

# Box Hill Historical Society Newsletter



## Volume 26, Issue 3

(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 1 of Box Hill Library, 1040 Whitehorse Road, beginning at 2 pm. However, in the present circumstances, all meetings are **CANCELLED**.

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.**

## A message from the President

Considering we are locked down, in the day and in the night, we need to be **U**plifted, by something different, something bright. Although we can't have **R**egular meetings (that's clearly not permitted) we are steadfast in our **F**ocus: to studying our past we are nonetheless committed. And so that **E**very one can know that we've been busy, in isolation **W**e, that is the committee, present the following information

In light of the pandemic, allowances has been made by Consumer Affairs for incorporated bodies such as the Society to defer their **Annual General Meeting**. We are looking tentatively at an on-line AGM in November but further details will be available in the next Newsletter.

## 75th Anniversary of VP Day

15 August, Victory in the Pacific Day, commemorates Japan's acceptance of the Allied demand for unconditional surrender, made on 14 August 1945. For Australians, it meant that the Second World War was finally over. The Minister for Veterans, Shaun Leane, has provided the following details regarding commemoration of the event.

While the 75th Anniversary of the end of the war will look very different, the Government's commemorative and cultural program 'At home' provides other ways to connect with and thank our veterans.

A presentation will be hosted on the RSL Victoria and The Shrine of Remembrance Facebook pages from 11.20 am on VP Day, while that weekend, Victorians can also take part in an interactive digital exhibition 'WWII at Home: Response, Reflection & Rejuvenation', curated by the National Trust of Australia in conjunction with Open House Melbourne and the Centre for Architecture Victoria.

Some of Melbourne's iconic buildings and institutions, including The Shrine of Remembrance, Old Treasury Building and Museums Victoria—as well as local and regional community organisations and museums—will also take part in the anniversary by holding online exhibitions over the coming weeks.

Explore the full program at [www.vic.gov.au/world-war-2-75th-anniversary](http://www.vic.gov.au/world-war-2-75th-anniversary)

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See page 4 below, for an account of the memories and perspectives of some local people from the time of VP Day.

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](https://www.facebook.com/boxhillhistoricalsociety)

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## New members

The president and committee are pleased to welcome the following individuals as members of the society. We hope that their membership is a long and mutually enjoyable one.

**Cr Raylene Carr** is in her 3rd term as a Councillor for Morack Ward. She is on Whitehorse Council's Heritage Advisory Committee and is the current Chair of the Visual Arts Committee. Raylene is a keen photographer and has a long-standing interest in history.

**John Emerson AM** is recognised Australia-wide as a specialist in the tax laws applicable to charities and until recently headed the Herbert Smith Freehill's Charity Law practice. John was the pro bono partner at the Melbourne office which pioneered such activities which are now commonplace for large law firms. He has recently retired.

**David Tolstrup** is a former president of the Box Hill Chamber of Commerce and the current president of Box Hill Burwood Rotary; both David and his father Fred feature in our newspaper scrapbooks.

## Donations

The Committee is pleased to thank those members who have made generous donations to the Society's finances in recent months. In some cases this was done as part of the process of becoming a member of the Society, while some members took the opportunity, in renewing their membership, to add a gift.

## Box Hill Library 70th anniversary

In October 2020, Whitehorse Manningham Libraries will be celebrating the 70th anniversary of Box Hill Library. In advance of this event, a callout to its community will be made, to share stories, memories and photos of what the Library has meant to you over the years. This campaign will be shared on the Library's Facebook page and via postcards distributed in the coming months.

In the meantime if you have any stories or photos you wish to share, please email: [Christina.Davidson@wml.vic.gov.au](mailto:Christina.Davidson@wml.vic.gov.au)



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## Archivist's report

The town hall has remained closed to both volunteers and the public since March, but I have made a number of visits, and after carefully disinfecting doors, keyboards etc., have managed to complete some research requests for both Council officers and the public.

We have received numerous emails, one of which has resulted in the Society being gifted a wonderful collection of pen and ink sketches of local properties. The works were completed by artist Margaret Picken between 1983 and 2005, when she was commissioned by various real estate agents to produce illustrations of houses that were for sale, such as this one, at 54 William Street. This was an Ellingworth property, sold and removed in 1993.



