

Box Hill Historical Society Newsletter



Volume 26, Issue 2

(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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A message from the President

Annual General Meeting

Can I begin by expressing the hope that all our members and friends, **O**ne and all, are safe and well — and isolated. Although government restrictions might be easing, your Committee feels that the time is not yet **R**ight for groups such as ours to be meeting. Composed as we largely are of an **O**lder demographic, we need to be especially careful. So, **N**otwithstanding, current low infection rates, we have decided not to hold our **A**GM in August. Under our constitution, from Consumers Affairs **V**ictoria, we are required to hold an AGM within five months of the end of the financial year. Our thinking currently is for a **September AGM**. **I**n the meantime, the Heritage Centre will stay closed. We cannot open while the BH Town Hall **R**emains closed, in any event. **U**ndoubtedly, this situation will change in time, but until we feel it is **S**afe to resume business 'as usual', we will continue to communicate in this digital and remote fashion.

New ward names

Members may be aware that new State Government legislation has recently imposed on all metro councils the requirement to operate with one-member wards. For residents of Whitehorse this means that we will now have eleven wards, each represented by a single councillor, as opposed to five wards represented by two councillors. The Society was asked for, and provided at short notice, suggestions of appropriate names. For reader's interest the names decided upon are Elgar; Cootamundra; Lake; Walker; Kingsley; Sparks; Simpson; Wattle; Eley; Mahoney; and Terrara. (These are based on local parks through the city.)

These names may be subject to change, as Council was given very limited time to finalise the names, and has requested that additional community consultation take place, before the 2024 council elections.

The Box Hill Historical Society is pleased to thank the office of Paul Hamer MP, Member for Box Hill, for assistance with the printing of this *Newsletter*.

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 (or use a search engine)

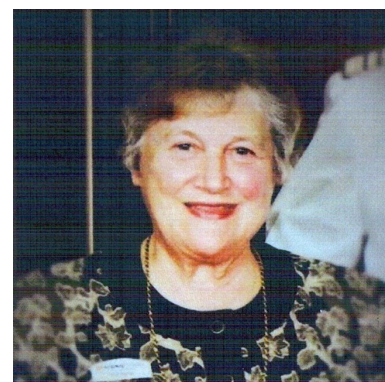
You can email us at: **boxhillhistory@gmail.com**

and follow us on *Facebook* at: **www.facebook.com/boxhillhistoricalsociety**

Tribute to Marjorie Morgan OAM (19 August 1930 – 26 March 2020)

The Society lost a stalwart and long-serving member with the death of Marjorie Morgan on 26 March. This tribute is based on the eulogy given at Marjorie's funeral and kindly supplied by her daughter Linda. Additional information was gleaned from personal recollections and the Society's archives.

Marjorie Sanders was born in Blackburn in 1930, the sixth in a family of eight children. Soon after, the family moved to a small orchard close to Frankston. After leaving school, she attended the Kindergarten Training College in Kew and subsequently worked at the Frankston Kindergarten, where she became the Director. She transferred to the kindergarten at the Upper Yarra Dam site, where she met and married Bill Morgan, a civil engineer working on the construction of the dam wall. They lived at Upper Yarra for three and a half years, before moving to Box Hill in 1957.



Soon after moving to Melbourne, Marjorie's health declined. She suffered from allergies, the symptoms of which were debilitating and painful and led to her being housebound for weeks at a time. Unable to continue her previously active lifestyle, she sought interests she could pursue during her long and frequent periods of un-wellness; the result was her voracious interests, in genealogy and then history. Marjorie's illness plagued her for 27 years, until it was correctly diagnosed in the mid-1980s, but her interests in genealogy and history were to stay for the rest of her life!

She volunteered to index shipping lists held by the Public Record Office, and spent years compiling a card index system, subsequently used by many researchers over many years. One of the people who delivered the lists to her home was Andrew Lemon AM, who later wrote the history of Box Hill (after being prompted by Marjorie to apply for the job). Marjorie later collaborated with Andrew to produce two memorable books, *Poor souls they perished*, the story of the wreck of the *Cataraqui* on King Island, and *Buried by the sea: a history of Williamstown cemetery*.

Marjorie joined the Genealogical Society of Victoria, served on the committee, and was made a Fellow. She worked with the late Rev H.W. Coffey to compile four volumes of *Irish Families in Australia and New Zealand 1788-1981*. These were published between 1978 and 1983. She also joined the Australian Institute of Genealogical Studies (now Family History Connections) and in 1982 researched and compiled for the Institute its publication *The Old Melbourne Cemetery 1837-1922*. Later, she co-authored, with Frances Brown and Dom Meadley, *Family and Local History Sources in Victoria*. Marjorie became a member of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria in 1969.

