

Box Hill Historical Society Newsletter



Volume 27, Issue 1
February 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 Eastern Historical Societies.**

A [brief] message from the President

Valuable work has been done of late, by our Archivist, and others, though somewhat restricted by COVID. It may be a while before we can Come back to our room, but we're keen with Intent to safely resume. The thing we Need most, which will put us at Ease, is a jab in the arm—to ward off this disease.

Next Society Meeting

Sunday 21 March, beginning at **2. 00pm**

Guess who once lived in Box Hill!

The Society has not scheduled a meeting for February, owing to the ongoing pandemic situation, but our March meeting is going to be something special! As mentioned elsewhere in this Newsletter, the archivist has discovered a range of interesting people who once called Box Hill home, in the period 1954–1984. Via Zoom, and with the aid of the president and some of our new volunteers, the archivist will introduce some of these people, and tell of the fascinating lives they led. Find out about the opera singer, the actor, the naturalist, the anthropologist, the chief commissioner, etc. Please join us for an enlightening afternoon, virtual afternoon tea only! Please RSVP to boxhillhistory@gmail.com to obtain the Zoom link.

Heritage Centre re-opening

Our original notional date of re-opening, 1 February 2021, has come and gone and we are still hampered by restrictions due to COVID. Mindful of the risks involved, particularly to people of our usual demographic, the Committee has decided that re-opening the Society's premises for public research purposes should not occur before the roll-out of a vaccine.

However, as indicated in the previous Newsletter, BHHS members wishing to carry out research can meet with the archivist, **by prior arrangement**. If you wish to arrange a meeting for such purposes, please contact Helen by email (boxhillhistory@gmail.com), or telephone 9890 9288.

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

Archivist's Report

I have had a busy time during the last couple of months, dealing with research queries, Council requests for photos and information, online book sales and completing the data entry of the last few rate valuation books in East Ward. There are more than 16,500 entries so far, and I anticipate several hundred more, as I check the reverse pages for additional names which sometimes appear. While entering the data, I came across some interesting occupations, and well-known names, which stimulated me to make a note of them and start searching the books to see if any more showed up — which they did. I now have quite a list of residents with interesting occupations, including architects, artists, entertainers, journalists, musicians, radio announcers, singers, and TV scriptwriters, as well as scientists and engineers. Included were some unusual occupations – bakelite* moulder; cushion worker; and glass beveller+. Brief articles on two of these people—in this case entertainers—are in this Newsletter, and with the help of some of our new volunteers, more will follow.

The fact the Society has new volunteers came about because of a notice I placed in mid-December in *Seek Volunteer*, a free online volunteering service, run by *Volunteering Australia*. I thought I might get just a couple of responses, but the result has been really pleasing. We have had offers of assistance from a wide range of people: some are undertaking university studies; some already have qualifications in various fields, from history to architecture. The one thing they all share is an interest in history. Some have already begun volunteering, undertaking tasks they can do from the comfort of their own home, such as researching subjects about which articles for the Newsletter can be written. This work will be of benefit for future editions of the Newsletter, and also provide details of the many interesting people who once called Box Hill home.

* bakelite was the first plastic made from synthetic components and was developed by the Belgian-American chemist Leo Bækelandt in Yonkers, New York, in 1907. Further reading on this story can be found online at: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bakelite>

+ glass bevelling is the process whereby an angled surface cut (bevel) is created around the entire periphery of a sheet of glass. The bevel acts as prisms in sunlight, creating an interesting color diffraction which both highlights the glass work and provides a spectrum of colors. Traditionally this was done by hand but in modern times the process has become mechanised. For further information on this subject, see the wikipedia entry on 'Glass beveling' at: https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Beveled_glass&oldid=990519856

Til next time,
Helen

AEHS Meeting

The first meeting of the Association of Eastern Historical Societies for 2021 will be held on **Saturday 27 February, beginning at 1.30pm**. It will be hosted by Doncaster-Templestowe HS, and held in the garden at Shramm's Cottage, 80–90 Victoria Street, Doncaster East (access via Muriel Green Drive; Melway ref. 33 J10). The meeting will be followed by afternoon tea and a tour of the historic cottage.