54 WILLIAM ST, BOX HILL  
MARGARET PICKEN-93  
WOODARDS ~ BOX HILL

I have compiled two indexes to these images, one covering Box Hill, Mont Albert and Surrey Hills, and a second of Burwood properties. Both indexes can be viewed on our webpage at: <https://www.borhillhistoricalsociety.com.au/bhhs-sketches-of-properties/>. Digital copies of these images are available free of charge to members. We do ask a small donation from non-members.

Another donation we have received recently was from Daylesford Historical Society, where a photograph of Bird's Timber Yard was found among a collection donated by Ruby Gunn n   Sweetland, a grand-daughter of James and Mary Ann Collier.

We also had an email from Council officers to say that, following a clean out, they had some old video and reel-to-reel audio tapes we were welcome to have, along with some old papers. A substantial box of material was duly delivered. On inspection, I found that some of the contents really belonged to the Nunawading end of town, and the Whitehorse Historical Society has been offered this material. Once we have managed to get the video tapes to work, we will be able to see whether there is anything worth transferring to a digital format. If anyone has any equipment that can play video tapes, I would love to hear from you. We also need an empty spool for a reel-to-reel tape player. We have access to a player but it is missing a 7 in. (178 mm) take-up spool.

Heritage Week will be held between 10 and 17 September, but because of the COVID-19 restrictions, all events have to be in a virtual form. The theme was to have been 'Hidden history', so this end, I have prepared a slide show with commentary, which focuses on some of the interesting items within our collection. This presentation will be uploaded to both the Council's and our own websites in due course. Details will be found closer to the date on [www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/heritage-week](http://www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/heritage-week)

We are pleased to inform readers that copies of the *Reporter* newspaper up to 1930 have now been digitised and are available on the National Library of Australia's *Trove* website. The URL of *Trove* is: <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/>. That the Society was able to successfully conclude this project is due in part to the generosity of members who made donations that we earmarked for the digitisation of the local newspaper.

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# 75th anniversary of VP Day

William R Orange

## Memories of VP Day August 1945

(previously published August 2005)

**John S. Martin** in his recollections of WWII wrote the following - Declaration of peace on Thursday 16 August 1945 was a joyful occasion. This was really the end for us. I was at Mont Albert Central School in Form 2 (year 8) at the time and the head master came into every room to tell us that the war had finished and we could go home. We had only been there for a short while. When I got home we sat glued to the wireless and listened to joyful music and Mr Chifley talking to the nation.

Then there was a local celebration one evening – I cannot remember if it were on the Thursday, the Friday or the Saturday – at the Box Hill City Oval on the north-west corner of the Box Hill Oval (opposite Box Hill High School). I walked up there with our neighbours, the Drydens, to see the fireworks and join in the communal expression of joy. At Sunday at church the augmented choir sang Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" from *The Messiah*, which was very impressive, as was the last hymn "Now thank we all our God". It had been the basis of the sermon, and I can still remember that the minister said that it was written during the Thirty Years War in Germany (1618-1648) by a Lutheran minister who had strongly guarded and encouraged his flock during the terrible devastations and hardships they suffered during that war. For a few days everyone went around in an exalted state. (Irene King née Clark writes in her memories of St. Peter's Box Hill of the same performance: it was originally intended to have the Box Hill Orchestra accompany the choir, however the conductor, the Vicar of St Peter's the Rev'd Oliver Hole, in a fit of frustration and temper, peremptorily dismissed the orchestra during a rehearsal, so the final performance was accompanied by organ and piano alone.)