And, of course, she joined this Society, serving as Archivist 1975–1996; President 1987–1993; Vice-President 1995–1997; and on the Archives sub-committee until 2018. With the late Lea Finlay, she produced three books of photographs on aspects of Box Hill life, and *Prelude to Heidelberg*, the story of the Impressionist artists who frequented Box Hill. Other books included *Legacy in sculptured wood* on local wood carver John Blogg; *Forty Years of Growth* on Box Hill hospital; two booklets on Box Hill cemetery; and a very useful card index to ratebooks from the period 1863 to 1884. She was made a Life Member of the Society in 1977, an honour that was richly deserved.

Marjorie was deeply involved with many other facets of the local community. She was a Councillor for the City of Box Hill for two years, and a long-standing voluntary worker for a number of organisations. For 34 years she volunteered at Box Hill Hospital, and for 58 years she participated as a fund-raising auxiliary for the Princess Elizabeth Junior School for Deaf Children (now Aurora School). She was also closely involved in a Box Hill Rotary Club project to support poorer people in Zambia. These efforts, along with her many contributions to community history, were officially acknowledged in 1994, when Marjorie was honoured with a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM).

In 2001 Marjorie and Bill moved from their home in Box Hill to the Cameron Close retirement village in Burwood. Sadly, Bill died only a few months later. Marjorie continued to live in the village for a further 17 years. As she came to need greater care, she moved into Samarind Lodge in Ashburton. In the circumstances, Marjorie's funeral had to be a private affair.

Marjorie will be greatly missed by her many friends at the Society — for her knowledge, for her friendliness and for her dedication to local and community history.

Helen Harris OAM
BHHS Archivist

***The Reporter* (Box Hill)**

The BHHS Committee is able to report that the Society's project to have issues of the *Box Hill Reporter* digitised, has been partially successful. Thanks to our fundraising efforts, and a generous grant from Whitehorse City Council, issues of the weekly paper from 1919 up to March 1925 are now available for reading on the National Library of Australia's *Trove* website. (Check it out at: <<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/search?adv=y>>, but be warned, *Trove* is highly addictive for historians.) Issues of *The Reporter* up to 1930 will be added as soon as 'normal' activities can be safely resumed.

To celebrate this achievement, the following couple of items have been extracted from *The Reporter* of 100 years ago. They are reproduced here for readers' interest and amusement.

As noted in the February *Newsletter*, while funds raised to date were still short of the final amount required to digitize the newspaper, the Committee made the decision to take the balance of the funds from our reserves. We are, then, pleased to receive further donations, to help make up that small shortfall. A suggestion of how such donations could be made is given on page 4, below.

4 June 1920, p. 5.

BOX HILL DIGGERS' CARNIVAL OPENS THIS AFTERNOON.

To-day (Friday), Box Hill is to be the centre of attraction in the form of a carnival to be opened by Hon. D. Mackinnon at 2.30 p.m. in the New theatre. White Horse road, to raise funds for building club rooms for the returned sailors and soldiers of the district. A large committee has been working for the last six weeks to ensure a successful fete, and they hope to raise £400 or £500 for the building. The council generously granted the use of the eastern oval for a site, and on all sides they have been commended for their action. The New theatre, kindly loaned by the Misses Mates*, lends itself admirably for the holding of the function, and the public of the district will have all opportunity of inspecting this splendid and most up-to-date building. Star attractions have been secured by the organiser, including the distribution of stars to 1914 and 1915 men by General Brand on Friday night, at 8 o'clock, also the same night the arrival in Box Hill, about 7 o'clock, of a most notable person, welcomed to the carnival by the Mayor of Box Hill, and presented in the theatre of some of the products of the district.

The carnival will be continued on Saturday afternoon and evening. A huge motor procession will tour the town and suburbs during the afternoon, and terminate at the hall. Buttons are being sold as a badge of admission, and a charge of sixpence per session will be made to those not having a button. The committee trust that the carnival will be patronised by the residents and that they will do their share towards making some recompense to the Diggers for their loyalty in doing their duty to the country.

The following is the full programme for Friday, June 4, for the Prince of Nanny Waddy's visit to the fete:

The order of the procession when the Prince of Nanny Waddy lobs at the Box Hill Railway Station, at 7.45 p.m. will be as follows:—Detachment of Police; the Box Hill Brass Band; Escort of Soldiers; two outsiders; State Carriage, drawn by four horses and two postillion riders attended by two footmen: the Prince of Nanny Waddy, Admirable Sir Lion Hasey; second carriage, the Prime Mister, Sir Billie Boose, L.S.D., Sir Bobbie Rest, O.V.H., Mr. Green-Firewood. X.X.X.

