

# Box Hill Historical Society



**Volume 25, Issue 1**  
**February 2019**

**General meetings of the BHHS** are held on the 3rd Sunday of each month, in the *Bert Lewis* 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**

***Inside this issue:***

For your diary	1
President's Report	2
BHHS President honoured	2
Answers to quiz question	2
Forthcoming society events	3
Other forthcoming events	3
Archivist's Report	4
From a newspaper of the past	5

## For your diary

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

**Sunday, 17 February 2019, 2pm**

Guest Speakers:

Society secretary **Helen Harris OAM**, and **Bob Yeomans**, former President of the Box Hill Horticultural Society, will speak about the two horticultural societies that existed in Box Hill; the differences between them; and some of the personalities involved in each. The first society commenced in 1900 and held shows in the Showgrounds; the second commenced in 1931 and held shows at a number of venues. The latter continues to this day, in a reduced format, as the Box Hill Garden Club.



(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 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 — February 2019

Welcome to another year of meetings, Newsletters, and other events focusing on Box Hill's history.

With the year barely a month old and no meetings having taken place, there is not a lot to report. I should note, however, that our indefatigable Secretary/Archivist has carried on with her indexing projects, over the break. She also organised and led a successful twilight walking tour around the old Burley Park area, on 1 January.

More walks, cemetery tours, and a host of interesting speakers are planned for this year.

Gary Presland  
**President**

## Answers to 2018 Trivia Quiz

The answers to the quiz questions in the December 2018 issue of the Newsletter are as follows:

- |                                 |                                   |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. 1982                         | 11. Rosemary Varty                |
| 2. 1983                         | 12. 1984                          |
| 3. Bert Lewis                   | 13. 1985; he died on his birthday |
| 4. 1956                         | 14. 1987; he moved to Paris       |
| 5. 1981; 295 Middleborough Road | 15. David Reid                    |
| 6. 1948                         | 16. 1980; he moved interstate     |
| 7. 1982, Council                | 17. Robin Friday                  |
| 8. Helen Mayer                  | 18. Dr Peter Ferwerda             |
| 9. 1982                         | 19. Clive Evenden                 |
| 10. Margaret Ray                | 20. February 1983                 |

## BHHS President honoured

The Society's Committee congratulate their president, Dr Gary Presland, on his receiving a City of Whitehorse Civic Award, for Community Achievement. The presentation took place in the Whitehorse Theatre on Australia Day, 26 January 2019. Gary's contribution to the study of local history through his involvement in this Society was a feature of his nomination for the award.



Gary listens intently while Acting CEO Tony DeFazio reads the citation, with the Mayor Bill Bennett and Cr Tina Liu looking on.

## *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, 17 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. 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.

### Sunday, 28 April 2019

**Please note:** This year our regular meeting day in April falls on Easter Sunday, 21 April. In light of this, the Committee have decided to shift the general meeting to the following Sunday, 28 April.

Guest speaker: TBA

## Other forthcoming event

Readers may be interested to know of a new book of local relevance, to be launched on Sunday 24 February. This will happen at 2pm, at Cameron Close Retirement Village, 155 Warragul Road Burwood.

If you are intending to be at the launch, please RSVP, by **18 February 2019**, to **Jasmin Davis**, whose contact details are given below

*Burwood Boys: Seven stories of success*  
compiled by Kay Edwards

The seven stories in this book are told by former residents of Burwood Boys' Home, some of whom arrived there from other residential institutions. The stories provide a window into an earlier era of Melbourne's social history, from the 1930s to the 1970s.

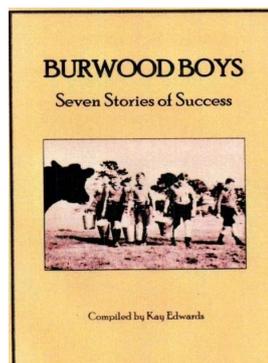
These are stories of resilience, good humour and positivity, but also of abandonment, confusion and fear as families made hard decisions. They vary in length, and include a lengthy extract from an autobiographical work by Hector Davis OAM, who arrived at Burwood aged eight, in 1934.

The book will retail for \$15.00 (plus \$5 for postage).

Copies can be obtained from **Jasmin Davis** by –

Mobile: 0433 858 239

Email: sevenstoriesofsuccess@gmail.com



## BHHS meeting venue

In 2019 the Society's monthly meetings will continue to be held in the upstairs meeting room in Box Hill Library, at 1040 Whitehorse Road. Members will be interested to know, however, that City of Whitehorse Council agreed late last year to honour a former Chief Librarian, Bert Lewis, by naming the meeting room in his memory.

H C (Bert) Lewis, joined Box Hill Library in March 1954 and retired in July 1981. Between those dates he was heavily involved in many cultural and social aspects of the Box Hill community. In brief, he:

- Served as secretary on Box Hill Council Centenary Committee, 1957;
- Developed the Australian collection at Box Hill Library, 1959;
- Served on the Executive of the Library Association and was President 1961, 1962 (at least);
- Was the Rotary Club Citizen of the Year, 1965;
- Promoted and oversaw the development of a new library on the current site in 1973;
- was the founder of this Society, as well as the Box Hill Philatelic Society, and a co-founder of the Box Hill Rostrum Club;
- served for 23 years on the Box Hill Cemetery Trust;
- was a long time member of the Box Hill Businessmen's Club.

Bert Lewis died in May 2001.

## Do you know.....?

The original Box Hill Council building was on the corner of Cambridge and Stations Streets. In what year was the building sold by Council?

For the answers to the Christmas/New Year monster quiz, see page 2 of this Newsletter.

