

Box Hill Historical Society Newsletter



Volume 28, Issue 1
February 2022

(In the usual course of events)
General meetings of the BHHS
are held on the 3rd Sunday of
each month, in the *Bert Lewis*
Room in Box Hill Library, 1040
Whitehorse Road, beginning at 2
pm.
Enquiries are welcome, on:
03 9285 4808

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

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

Next Society Meeting

Sunday 10 April 2022, beginning at 2.00pm
in

the Bert Lewis Room in Box Hill Library, 1040 Whitehorse Road

Guest Speaker: **Bill Sawyer: 'Growing up on a dairy in Box Hill'**

From horses and milk delivery to dairy chemistry and medical science: after growing up on his parents' dairy, Bill became Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at The University of Melbourne.



ANZAC Service at Wattle Park

Ed Bright, Secretary of the Wattle Park Heritage Group, has advised that an Anzac Commemoration Service will again be held at the Patriotic Area within Wattle Park on **Sunday 24 April, commencing at 1.00pm.**

As in the past, the service is to be held beside the Lone Pine. Members of this society are invited to attend the service and if they wish, to place a floral tribute at either the Lone Pine or the adjacent Clocktower monument. Once again, a light afternoon tea will be served at the conclusion of the service. The president will be in attendance, but of course, the invitation is, open to all members of the Society.

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

A message from the President

It was a pleasant change to be able to attend in person, the March general meeting; that was our first face-to-face gathering since May 2021 and only our second in two years.

It was a pleasure, also, to take in Alison O'Donoghue's magnificent talk on the 1960 White Horse Festival. Alison put a lot of work into the presentation and it was a great pity that she was unable to give it in person. We were grateful that Ian Broadhead was on hand to answer questions. The event was a perfect combination of multi-media know-how and personal experience (aided by a very good memory!).

Looking ahead, the committee has planned a programme of interesting speakers and other events for the remainder of the year. COVID-19 allowing, the Society's customary activities should be resumed on a regular basis, through the year. It is testament to our durability that we have been able to provide some service to members and the public during the pandemic, but it will be great day when our operations can assume the new normal.

Gary

Archivist's report April 2022

Our premises in the town hall hub have re-opened, and volunteers are slowly returning, although illnesses, including a Covid infection, have depleted their ranks somewhat. It would be good to be back to full strength, although the predicted surge in both influenza and a new strain of Covid in the winter months will no doubt have an impact.

The index to names in the 1954–84 Rate Valuation books for West Ward streets A-G has now been uploaded to the Society's website, and volunteers have commenced entering the data for the rest of the Ward, with one book being completed already.

We have applied to the Council for a community grant to assist in transferring the catalogue to the Victoria Collections website, as this will make it more easily accessible, easier to upload new data, and provide free cloud storage. It is a massive task which will take months to complete. In the meantime, the only online access to the old catalogue remains through the library system, details of which are on our website. This version of the catalogue is four years old.

Recent donations include documentation from the establishment and early years of the local Apex Club, including some Annual Reports, and a history prepared in 1979 listing members; a 1970 programme for *Show Boat*, produced by the Box Hill Musical Comedy Society; and newspaper cuttings to do with the building of the transport interchange in the 1980s. All of this was donated by the McLaughlin family.

In other news, our much-delayed pre-loved book sale will hopefully take place at the town hall on Sunday 31 July, as part of the Open House scheme. *Books, beanies and bargains* will have a variety of material, including lots of Box Hill memorabilia, books on every conceivable subject and some lovely hand-knitted beanies. Please mark the date in your diaries now.

Till next time,

Helen

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 reticent; 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.

New members

The Committee is pleased to welcome the following new members. We hope their connection to the Society will be a long and mutually beneficial one.

Louise and Luke Nelson,
Elgar Road, Box Hill

Forthcoming Society events

The following general meetings of the Society are planned for the next couple of months. This much the Committee can do. As to whether the meetings can be safely held in person, or will best be done remotely through Zoom, is largely beyond the Committee's control. We all live in hope.