The procession will leave the station immediately the train arrives from Dinkums Creek at 7.45 p.m., and proceed via Station Street, around the Ovals to the New Theatre, where he will be received by the Lord Mare and Lady Mareass and the Darter Daphne, who will read an address of welcome and present the Prince with souvenirs from the local industries.

* The New Theatre was built on the corner of Whitehorse Road and Watts Street, following World War I, with funds provided by Misses Ella and Maude Mates. It was a modern picture theatre that could seat 1200. The misses Mates also financially supported the building of the returned servicemen's clubrooms.

See below, for a part of the paper's detailed report of the carnival, published in the following week. In following extract, the identities are revealed of 'the impersonators' The full article is now available on-line, through *Trove*. [Ed.]

The Reporter (Box Hill)

11 June 1920, p. 5

THE PRINCE'S ARRIVAL

... Great excitement prevailed in the street on Friday evening, when it was announced that the Prince of Nanny Waddy would arrive in Box Hill, and grace the fete with his presence. Unfortunately, the weather was most unpropitious, heavy rain falling early in the evening, but this did not prevent the participants from carrying out the entire programme arranged. The procession was in the nature of a burlesque which was acted with due solemnity and pomp, worthy of the occasion and the many humorous characters were excellently sustained. All of the impersonators were attired in fancy costume and an imposing display was made. The procession was marshalled in front of the Box Hill railway station and a start was made from there at 7.45 p.m. After the principal streets had been paraded, and a course followed around the ovals, the procession made its way to the New theatre, where the fete was in progress, and its arrival was met with much enthusiasm. There the Prince on alighting from his carriage, was given a great reception and warmly welcomed by the Lord Mayor who presented him several souvenirs from the local industries as products of Nunawading, including a fruit case from the box factory, a brick bat from the brickworks, a block of ice from the local abattoirs. The characters were interpreted by the following: Prince of Nanny Waddy, Mr George F. Wright; Admiral Sir Lion Hasey, Mr H.S. Beattie; the Mister, Mr George Evans; footmen, Messrs W.F. Ellingworth and George Morton; Mr Green-Firewood, Mr S.B. Gravenall; drum-major, Mr. Bradley; drummer, Mr. D. Young; lord mayor, Mr W. H. Elsum; lady mayoress, Mr. L. Young; their daughter, Daphne, Mr. Tom Young; policeman in charge, Mr. Marcus Clark mounted on a beautiful light bay; outriders, Messrs Keely brothers. There were also a number of bandsmen. The whole performance was carried out in a humorous style, and reflected credit upon those who took part. Messrs. Keeley and Son kindly loaned the landau used for the Prince.

Society Notices

Fundraising Raffle



Early this year the Society was given a hamper by Ryman Healthcare, to raffle as a means of raising funds towards the digitisation project. The Society thanks Ryman for its support. It was our intention that the raffle would be drawn at a Society meeting,



perhaps in April or May. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, this could not happen, of course, so we are aiming for a later date. So—the good news—tickets in the raffle are still on sale at \$2 each or 3 for \$5.

Donations to the funding of digitisation of the *Reporter*

Included in the Membership Renewal Form which you have received with this *Newsletter*, is the opportunity to add a donation to your subscription amount. We are always pleased to receive donations, which would usually go toward general operating costs. In the present circumstances, the committee has decided that donations made in this way should be put toward the shortfall in the digitisation project, and that donors should receive raffle tickets, in appreciation. So, for each five dollars given in addition to the usual subscription, three raffle tickets will be issued to the donor.

Renewal of Membership

Coronavirus notwithstanding, the Society will continue its work in archiving and documenting the history of our area, and providing a means whereby that information can be made accessible to the widest audience. Members are encouraged, therefore, to renew their membership, using the form provided.

For readers of this *Newsletter* who are not currently members, you are, of course, very welcome to join. Alternatively, you can use the form to make a donation to the Society (and gain a chance of winning the hamper).

Grant from Lions Club of Nunawading

The Society has been successful in gaining a grant of \$1820 from the Lions Club of Nunawading, to purchase a set of portable display boards. We thank the Club for their generous support of the Society's work. The display boards will be useful in mounting display in venues away from the Heritage Centre, such as at the Spring Festival, or at a presentation to another group.



