

# Box Hill Historical Society Newsletter



**Volume 27, Issue 5**  
**October 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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## **For your diary**

**Sunday, 17 October 2021, 2.00 pm**

Guest Speaker: **Caitlin Stevens**

*'The Digital Age, local historical societies and the future.'*

Can social media help stimulate interest in history and local historical societies? The presentation will focus on what social media is, does it help or hinder the heritage sector at both a professional, amateur, international and local level.

Caitlin (pictured right) is the newest Committee member of the Society. She completed a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in history, at Deakin University in 2018, and is currently undertaking a Masters in Cultural Heritage and Museum Studies at the same University. She began volunteering with the Society in November 2020 and 'is loving every minute since.' She describes herself as 'a student, an essential part-time worker and a volunteer.'



**NB.** In the present circumstances, this will be a ZOOM meeting. You are most welcome to participate in the meeting, but please **RSVP by email to <boxhillhistory@gmail.com>** for the link.

## **2021 Annual General Meeting**

The election of office bearers and committee for the 2021/22 year, kindly conducted by Betty Walters at the AGM in September, resulted in the following members being elected to the positions listed:

President :	Dr Gary Presland
Vic-President:	William Orange
Secretary:	Helen Harris OAM
Treasurer:	John Barnao
Committee:	Ian Broadhead
	Judith Eadon
	Rev. Shane Hübner
	Ric Pawsey
	Caitlin Stevens

## Forthcoming Society event

Details provided here of the following Society meeting are based on the expectation that it will be conducted via ZOOM. It is thus **imperative that you register your intent to be there**. Any changes to meeting arrangements because of COVID will be notified through email, website and facebook.

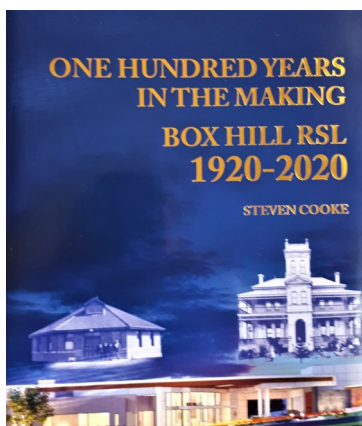
**Sunday, 21 November 2021, 2.00 pm**

Guest Speaker: **Dr Steven Cooke**

**'100 years in the making: Box Hill RSL 1920-2020'**

In keeping with our occasional practice, of having a speaker present on a military service theme, at our November meeting, Dr Cooke will speak on the subject of his recent book. This work charts the story of the Box Hill RSL from its origins in the aftermath of the First World War.

Dr Cooke is Associate Professor of Cultural Heritage and Museum Studies Senior Lecturer, at Deakin University's Burwood campus.



## A word (or two) from the President

The Society remains in something of a state of limbo. We are unable to meet in person, and our Heritage Centre is largely off limits. That doesn't mean we have been inactive in the present phase of the eternal lockdown: we continue to receive—and service as best we can—requests for information, for assistance in various matters, and for purchases of books. The Secretary/Archivist has dealt satisfactorily with most of these requests.

Our return to more-or-less normal procedures and the re-opening of the Heritage Centre are now dependent on Victoria's population reaching 70% double vaccination against the Covid-19 virus. This point is not far away. Ideally, we need to have everybody inoculated but this is not likely to happen. I won't go into the matter of making jabs mandatory, except to offer the following observations: most of the diseases that long plagued humans, such as smallpox, diphtheria and tuberculosis, have been largely eradicated through vaccination. There is nothing new under the sun, and in the past, at times when these diseases were in plague proportions, governments enacted legislation to make it compulsory to be immunised. This may have been irksome to some, maybe many, but thousands of lives were thereby saved.

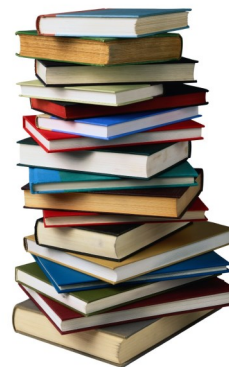
Gary Presland  
PRESIDENT

## BHHS Subscription rates

At the recent AGM, it was resolved that membership subscriptions for the 2021/2022 year would remain unchanged from last year. These rates are listed here for the benefit of readers:

Membership Category	Annual Sub (\$)
Single	28
Family /couple at one address	42
Newsletter only	16

**Coming soon!**



We are currently looking at ways by which the Society can sell secondhand books through one of the on-line marketing outlets. Watch this space!

