

Box Hill Historical Society Newsletter



Volume 27, Issue 6
December 2021

(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 East-
ern Historical Soci-
eties.**

Heritage Centre re-opening



We are back in action, having re-opened on 23 November, and will remain open every Tuesday from 11am to 4pm, until 14 December, when we will close at 2pm. We will arrange to open for a few hours on the 21 December, if there are requests to do so and appointments are made in advance. We will re-open from the Christmas/ New Year break, from **Tuesday 18 January 2022**.

The President and Committee are glad to wish members of the Society all the very best for a safe and happy Christmas/New Year period. We look forward to seeing you all, in person, in the not-too-distant future.



It's that time of the year, when gift giving can become a problem. Why not purchase something from your Historical Society, such as one of our variety of books, or a gift voucher for a future cemetery or walking tour? Not only would you solve your gift problem, you would also benefit the Society at the same time. Books can be purchased online and posted, or if easier, paid for by cash when collected from our premises at the Town Hall at a mutually convenient time. Vouchers can be personalised and sent electronically.

To see our collection of books go to

<https://www.boxhillhistoricalsociety.com.au/shop-02/>

– remember, the online price includes postage and packaging.

And to find out about our vouchers, go to

<https://www.boxhillhistoricalsociety.com.au/our-tours/>

Please direct any orders for cash sales and vouchers
to boxhillhistory@gmail.com

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

With the year drawing to a close, it is fitting to reflect on how the Society has fared over another trying 12 months. My feeling is that, despite being effectively locked out of our premises, the digital technology at hand has allowed us to continue many of our usual activities.

I can't say that we have done them in the 'usual' way: meetings, for example—both committee and general—have been conducted mostly via ZOOM. (The one exception was the general meeting in May, in which the members present all sat in the same room— socially distanced, of course.) Regarding our use of the ZOOM platform, I am particularly thankful to Rev. Shane Hübner, for willingly taking on the role of host for these meetings and mediating the process.

Through available digital facilities our Archivist has been able to research the lives of a number of people, as well as a range of events, with connections to Box Hill history. The result of her work provides not only material for the Newsletter, but also information that will be of use in future cemetery or street tours and in presentations at general meetings.

And we have been able to keep members informed about what their society is doing. The Newsletter has appeared regularly through the year, and our Facebook page and website are constantly being updated. These activities, at least, have been large unaffected by the pandemic.

I extend my best wishes to all members and their families, for the Christmas season.

Gary

Forthcoming speakers

The Committee has organised speakers for the first couple of months of the New Year. Further details will be provided in forthcoming Newsletters, but to whet your appetite in advance, we can reveal the following:

On **20 February**: **Lorraine Mitchell** will speak on *Box Hill Baptist Church : the first fifty years*

Established in 1900, Box Hill's Baptist Church emerged from the strong Methodist presence in the district, and had in its foundation members, some of its most notable citizens. Mirroring the suburban growth of the era, the church prospered, becoming one of Melbourne's largest Baptist Churches by the middle of the century.

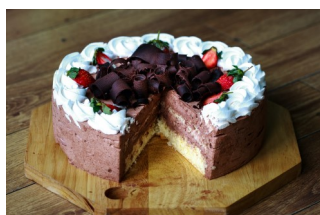
On **20 March**: **Alison O'Donoghue** will speak on the topic of *When Lady Godiva came to Box Hill*. In 1960 the newly-formed Box Hill Chamber of Commerce came up with an idea to promote businesses in the area. Alison's presentation will cover the highlight of the promotion and the various activities that were associated with it.

Society end-of-year function

An invitation is extended to all members, to gather in **Linsley Park** on **Tuesday 14 December**, from 2.00 pm, for an end-of-year picnic.

This venue should ensure that we can more safely be in each other's presence than if we were to meet indoors.

The Committee will provide something by way of light refreshments, (finger food, soft drink, tea and coffee). It would be appreciated, for catering purposes, if members could **RSVP** by phone to the Secretary, on 9890 9288/ 0429 833 324, or by email: <boxhillhistory@gmail.com >



Linsley Park, at the corner of Bank and Linsley Streets; site of the Society's picnic in the park, 14 December 2021.

Suburban Rail Loop information sessions

Because it will have a major impact on our area, the Society is here providing links to the Suburban Rail Loop Authority's project, in relation to the Box Hill area. The first URL provides the basic detail of what is proposed, including the route through the heart of the shopping centre.

