

Box Hill Historical Society News-



Volume 25, Issue 6

December 2019

General meetings of the BHHS are held on the 3rd Sunday of each month, in the Bert Lewis Meeting Room in Box Hill Library, 1040 Whitehorse Road, beginning at 2 p.m.

Members and friends are always welcome to attend.

Enquiries are welcome, on:
03 9285 4808

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For your diary

The Society's first meeting in the new year will take place in Bert Lewis Meeting Room of the **Box Hill Library**, 1040 Whitehorse Road, Box Hill, beginning at 2:00 pm. Details are as follow:

Sunday, 16 February 2020

Guest Speaker— **Ian Wood**, former Box Hill pharmacist

**'Panaceas and placebos: a history
of pharmacy in Box Hill'**

Ian's father established a central Box Hill pharmacy in 1938. Ian joined his father in 1956, and in subsequent years, as a pharmacist in Box Hill, Ian gained a wealth of experience, as well as many stories about professional practice.



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 (or use a search engine)

You can email us at: boxhillhistory@gmail.com

and follow us on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/boxhillhistoricalsociety

President's report: December 2019

The Society has had a public presence at two local events in the past couple of months. As usual, we had a stall at the Whitehorse Spring Festival, held this year on Sunday 20 October. The theme at the Festival this year was STEM—Science, Technology, Engineering and Medicine, which somewhat taxed our ability to create an appropriate display. However, our Archivist was able to delve into our collection and find some relevant photographs. We used the occasion to offer a wide range of secondhand books for sale, and here we did reasonably well, raising money to be put towards the digitising of *The Reporter*.

I am pleased to thank the following members and friends who volunteered their time and energy for various periods during the day: John Barnao, Tony Bryer, Robyn Doble, Heather Eadon, Gill Madden, William Orange, Ric Pawsey, Grace Swiney, and her English cousin, Betty.

In the week following the Festival, the Archivist spent many hours assisting members of St Peters' congregation put together a display of photographs dealing with the history of the church. This was in advance of celebrations of the 130th anniversary of St Peter's, on Saturday 26 October. The Society also staffed a small book stall, in which we offered some of our publications for sale. This was not as successful as the Spring Festival, in that we sold only one book, but hopefully the profile of the Society was raised.

Gary Presland
President

PROV call for contributions to its journal

The Public Records Office Victoria (PROV) are currently inviting contributions to its journal, *Provenance*. Anyone who has used original records from PROV's collection in their research is able to submit an article either for peer-review or the general article section of the publication. Submissions are encouraged from students, emerging scholars, community and family researchers, academics, and professional historians.

Deadline for submissions for the 2020 edition is 31 March 2020. Visit the PROV website for more information:

<https://prov.vic.gov.au/index.php/explore-collection/provenance-journal/call-papers>



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

Our Syllabus Organiser and Secretary have been busy, putting together a list of speakers for next year's monthly meetings. Members and friends can look forward to some scintillating and informative talks at 2.00 p.m. in the Bert Lewis Meeting Room, on the following dates:

Sunday, 15 March 2020: former General Manager of Infrastructure at Whitehorse City Council, **Phil Warner** will speak about his 47 years of service, which commenced with the City of Box Hill in 1972;

Sunday, 19 April 2020: **Bill Sawyer** spent his childhood in Box Hill, where his parents operated a dairy, during the 1930s and '40s. He went on to become an agricultural scientist.

Sunday, 17 May 2020: **Dr Stephen Poropat** is an internationally-known palaeontologist, and Post-doctoral Researcher at Swinburne University of Technology. He was born and grew up in Box Hill, and will speak about how to turn a life-long interest in dinosaurs into a promising career.

Committee profiles

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

Shane Hübner was ordained an Anglican clergyman in 1995 and has served the Anglican Church in Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth and Melbourne. He has been the Vicar of the Anglican Parish of Box Hill since January 2016. He has been happily married to Janet since 1992. Before finding a serious vocation to the Priesthood, Shane was always planning on becoming a modern history teacher, and history remains a great passion in his life. Other interests include singing, and Shane has sung in the Australian Welsh Male Choir since 2011. When he has both the time and the resources Shane loves to travel and has recently completed trips to Egypt, Jordan, and the Holy land (2018); a choir tour of Scotland, Wales, and England culminating in a performance on the stage at the Royal Albert Hall (2018), and a trip to the USA to celebrate his mother's 70th birthday (2019). While only a relative newcomer to Box Hill, Shane is fascinated by the history of the area and, of course, the changes happening around us today. He is keen to lend his hand to the preservation and recording of the local history of Box Hill.

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



New members

The Committee is pleased to welcome the following individuals who have joined the Society recently. We hope their association with the Society is a long and mutually beneficial one.

Brenda Webb
Ben Lyons



Christmas/ New Year break

The Society's Heritage Centre will be **closed** from 1.00 pm on Tuesday, **17 December 2019** and **reopened** at 11.00 am Tuesday, **21 January 2020**

Recent speaker

William R Orange

Professional historian and researcher Mary Sheehan spoke to the **November general meeting** about the **1919 influenza outbreak in the Shire of Nunawading** (now Whitehorse). She illustrated her talk with some contemporary images. The speaker's attention was drawn to the impact of the influenza pandemic on the Melbourne of 1919 while researching the history of St. Vincent's Hospital: she found the record of the death from influenza in early 1919 of nurse at the hospital, Leonora Valda (always known as Valda) Kelly, and devoted some time to finding her story.