N.B. COVID restrictions are subject to change. If you plan to attend the AEHS meeting, please RSVP by email to AEHS president, Jane Turton, at joonszoo@bigpond.net.au, by **24 February**.

Answers to the 2020 Christmas Trivia Quiz

For those of our readers who toiled over the quiz in the December *Newsletter*, here are the answers:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. 50 Rutland Road; 1984 | 8. 1982 | 15. Combination knife, fork and spoon |
| 2. Paul Archibald | 9. 990 Whitehorse Road | 16. 1983 |
| 3. 1910 | 10. <i>Performers</i> | 17. Helen Mayer |
| 4. Doll museum | 11. 1941 | 18. Joy Mudge |
| 5. 1984 | 12. BMX competition | 19. Judith Mitchell, 1987 |
| 6. Normie Rowe | 13. Ed Adamson | 20. 1985 |
| 7. Peter Corrigan | 14. Fountain View | |

Membership matters

New members

The President and Committee are pleased to welcome the following individuals as members of the Society. We hope that their membership will be a long, enjoyable, and informative.

Caitlin Stevens is one of our recent volunteers. She has a BA in history and anthropology and is completing a masters in Cultural Heritage at Deakin University. Caitlin is working on a selection of articles for our '100 years ago' section of the Newsletter.

Sang Du is another recent volunteer. He has a BArch and a Master of Construction Management. He is interested in history and especially in how the Chinese interacted with the west.

Peter van Loon

Peter has very kindly provided us with a short bio of himself and his wife, as well as a few images of the building of his childhood home.

Both my wife (Andrea) and I lived in Box Hill South during our formative years and although one of my school friends lived in the same street as Andrea we never actually met until we were in our late 30s/early 40s.

I lived in Farleigh Avenue from my birth in 1959 until I moved with my parents in 1975 to the small country town of Foster in South Gippsland. I attended St. Scholastica's primary school (Grades 1-3) and then St Leo's (Grade 4-Form 4). My sister Marian attended St. Scholastica's Primary School, Chavion College and Burwood high school.

My father was a scout leader with the 21st Box Hill scout group (which became the 3rd Bennettswood Scout Group), retiring from that role in 1975. I was a cub member and a scout member of the same group (1968-1975).

Andrea (nee Lacaze) lived in Douglas Avenue from 1966 until 1973. She attended Box Hill South Primary School, Wattle Park High and MCL.

Both of us had a parent working at Bowater Scott in the early 70's, around the time of the factory fire. Andrea's father was a member of the Bennettswood bowling club.

My father built our house in Farleigh Avenue and I came across your web site whilst I was looking for artifacts associated with building property sales and building records for this period.



Membership matters

Vale Barbara Lovell

The Society was saddened to learn of the death of one of our long-term volunteers, Barbara Lovell, on 10 December 2020. A memorial service was held on 5 February 2021, at which this Society was represented by Helen Harris OAM, Grace Swiney, and Ian Broadhead.

The following tribute is based on the eulogy given at the memorial service, and was kindly provided by Barbara's family.

Barbara Mary Lee was born on the 10th of December in 1933 at St Helen's hospital in South Brisbane, the 3rd child of Dr Alan and Mrs Ellen Lee. She had two older brothers.



She firstly attended the local Cooparoo State School, then transferred to Buranda Girls' School. At the end of Grade 7 she sat a state-wide exam called 'the Scholarship', and received a silver cup for the highest marks in the school. She also achieved the top history mark for girls in the entire state of Queensland. This was celebrated at a special dinner where she was the guest of honour. At the age of 14 she left Brisbane to go to boarding school at Melbourne Girls Grammar which was deemed the best educational choice for her by her parents. An excellent student, her favourite subjects were German, and both Greek and Roman history, she was a very good English student and was also elected to the school council.

After completing her schooling her parents took her on "a grand tour of England and the continent" which ignited her love of travel. When they returned, she started nursing training in Brisbane and it was during this time that she met her future husband Allen Bruce Lovell. They married in Brisbane on 10 September 1955, and moved to Adelaide shortly thereafter. She completed her final year of nursing training at the Royal Adelaide hospital. In 1957 their first child, Susan, arrived. Following a work opportunity, they moved to Melbourne in 1958, living initially in the Camberwell area until they purchased an Edwardian house at 189 Union Road, in Surrey Hills. They were to have three more daughters.

