

# Box Hill Historical Society



Volume 24, Issue 5

October 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

**Please note:** there will be no general meeting of the Society in October. The day for our regular monthly lecture meetings—the third Sunday—is also the date of the Whitehorse Festival. We will have a stall at that event instead of the meeting.

The Society's tables will be in the usual place — in the foyer of the Whitehorse Civic Centre. We hope to see you there.

Thus, 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, 18 November 2018**

Guest Speaker — **Graham O'Rourke**

### 'WW1 - Hughes and Mannix - the Conscription Debate'

Twice during WW1, in 1916 and 1917, Australians were asked to vote in a national referendum regarding the introduction of conscription. Both referenda failed and the debate divided the nation.

Our guest speaker, retired history teacher Graham O'Rourke, will discuss the conscription issue and the opposing views of Prime Minister William (Billy) Hughes, and Catholic Archbishop, Dr Daniel Mannix.



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 — October 2018

There has been much activity by the Society since my last report. At the AGM in August three members of the Committee did not stand for re-election. We are pleased to welcome Helen Kane, Ric Pawsey and Grace Swiney, as new committee members replacing Colin Barraclough, Philip Widmer and Gill Madden who chose to retire. I offer my thanks to Colin, Gill and Philip for their assistance in managing the operation of the Society in the past few years.

The Society's major contribution to Heritage Week in September was a significant one. The staging of a Garden Show in the lower town hall required a lot of planning, many meetings, and the active involvement of a wide range of people.

The Garden Show was a huge success, a fact due largely to the efforts of our Secretary, who magnificently marshalled the available personnel and resources. A full report of the Garden Show is provided below, on page 6.

Gary Presland  
*President*

## Whitehorse Spring Festival 2018 21 October 2018

As we catch our collective breaths following the heightened activity of Heritage Week, we are gearing up for this year's Spring Festival. The Society will be conducting its usual stall, at which we will present to the public some aspects of our work. The theme of the Festival this year is 'The Arts' and this will determine what we have on display, and to which of the available publications we will give prominence.

In addition to items for sale, we will make accessible through a laptop, data relating to rate books and newspapers. Our Archivist and her team of workers have prepared new databases that index some of the resources held in the Society's collection. These include World War 2 Civil Emergency Service cards; and a new newspaper scrapbook index, covering part of the 1980s.

Volunteers are needed to staff the Society's stall. The operating hours for the festival are 10 am to 4 pm, and we need to have three people on hand in each of the three shifts: 10-12; 12-2; and 2-4. If you can spare a couple of hours in the afternoon, please contact Helen on **0429 833 324**, or Gary on **0416 316 419**.

### *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

### Cemetery tours

Now that the warmer weather is approaching, we thought it appropriate to re-activate our cemetery tours, and have scheduled the three below. We have also introduced a new method of booking the tours online via Trybooking. Details are:

#### Sunday 28 October 2018

**Creative/Artists Tour:** Joy Hester (artist), Edouard Borovansky (founder of Australian Ballet), John Grainger (architect and father of Percy) and J.A. Turner (postcard artist) plus more.

Bookings: <https://www.trybooking.com/YQYA> or <https://www.trybooking.com/433264>

#### Sunday 4 November 2018

**Famous And Unusual Tour:** includes prominent business and professional people such as Sidney Myer, C.J. Dennis and William Angliss.

Bookings: <https://www.trybooking.com/YQYB> or <https://www.trybooking.com/433265>

#### Sunday 2 December 2018

**Pioneers Tour:** visits the graves of some of the early pioneers of the City of Whitehorse.

Bookings: <https://www.trybooking.com/YQYD> or <https://www.trybooking.com/433267>

All tours will commence outside the Cemetery Office, which is in the middle of the Cemetery grounds. Parking is available in Reserve Road or Whitehorse Reserve (with access to the cemetery across the footbridge.) Please note that bookings are essential. The tours will not take place if there are less than five people booked in.

## Another local event of interest

The next meeting of the **Whitehorse Historical Society** will be on Saturday, **13 October 2018**, beginning at 1.00 pm. The Guest Speaker will be James Nicholas, speaking on the subject of *'The Mystery of Fairyland — Kew'*

Meetings of WHS are held at the Schwerkolt Cottage and Museum complex, Antonio Park, Nunawading.