Sunday, 15 May 2022, 2:00 pm

Guest presenter: John Rivers

'The historic Willis organ at the Box Hill Wesley Church'

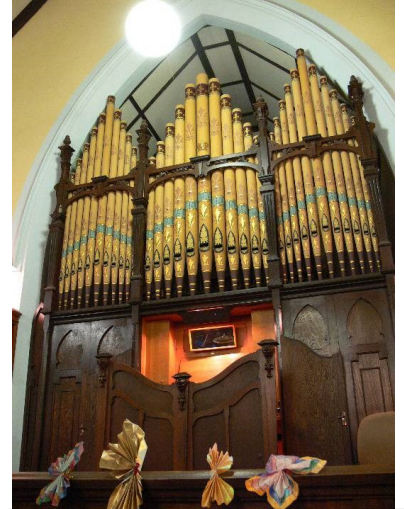
John Rivers, the principal organist at the Box Hill Wesley Uniting Church, at the corner of Oxford and Station Streets, will tell us the history of the organ and demonstrate its special features through some recital.

N.B. The location for this meeting is: Wesley Uniting Church, Corner Oxford and Station Streets, Box Hill

Sunday, 19 June 2022, 2:00 pm

Guest speakers: David and Marlene Pietsch

'History of the Lutheran Church in Box Hill'
(More detail to follow in next Newsletter)



The Henry Willis organ in the Oxford Street, Methodist Church, whence it was moved in 1929. It is the only example of Willis' work in Victoria.

A visit to Banff

The Society was approached for assistance in helping to restore some interior damage to the heritage listed *Banff* in Albion Road. The heritage listing does not cover the interior, which means there is no grant funding available. The current overseas owner is only prepared to have a minimum repair job done, but the lead tenant would love to have the damaged fireplace fully restored, meaning a need to raise about \$1500. We suggested a 'Visitors Day', with guided tours, might be a way to raise sufficient funds, and offered to mount a display and assist with the tours, an offer that has been taken up. Details of the day are given here.

Visitors Day: Sunday, 1 May 2022

Rarely open to the public, this magnificent mansion has stood proudly in Albion Road Box Hill since 1890. Built as a private home, Banff Ladies College operated from the site from 1892 to 1908, before it reverted to a private residence. Learn about the history of the house and some of its occupants via a tour and historic display, and help with fundraising to restore an earthquake damaged fireplace.

Guided tours, **by appointment only**, beginning on the hour – 10 am to 4 pm.

Booking is essential, via Trybooking (see link below).
Cost: \$10 per person, includes refreshments.

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



Recent speakers

Gary Presland

The **February general meeting** was conducted by means of ZOOM. The guest speaker, **Lorraine Mitchell** of Whitley College, was uncertain that she would be able to attend the meeting, and had pre-recorded her presentation. The subject was '**Box Hill Baptist Church: the first 50 years**'.

New arrivals to Box Hill before the 1880s had a choice of two churches in which to worship—the Wesleyan Chapel in Woodhouse Grove, or the United Free Methodist church in Station Street. The nearest Baptist church was well beyond the boundaries of the parish, in Kew. In Box Hill a significant number of civic identities, including the Ellingworth family, were United Free Methodists. It was the joining of several branches of Methodists in 1900, led by William Henry Garibaldi Ellingworth, that was the catalyst to break away from the Methodists to form a Baptist congregation.

Towards the turn of the century the Methodists of Victoria chose to unite. In places where there was more than one congregation, a choice was made as to where to meet. In Box Hill it was the Wesleyans, with a newer and larger church that were favoured. This did not suit the Ellingworths, so they chose to start anew, and become Baptists. WHG Ellingworth and Charles Carter, a lay preacher from Auburn, set about creating a Baptist congregation in Box Hill.

The first Baptist service was held on Sunday, 1 April 1900, in the upstairs area of the Recreational Hall. This location soon proved to be less than ideal, and a move was made to purchase land and erect dedicated premises. Ellingworth's orchard was bought for £150. A large chapel, capable of seating 150 people was built by a local contractor and the first service was held on 19 January 1902.

