

Box Hill Historical Society Newsletter



Volume 23, Issue 2

April 2017

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

Inside this issue:

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| President's Report | 2 |
| Wattle Park ANZAC service | 2 |
| Forthcoming society events | 3 |
| Society excursion to Footscray | 3 |
| Recent speakers | 4/5 |
| A photographic mystery | 6 |
| Additions to the collection | 6 |
| Members of committee | 7 |
| AEHS report | 7 |
| Archivist's Update | 7 |

For your diary

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

Thursday, 20 April: Guest speaker **Grace Swiney** – 'Life in England during WW2'. Grace will talk of her childhood memories of living in England during WW2, recalling the restrictions of rationing, travel and the blackout; the lack of news but listening to the radio broadcasts and speeches of Winston Churchill; schooling and having fun with friends despite what was happening elsewhere; the support of her family and living deep in the English countryside.

(For details relating to the other events confirmed to date for this 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 2017

The society has enjoyed a productive and interesting start to the year, with engaging talks at both the monthly meetings and a flurry of activity in the Heritage Centre.

The turnout was good for the February meeting, at which Susan Barnett and Greg Buchanan—both Surrey Hills residents—spoke on the subject of 'Some architects of Surrey Hills'. In March the Society was delighted to have Carolyn Landon speak about the subject of her recent biography — acclaimed botanical artist and sometime Box Hill resident, Celia Rosser.

Moves are reaching conclusion to provide the Heritage Centre with an Internet connection. This has proven to be a more complicated matter than the Committee imagined, but the end of our virtual isolation is at an end. Connection to the Internet will make it easier quicker to service any request we might receive through our email account. To this end, the Society is also working towards upgrading its website. In the long term all of these efforts will help to broaden our appeal to as wide an audience as possible.

Gary Presland
President

Wattle Park ANZAC service

Members may be aware that since 2011 the Wattle Park Heritage Group has annually conducted a memorial service in the park, to honour the fallen from past conflicts. This year the service will be held on **Sunday 23 April**, commencing at 1.00pm.

Ed Bright, Secretary of the Group has written to the Society indicating that members are very welcome to attend. He has provided the following detail regarding the event:

This year marks the centenary of the horrors experienced by ANZAC troops in the mud of Passchendaele, and the full realization of the protracted nature of this enormous conflict. Local residents in particular, are invited to attend the service and if they wish, to place a floral tribute within the Patriotic Area.

The service will be followed at 2.30pm by the Melbourne Tramways Band's final recital for its seventy-seventh annual season. The concert program, entitled 'An Anzac Spirit', will bring back musical memories reflecting all periods of national conflict.

If you require further information on the service or the concert, Mr Bright can be contacted on 03 5798 3438.

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

Sunday, 30 April 2017: Visit to the premises of the Footscray Historical Society (For details see below, this page)

Thursday, 18 May 2017: Guest speaker **Alan Ritter** – ‘Mont Albert Primary School, 100 Years’. Mont Albert Primary School celebrates its centenary this year, having been established in April 1917. It became a Central School in 1918, incorporating Forms 1 and 2, and remained so until 1964. Alan Ritter, manages the school's archive and is co-ordinating the year's celebrations.

Please note the change of day, time and venue for the winter months. The general meetings for June, July and August will be held on Sunday afternoons from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm at Box Hill Library, Meeting Room 1, 1st Floor (accessible by lift or stairs).

Sunday, 18 June 2017: Guest speakers: **Glenys Grant OAM and Kay Edwards** – ‘From Burwood Boy's Home to Bestchance; 120 years’.

Sunday, 16 July 2017: Film clips in the Society's collection.

Society excursion to Footscray

The Committee, in conjunction with the Executive of the Footscray Historical Society, have arranged for a party of our members to visit the Footscray society's premises, on **Sunday 30 April 2017, commencing at 2.00 pm.**

These premises are located at 64-66 Hyde Street, Footscray; on the corner of Napier and Hyde Streets (Melway 42 D5). This is within a five minute walk of the Footscray railway station. If travelling by car, there is a small car park adjacent to the building, which is for the use of visitors to the Society.

The purpose of this trip is to provide members of this society with a opportunity to learn how another local historical society goes about its business, and become acquainted with the issues that society faces, and the solutions it has devised. Footscray HS is a group of comparable age, size, and level of resource to our own; it will be interesting to see what it has achieved and how it has managed in its efforts to preserve and promote the local history of the Footscray area.

