

# Box Hill Historical Society



Volume 24, Issue 6

December 2018

**General meetings of the BHHS** are held on the 3rd Sunday of each month, in Meeting Room 1 of Box Hill Library, 1040 Whitehorse Road, beginning at 2 pm.

Members and friends are always welcome to attend.

Enquiries are welcome, on:

**03 9285 4808**

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## For your diary

The next meeting of the Society will be in Meeting Room 1 of the **Box Hill Library**, 1040 Whitehorse Road, beginning at 2:00 pm. Details are as follow:

**Sunday, 17 February 2019**

Guest Speakers— **Helen Harris OAM** and **Bob Yeomans**

### **'Box Hill's two horticultural societies'**

Helen Harris, BHHS Secretary and Archivist, will detail the history of the first such group in the Box Hill area; and Bob Yeomans, a former President of the Box Hill Horticultural Society, will speak about the history and activities of the later group.



A scene from the Society's successful flower show, during the recent Whitehorse Heritage Festival.

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

- Royal Historical Society of Victoria;
- Association of Eastern Historical Societies.

The Society can be found on the 'net at: [www.boxhillhistoricalsociety.com.au](http://www.boxhillhistoricalsociety.com.au) (or use a search engine)

You can email us at: [boxhillhistory@gmail.com](mailto:boxhillhistory@gmail.com)

and follow us on *Facebook* at: [www.facebook.com/boxhillhistoricalsociety](http://www.facebook.com/boxhillhistoricalsociety)

## President's report — December 2018

As another successful year for the Society draws to its end, I take this opportunity to thank all our members and friends who have given their support throughout 2018.

The Society has achieved a great deal during the year, all of which is due to the voluntary input of our members and committee. They have given much time and effort to organise events, arrange meetings, attend functions, answer enquiries, scan images, catalogue collections items, index records, manipulate and manage digital resources, and even compile newsletters. Of particular note is the work put in by Gill Madden and Helen Harris OAM in managing the Society's website, and its Facebook account. These resources are of prime importance because they are the fastest and most effective means of expand the Society's reach.

Gary Presland  
*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, Benettswood and the parts of Burwood and Surrey Hills, which fall within the City of Whitehorse.



### **Christmas/ New Year break**

The Society's Heritage Centre will be **closed** from  
3.00 pm on Tuesday, **18 December 2018** until  
11.00 am Tuesday, **15 January 2019**

### **Twilight Walking Tour**

To commence the new year, we are trialing something different — a Twilight Walking Tour of the early streets and houses bounded by the Rutland Road/Albion Road area. A number of prominent 19th century families lived here, so why not join us and hear tales of the lives of some former residents and admire the remaining houses [no admittance to the buildings]. The tour will commence and conclude at the park on the corner of Linsley and Bank Streets, and refreshments will be provided at the conclusion.

When: Tuesday 1 January 2019

Time: 7pm

Cost: \$20 per person, [\$15 for BHHS members]

**Bookings** can be made online through Trybooking, at:

<https://www.trybooking.com/ZXOA>

Please note that the tour requires a minimum of five (5) people to proceed.

## Forthcoming Society event

### General meeting, Sunday, 18 March 2019

Guest Speaker **Professor Janet McCalman AC** will speak about 'Box Hill women'. Janet is Professor of History in the Centre for Health Equity within the Melbourne School of Population and Global Health. She is the author of a number of books, including *Struggletown*, and *Sex and suffering*. Members of the Society with good memories may recall that Janet spoke to a Society meeting a few years ago, about her childhood, growing up in Box Hill. She is returning to speak more generally about the contribution of women in the local community in the 1950s.

## Annual Historical Trivia Quiz

How well do you know your Box Hill history? Test your knowledge over the Christmas holidays, with the questions listed here. The answers will appear in the next Newsletter.