In 1967 Barbara completed a Nursing refresher course so she could return to work. Initially she did night duty at the Royal Women's and St Georges Hospitals, then in 1972 she started a 14-year career with the Royal District Nursing Service. She was later to play a key role in the foundation of an association for former staff of the Royal District Nursing Service, holding positions on the committee, including president.

The couple both retired from work together in 1986, and enjoyed gardening, travel, cooking, going to the races and entertaining. Sadly, Susan passed away in 1988, and Barbara became a widow in 1992, aged 58.

More volunteering became part of her life when she commenced at the Box Hill Combined Charities Christmas Card Shop in 1991. She was involved with this charity card shop for 15 years. Barbara's involvement with the BH Historical Society began in 2007, when she was looking for a home for the archives of the Charities Christmas Card Shop. She had been secretary of the group from 1993 until its closure. The Society agreed to accept the archives, but wondered if she would care to actually catalogue the material for us, on our premises. This she agreed to do, and not merely listed the contents, but wrote a history of the organisation.

Having completed that task, and enjoyed it so much, she decided to stay on and catalogue other records for us. Before COVID struck, and we were obliged to close our premises, she would arrive as regular as clockwork every Tuesday and ask what jobs we had for her to do, then quietly sit down and work through the task. She also became involved in helping with various activities we run, including assisting with stalls at various functions. Highly intelligent and well organised, she was delightful company and will be sorely missed by her fellow volunteers and the committee of the society.

100 years ago

Fatal Fall off Bicycle

A young woman named Florence Hilda McGuinness, 32 years of age, a local resident, was riding a bicycle along Harrow street, Box Hill, at about eight o'clock on Wednesday evening, when she had a fall off the machine. She was picked up in an unconscious condition, and removed to Nurse Coe's private hospital, where it was found that she had sustained a fractured skull. Drs. Richards and Cowan were in attendance, but the victim of the accident died a few hours later. Yesterday the Box Hill police removed the body to the Morgue.

Box Hill Reporter 25 February 1921

O-o-o-O-o-o-O

Initial attempts to investigate this case further drew a blank, as there was no listing in the inquest or death indexes under various spellings of McGuinness, and nothing further in the newspaper. A search in the death indexes on given names and location of Box Hill eventually traced her under the name McInnes, and the inquest was also found under this name.

Inquest No. 294 of 1921 was held at the Melbourne Morgue on the 17th March before the Coroner Mr R.H. Cole. Snr Constable J. Stephenson No. 3683, based at Box Hill, had reported the death to the Coroner and provided the basic details. After the accident Florence had been taken to Nurse Coe's hospital, which stood on the site of the Box Hill town hall, and subsequently removed to the morgue. Angus McInnes, the deceased's father, a bootmaker who lived in Canterbury Road Box Hill, identified the body and testified that Florence lived with him, and was on her way to Whitehorse Road to relieve her sister at the lolly shop she ran. The bike, which was her sister's, had no light, and it was just on dusk when she left. Eliza Adeline Raw, single, of George [now Glenmore] Street testified that she and her sister were walking down Harrow Street and saw Florence skid into sand on the road and fall. They ran to tell someone to get help. Herbert Ingamells, warehouseman, also of George Street gave evidence that there was sand on the centre of the road, which looked like it had been tipped out of a dray. It was not there that morning, and was in heaps some 4-5 inches deep. He went to Councillor Ellingworth's house, [in nearby William Street], to tell him about the danger so as to prevent further accidents. Ellingworth's son, who was not called to give evidence, was sent to inspect the road. John Gouge, foreman for the Shire, also gave evidence, stating that the sand was spread on the road to dry early in the afternoon under his instructions; he looked the next morning and the thickest was 1½ inches deep. [So some time after the accident, the sand was spread out to reduce the depth, and possibly to reduce a claim of negligence against the Council.]