The visit will include a tour of the nearby Footscray Town Hall, and the society's premises, which are within an historic building owned by the society.

Members are encouraged to take this opportunity to become acquainted with how history is studied and preserved in a different part of Melbourne. There are no costs involved in this excursion, but the Secretary would appreciate it if members could let her know if they intend taking part (Helen Harris: 9890 9288).

The size of the party will need to be capped at 20.

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, addressed to the Editor at presland.gary@gmail.com.

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

Recent speakers

The **February general meeting** was addressed by two Surrey Hills residents— local historian **Susan Barnett** and **Greg Buchanan** a town planner—on the topic **Some Architects of Surrey Hills**, and illustrated with photographs of the architects' works.

Greg Buchanan spoke about **Thomas Hendy (1876–1962)** the designer of the house in Barton Street, Surrey Hills where he has lived since 1980. Hendy was born and educated in Geelong and after completing his architecture articles travelled extensively through Europe including Italy, Germany and England on an architectural study tour. He followed this by two years working in Pretoria, returning to Geelong in 1898 to form a partnership with Frank Apted: together they designed many public buildings around Geelong and the Heathcote Mechanics Institute. In 1907 he moved to Surrey Hills and joined the Public Works Department where his work included the design of the 1909 extensions to Surrey Hills State School. He was community minded – having won first prize in 1899 at the Ballarat Debating Tournament for an essay on public life in Australia; and in 1909 started the 1st Surrey Hills Scout Troop, one of the first in Victoria. While in Africa he had met Baden Powell, the founder of Scouting and later exchanged letters with him. He wrote to the *Argus* vigorously rejecting the alignment of Boy Scouts with the militaristic School Cadets. The Scout group lapsed for the duration of the war with its revival post-war by others.

Hendy married Constance Cadd in 1913 and purchased the Barton Street site the same year. The house he designed was a two bedroom Federation style weatherboard with a large verandah framed by distinctive fretwork: the internal layout was traditional with a central timber lined passageway and fireplaces with high quality tiling. The Hendys' daughter Lorraine Duck, born in 1918 has been interviewed by the speaker and is still living.

Susan Barnett went on to talk about three architects, Arthur Plaisted, Clive Lord and John S. Gawler, all of whom had involvement in domestic and public design. She argued briefly for heritage recognition of some of the more modest works of the inter-war period, designed in particular by Lord and Gawler.

Arthur Plaisted (1891–1965) was the producer of some grand designs and he has been well researched by Robin da Costa. He worked with his father, a master builder, as Plaisted & Son. His architectural work dates from 1913 and he was registered as an architect in 1923. Together they designed and built homes and medical centres in the Western District and south eastern suburbs of Melbourne. Their housing was in a variety of styles including Art Deco. Locally built is Surrey Hills Medical Centre, on the corner of Guildford and Union Roads. He married Emily Gray in 1913 and they had three daughters, Emily unfortunately dying soon after the birth of their third child. Plaisted remarried in 1921 to Jessie Capuano and they lived in a couple of residences in Union Road. He designed 'The Big Garage' in Bairnsdale which has state and National Trust recognition and a house in Kooyong where they lived during the latter part of their lives. Other designs include *Enniskillen*, the former McAlpine residence at 14 Balwyn Road, homes in Rippon Lea and Elwood, and apartments in South Yarra. Plaisted had an association with the Plymouth Brethren and designed their church at 4 Burke Road (now demolished). In addition he and his brothers imported heating equipment with considerable financial success.

Susan's interest in **Clive Lord (1905–1979)** was initiated by a donation of plans and photographs of the Surrey Hills Theatre designed by Lord, and a subsequent meeting with Clive Lord's son David. Lord was a domestic and church architect (he was a parishioner at the Hotham Street Methodist church in Mont Albert): unfortunately many of his buildings, includ-

Recent speakers (cont.)

ing churches have been lost. He registered as an architect in 1931 and formed a partnership with Harry Winbush. (Winbush became much better known than Lord. His works include five fire stations including Box Hill, and he had an academic career with the Architecture and Building Department at RMIT.) Surrey Hill Theatre was opened in 1939: it was the third picture theatre in Surrey Hills and had 762 seats. The building included shops as part of the original Art Deco style design. After the theatre closed in 1960 it was first remodelled for squash courts and later for offices. Lord enlisted to serve in WWII but did not return to the partnership: in 1949 he took up a position as chief architect for the Commonwealth Bank (where he also set up a housing loans department for ex-servicemen) and held this position until his retirement in 1968. He was able to do private work including small homes and many churches, including Methodist churches in Blackburn, North Balwyn and the Centenary Methodist Church in Barkers Road Hawthorn, where he also married. This latter church has been converted to apartments.