Martin Luther Palmer Murphy was in charge of the cause from the beginning. However, it was difficult for the congregation to pay the stipend for Murphy, so an arrangement was made with the church in Lilydale. For five years Murphy shared his duties between the two areas. Murphy accepted the offer of a place at Alberton in South Australia, and left in 1909. After 18 months his position in Box Hill was filled by Walter Crawford, a former Free Wesleyan. Box Hill was his first post, and it lasted only two years, after a dispute between the pastors and deacons, brought a number of resignations within the church, including that of Crawford. He was replaced in June 1914 by Revd Louis Field, a 56-year-man who

was proud to say 'that old-time religion was good enough for me.'

During the years of World War I, the congregation continued to grow, highlighting the inadequacies of the chapel—services were uncomfortably crowded, particularly in summer. There were moves to pay off the existing debt and commence a building fund. But an offer of £1000 toward the purchase of land for a new chapel, lapsed because no suitable site could be found. Field moved to Coburg in 1922 and was replaced by Revd Gordon Rees, who had overseen the building of a new church at Essendon. Plans for a brick structure were in hand; the foundation stone was laid in February 1925, and the church was opened in the following August, with a total cost of £3950. The older wooden chapel was removed and re-erected next to the new church, where it is now referred to as 'the barn'.

Rees resigned in 1928, on being appointed General Secretary of the Baptist Union. His replacement was Revd Raymond Farrer. During the depression of the 1930s, much effort was put into servicing the debt, with creative measures, such as 'Gift days', Associate membership, and Harvest Festivals, adopted to raise funds. By 1935 applications for baptisms were on the rise, and morale was much improved. The congregation received a boost when many former members returned to the area during the 'Back to Box Hill' celebrations for the opening of the new Town Hall.

Farrer resigned the pastorship in 1942 and was replaced in the following year by Dr Henry G Scholefield. The post-war building boom saw the local population grow rapidly, and church services for children increased significantly. In 1948 Charlie and Estelle Hemming ran a children's mission. This led to open air activities, and the purchase of an old tramways bus, fitted out as a bus. The vehicle was used for open air services and for transporting to Box Hill for Sunday School. The exercise became so successful that new churches had to be set up in the district, to accommodate the increased numbers.

The jubilee celebrations for Box Hill Baptists in 1951, included the opening of the new church on Springfield Road.

On the day, Lorraine was able to tune in to watch her own presentation and, more importantly, she was present, and pleased to answer members' questions.

Recent speakers (cont.)

Helen Harris OAM

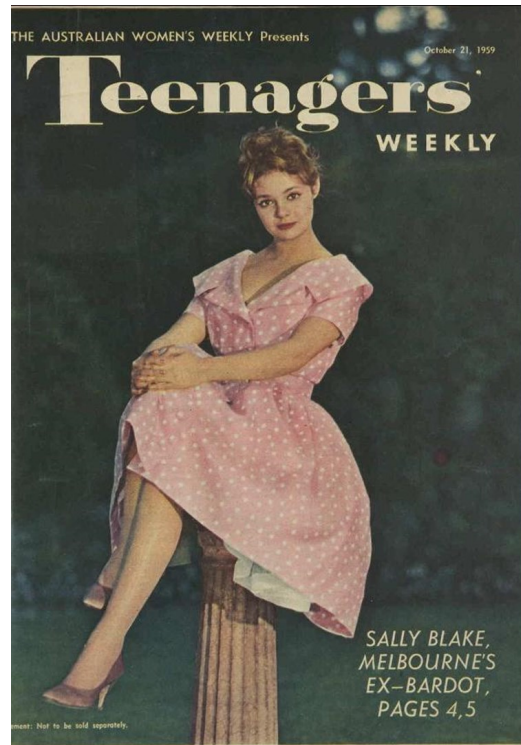
Guest speaker Alison O'Donoghue was unable to present in person at the **March general meeting**, but had prepared a Powerpoint, complete with narrative, in advance, and with Ian Broadhead handling questions, the presentation went very smoothly.

