of an empathetic physician – William Orange.

**Philip Widmer** talked about some stories from the *Illustrated London News* from 1854, including the shipping news and opening of the Somerset Railway.

**Helen Harris OAM** related how she came to be given Michael Cannon's Australian history volume *Who's Master? Who's Man? Life in the Victorian age*. She spoke about some of the book's content, including an account of the proposed celebration in Sydney to mark the accession of Queen Victoria to the English throne in 1837.

**Grace Swiney** displayed some illustrations from a book published in Britain, following World War 2. She related the photographs to episodes in her childhood and younger years that included the war years.

Each of the speakers evoked lively discussion from the audience.

**William R Orange**

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## Archivist's Update

We have been busy with visitors in the Local History Room during the past month or so, although the enquiries via email have been not too demanding of late. When preparing my contribution to the Annual Report I added up the number of volunteers that we have on a Tuesday—14. It is a lot of people to keep occupied! However, we do get a lot of work done.

Thanks to Vicki Goodall for finding a home with the Tram Museum for a stack of framed tram images which (I think) were a legacy of the centenary of the Box Hill/Doncaster tram exhibition which must have taken place in the '80s. The frames were so large and heavy they could not be stored anywhere other than being leaned against the wall in the work room. The framed images that the Tram Museum took had no relevance to Box Hill. The Whitehorse Historical Society has also relived us of some display boards which are more suited to their museum environment than our Local History Room. This allows us to make better use of our work space.

Heritage Week will soon be here and I am looking forward to taking part in the Artists Walk in a beautiful part of Box Hill South.

Robyn Doble  
***Hon. Archivist***

## Additions to the collection

At its most recent meeting, the Acquisitions Committee considered a number of donations, which included:

- model of the Box Hill Ice Works truck, donated by Ron Legg;
- photograph of Form V, 1953, Box Hill Boys High School, donated by Graeme Reynolds who appears in the photo. All boys were identified by Graeme at the time;
- photograph, painting and documents relating to Surrey Dive, donated by City of Whitehorse;
- research and exhibition material from the 'Australia Calls' exhibition in 2015, donated by City of Whitehorse;
- a number of framed photographs from the Box Hill Bowling Club, collected by Margaret Wood;
- large mounted photograph of a cricket club team. Team members are named on the damaged mount but the name of the club or the year are not given. Further research by Kathleen Newman has confirmed it is the Mont Albert Cricket Club team, pictured in 1932.

Robyn Doble  
***Hon. Archivist***

## Association of Eastern Historical Societies

On a cool and damp Saturday (28 June) Ringwood Historical Society hosted the AEHS meeting at North Ringwood Community House. Twenty-one people were present from the Historical Societies of Balwyn, Box Hill, Eltham, Knox, Lilydale, Mooroolbark, Mt Evelyn, Ringwood, Sherbrooke/Foothills, Upper Yarra Ranges, Waverley, Whitehorse, and Yarra Glen. Our society representatives were Janet Galley OAM and Peter Galley.

Business discussed included hosting by societies and venues for AEHS meetings in 2017; conference for 2017 at a suitable venue; 2017 AEHS office bearers, as the AGM is on 3 September. The benefits of Facebook, Twitter and Flickr were discussed also, as well as a recent topic — old photographs shown on ABC Landline.

Guest Speaker was the President, Ringwood HS whose topic was 'Von Mueller, Bosisto and Eucalyptus Oil'.

The next AEHS meeting is the Annual General Meeting, to be hosted by Warrandyte HS, on 3 September (details to be advised).