John Stephens Gawler (1885–1978) is possibly best known locally as architect of Box Hill Town Hall. He was born in Essex came to Melbourne as an infant in 1886. He was educated at Brighton State School and University High School then took articles with the architectural partnership of Gibbs & Finlay. In 1907 he travelled to Canton for a two year building project, then went on a working tour of North America and Europe. He returned to Australia as an agent for Walter Burley Griffin. His first commission may have been *Wenley House* in Flinders Lane, followed by St. Agnes in Black Rock, where he married Ruth Woodworth in 1914. The partnership with Walter Drummond was formed in the same year. He enlisted in the AIF, at the time living in Barloa Road, and served from 1917 to 1919, including on the Western Front. On return he was appointed a lecturer in architecture at The University of Melbourne (1920) and elected Dean of the faculty in 1938.

Miles Lewis in the ADB, perhaps unfairly, describes Gawler and Drummond's partnership as prolific yet undistinguished, with Gawler being more important as an educator, activist and reformer. His designs covered domestic, industrial, commercial and church buildings. Lewis also notes Gawler's early use of cream brick veneer. As University Architect he designed the Metallurgy building and the Grainger Museum (the latter in 1938, in conjunction with Percy Grainger). Other works include Holy Trinity Church Surrey Hills, the Shrine in Surrey Gardens (Gawler and Drummond 1918, housing J.K. Blogg's WWI Honour Roll), the Deaf and Dumb Church in Jolimont, Box Hill Town Hall (1935) and the J. R. Ellingworth drinking fountain (1928 – Box Hill median). His community service included an extended period as a local councillor from the Shire of Nunawading to the City of Box Hill and post war on the Commonwealth Housing Commission and founding chairman of the Town and Country Planning Board (1946). Gawler's son David followed his father as an architect.

Susan Barnett concluded by noting that the double storey (originally) cream brick house at 50 Victoria Crescent was her parents' home for 40 years from 1970 and commented on the innovative layout and well built and fitted interiors.

Carolyn Landon spoke to the **March general meeting** about the subject of her biography, **Celia Rosser, botanical artist and artistic creator of the *Banksia Florilegium***. A full report of Carolyn's talk will be included in the June newsletter.

William R Orange

A photographic mystery

Some time ago the Society was given a number of glass negatives. Initially, the donor thought that they may have been of Doris Irene Hargrave, who lived at 801 Whitehorse Road Box Hill and was a friend of his late mother. When Doris died in 1981 she left his mother her 'ornaments, pottery, paintings, books, needlework and clothing', and it is possible that the glass negatives were part of this estate. Doris was believed to have been a potter who studied in France and painted overseas; she sketched the donor as a child.



Thanks to the skill of our Facebook guru Gill Madden, we have been able to make viewable copies of these negatives.

Thanks also to the skill of another member, Peter Galley, we were able to date the car shown to around 1929–1930.

Jennifer Elder and Helen Harris have undertaken searches of the births, deaths and marriages index and probate records and found that Doris was the daughter of John and Alice Amy Josephine RUSSELL nee MUNDAY. Alice died in 1949, and had four children: John Clarence Russell, who became a frock specialist in Bentleigh; Doris; Irma; and Aldyth Grace, a school teacher (also described as an artist). Alice was also the grandmother of Lorna (Mrs Wren), Graham, Joan and Noelle, great grandmother of John. Aldyth (known as Grace) died in 1993, and left no descendants.

Questions remain: who were the couple in the negatives? Where and when were the photographs taken? The Archivist would be glad to hear from anyone who can provide information.