Recent speakers

William R. Orange

Ian Wood, retired Box Hill pharmacist and Society member, spoke to the **February general meeting** on the topic **Panaceas & Placebos**, with a **Brief History of Pharmacy in Box Hill** and some illustrations of local pharmacies.

The ancients had some knowledge of pharmacy: this developed through the ages based on empirical observations with a more scientific approach during the 19th and 20th centuries. Pharmacy went through an industrial phase from about 1940 to 1970 followed by a greater 'patient care' emphasis. The future probably lies in a biotechnical approach.

The Greeks adopted the principle of 'healthy body, healthy mind' and the Hippocratic Oath to 'do no harm' when treating patients. Natural remedies such as the use of willow bark extract as an analgesic have probably been known of for millennia – willow bark's effect was scientifically proven late 18th century. Bayer was able to produce the active ingredient as an 'over the counter product' *Aspirin*, in 1917. Australian Aborigines had knowledge of many remedies derived from natural materials. The late 19th and early 20th century saw the development of many proprietary medicines such as *Aspro* (produced by the Nicholas Company in Australia), *Bex* (a compound drug of aspirin, phenacitin and codeine) – discontinued when the kidney damage caused by phenacetin was recognised, and *Chlorodyne* (a mixture of laudanum, cannabis and chloroform). Ferdinand von Mueller helped investigate the medical properties of eucalyptus oil — distributed by Felton & Grimwade as *Bosisto's Eucalyptus Oil*.

Some early pharmacists in Box Hill were Osmond Perrin, Clarrie Martin, Fred Cheshire, Freda Mellor, Michael Gandolfo, later succeeded by Graeme Judkins, Percy Williams, and Graham Blashki. Mellor in 1922 was running the United Friendly Societies' Dispensary in Rutland Road. The U.F.S. had established a number of dispensaries to help ensure high quality medicines: these dispensaries were controlled by state government legislation that allowed a chain of pharmacies through the U.F.S. network (others not permitted).

Esther Pöelman, for a time councillor and Mayor of Box Hill, ran the Trawool Street Pharmacy from 1973



Ian Wood's father, Charles Wood MM began his pharmacy apprenticeship in Coburg prior to enlisting and serving in the 10th Field Ambulance during WWI. Post-war he completed his training in Coburg and worked there for a time: he moved to Box Hill in 1938 to premises on Tait's Corner where he was later joined by Ian. Ian had served his apprenticeship in Burwood and worked elsewhere prior to coming to Box Hill: he later on joined in partnership with Keith Williams at 599 Station Street. Subsequently John Poxon (who was at this talk) joined the partnership, with a new pharmacy also established in Market Street.

During WWII many medicines became unavailable so plant-based alternatives had to be found. Scouts and Guides were recruited to collect herbs such as foxglove (for digitalis) to extract the active ingredient. The Nicholas brothers had earlier devised a way of synthesising aspirin (acetyl salicylic acid). The production of antibiotics like penicillin was in its infancy. Some pharmacists also devised their own formulations. Peter James recalled making *Dermobalm*, during his apprenticeship with Fred Cheshire, whose daughter Jeanette also became a pharmacist.

Recent speakers (continued)

The Pharmaceutical Benefit Scheme provided universal access to medicines listed in the Commonwealth Formulary. In 1950 there was a 5/- (five shillings) charge for patients on the 'free' list. New drugs and an ageing population have led to increasing costs for the PBS. There are new prospects with gene technology—pharmacogenetics—leading to tailor-made medicine. The role of pharmacists continues to change. During the immediate post-war period and prior to the large-scale commercial production of medicines it wasn't unusual for pharmacists to live on the premises and work long hours seven days a week. Charles Wood developed a roster for a Sunday morning dispensing service and later the Box Hill Night Prescription Service was established as a co-operative to dispense prescriptions only from 7p.m. to 9 p.m. each evening – partners were rostered after 9 p.m. for urgent requests.

After questions the audience was invited to inspect a display of some historical pharmacist tools and products.

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Phil Warner, local resident and recently retired **City Engineer** spoke to the **March General meeting** about the **Changing face of Local Government** and his experiences over 47 years working in that sphere. Whitehorse Council today oversees some \$3,000M in assets guided by a four-year Council Plan and a 10-year (rolling) Financial Plan. This year's total budget is about \$170M including capital works of \$80M. In recent years councils have had regular additions to State Government compliance requirements, including a focus on the behaviour of councillors in the new Local Government Act. There is also much greater community scrutiny, and more public consultation required under the 2020 Act.