### 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)

### Vale

We are saddened to note the decent passing of two locally-involved people:

**Mary Lou Friday**, the wife of former Box Hill Mayor Robin Friday died on 20 August.

**Kathleen Beanland**, a former member and volunteer of this Society, died on 29 September, at the age of 90. Kathleen was one of eight children of the longest serving principal of Kingswood College, CF Walker and his wife Ethel. She was raised and educated at Kingswood (formerly Box Hill Grammar School). She married Graham, also the child of a school principal (CH Beanland, Footscray Technical School), in 1954 at Box Hill Methodist Church.

Our condolences are extended to both families.

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## Recent speakers

### William R Orange

**Aliya and Robert Porter** spoke to the **August general meeting** about the **history and restoration of their former home, *Carbethon***. Located in Churchill Street Mont Albert and facing north towards the railway line and the hills of Doncaster and Templestowe, it was built in 1922 by George or John Garrett from Box Hill red bricks. The first occupiers were Moreton Wallhouse and his family (1923–1927), followed by the Horsfall family then Ernest Smail (1936–1947, Lance and Mary Ellen Butcher (1947–1988) and Lorraine and Dennis Gordon until 1997. The Gordons ran *Carbethon* as a Special Accommodation Home for 16 elderly women. Through making contact with previous owners or their descendants, including Moreton Wallhouse's son (also named Morton), the Porters were able to display some historic as well as more contemporary images of the house and its garden as part of their talk.

As originally built, the two-storey house was fairly plain. It was extended to the rear and decorated, with statuary and a fountain in the front garden added by the Horsfalls. The driveway entry lychgate was rebuilt with four pillars (originally two) by the Porters. Lance and Mary Ellen Butcher were shown with their Jaguar in the well-tended front garden, maintained by their employed gardener. The Butchers ran the Twylite Trading Company in Lonsdale Street, Melbourne that sold electrical goods (possibly Gilford brand).

In 1997 the Porters were renting the neighbouring house when the Gordons offered to sell them *Carbethon* as they were retiring from the Special Accommodation business. The offer was accepted. An inspection of the house revealed a time capsule, the laminex kitchen was new but otherwise the house was intact. Everything inside except the fire places had been painted white and many of the decorative features covered up. Under the coverings were glass copperlight windows and the original ceilings above lower false ceilings.

Aliya and Robert were both interested in architecture and after seeking some heritage advice, planned out a restoration of the house. The originally green concrete tile roof was in good condition: seaweed insulation was found above the ceilings. Electrical rewiring was required and floor repairs and retiling in the bathroom. A hard renderer was engaged to do replastering, the hot water service and heating replaced and floors resanded. The billiard room, dining room and front (sitting) room were restored with original light fittings, dark stained wood panelling and paint work. Part of the south east corner was demolished and a new bathroom, laundry, kitchen and meals area and nook constructed, with the kitchen fittings referencing 1920s *Home Beautiful* designs.

In the garden the statuary and fountain installed by the Horsfalls were retained, the lychgate timbers renewed and roses planted along the side path at the front. A cypress hedge and an *arbutus* sp. were also planted. (The garden had been included as an entry in the Herald-Sun Garden competitions post WWII.)

The Porters concluded by noting the pleasure they had had in restoring and living in *Carbethon* (an Aboriginal term thought to mean 'cheerful'), which had been an important part of their lives. After completing the restoration they sold the house and moved on in 2005.

The September general meeting was addressed by **William Orange** on the topic 'A Pockett full of Gardens'. The talk covered the contribution to horticulture of the speaker's great grandfather Thomas W Pockett OBE, in particular his work in municipal garden design and chrysanthemum culture.

Many Melburnians will be familiar with the names if not the garden design work of the likes of William Guilfoyle and Carlo Catani. Thomas Pockett has largely been forgotten, in spite of his modest but significant opus of executed designs of municipal gardens in the eastern and south-eastern suburbs of Melbourne.

Pockett was born in 1857 in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. He started gardening at the age of 10 at Ireton House, a relatively modest local house, and did farming and market gardening work for his father, a market gardener. At the age of 16 he took a position at Parker's Nursery in Tooting (London) and at 18 was appointed plantsman at Lord Falmouth's Mereworth Castle. At 19 he became foreman in the gardens of JH Elwes at Colesbourne Park, a large estate near Cheltenham, and won his first prize for chrysanthemums at a Cheltenham flower show.

Thomas and Louisa Pockett emigrated as newlyweds to Australia in 1878, apparently after an uncle suggested that there were good prospects for gardeners in Victoria. Their first two years in Victoria were financially difficult, with a paucity of private positions as gardeners and fluctuating markets and conditions for market gardening. Pockett worked in Hawthorn in the early 1880s, and later at 'Kenley', a property in Kooyong Road, Toorak.