1. In what year was the Box Hill Probus club formed?
2. In what year did the Neighbourhood House in Kitchener Street open?
3. Who was the long serving Box Hill Chief Librarian who retired in 1981?
4. In what year did St Leo's school open?
5. In what year did Crawford Productions move to Box Hill and where were they?
6. In what year did the Box Hill City Archers form?
7. In what year was the Burwood Drive In sold, and who bought it?
8. Who was elected as MHR for Chisholm in 1983?
9. In what year did Barclays Bank open?
10. Who was elected as State MP for Box Hill in 1981?
11. Name the woman who was elected to Box Hill Council in 1981.
12. In what year did the Commonwealth Bank open new premises at Box Hill?
13. When did author Judah Waten die, and why was the date significant?
14. When did Greg Medcraft resign from Council and why?
15. Who replaced Greg Medcraft on Council?
16. When did Roger Cordery resign from Council and why?
17. Who replaced Roger Cordery on Council?
18. Who stood as a candidate for the DLP on a number of occasions in the 1980s?
19. Who was elected to replace Cr Kevin Lear when he resigned in 1980?
20. When did the first run of the miniature railway in Elgar Park take place?

### **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](mailto:presland.gary@gmail.com).

Alternatively you can email the Society at:  
[boxhillhistory@gmail.com](mailto:boxhillhistory@gmail.com)

The President and Committee are pleased to wish members of the Society all the very best for the festive season.



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## Recent speaker William R Orange

**Graham O'Rourke**, a retired history teacher and researcher, spoke to the **November general meeting** on the topic **Daniel Mannix and William Hughes and the WWI Conscription Debates**. O'Rourke was aware of Mannix from childhood in the 1950s – there was a photograph in their home of Mannix with his father during the 1930s, and memories of Mannix at school openings, in an open car as part of St. Patrick's Day parades and ultimately lying in state in St. Patrick's Cathedral in 1963. Mannix was a tall patrician man (compared to the diminutive Hughes); several biographies have been written including that by Brenda Niall. He was born in Charleville, County Cork in 1864 and well educated, including studies in Latin. He graduated to a seminary where over time he achieved a D.D., and was appointed Professor of Moral Theology and Rector. In 1913 he was appointed to Melbourne's Catholic Diocese as coadjutor to Archbishop Thomas Carr and parish priest to St Mary's Star of the Sea, West Melbourne, followed in 1917 by installation as Archbishop of Melbourne.

William (Billy) Hughes was born in 1862 in Pimlico (London). His mother died when he was seven years old, which resulted in a move to Llandudno for education and care, then a return to London, initially as a student teacher, then apprentice teacher. In 1884 he emigrated to Australia, initially working as a rouseabout, before moving to Sydney, where he had many jobs including mending umbrellas, and union organiser. He was elected as a NSW member of parliament in 1894, and the Federal member for West Sydney in 1901. In the latter capacity, he held the positions of Attorney General (in a number of ministries) and Minister for External Affairs. Hughes had strong union support, and wrote a weekly column for the *Daily Telegraph*.

From the start of World War I in July 1914 until early 1916, there were strong enlistments of Australians (around 20,000 troops including Hughes' son). From the beginning of 1916 Hughes spent about seven months overseas, including time in New Zealand and the United Kingdom, dealing with Japan (which was on the side of the Allies), seeking access to the British markets for the Australian wool clip, and visiting the war front. Conscription was in place in both New Zealand and the U.K. War casualties in 1916 were high, notably during the Battle of Fromelles.

On return to Australia, Hughes was encouraged to introduce conscription, but the Senate was not in favour, so the issue went to a referendum in October 1916. In the lead up to voting there was a divisive public debate. Some saw enlistment as a community obligation, while others had concerns about the impact of high levels of enlistment on community life and viability.

The 'anti' campaign had its main support from unions, the working classes and farmers (who were also concerned about cheap 'Asian' and Islander labour). Recruitment targets were seen as too high and anti-conscription campaigners were gaoled for long terms. Working class women were largely affected. There was a strong pitch to women that they should be prepared to sacrifice their men for 'children and the country'. Vida Goldstein, the National Council of Women and the WCTU were also involved in the 'anti' campaign. Mannix took no part in this campaign, apart from a couple of statements supporting voluntary enlistment, while his Anglican counterpart and Primate was more vocal. Hughes travelled around the country supporting the conscription campaign. There was an 82% turnout for the vote, which was defeated, and Hughes left the Labor Party.