The 1960 Whitehorse Festival was the first of its kind in Box Hill and its activities ran from 2 to 10 September. Organised by the Box Hill Chamber of Commerce, it was planned to draw attention to the city of Box Hill in general, and to its shopping areas—to ensure that people from throughout Melbourne would be enticed to come and see. The Official Festival Programme included a fashion and beauty parade, hairdressing and beauty demonstrations, a flower and floral art show, a car trial, a 'Made in Box Hill' exhibition, a baby competition, cookery demonstrations, and a live telecast of the TV show 'Sunnyside Up' at the Town Hall.

The most anticipated event of the festival, however, was in fact its opening act—a special appearance by none other than Lady Godiva. Taking the part was local 18-year-old TV personality Miss Sally Blake; she was known for starring in the HSV-7 television show 'Bandwagon'.

An hour before the procession was due to start, a large crowd of onlookers started gathering in Station Street, Whitehorse Road, and Carrington Road along the route that the procession was to take. The crowd grew to become six to seven deep along the roads, with an estimated attendance of 8000. Sally led the procession, sitting atop 'Olga', a specially-chosen white circus horse, flanked by two handmaidens also on horses—19-year-old Miss Sue White of Templestowe, and 18-year-old Miss Peggy March, of Box Hill. The trio was followed by a jazz band, clowns handing out balloons, and marching girls from the Burwood Coronets, the Burwood Shamrocks, and the Burwood Emeralds.

The Heinz-Whitehorse Festival Baby Competition proved enormously popular, with over 200 entries. The Heinz representative said that it was the biggest suburban baby show he had ever seen. The champion baby of the competition was little Suellen Donohue of 55a Pope Road, Blackburn; the only daughter of Mr and Mrs J Donohoe.



The live telecast of HSV7's variety show 'Sunnyside Up' was the first ever on-location performance, intentionally planned to coincide with the White Horse Festival.

Alison concluded with details of what she was able to be gleaned about Sally Blake. She was the eldest of three girls, daughters of Brian and Ursula Blake, who lived at 12 Marlborough Street. Her TV and modelling career lasted only a year, as she gave it away. She later learned to fly a plane, became a draftsman and was part of the team working on the Mulgrave-Scoresby interchange. Later, she became a screenwriter and collaborated with John Papadopoulos in making at least two films, *Matchless* and *Jogstrot*, in the 1970s. She was interviewed about her life in 1974; her activities after that date are unknown.

White Horse Festival

BOX HILL TO GO GAY FOR NINE DAYS

CARNIVAL gaiety will come to Box Hill during the WHITE HORSE FESTIVAL to be staged for nine days from Friday, September 2. Streets will be decorated and floodlit at night and radio, stage and TV personalities will be in the centre on every day of the campaign.

Organised by the Box Hill Chamber of Commerce, it is hoped that the success of this year's festival will result in it being an important annual event.

Retiring president of the Box Hill Chamber of Commerce (Mr. Bruce McKenzie) said this week that the White Horse Festival was planned to draw attention to the City of Box Hill in general and to the shopping areas in particular and no effort would be spared to ensure that an interesting programme of events would draw people from all over Melbourne.

Final planning is still under way. Some of the events listed are:

1. A Baby Show sponsored by the H. J. Heinz Co.
2. Fashion Shows.
3. World class cookery demonstrations.
4. Trade exhibitions, a feature of which will be a MADE IN BOX HILL EXHIBITION.
5. A Flower Show.
6. A Car Trial.
7. Competitions for the shopping public with worthwhile prizes.

8. One of the highlights of the week will be a "first" of which Box Hill can be justly proud.

On Friday, September 9, at 7.30 p.m., HSV Channel 7 will do a live telecast of their top rating show "Sunnyside Up" direct from the stage of the Box Hill Town Hall.