<https://bigbuild.vic.gov.au/projects/suburban-rail-loop/srl-east/box-hill>

This second URL offers the chance to book in to the drop in session that is being held on 4 December at the town hall. The committee strongly encourages you to make the time to attend one of these sessions. We did plan to have someone from the SRLA present at one of our meetings, but the pandemic restrictions made that impossible.

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/suburban-rail-loop-drop-in-information-session-burwood-and-box-hill-tickets-204936008117>

This third link shows Council's comments on the various aspects of the project.

<https://www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/sites/whitehorse.vic.gov.au/files/assets/documents/Whitehorse-Advocacy-SRL.pdf>

Finally, online submissions can be made on the Environmental Effects Statement; you are encouraged to do this. The closing date is 16 December.

They cleaned up in Box Hill

The Archivist has been exploring the newly digitised images from the Publications Branch of the Education Department, that Public Record Office Victoria has placed on its website. The images are dated c.1950–1967, and are indexed. She has identified all local ones, and they have been posted to our Facebook page by Caitlin.



There are three that are quite unusual, in that they show the Council garbage collectors and their truck. They are reproduced, for readers' interest, but also with the chance that somebody can identify the men pictured. Please let Helen know if you can put a name to any of the faces.



Archivist's Report

Since my last report, I have continued to answer research queries and research interesting people who once lived in Box Hill for future articles in this Newsletter. I've also opened our premises, to visitors and volunteers, after being closed since July. I'm anticipating a busy time over the next few weeks. I've sorted and priced all of the secondhand Australiana books we now have, (there's quite a variety, ranging from local and family histories to the inner circle railway). They've been placed in the back room, so that anyone visiting can look for themselves, and purchase anything that is of interest. There are too many to list in this Newsletter, and the online sales page is not yet finalized, so it will be personal visits only for the time being.

The old 1950s and '60s negatives that we have had scanned are looking great. They are mainly of the formal debutante balls that used to be held. The next step is to match up the images with the list of debutante names that I have found in newspaper reports for each year, and then produce a listing of these. Copies of the images will be available at \$10 for members, and \$15 for non members.

Till next time,
Helen

Box Hill Tennis Club 125th anniversary


Box Hill Tennis Club has been serving the community since 1895. Covid prevented any 125th birthday celebrations last year and again, this year. However, undaunted, the Club has planned a belated 125th birthday party next year on **Sunday 30 January 2022** from 2pm to 5pm (restrictions permitting).

Further details of what is planned can be found on the Club's Facebook page:

<https://play.tennis.com.au/boxhilltennisclub/News/88152dde-d9b6-4315-8b65-17c5ca8f61fa>

Advert from 1910

The following advertisement has been drawn from a 1910 issue of the *Town and Country Journal*.



Man! Be Strong!

You can be cured of your weakness and be made strong for life by

Dr. Rentel's Vitality Pills

Price 10/6 Bottle, 2 Bottles (full course) 20/- posted anywhere. Send for Pamphlet

Weak and ailing men have learned to consult me, confident of the strictest privacy. They know that I am a reliable professional man, whose education, scientific skill and experience represent the highest type of Specialism. If worried about Enlarged Glands, Varicocele or any form of weakness, no matter how complicated or difficult your case I shall at once know the cause and by my carefully directed treatment, remove the same, and a positive and permanent cure will follow. Don't hesitate a day longer, but write to me at once, plainly stating your case.

S. H. HENSHALL
Qualified Chemist
246 Clarendon Street, South Melbourne, Vic.

DR. RENTEL'S VITALITY PILLS

She grew up (and still lives) in Box Hill

The Committee is pleased to congratulate **Cr Tina Liu** on her election as Mayor of Whitehorse at a recent meeting of Council. Tina is a supportive friend of this Society, and was the guest speaker at a general meeting, in October 2017. Her topic was 'Growing up in Box Hill'. The following few notes are drawn from the report of that occasion, written by William Orange.

Tina's parents emigrated from Taiwan to Australia in the late 1980s. Their first home was in Howard Street, Box Hill. Initially, Tina started her prep year at Box Hill Primary School but struggled with the language, so was enrolled in the Blackburn Language School. She subsequently transferred to St. Francis Xavier Primary School where, although there were still differences in culture, she was able to adapt and easily fit in. It was a close school community; children knew each other and their families, who came from various backgrounds including Greek, Italian, Vietnamese and Chinese.