The second referendum was held in December 1917. Mannix was attacked as being on the side of the enemy for encouraging a 'NO' vote, and 'Romanism' was seen as disloyal. The second referendum was also defeated, this time including in Victoria. Hughes resigned as Prime Minister but was re-commissioned by the Governor General. He went overseas for 16 months to represent the Australian Government during the latter months of the war.

There is no definitive answer as to whether Mannix was responsible for the referendum defeat: it is hard to determine who voted and why, and there was no obvious Irish (or Catholic) vote. In the post-war period Mannix continued as Archbishop for a further 45 years. In 1920, he travelled to New York where he boarded RMS *Baltic*, bound for Ireland. However, shortly before the ship was due to arrive in Cork Harbour, it was stopped and boarded by British military, who arrested Mannix and transferred him directly to England.

Hughes continued as Prime Minister until 1923, remained in Parliament, and served as deputy to Menzies. Brenda Niall in her biography of Mannix relates that he was visited by Hughes at *Raheen* in 1937, around the time that Hughes' daughter died in childbirth, and that a friendly relationship developed. Hughes died in 1952 at the age of 90, and Mannix in 1963 at 99.

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## Committee profiles

*The following piece continues our occasional series of autobiographical profiles of members of the Committee.*

### Grace Swiney

I was born at Eastbourne, Sussex, UK just before WW2. My family moved to Bournemouth in Hampshire after the war because my father worked on the railways. Later we returned to Eastbourne. It was there that I met my husband and in 1959 we decided to marry and take up Australia's offer of a 10 pound trip here. We thought of it as an adventure for at least two years – but I am still here in Box Hill North, in the house into which we moved within the first two months.

We had a very fortunate life here. We were made to feel so welcome by the neighbours and work associates. Luckily, I was a teacher and there was plenty of work available. My husband worked for CIG which was not too far away. We bought up two children who enjoyed the freedom of those days.

I have always been interested in the history of this area and once I had the time I joined the Historical Society and enjoyed learning more about Box Hill, Whitehorse and Melbourne.

## Archivist's Report

The Society continues to be busy, responding to enquiries made in person by visitors, by phone or through our email and Facebook accounts.

Recent donations include:

- a copy of *A social history of St Paul's Lutheran Church, Box Hill, 1948–2016: 50 personal stories from a faith committee*. This was donated by the author, Heidi Winnen;
- a collection of photos of the Rippingale family and 1940s Christmas cards; donated by Sandra Vandersee.

Rohan Gibbs has completed an index to the Society's collection of WW2 Civil Emergency Service cards; these record local residents who volunteered to assist in the event of an enemy attack, and can provide details of a person's place of residence as well as employment, age, a physical description, and a note of whether they could drive a car/scooter, speak another language etc. The index is now available on our website.

Our website now also has a *Shop* facility, which allows online purchases of our books. The URL is — <https://www.boxhillhistoricalsociety.com.au/shop/>

We have started the enormous task of indexing the rate valuation books 1954–1984, and 10 books, of the 60+ altogether, have been completed, comprising streets A–L in East Ward. This will be a long-term project, but we will upload certain sections as they are completed. Already it has proved interesting. Women of a certain age will know the name *Fella Hamilton* but perhaps be surprised to learn she lived in Box Hill North for a while. Internationally-known architect Karl Fender OAM and historian Janet McCalman AC were also once local residents, and both have agreed to speak to us in 2019.



Til next time,  
*Helen*

**Box Hill Historical Society Inc.**  
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**Hours: 11-4, Tuesdays; otherwise, by appointment**

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**Vice-President: William Orange**  
**Secretary: Helen Harris OAM**  
**Treasurer: John Barnao**  
**Committee: Ian Broadhead, Judith Eadon, Helen Kane,**  
**Ric Pawsey, Grace Swiney**



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Box Hill Historical  
Society  
Newsletter



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**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.