**Ian Shand**, at the time a school student, records in his history of the Box Hill Boys Technical School, how it and the local community reacted to the announcement of VP Day. The Prime Minister, Ben Chifley, announced the end of the war in a 9.00 a.m. radio broadcast on 15 August 1945, then proclaimed a two day holiday. Headmaster Shelton called an assembly at the Technical School and told the students, amidst cheers, that the Japanese had given in and the fighting had stopped. He then dismissed a class at a time to avoid too much exuberance as the boys left for home. Ian Shand himself remembers accompanying his 7-year-old friend Bill Cherry and his dad, when they went with a noisy backslapping trainload of joyful people into the city to celebrate VP Day. Flinders Street Station was like an ants' nest, with happy people scurrying everywhere. They forced their way into the crowd in Swanston Street to make their way towards the Town Hall and Bourke Street. A tram was trying to do the same but with little success. It was just inching along dingling its bell, but the crowd took little notice, they were so worked up. They all had the same idea, and so the street became wall to wall of boisterous people shouting, singing and dancing. At one stage my dad was worried that I would get trampled on, so he made me hang on to the back of the slowly moving tram and stood over me to protect me from being crushed. He concludes, "I've never seen or felt anything like it ever (since). Melbourne really 'went to town' in celebration that day."

Of the same momentous event, Andrew Lemon wrote in his landmark history of Box Hill (1978, p. 180):

'When Box Hill woke up the morning after the end of the Second World War it found that 'some exuberant persons'\* had painted the White Horse's head red. Nobody really cared.'

\* Quoted from *Reporter* 24 August 1945.

## Some more recent memories recorded from local residents in August 2020

**Bill St. Aubyn**, now 95, was serving as an aircraft fitter with RAAF 76 Squadron (Kitty Hawks) in Labuan, North Borneo in August 1945. The announcement of the end of the war was received with some cheering and relief, then the servicemen and women went back to work. 76 Squadron was re-equipped with Mustangs and went on to be part of the Occupation Forces in Japan. Bill St. Aubyn was transferred to 13 Squadron flying Venturas; 13 Squadron spent several months picking up the troops and prisoners of war around the surrounding island for repatriation to Australia. Bill was flown to Laverton two days before Christmas 1945; his group were then transported to outside Flinders Street Station where they were left to find their own ways home - he caught a taxi to his home in Richmond where his future brother-in-law had to pay his fare because he had no Australian currency on him. After joining a holiday camping with his family at Rye he soon resumed work with the PMG as a telephone technician.

**Geoff Steinicke's** recollections were also of a relatively low key marking of VP Day, after a more significant celebration of VE Day in June 1945 when there was a thanksgiving service in the local St. Augustine's church in

Mont Albert North. At the time he was a 15-year-old Applied Chemistry student at Swinburne Technical College and his classes had been joined by some somewhat older and highly motivated student colleagues, returned servicemen from Europe who had resumed their studies under the CRTS.

**Barbara Evans**, who was a young girl at the time, remembered her father using her red, white and blue hair ribbons to decorate the family car, then taking the family to drive up and down the local streets with much waving and tooting of car horns. At the same time her future husband, **Brian**, was a student and member of the Army cadet corps at Northcote High School. The Northcote High School cadet corps joined other units to join the VP Day march down Burke Street. Brian's father was an industrial chemist responsible for testing aviation fuel as it arrived in port by tanker ship: as a member of an essential service he had the permits required to have a telephone at home and an alarm clock. The family became long term friends with one of the fuel tanker ship captains who alerted them to the number of enemy submarines in Bass Strait and had survived two sinkings by torpedo.

GAS, COAL CRISIS — Page 5.

OFFICIAL WEATHER FORECAST —  
City: Fine; mild; freshening winds

**The Sun** **V-P**  
**NEWS-PICTORIAL**  
Registered in the U.K. as a newspaper. Published for the Proprietor by the Sun Printing and Publishing Co. Ltd., London.

Largest  
Net Daily  
Sale In  
Australia  
334,614

No. 7142 Melbourne: Wednesday, August 15, 1945 (24 Pages) 2d.

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### Attlee Announces Victory In Pacific

# JAPAN AGREES TO SURRENDER

## MacArthur To Accept Capitulation

**LONDON, Wednesday.—Japan has decided to surrender, and peace has come to the Pacific.**

## MR CHIFLEY DECLARES V-P DAY

**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, Rev.**

**Shane Hübner, Ric Pawsey, Grace Swiney**



Phone: 03 9890 9288

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.