After primary school she went on to Our Lady of Sion College, part of a school community of about 700 girls. She was in Loreto House, played netball, was in the rock eisteddfod, and—being a keen student of French and Japanese—participated in cultural exchanges when the students from the sister schools in Matsudo and France visited.

Tina continued with tertiary studies at the University of Melbourne and now runs her own business in the marketing and event management fields.

Her parents are hard working and involved in community work, values that were passed on to Tina and her brother. In order to give back to the Elgar community, Tina successfully stood for Council in 2016, and was re-elected in the 2020 elections. The Society applauds Tina's election as Whitehorse Mayor.



Box Hill Mill Gutted by Fire in Early Morning

A strong north wind—frequently the fire fighters' enemy—aided firemen at a Box Hill grain mill blaze yesterday and enabled them to save an adjoining store.

Reported at 5.20 a.m., the fire gutted the three-story mill building and destroyed milling machinery. The basement was flooded by water pumped on to the blaze.

The mill was owned by W. T. Murphy Bros. Pty. Ltd., of Carrington-road, Box Hill, and damage was estimated at between £50,000 and £75,000.

Soon after the fire had been extinguished at 8 a.m., building inspectors examined the factory and ordered that a guard fence be placed round it.

Huge steel girders, twisted by intense heat, caused sections of the 50-foot walls to bulge, and as the mill had been reduced to a brick shell, police feared that one of the walls might collapse under wind

pressure and crash on the foot-path.

Fifteen firemen and four appliances from Box Hill, Surrey Hills, Hawthorn and Eastern Hill, under Third Officer W. T. Aldridge, fought the fire and had it under control in an hour and a half.

Taking advantage of the north wind, the firemen at-

tacked the flames from a landing inside the three-story grain store adjoining the mill.

Modern Plant

Much of the machinery destroyed will be very difficult to replace. One machine, a modern oat miller, only recently arrived from England, and had been installed.

Although hundreds of cases of ready-prepared stock feed escaped the fire, large quantities of bran, pollard and grain were destroyed or damaged by fire and water.

Mr. R. F. Rowe, a resident in nearby Oxford-street, said that flames burst through all the windows of the mill.

Several local residents, clad only in pyjamas, watched the fire, the cause of which is unknown.

From *The Age*,
Tuesday 13 March
1951, p. 4

Recent Speakers

The need to 'spread the word' is something that regularly exercises the thinking of your Committee, coupled with deciding on the best means of achieving that aim. An historical society focuses its attention on the past; keeping up-to-date with developments in communications media is rarely core business for groups such as ours. So when committee member **Caitlin Stevens** agreed to provide an overview of the use of contemporary social media, the committee was pleased. Caitlin spoke to the **October** meeting, by means of ZOOM.

Members were introduced to the variety of programs that are available for making contact with other users, quickly sharing information and images, and staying up-to-date with contemporary themes. Caitlin outlined the advantages and disadvantages of some of the more popular software, such as Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and Facebook.

Caitlin's presentation evoked a wide range of questions, particularly relating to the amount of time required to make the best use of the social media she mentioned. A vote of thanks was proposed by Ric Pawsey.



A morse code key—modern communication technology from a bygone era.

Using the ZOOM platform, **A/Pro Stephen Cooke**, of Deakin University, spoke to the **November** meeting on the history of the Box Hill RSL — '*One hundred years in the making*'. This is the subject of his recent publication, which was commissioned by the local sub-branch.

In 1917, concerns about the treatment of returning soldiers, and particularly the lack of any welcome accorded to the local servicemen and women, led to the formation of the Box Hill Sailors' and soldiers League (BHSSL). This organisation, and other locally-based groups, set about welcoming the veterans, and providing welfare services to the wives and widows of servicemen. While the BHSSL comprised mostly relatives of veterans, the genesis of the RSL lay in the camaraderie amongst servicemen; it was an organisation formed by diggers for diggers. The BH sub-branch, among the first to form in the years following the end of hostilities,—was officially opened on 20 October 1919. One of the founding members was WJ Boyland, who became a prominent Box Hill Councillor, setting a connection between council and the RSL that endured for some time.