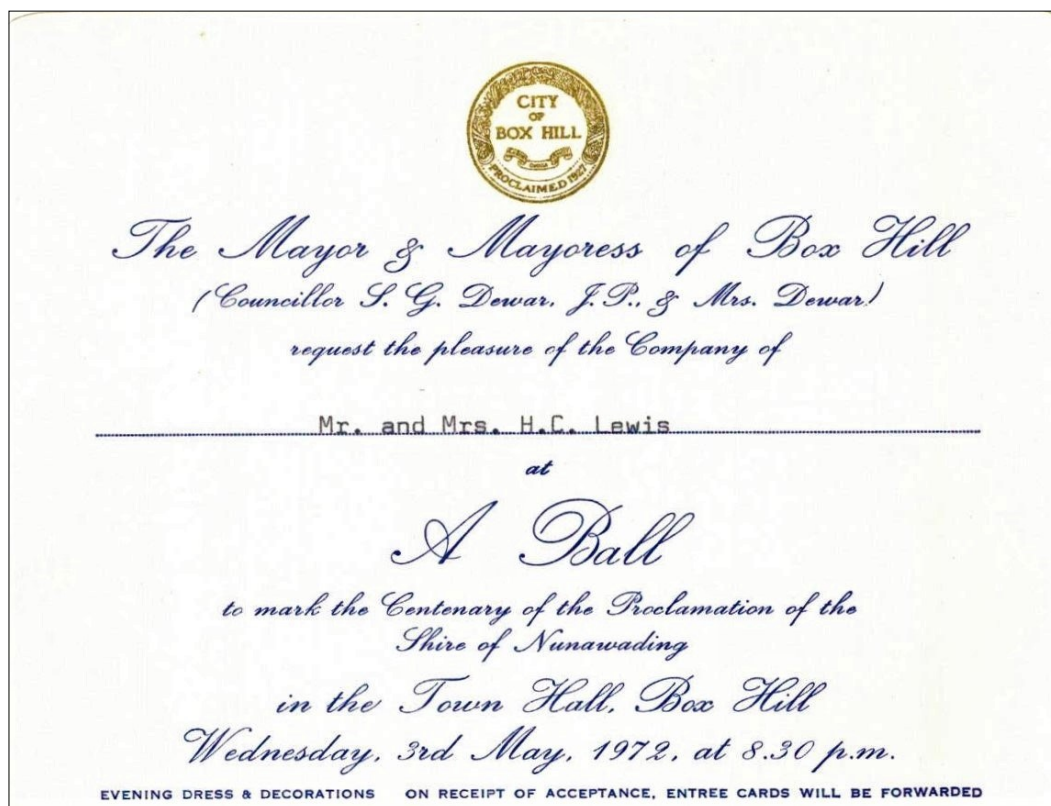
This will be the first time that a TV show of this kind has been presented from a Town Hall. The public will be admitted to watch this telecast and booking details will be announced later. Top line stars are being booked for this performance.

Another Centenary

Last year we had a Zoom presentation on the celebrations that took place in 1957, on the centenary of the founding of local government in the area, with the formation of the Nunawading District Road Board in 1857.

Another centenary celebration took place in May 1972, to commemorate the proclamation of the Shire of Nunawading, in May 1872. While Road Boards were limited to responsibility for the erection and maintenance of local roads and bridges, Shire Councils were responsible for establishing animal pounds, and implementing various public health requirements such as licensing slaughterhouses. They could also borrow money for permanent works.

Activities were considerably more muted on this centenary occasion. Box Hill Council held a Centenary Ball on 3 May, and a Joint Special Meeting of the Box Hill and Nunawading City Councils was held at the Council Chambers in Whitehorse Road, Nunawading on 5 May. This was presided over by the respective mayors, Cr Stanley Gordon Dewar of Box Hill and Cr David Philip Gawler of Nunawading. Current and former Councillors were invited, along with the President of the Legislative Council, Mr R.W. Garrett, who gave an address. Next month will be the sesquicentenary of that event. As far as we know, no events are planned.