The 1919 'Spanish' influenza pandemic was a swift and often fatal disease, killing 50 to 100 million people globally with about 15 to 17 thousand of those deaths in Australia during the 12-month period. In Victoria there were about 3500 deaths of which 14 were in the Shire of Nunawading. The low fatality rate is attributed to the sparse population at the time. It is still Australia's worst natural disaster in terms of lives lost, and had a catastrophic effect within the urban population, particularly because of its rapid spread. Data collation at the time was poor (although local records were kept), so the overall numbers were only estimates, until 2002 when more precise figures were compiled.

The so called 'Spanish' flu was not from Spain, the name arrived as a result of Spain's 'neutrality' during WWI because the influenza epidemic was first reported in the Spanish local press. The origins of this strain of influenza are uncertain but Kansas U.S.A. is one location speculated as the source of the disease, spread by troops from this area to the war front. Australia was warned of its spread to South Africa and imposed quarantine restrictions on inbound ships in October 1918. The disease arrived in Melbourne in early 1919 and spread rapidly, reaching Box Hill by February 1919.

Hospitals were overwhelmed and emergency hospitals were set up, providing about 5500 additional beds, including a large number at the Exhibition Buildings and others at various inner urban schools. Schools had not re-opened, and there were restrictions on public gatherings, to prevent spread of the disease. The cause of the disease was not understood and various remedies were advertised, some very doubtful. A probably ineffective vaccine against an associated bacterium was prepared by the Commonwealth Serum Laboratories: influenza is caused by a virus and viruses were not differentiated until the 1930s.

Inhalatoriums were set up in larger work places where workers were subjected to aerosols, including zinc sulphate amongst other chemicals: in the end, good nursing and maintenance of fluids was the best option at the time. New South Wales and South Australia closed their borders to prevent spread of the disease, and there was a quarantine camp at Albury for travellers. Some travellers were stranded without funds and a few died without reaching their destinations. There was loss of employment—theatres were closed and hotels restricted; mask-wearing in public was encouraged. The casualties included police, and there were other disruptions to society. Trains were cancelled and passenger and freight services limited due to the illness and overwork of the remaining railway workers.

Pregnant women were more likely to develop pneumonia, and the high temperatures associated with the disease increased the rate of still births and congenital abnormalities. The peak age group in the population was 28-year-olds.

Mary related some case studies from the Shire of Nunawading, including that of the Merrett family of Tunstall; and Mary Campbell, whose husband had been killed in action in 1917 and whose death from influenza left her three young sons to be cared for by her mother.

The 1919 'Spanish' flu pandemic has had limited coverage in literature—a passing reference in *Downton Abbey* is one exception. At the time little was known about the cause of the disease, and its impact has largely faded from public memory. More recent studies have given a better sense of the scale of the disease that killed many more than the Great War.

Archivist's Report

We continue to be very busy in the Heritage Centre, with visitors and email requests for information. It was good to welcome back Barbara Lovell after her accident.

Work on the East Ward rate valuation books is progressing, and we are now working through the street names beginning with 'S'. Data entry also continues on the Scrapbooks, with No. 26 nearly finished. Information included in the next scrapbook index to go online will be lists of dairies in the 1890s, and office bearers from local Friendly Societies, such as the Rechabites, MUOOOF etc.

When working through the Council files held at the Public Record Office for items on public health, I came across numerous business registration forms, so I made digital copies of them. An index of the names has now been uploaded to our webpage. The subjects covered include boarding houses, hospitals, factories, piggeries and ice cream manufacturers. The time period covered in this index is 1914 – January 1927, the period when Box Hill was part of the Shire of Nunawading.

I have also uploaded the listing of those locals infected during the 1919 Spanish Flu pandemic. Like the business registration files, digital images of these entries can be emailed free of charge to members.

Recent donations include the papers of the Box Hill Art Group. These comprise Newsletters, minutes of meetings, and a newspaper scrapbook.

Til next time,
Helen

From newspapers of the past

The Reporter 28 November 1958

All future "Stop" signs to be erected will be red with white lettering. The Traffic Commission says that red is normally regarded as a sign of danger but was not used in the past because of difficulties in providing a red which did not fade. A dependable red has now been produced and will be used as new signs are erected or old ones replaced.

Box Hill North Progress Association has drawn attention to the lack of street names and lights in newly settled areas, particularly that around Aspinall Street, Boxleigh Grove and Lindhurst Crescent. The Engineer said that there was now little difficulty in erecting names for streets as one of the employees is a good signwriter and if poles already existed it was possible to erect the signs with little expense.