---

## Archivist's Report

Recently, Town Hall staff have unearthed two interesting sets of documents and given them to us. This note is about one of those sets — a series of diaries kept by Town Hall staff, recording brief details of bookings made to hire the hall or any part thereof. Staff were also responsible for the hire of the Rotunda, which used to be in the median strip and later became the library.

The earliest of these A4 size diaries is dated 1937, and the first entry is for Saturday, 2 January for 'Miss Roderick' who paid 15/- to hire the supper room and piano that morning, and did so every week for some months. [Iris Roderick was a well-known figure in Box Hill and her dancing classes and concerts were hugely popular; we have several photos of both her and some of her pupils.] The second entry was for a Mrs Nidschelm of Station Street Bayswater, who booked the small hall, kitchen and piano for a wedding with approximately 90 attendees. The diary notes that a chair leg was broken at this event.

Later in January, the 24th Battalion booked the Rotunda and the Horticultural Society held their AGM in the Auxiliary Room. In February three weddings were held; while the Jones family from Ivanhoe wanted carpets, palms and the piano in the south west corner, the Beachcrofts from Clota Avenue opted for dancing, and thus the carpet rolled up. The use of the floor cost them an extra 7/6.

March saw the small hall booked for the Federal Referendum by the Yes campaign, while the No campaign paid for the Rotunda only. Referendum day saw the small hall booked from 7.30am to 11pm, while W.H.G. Ellingworth agreed to supply the needed trestle tables. There were several election meetings held during the year, including by Mrs [Ivy] Weber, who subsequently became MLA for Nunawading, the first woman elected at a general election.

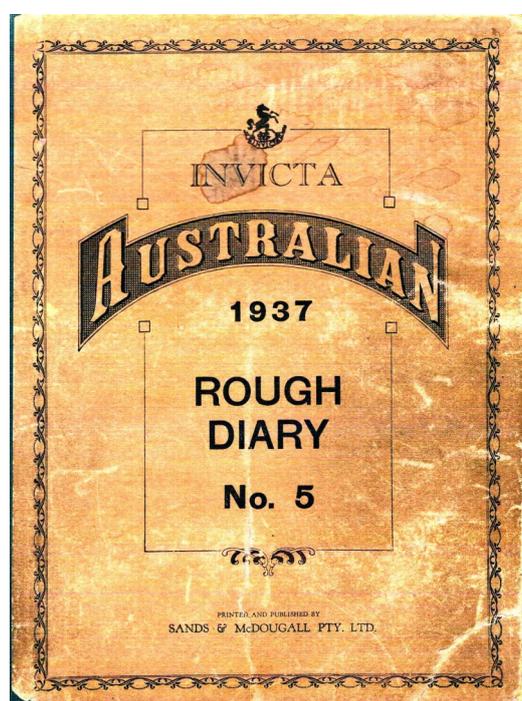
12 May was a public holiday for the Coronation of King Edward VIII, and the main hall was used for a Coronation Concert at 8pm, with the Band playing in the Portico before having to go around the back of the building and upstairs to the stage for the concert itself.

And in one of the last entries for the year, Mrs W. Unsworth of Alexandra Avenue Surrey Hills booked the small hall for a 21st birthday party on 22 December, but it 'went on till 1 o'clock'. She forfeited 7/6 out of her deposit.

Other surviving diaries cover the years 1939, 1941, 1944, 1946, 1952, 1953, 1958, 1962 and 1963.

These little gems of social history will eventually be indexed as I'm sure the details, though very brief, will be of interest to the groups/families mentioned.

Till next time,  
*Helen*



## From a newspaper of the past

This article from *Progress Press* 24 June 1992, has been unearthed by Society archivist Helen Harris OAM.

### Garden shield mystery

**T**HE discovery of a long lost tribute to Box Hill's reputation as one of Melbourne's finest garden suburbs has sparked a frantic search through the history books.

When a grand old mahogany shield last week surfaced in the council chamber the race began to piece together details of how it came to its final resting place.

Bearing the title *Herald Gardening Award*, the annual plaque was first presented to Box Hill in the early 1940s.

Other winners included Camberwell, Heidelberg and Essendon. Box Hill made it a clean sweep from 1950 to 1958 and has held it ever since.

But the passing of time has resulted in the story behind the mysterious, but impressively embossed, memento suffering the same fate as the competition from which it was spawned.

Even the Box Hill Horticultural Society's most legendary life member Lillian 'Buz' Buzwell was stumped when asked for an explanation.



**BOX Hill Town Clerk, Ian Port and Lillian Buzell with the mystery gardening shield.**

The 'garden shield mystery' was easily solved when Mac Snellgrove, a former President of the Box Hill Horticultural Society, wrote to both the Council and the newspaper, providing the following details:

The garden competition referred to was sponsored by the Herald and Weekly Times and inaugurated in 1929. Marshall Tweedie, who became a prominent citizen of Box Hill, in response to a suggestion by Cr R. Sparkes, the well-known nurseryman, decided to put in an all-out effort to win the competition for Box Hill. He walked the streets of Box Hill and persuaded owners of the many beautiful gardens there to enter the various sections of the competition. Ultimately the shield was won outright over many times by the City of Box Hill and was proudly presented to the Council, where it hung in the chambers for many years.

The Shield has been stored in the Society's archives for many years, and will be on display at the February meeting, along with a short history prepared for last year's flower show. It is well worth a look.

**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: Ian Broadhead, Judith Eadon, Helen Kane, Ric Pawsey, Grace Swiney**



Phone: 03 9890 9288

Box Hill Historical  
Society  
Newsletter



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.