Additions to the collection

The Acquisitions Committee met on 28 February and considered the latest batch of donations, which included:

- * A memoir titled *Part of Jack's Story* by John Noah Savage who came to live in Kangerong Road in 1932 when he was 9. He lived, married and raised a family locally. Donated via Susan Johns;
- * Five arch folders of research into the 1039 WW1 returned service people who are interred or memorialised in Box Hill Cemetery. Individual research form for each person containing personal and service details also in many cases further information found on web sites such as the Australian Archives and Australian War Memorial. Researched and donated by Bill Pritchard;
- * Framed photograph of the Box Hill Ladies Relief Society in 1928;
- * Document titled 'Box Hill North, A Local History' researched and donated by Dr Neil Lennie.

Robyn Doble
Hon. Archivist

Members of committee

I was born in Stawell in 1930. As usual, Victoria was short of teachers and my father was one of a group of 40 English science teachers sponsored by the Education Department who came out to Victoria in 1927.

My father taught at Box Hill High School in the 1950–60 period and two current members of the Box Hill Historical Society were taught by my father.

I call myself a Dimboola boy because it was there I attended primary school and four years of secondary school. My family moved to Melbourne in 1945 so that my sister and I could finish our secondary schooling.

I worked at the Kraft Walker Cheese Company (later Kraft Foods) for the period 1947 to 1955, starting as a junior laboratory assistant. I went to evening classes at the Melbourne Technical College (now RMIT University) and obtained a Diploma of Applied Chemistry. I enjoyed my work at Kraft but decided to move into the academic world.

I did a BSc degree and then an MSc degree at the University of Melbourne. The next move was to London where I obtained a PhD degree at University College London. Returning to Melbourne in 1961, I was appointed as Lecturer in Chemistry and retired as an Associate Professor in Physical Chemistry in 1993.

I have a major interest in bird watching and have enjoyed many camping trips in outback Australia.

Colin Barraclough

Committee member

Association of Eastern Historical Societies

The first general meeting of the AEHS for 2017 was held in Yarra Junction on Saturday 18 February. It was hosted by Upper Yarra Valley Historical Society, in the comfortable surrounds (with excellent facilities) at the Yarra Junction Fire Station.

Societies represented were Box Hill, Camberwell, Eltham, Healesville, Knox, Lilydale, Mooroolbark, Mt. Evelyn, Surrey Hills, Upper Yarra Valley, Waverley and Whitehorse — 20 people in attendance, including Janet Galley OAM, Peter Galley and Philip Widmer, who represented our society.

The guest speaker was Mike Foley who gave a lengthy presentation on the history of the Lilydale to Warburton railway line.

Once again, an over indulgent deluxe afternoon tea was served, which in this case was a most welcome aspect as the drive was 100 km to attend this AEHS general meeting.

The next meeting of the Association will be held on Saturday 29 April and will be hosted by Waverley Historical Society in their rooms on Level 1, 41 Miller Crescent, Mt Waverley (opposite Mt Waverley railway station on the northern side of the line).

The Association's bi-annual conference is to be held this year on Saturday 28 June. The location will be Ringwood, and the theme will be 'Preserving our archives'. Final details regarding speakers and attendance by society members are to be advised.

Janet Galley OAM

Archivist's update

The Town Hall is currently being fitted with new windows so there has been some disruption this week, as we moved things out and covered other things in preparation for the installation of windows in the Work Room. The window surrounds had to be chipped back, resulting in a gritty coating of brick dust across the room. The windows are now in and drop sheets and brick dust gone and we are assured the rest of the process, to keep the windows in place, will be mess free.

We have had some excellent photo sales this year and we recently sold some images to the Golden Age group, developers of Sky One. The group plan to use the images to create a history timeline of Box Hill on their hoarding along Carrington Road and Station Street. It will be interesting to see what results.

Robyn Doble

Hon. Archivist

Box Hill Historical Society Inc.
No. A15258V ABN 613 34916140

Heritage Centre - 03 9285 4808
Suite 7, 27 Bank Street, Box Hill.
(Town Hall Hub, rear Box Hill Town Hall)
Hours: 11-4, Tuesdays; otherwise, by appointment

President: Dr Gary Presland
Vice-President: William Orange
Secretary: Helen Harris OAM
Treasurer: John Barnao
Committee: Dr Colin Barraclough, Robyn Doble,
Judith Eadon, Philip Widmer



EDITOR
Dr Gary Presland

Phone: 03 9890 9288

**Box Hill Historical
Society
Newsletter**



Box Hill Historical Society Inc.
PO Box 268 Box Hill 3128

CITY OF



WHITEHORSE

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.