Box Hill's World record woman's cyclist

Women in the World

"Pickerup": The world's record for women cyclists has been twice shattered by Australians. Following on Miss Jean Snell's fast ride from Melbourne to Geelong and back, Mrs. Ethel Carter, of Box Hill (Vic.), covered the 100 miles of the same course in 5hrs, 20mins, beating Miss Snell's record by 23mins, 4 secs. "And if I hadn't got a cramp I'd have made it half an hour," remarked Mrs Carter when she finished the run.

(From *The Australian WOMAN'S MIRROR*, October 27, 1931)

Garden visitors

By Donald Thomson

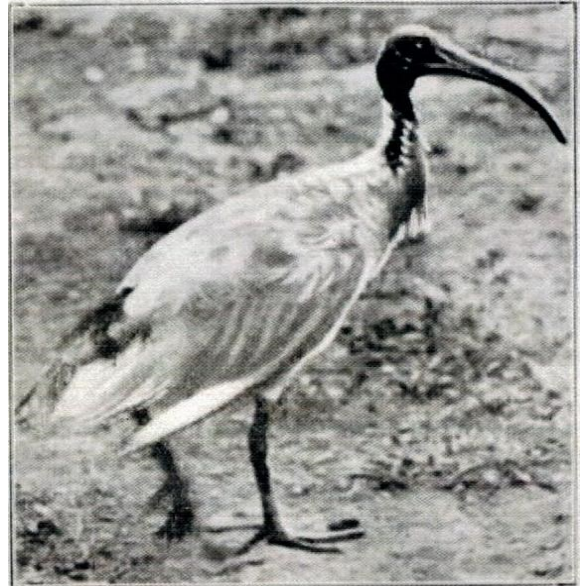
(From *The Australian Home Beautiful*, July 1926, p. 10)

"Joker"

Quite the strangest bird visitor I have known was a solitary White Ibis which visited the home of Messrs Rodgerson Bros. at Box Hill, last year. I am indebted to Mr A. J. Campbell, of Box Hill, the veteran ornithologist, who first took me to see this extraordinary bird. Residents of Box Hill were often surprised by the sight of the huge bird which flew about with a flock of pigeons, or surveyed the neighborhood solemnly from a chimney-top,

Each morning Joker, as Mr Rodgerson called the Ibis, strolled up to the kitchen door to snap up the scraps of meat thrown out to her. After each morsel she strolled off to the nearest water, to wash down the mouthful. Joker evidently thoroughly approved of her new home, and established herself permanently in the poultry yard. It was not long before she reigned supreme—one thrust of her long scimitar bill putting the most assuming old gander to flight.

Then one day Joker selected a quiet corner of the poultry yard, under a quince tree, and proceeded to construct a nest. Before long she had completed the huge platform of sticks shown in the photograph. There she deposited two large white eggs—at least they were white to start with, but later they assumed an indescribable tint. Then Joker began to sit on the eggs. After some time, one fell through the frail platform and came to grief. Undaunted, Joker continued to squat solemnly on the other egg for some weeks before she finally lost heart and gave up the hopeless task! It would have been difficult to imagine a more extraordinary visitor to a suburban garden than Joker, the "old maid" Ibis—the self-elected mistress of the poultry yard.



A snapshot of "Joker" the wandering spinster Ibis, who took charge of a Box Hill poultry yard, built her crazy nest under a quince tree and vainly sought to hatch a pair of eggs.



The curious nest of "Joker", the optimistic spinster Ibis, who took up her abode in the farm yard at Mr Rodgerson's home at Box Hill. She sat on this solitary egg for weeks and weeks in spite of the fact that its fellow had fallen through.

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

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(Town Hall Hub, rear Box Hill Town Hall)
Hours: 11–4, Tuesdays; otherwise, by appointment

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Shane Hübner, Ric Pawsey, Caitlin Stevens



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Box Hill Historical
Society
Newsletter



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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.