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## Recent speakers (continued)

In 1884 after the Victorian Horticultural Improvement Society's autumn show, *The Leader* of 10 May wrote, 'As regards the chrysanthemum (flowers) ... we question if finer flowers than those staged by Mr. Pockett could be seen anywhere'. He also won the Society's first prize for the 'best arranged and kept gentleman's garden within 5 miles of the Melbourne GPO'.

In about 1886 the family was able to buy land and build a house in Malvern Road, Malvern, intending to use the land in particular for the growing and production of new chrysanthemum cultivars. After Pockett relinquished his position at 'Kenley' in 1888 he was invited to prepare a plan for 'improvements' to the recreation reserve to the rear of the Malvern Shire Hall.

The plans were approved, Pockett was appointed curator, and the Malvern Gardens in High Street were officially opened in December 1890. He designed these, Malvern's first public gardens, with serpentine paths and without straight lines or formal angular beds. A row of English oaks was planted on each side of the drive, and there were plantings of palms, elms and flowerbeds. The lawns and plantings were arranged so that long views could be obtained through the gardens. His design included a lily pond with a grotto and fountain located around an existing natural spring. The design used traditional 18th century English landscaping principles of light, shade and perspective including large trees and vistas of expansive lawn.

A number of areas are recognised as having been designed by Pockett. Malvern Gardens, Central Park and Alexandra Gardens were known within the family as Pockett designs, while Barkly Gardens in Richmond was acknowledged so in a document located some years ago. Some clues pointing to Central Gardens in Glenferrie having been designed by Pockett were seen in a newspaper article that refers to Henry Street. The designs of Caulfield Park and Hopetoun Gardens (Elsternwick) were attributed to Pockett by a researcher in c.1980. More recently, Caulfield Park was confirmed with more recent access to Council minutes' summaries, while there was a newspaper article about the Hopetoun Gardens bandstand and a controversy about the first recital. When the Central Gardens design was approved in 1896 Pockett also submitted a plan for the 'West Hawthorn Reserve' bounded by Barton Street and Burwood Road, which has become St. James' Park.

Although Malvern Gardens and a number of Pockett's other designs still maintain herbaceous borders, the floral displays have largely disappeared. The enduring and notable aspect of his designs is the general layout (which has generally been retained) of the parks and his tree selection, including both exotic trees - in addition to oaks and elms a range of conifers, and Australian natives where appropriate. He was responsible for street tree planting in Malvern—a notable avenue of planes can be seen in Finch Street and maintained significant skills in tree selection—his advice continued to be sought after he had 'retired' to Healesville (e.g. Green Street pinoaks 1930 were planted on his recommendation).

He was assisted by his eldest daughter Rose when living in Malvern, especially when overseas. His son Bill assisted for some years with the propagation and distribution of chrysanthemums and later went on to establish his own nursery in Canterbury and later Dandenong, growing chrysanthemums and dahlias in particular. His youngest son John Pockett moved to Healesville to assist and later establish a nursery growing and distributing chrysanthemums in cooperation with TWP (he also grew roses some of which are still surviving in Healesville). His wife Louisa was clearly supportive of her husband's endeavours, is likely to have assisted with the chrysanthemum work, and helped to assemble the early records of Thomas Pockett's achievements.

He received an OBE in 1945 at the age of 88 for services to horticulture, despite his reputation in both chrysanthemum culture and park design being well established before WW1. He was also recognised by Malvern Horticultural Society and in Healesville. He left a lasting legacy of parks and gardens and street trees - some of his chrysanthemum cultivars still survive today e.g. *Louisa Pockett*. Contribution to horticulture continues with his descendants: John Pockett's elder son Tom Pockett was a nurseryman and his other son Bob Pockett worked for the Department of Agriculture, making a significant contribution to the virus free strawberry runner scheme: some of the next generation continue involvement in horticulture.