Fund-raising began early in the following year, in order to create a memorial and establish Club rooms. The campaign was vigorous and largely successful. The foundation stone of the Soldiers' Memorial Hall, sited in the reserve between carriageways of Whitehorse Road, was laid on 28 August 1920. The rooms were ready for use by the following November.

With the return of WWII servicemen, the sub-branch outgrew its original home, and in 1950 it purchased Upton House as a new base. With the assistance of a grant from the Council, it renovated the building and moved there in 1951. This occupancy lasted just over a decade, until a better site became available — one where there was an adjacent space to that would become a bowling green, to be used by members. The sub-branch began occupancy of its present quarters, a specially-designed building in Nelson Road, in April 1965.

It continued to thrive in the decades following. However, by the late 1990s the sub-branch was in financial trouble, with difficulty in making mortgage payments; this, despite the introduction of poker machines in 1992. The newly-elected committee in 1997, with Tony Bowden as President and Arthur Merryweather as Treasurer has steered the sub-branch to a more viable position over the succeeding decades.

Stephen's talk evoked a range of questions, and he was thanked by Ian Broadhead, whose grandfather was an early and active member of the Box Hill RSL.

A sad tale from long ago

By Helen Harris OAM

One of the ways to keep active during lockdowns, was to take a walk through Box Hill cemetery, and it was on one such walk recently, that I came across the small plain monument to 24 year old Margaret Graham Scott, who died in June 1928. The monument records that she had been the science mistress at the Box Hill Technical School. Death at such a young age was unusual, as was her occupation, so a *Trove* search was undertaken, and the following obituary located in the *Box Hill Reporter*:

Miss Margaret Graham Scott, B.Sc., who was appointed science mistress at the Box Hill Girls' Technical School in May last, died in the Melbourne Hospital on Friday, after a short illness. A slight cut from glassware in the laboratory led to a septic hand, and pneumonia supervened. Miss Scott, whose parents live in Partick, Glasgow, was an honors science graduate of Glasgow University, and in 1926 was one of 40 secondary teachers selected in Britain for service in the Education Department of Victoria. The loss of such a brilliant young scientist, at the age of 24 years, is a great one, and deep regret is felt at her untimely death. The funeral at Box Hill cemetery on Monday was attended by prominent members of the department and others. Girls of the Box Hill school formed a guard of honor outside the school as the funeral passed, and they, and the staff with many other sympathisers, sent wreaths.

Further investigation showed that in 1926 the Victorian government had advertised overseas for secondary teachers, as there was a shortage here. Some 400 overseas teachers applied to join the scheme, a requirement of which was that they had to stay for 3 years. The first batch of those chosen arrived on Friday 5 February 1927 on board the *Runic*; they comprised 29 males, some of whom bought their wives and families, and 7 women, one of whom was Margaret Scott. They were met and welcomed by government officials, with accommodation provided in the Teachers' Training College. After a welcome reception and undergoing medical examinations, the applicants had an overnight rest before being sent to their various placements throughout Victoria. Margaret went firstly to Kyneton High School, before coming to Box Hill the month before her death.



No. 179. University of Glasgow. Fee, £2 2s. SESSION 1924-25.

MATRICULATION ALBUM.

Name in Full, Margaret Graham Scott.
(Initials not sufficient—Add any University Degrees already obtained.)

Age at last Birthday, 24.

Birthplace—(Town or Parish, and County; if not in Scotland, write the Country also.) Glasgow Lanarkshire.

Father's Christian Name, Thomas.

Father's Occupation, Chemist & Druggist.

Is Father Alive? Yes.

Faculty—Arts; Science (Pure, Engin., etc.); Medicine; Law; Theology. Pure Science.

Classes for this Session, viz.: Organic Chemistry Hons. course.

Are you attending any classes at the Royal Technical College? No.

Year of attendance at this University, i.e., First or Second, etc., First.

Previous Faculty or Faculties of Study, if any, _____

Present Address, 460 Dumbarton Road Partick Glasgow.

Home Address, 460 Dumbarton Road Partick Glasgow.

I enquired at Glasgow University archives, to see if they could tell anything more about Margaret and her background, and they were kind enough to send both her Matriculation Certificate and Graduation Schedule. The latter showed that she had graduated on 3 July 1925.

The Archives staff were sent a copy of the local obituary and a photograph of the grave, and are to add her sad story to their online Alumni stories. We will add her to our database, and perhaps include her monument in a future cemetery tour.

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.