Dr John Brett performed the postmortem, and reported that Florence had abrasions and bruises on her left shoulder, left elbow and left hip and died of a fracture of the skull and cerebral hæmorrhage. The Coroner's verdict was that she died of 'injuries due to a fall from a bicycle in Harrow Road Box Hill'.

Florence was buried in Box Hill cemetery in a family plot that already contained the body of her brother Angus, who also, incredibly, had died of a fractured skull after an accident five years earlier – but that is a story for a cemetery tour! Their parents Alice and Angus were subsequently interred in the same plot in 1930 and 1949.

[It was 1990 before mandatory helmet laws were introduced in Victoria.]



100 years ago (cont.)

TB and the discovery of the BCG vaccine by Colin Wang *

Tuberculosis (commonly known as TB), is a highly contagious bacterial infection that primarily affects the lungs. Once a person is infected with TB, they often acquire a latent infection where they do not have symptoms. However, this infection can become active in which case patients often suffer symptoms of persistent coughs, night sweats, tiredness, weight loss, and coughing up blood. TB is considered highly contagious only when there is an active infection of the lungs. The bacteria can then be easily transmitted through coughing, singing, laughing, or sneezing. Suspected infections can be diagnosed via skin tests, blood tests, chest x-rays, and sputum tests.

French scientists Albert Calmette and Camille Guérin developed the *Bacillus Calmette-Guerin* (BCG) vaccine in the early 20th century to combat this disease, and the first oral dose was given in 1921. The BCG vaccine is given as an injection within the skin of the upper arm and it reduces both the risk of developing serious infections and the contagiousness of TB in infected individuals. In Australia, the BCG vaccine is reserved for high-risk populations.

Prior to the availability of the BCG vaccine, no reliable treatment for TB had been available. Nowadays, extensive research has allowed for TB to become curable with a six-month course of antibiotics.

Further reading:

Better Health Channel. (2020). Tuberculosis (TB). Retrieved from <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/ConditionsAndTreatments/tuberculosis-tb>

Luca, S. & Mihaescu, T. (2013). History of BCG Vaccine. *Maedica – a Journal of Clinical Medicine*, 8(1), 53–58. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3749764/>

The Department of Health. (2013). The BCG Vaccine: Information and Recommendations for Use in Australia. Retrieved from <https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/cda-cdi3701h.htm>

The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne. (2018). BCG Vaccine for TB. Retrieved from https://www.rch.org.au/kidsinfo/fact_sheets/BCG_vaccine_for_TB/

* Colin Wang is a pharmacy student at Monash University who has recently volunteered to assist the Society.

Extract from report of Health Officer A.P. Vaughan (Reproduced in *Reporter* 16 March 1900)

I would warn the people generally, and of this district in particular, of the danger of infection from a consumptive person, that exists. This disease is the scourge of the Anglo Saxon race. The ravages of war are comparatively insignificant alongside the ravages of the tubercle bacillus, but familiarity with its effects is apt to engender if not contempt at least heedlessness, which is equally dangerous. In every case of phthisis comparative isolation should be adopted. All sputa &c, should be carefully burnt, disinfectants should be used, and should a death occur, the house, and especially the room, should be thoroughly disinfected in the most approved manner, cleaned, repainted, &c and as far as possible everything destroyable appertaining to the patient should be burned. In the interests of the survivors the question of cremation of persons dying of infectious diseases will loom largely in the future, especially in arid climates like ours where the life of a desiccated germ may be prolonged through indefinite periods of time.

I would again draw attention to the dangerous practice of indiscriminate visiting at houses where sickness exists, and remind people that though actuated by the best intentions they may do incalculable harm to others, if not members of their own family, perhaps some innocent third person to whom they may convey contagion.

[Dr Vaughan's predecessor, William Miller Dickinson, died of TB in 1888; within the following four years Dickinson's wife and two children died of the same complaint.]

COMMISSION OF PUBLIC HEALTH.
Notification of a Case of Infectious Disease.

To the Municipal Clerk, Municipality of *Remonding*

I HEREBY REPORT the following case of *Pulmonary Tuberculosis*.