Janet Galley OAM  
***President***

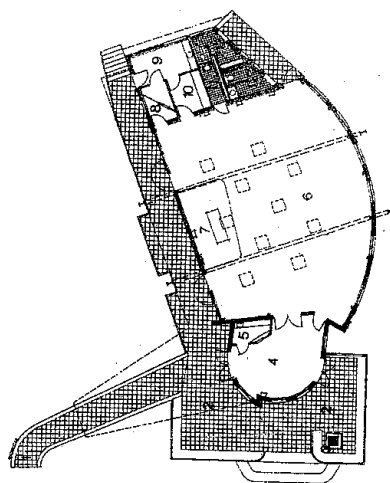
# St Joseph's Chapel – 29 Strabane Avenue, Mont Albert North

Land was purchased on the south side of Strabane Avenue from the Ashmole family during the 1950s. The purchase certainly included the site of the current chapel and that of Vincenpaul nursing home. A small wooden chapel was erected, the original St Joseph's Chapel, in a traditional rural style. It was an outpost of Holy Redeemer Parish in Surrey Hills and the land was probably bought with a view to the construction of a more substantial church in the future.

In 1976, Father Michael Burke, the parish priest of Holy Redeemer, having seen their design for the Church of the Resurrection in Keysborough, commissioned the architectural partnership of Peter Corrigan and Maggie Edmond to design a new building for the site to replace the existing wooden building. The brief was for a light filled space for both worship and community use to serve a relatively homogeneous community, including the elderly residents of the St Vincent de Paul home then under construction next door. The building was completed, with some modifications to the original design, in 1978.

The Chapel of St Joseph has been recognised as one of the first examples of post-modern architecture in Victoria. In 1983 it received the RAI (Victorian Chapter) award for Outstanding Architecture in New Buildings and was classified in 2004 by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) as a leading example of post-modern architecture.

The building was originally entered through a small north-facing porch on an elevated patio accessed by steps and a long ramp that extends across the property. The porch walls curl around, leading the visitor into the main body of the building which is overall described as having a 'curved shell shape'. On the left or eastern side along the length of the building is the site of the original sanctuary, delineated by a slightly raised platform facing a transverse nave and the curved western wall to the right. Externally to the east is a long covered verandah with a wrought iron balustrade, perhaps reminiscent of a sports pavilion, with views to the sports ground close by and the Dandenongs in the distance. Ancillary spaces to the rear (south) include toilets, a storeroom and office (see floor plan and orthographic view).



Floor plan of St Joseph's Chapel

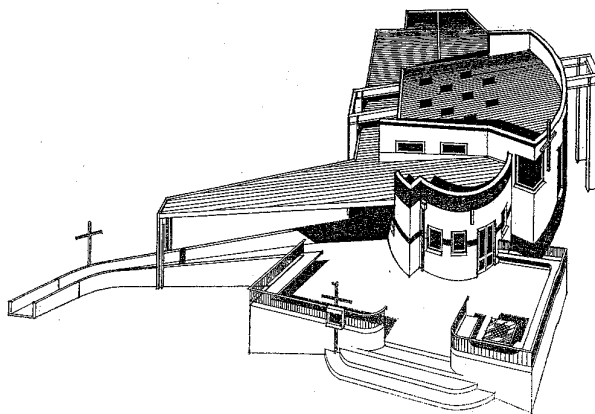
The red brick and cream wrought iron provide a connection to local housing – 'suburban referencing'. The internal steel frame was painted sky blue and there was a blue carpet. The building has also been compared to Le Corbusier's Pilgrimage Chapel at Ronchamp and to the work of local architect Greg Burgess (who designed the Box Hill Community Arts' Centre). In February this year (2016) the former St Joseph's Chapel was approved for inclusion on the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR – PROV – H2351) and it is also proposed for inclusion under an individual heritage overlay (HO 263) under the local planning scheme. Following its purchase by the City of Box Hill in c. 1991, the building has been used by the local branch of U3A, since 1992, for their educational programs, as well as the Historical Society for its monthly general meetings.

## Sources:

National Trust Classification Report 2004

Heritage Council Citation and Report 2016

Images from *Cities of Hope: Australian architecture and design by Edmond and Corrigan, 1962-1992*. Conrad Hamman, 1993 (Melbourne: Oxford University Press)



Orthographic view of St Joseph's

**William R Orange**

**Box Hill Historical Society Inc.**

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**Box Hill Historical  
Society  
Newsletter**



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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.