The Reporter 12 September 1961

Post Office Link with Past

The unofficial post office at 169 Middleborough Road Box Hill South, has been named Houston, a name linked closely with the early history of the district. Mr David Houston was the original purchaser from the Crown of the land which abuts this shopping centre and was among the early settlers who took an active interest in community affairs. Further, on part of his land, for a number of years at the end of last century, the well-known Australian painters Tom Roberts, Arthur Streeton and Frederick McCubbin had their camp and began the first school of Australian landscape Painting. The P.M.G.'s Department has advised the Council that 'Houston' has been chosen. It was the Council's first choice.

Twilight Walking Tour

Sunday 5 January 2020

To commence the new year, once again we will be conducting a Twilight Walking Tour. This time we will be walking along Whitehorse Road. The tour departs from Box Hill Town Hall, goes as far as the tram terminus and returns, on the northern side of Whitehorse Road, to conclude in the Linsley Street park. Refreshments will be served at the end.

When: Sunday 5 January 2020, beginning at 7p.m.

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

Bookings are essential and can be made online through Trybooking, at:

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

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



Percy Broadhead in the doorway of Hudson & Keen, 974 Whitehorse Rd, south side, c. 1930

Cemetery Tour

10 a.m., Saturday 29 February 2020

This is advance notice of a walking tour in Box Hill Cemetery, planned for 29 February 2020. Take advantage of the extra day in 2020 and book in for a two-hour tour of a range of graves in this historical cemetery. There are many well-known and interesting people buried in this cemetery, including from the literary and artistic world; and individuals who were noted in business and sporting spheres.

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

Further details will be published in the February issue of this *Newsletter* and on the BHHS Website,

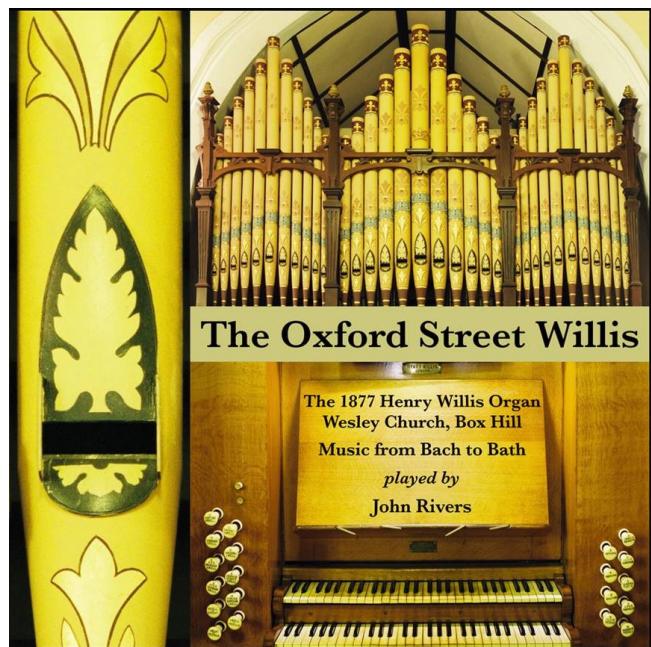
Enquiries: ring John Barnao on 9890 0283.

The Oxford Street Willis

The Oxford Street Willis. The 1877 Henry Willis Organ at Wesley Uniting Church, Box Hill. Music from Bach to Bath played by John Rivers. Cygnet Productions. Available from selected Readings stores or online from www.readings.com.au

This new CD, recorded at Wesley Uniting Church, Box Hill, showcases the heritage listed 1877 Henry Willis organ. This precious instrument remains tonally intact, despite 142 years of constant use. The organ is in good playing order, although parts show signs of its great age.

The various tracks use a wide variety of colours, showing the various solo sounds and the warmth of tone that was customary from Willis. The music recorded is an attractive program, played with imagination, from Bach through to the early twentieth century.



BHHS digitising project

\$4620

Thanks to good sales from our stock of secondhand books, at the Whitehorse Spring Festival, the total of money raised toward digitising issues of the *Box Hill Reporter* continues to creep up. To make things a *little* easier, the sum required for this project has been reduced slightly.

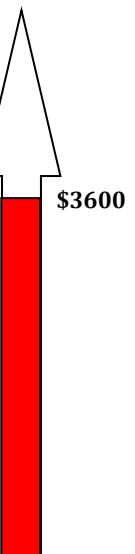
We have been advised by the National Library that the cost per page to digitize newspapers has been reduced from \$2.31 to \$1.93, thus reducing the total needed to \$7,892.50. This leaves about \$1000 that the Society needs to raise, to fully fund the project.

To both cast our appeal to a wider audience, and make donating easier, the Society has set up a webpage with the ticketing and fund-raising platform *Trybooking*. People wishing to make a donation need only to log on to the webpage, using the following URL:

<https://www.trybooking.com/au/donate/boxhillreporter>

And follow the easy-to-follow directions.

Progress will be reported in successive newsletters, in the graphic form as presented here.



(Not to scale)

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

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Vice-President: William Orange

Secretary: Helen Harris OAM

Treasurer: John Barnao

Committee: Ian Broadhead, Judith Eadon,

Rev. Shane Hübner, Ric Pawsey, Grace Swiney



EDITOR

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Box Hill Historical
Society
Newsletter



PO Box 268, Box Hill 3128



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.