Surname *Fuller* Christian Name *Eladys*

Age *19y* Sex *F.* Duration of Illness *4 1/2 years*

Full Address *9 Hume St - Box Hill*

Observations:—

Date *21 / 5 / 21*

Signature *James A. D. ...*

Address *Curran sent*

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Recd 24/5/21, N. H. 6 24/5/21, Curran sent

One of the many digital images in the Society's collection of a certificate reporting a local case of a person having been diagnosed with an infectious disease

They once lived in Box Hill

Normie Rowe

Norman John Rowe was born in Melbourne in 1947 and showed musical talent at a very young age, forming a band while still at Northcote High School. Employment with the PMG [later split into Telecom and Australia Post] was brief, following a disagreement about his long hair, and he left to become a fulltime entertainer in 1964. His first single release, *It ain't necessarily so*, went to No. 1 in Melbourne, and many others were similarly popular. Rowe became the most popular solo performer in Australia, so in August 1966 left to try his luck in the UK. Subsequently he and his band flew to North America, where he supported Roy Orbison on a US tour, and alongside The Seekers represented Australia in a performance at Expo '67 in Montreal.

He subsequently returned to Australia, and in September 1967 received his call-up notice for national service. He served in Vietnam, and was discharged from the army in February 1970. His Vietnam experiences left a deep impression on him, and since that time he has worked extensively on behalf of other Vietnam veterans.

On 6 March 1971 at St Benedict's church in Burwood he married Sue Powlesland, and four days later the couple moved into Unit 8, 99 Thames Street Box Hill, paying a monthly rental of \$114.80. It is unclear precisely how long they remained in Box Hill; the next tenant occupied the flat from January 1972.

Although his career as the leading popstar never returned, with Johnny Farnham being the new king of pop, Rowe began to concentrate on a varied career playing the club and hotel circuit as well as making TV performances, and continued to record through the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. He expanded his career into acting and musical theatre, appearing in productions such as *Les Misérables*, *Annie*, *Chess* and *Evita*.

In 1994 he was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for services to Vietnam veterans, the entertainment industry and the community. In 2005 he was inducted into the ARIA Hall of Fame.

Normie has had a long association with many charity and community groups, with his major concern being the welfare of children. He is a long-serving member of Variety Clubs of Australia, for which he is now a National Ambassador. He published an autobiography in 2016, a copy of which is available at the Blackburn branch library. Somehow his stay in Box Hill is missing from the book, something that surely should be corrected in any future edition!



Kevin Shegog

Kevin Joseph Alfred Shegog was born on 20 August 1933 near Launceston, Tasmania; his parents ran a dairy farm. At an early age he displayed an interest in music, teaching himself to play guitar when aged 9, and performing in his school choir. At the age of 14 he started to write his own songs, and commenced performing as a country and western singer. His first hit was an American song, *Wolverton Mountain*, in 1962; this was followed by his own compositions *The Little Kangaroo*, *One small photograph* and *Wayward Rambler*. He subsequently released many singles and albums, mostly on the W&G label.

He moved to Victoria, won Australia's Amateur Hour, and lived for a while in Shepparton, where he performed at local dances and on radio 3SR with a group called The Gold Toppers.

Kevin married Shirley Haas, and they were to have five children. By 1970 the family was living in Melbourne, firstly at Preston and Reservoir, then on 25 February 1973 the family moved into a 5-roomed weatherboard house at 13 Thames Street, paying a rental of \$22 per week. His occupation was given as entertainer. By 1980 they were at 27 Severn Street according to a directory, but do not appear in the ratebooks at that address.

Shirley died at Box Hill on 8 December 1981, aged only 44 years, and was buried at Springvale cemetery. Kevin died 9 November 2000 at Wallaroo South Australia; he had suffered a stroke seven years earlier. His ashes were returned to Melbourne, for burial with Shirley.

Kevin Shegog was honoured in 1983 at the Australian Country Music Hall of Fame's 'Hands Of Fame' at Tamworth NSW, designed to honour individuals who had made a significant and ongoing contribution to Australian country music.

His daughter maintains a Facebook page to his memory.



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

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Committee: Ian Broadhead, Judith Eadon, Rev.

Shane Hübner, Ric Pawsey, Grace Swiney



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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.