**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](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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## Report on Heritage Week: 9 – 16 September

### *'1950s — the Suburban Dream'*

We had planned to run a number of different activities during Heritage Week 2021, but, as is becoming common now, our 'live events'—street and cemetery tours, trivia night, and debutante display at the town hall—all had to be cancelled at short notice. With the help of Council staff, the debutante display became an online viewing option. With little or no access to our premises, we could not do the same for the street tour, but the President and Secretary visited the cemetery and took photos of some monuments. With the assistance of Caitlin Stevens, we managed to create a digital cemetery tour.

Our other effort was a 'shopping in Box Hill in the 50s' video, expertly researched and put together by Alison O'Donoghue and Caitlin Stevens. In the brief period the Heritage Centre could be open, in June and July, they went through years of newspapers, looking at various advertisements. Thanks to the efforts of Gary Bruce, who provided a USB of hundreds of photos, Alison was able to combine the two resources and produce a wonderful video. A big thank you is extended to all concerned.

Although officially concluded, the digital presentations are still online for an extra period, so if you missed them the first time around, you may be lucky enough to still see them:

<https://www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/things-do/festivals-and-events/heritage-week>

### **Cancellation of planned festivals**

Because of the ongoing Covid19 outbreak, we have been advised by Council that this year's Seniors' Festival has been reduced to online activities, so our planned cemetery tours have again had to be cancelled. The Whitehorse Spring Festival has also been cancelled. This will now be held in March 2022, perhaps under a different name!

## **Books for sale**

The following list is of books donated to the Society for resale. Orders can be taken now, and books reserved until we can re-open. The prices quoted are cheaper than advertised online prices.

	\$
<i>All the brave promises; memories of Aircraft Woman 2nd class 2146391.</i>	
Mary Lee Settle. [Joined the Royal Airforce in England.]	10
<i>Anzac Day: seventy years on.</i> Michael McKernan/Peter Stanley	15
<i>Australian Code Breakers.</i> James Phelps.	20
<i>Fortress Singapore: The battlefield guide</i>	10
<i>HMAS Tobruk: warship for every crisis.</i> Ken Doolan	10
<i>Homefront 1914-1918: how Britain survived the Great War.</i> Ian Beckett.	20
<i>Of love and war: the letters and diaries of Captain Adrian Curlewis and his family 1939-1945.</i> Philippa Poole.	15
<i>On dangerous ground: a Gallipoli story.</i> Bruce Scates.	20
<i>The spirit of Kokodo: then and now.</i> Patrick Lindsay	10
<i>The Volunteers: the price of freedom.</i> Robert Hutchison	20
<i>Voices from the Voyager: HMAS Voyager/HMAS Melbourne 1964.</i> Carla Evans	20



## Recent Speakers

In keeping with the Heritage Week theme of the 1950s, Society secretary **Helen Harris OAM**, presented to the **August Zoom meeting** on the local events that took place during the **1954 visit to Australia of Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip**.

Long before the royal couple arrive in Australia, Box Hill council had started planning, for what they initially hoped would be a visit by the royals to the city. This was not to be, but they did manage to have confirmed that the royal train, on route from Melbourne to Warburton on Saturday 6 March, would slow down and travel slowly from the Box Hill station until it reached Linsley Street. This was all the Council needed to know, to continue with the plans already in hand.

Two main events were planned; the first of these was a garden competition.

The competition encouraged residents to showcase their gardens. Entrants were encouraged to incorporate in their garden displays either the British colours of red, white and blue, or the royal colours of purple and gold. Section 1 of the competition was won by Mr and Mrs T.G. Oates of Churchill Street Mont Albert; section 2 by Mr and Mrs Henley of Graham Place, Box Hill; and Section 3 by Mr and Mrs Hardy of Kenmare Street, Box Hill North. The winning gardens were subsequently open to the public, with the admission charge being donated to the Box Hill Hospital. The Horticultural Society and local florist Alwyn Spicer were also involved in providing floral arrangements at various Melbourne locations.