When Phil Warner was appointed as a cadet engineer to Box Hill City Council by City Engineer Ian Pollock in September 1972 his annual salary was \$3,000 and his employment contract took up a quarto page. The Council consisted of a group of conservative businessmen. At Council meetings they would scrutinise the monthly accounts, Mayoral Balls were frugal, but they did have a vision for Box Hill. They bought up land to enable the rail grade separation in Station Street and construction of the Whitehorse Plaza to encourage local business activity. Other projects were the construction of *Gowan Lea* (independent living units), 40 Dorking Road hostel, a new library and the Box Hill Community Arts Centre.

The 1954 MMBW proposals for increased development in Box Hill, including later the Prospect Street Office Precinct brought about the involvement of community groups like the Box Hill Residents Association. (The MMBW was the planning authority at this time.) Box Hill Council by the 1980s was moving away from 'Roads, Rates and Rubbish' to provide more community services – a social worker was appointed and Infant Welfare Centres had been run by the Council for some decades - Council today delivers 137 different services.

Box Hill Electric Supply ran at a loss during the 1950s to 1970s due to the demands of a rapidly growing community: when it started to make a profit in the 1980s these profits were used to underwrite the rates. The synergism between the Council and the Electric supply facilitated projects like road widening and reconstruction, and other building works

At amalgamation in December 1994, Box Hill was in much better condition than its eastern neighbour, although its management team of Town Clerk, City Engineer, Electrical Engineer and Town Planner was seen (by some) as outdated, and there was a large workforce, particularly in the Parks and Gardens



Recent speakers (continued)

Department. (During his earlier years with Box Hill Phil Warner would spend time on Tuesdays taking the pays in cash to the outdoor staff.) Nevertheless the citizens of Box Hill were well served by good people doing good things, (while their neighbours spent money preparing for a takeover.)

Whitehorse Council has been a good custodian of its inherited assets. The sale of the Whitehorse Plaza brought a good return for Council and 40 Dorking Road's sale, although controversial, has underpinned other aged care services and facilities. (A change in government regulations made this facility non-compliant.) Asset management has become a major responsibility, with 335 buildings under Council control. Ovals were previously just fertilised and watered; now all have been rebuilt with drainage, irrigation and drought resistant grass. Box Hill Library had largely been 'just books' (and tapes and records), but now offers a much wider variety of services and media. Last year the library façade was found to be close to falling off due to failing mortar, and although maintenance works had been put out to tender, an emergency works order was invoked through CEO Noelene Duff to allow urgent repairs to take place and bypass the tender process. In 1972 the triplicate order book would have sufficed.

Interim CEO at amalgamation Brian Payne offered Phil Warner a redundancy without ever meeting him: Warner declined, insisting on the terms of his original 1972 contract as a permanent local government employee. Penny Holloway was appointed in charge of City Services and asked Warner to reduce staff by 10% - by December 1995 the workforce was reduced to less than half, many of the Box Hill Staff left and output had later doubled from 40,000 to 80,000 'things' each year.

The City of Box Hill had a planning scheme that worked and while councillors accepted development, Mont Albert residents usually had an advocate at VCAT appeals. Councillors were supportive of their staff and were often community identities. The City of Nunawading introduced special zones that limited development and its councillors were happy to leave things the same.

There are 11 landfill sites across the city and some have required expenditure for remediation. Wembley Park's soccer pitch was built over ash residues from the adjacent Council incinerator – the ash has now been removed and the pitch rebuilt. There had been a major redevelopment initiated by then City Engineer Rex Hopkins and completed in 1981 to create the Box Hill Indoor Recreation and Aquatic Centre. The original 1937/39 Box Hill Swimming Pool was made of hand mixed concrete and found to need further attention by the early 2000s. After having spent 15 months supervising the construction of the Vermont South Indoor Recreation Centre, Phil Warner was asked to follow on with the Box Hill Pool refurbishment works.

During his early years with Box Hill he had supervised the Box Hill Transport Interchange project completed in 1984, spent 14 years as a part time university student, completed the company directors' course and married Maxine, the Box Hill Town Hall telephonist. He was able to attend, and speak at overseas engineering conferences, 'with the trust of the councillors', and worked through the introduction of computers and electronic communications. Overall he had enjoyed the challenges and experiences.

After questions, the vote of thanks was given by former Box Hill councillor and Mayor Betty Walters.

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

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Society
Newsletter



PO Box 268 Box Hill 3128

The Box Hill Historical Society is pleased to thank the office of Paul Hamer MP, Member for Box Hill, for assistance with the printing of this *Newsletter*.

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.