An earlier version of this article was published in *Australian Garden History* - Volume 27, No. 1 July 2015. This article also draws on material prepared by R.J. Pockett, J.B. Pockett and Di Foster (Malvern archivist), and a range of newspaper articles and pamphlets

## Heritage Week Garden Show

A subcommittee of Judith Eadon, Helen Harris and William Orange was formed, and various organisations were approached to assist, with both planning the programme and providing exhibits for the Show. Brian Pell from Greenlink and the Box Hill Community Gardens, Heather Eadon, also from Greenlink and the Field Naturalists Club, and Alison Sizer from the Urban Harvest group, were soon on board. The attitude of the Box Hill Garden Club, successor to the Box Hill Horticultural Society, which declined to take part, was a little off putting, but fortunately one of their committee members, Kathrin Grellis, came on board, and proved of immeasurable use in drawing in others, including retired florist Lyn Sutton and floral art exponent Jan Keppie. William used his connections too, and soon we had other groups in the mix. Bob Yeomans, a former President of the Box Hill Horticultural Society was a late but most welcome addition, with his long knowledge of the practicalities of running a Show. And late in the piece the Floristry Department at Box Hill Institute agreed that 12 of their students would take part, each doing a piece with an historical theme. Helen provided them with extracts from old newspapers to help with the concept.

Whitehorse Council provided a \$1500 grant to help with costs, and the Federal Member for Chisholm, Julie Banks, and the State Member for Box Hill, Robert Clark, also provided assistance. Bunnings, Seasol International and Garden Express also made donations. Council's Parkswide team produced a great display, both in the foyer, and in the lower town hall itself, while Jacque Nichols-Reeves, the Art Curator, arranged botanical paintings around the walls. Blackburn branch of the Red Cross took care of the refreshments. Guest speakers were Jill Abbott, Max Campbell, Alison Sizer and Bob Yeomans, and the following groups took part:

Australasian Native Orchid Society  
Box Hill and Nunawading Community Gardens  
Box Hill Floral Art Society  
Box Hill Institute  
Bromeliad Society of Victoria  
Field Naturalists Club of Victoria

Gardens for Wildlife  
Greenlink Indigenous Nursery  
Vermont Floral Art Group  
Waverley Bonsai Group  
Waverley Garden Club  
Whitehorse Urban Harvest Group

As well as flowers, fruit and vegetables on display, Helen researched and assembled (with Gary's help) the history of the two horticultural societies that had existed, along with the *Herald* Garden Week Shield that we've had in storage for years. Some of the individuals researched also featured in the cemetery tour that we conducted two days later, in conjunction with the Surrey Hills Historical Society.

In all, our activities during this Heritage Week were a great success, judging by the comments at the time and subsequent feedback.



(Left) Flower Show sub committee (missing Judith Eadon and Heather Eadon);  
(Above) the central floral feature created by Whitehorse Parkswide staff.

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## Committee profiles

*The following pieces have been written by members of the Committee, as part of our occasional series of profiles of members of the Committee.*

### *Helen Kane*

I was born in Hobart in 1948, and lived in Tasmania until I came to Melbourne when I was 21 years old. The goal was to build up some experience in the public service, and go back home in due course. But I never did go back to live. I discovered social work, and had a very fulfilling career, in a number of organisations, mostly not for profit, until I retired 5 years ago.

I bought my home in 1995, and have lived here in Surrey Hills ever since. And I love it; it feels like a community.

Over 70 years of my life, the changes have been extraordinary. I was a public servant when women no longer had to leave when they married, and then we had maternity leave, then equal pay for women was introduced (over 3 years as I recall). We had paid study leave, financial support for tertiary study (all of which made it possible for me to train as a social worker). And of course now, we see the gradual removal of all of the things that made it possible to get an education, develop a worthwhile career, own a home and live a life enriched by art and culture. I was incredibly lucky to be born when I was, and I am concerned about the future of young people now.

My interests are my dog, my garden (I have a plot in the local community garden), listening to chamber music, reading, and remaining engaged with the world.

### *John Barnao*

I was born in Carlton to parents who migrated from the volcanic islands of Italy's UNESCO-listed Aeolian Archipelago.

My father Vincent was a well-known fruiterer who worked in Box Hill from 1930, in later years selling produce from his recognisable Kombi Van, until he retired in 1982.

We lived locally and after attending Box Hill High School from 1968 to 1973, I studied Economics and Commerce at the University of Melbourne. I went on to pursue a career in banking, accountancy and tax.

During my first trip to Europe, I completed a course of French studies at Montpellier which ignited my interest in European History. This was enhanced by journeys tracing the Spanish conquest of South America, focusing on the Inca civilization of Peru. Further travels ensued, culminating in post-graduate studies in Applied Linguistics at Monash University, specialising in German.

In recent years, I have been exploring the grass root stories of ordinary people, especially the post-WW1 settlement experiences of Italian migrants, about which talks have been presented at Genealogy and Family History seminars.



A part of the historical display at the Heritage Week Flower Show. Photo by Margaret Wood

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**(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**



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Box Hill Historical  
Society  
Newsletter



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**WHITEHORSE**

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