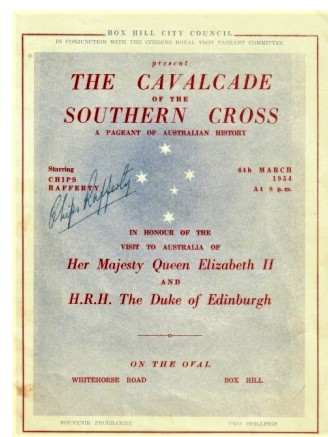
In the meantime, a Citizens' Royal Visit Governing Pageant Committee was set up under the chairmanship of Cr Oscar Lundgren, with Cr Reg Sparks as treasurer. Joint secretaries were W. Crosbie, and the city librarian, C.P. Billot. Apart from the Mayor, Cr George Padgham, and town clerk A. Bruce Currey, other members were: Mrs Burland, Mrs Dwyer, Miss M. Earl, Mrs J.B. Leach, Mrs I. Proudfoot, Mrs V. Walker, Mrs Watson, Rev F.L. Nunn and Messrs G.F. Foster, P. Prickett, Murray Rawlings, A.M. Storey, D. Youl. They approached local businesses, asking them to decorate their premises with flags and bunting. Local police and St John Ambulance Brigade were also involved in the events.

Philip Billot, secretary of the Citizens committee for community cultural activities, had taken it upon himself to write a pageant,

entitled *Cavalcade of the Southern Cross*, which depicted Australia's history. The pageant would take place on City Oval, on a stage (three feet high, with an area of 50 x 50ft), and a feature a cast of about 500 locals, drawn from community groups. A well-known actor would lead the show, playing various parts; this was subsequently announced to be Chips Rafferty. Local radio announcer Terry Dear would provide the narration.

A young local woman was needed to play the part of the *Spirit of Freedom*, and appear on a white horse. A beauty competition was arranged, which attracted entries from 50 local women. The winner was Lola Jackson. In the lead up to her presentation, Helen managed to track Lola, now Lola Brown, and she joined us for the meeting, sharing her photos and memories of the occasion.

Those local groups who took part in the Pageant were: Box Hill (BH) Ballet Group; BH Choral Society; BH City Band; BH City Drama Group; BH Discussion Group; BH Operatic Society; BH Baptist Pioneers; BH Branch C.W.A.; BH Branch R.S.L.; BH Brownies; BH Grammar School; BH High School; BH Methodist Young Men's Club; BH South Square Dance Club; Folk Dancers, Greek and Swedish Group; members of BH City Council; Royal Caledonian Society of Melbourne Pipe Band; St Francis Xavier School. Councillor Oscar Lundgren provided accompaniment on Piano Accordion.



Lola's costume for the Pageant.

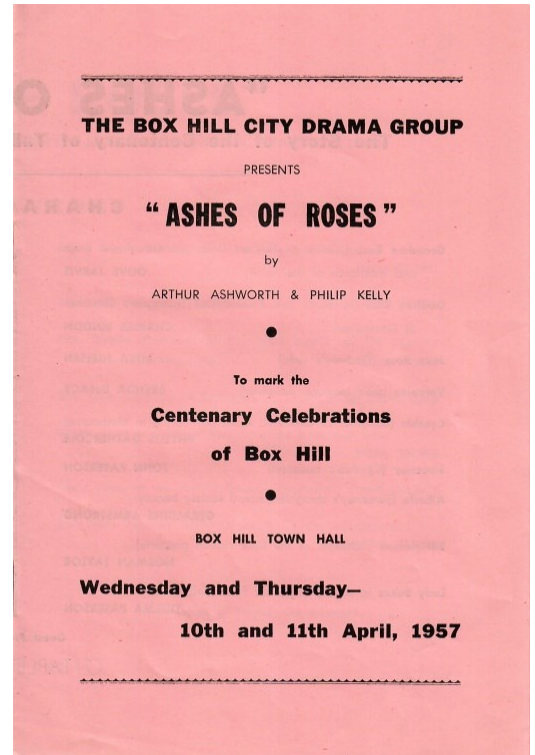
## Recent Speakers (cont.)

As the advertised speaker for the **September meeting** declined to take part in a Zoom presentation, our secretary **Helen Harris OAM** again stepped in to present to the meeting. Continuing on with the Heritage Week theme of the 1950s, she spoke on the 1957 celebrations to commemorate the centenary of the establishment of local government in Box Hill.

As in 1954, a committee was established to plan the celebrations. The first of these was a production by the Box Hill City Drama Group; *Ashes of Roses*, billed as a comedy, was the story of the centenary of a fictitious country town, Talbogrin. It hasn't exactly become an Australian classic! Those who took part were: Geraldine Armstrong, Charles Bindon, Pixie Brinsmead, Brenda and Ian deLacy, Phyllis Gathercole, Edward Hill, Olive Jarvis, Ruva Nielsen, Edith Noall, John and Thelma Paterson, Norman Taylor, Myra Tepper, Catherine and John Veitch.

The play was followed the next month by a special chrysanthemum and floral art show, organised by the Box Hill Horticultural Society. In the same week the annual mayoral ball with 15 debutantes occurred. The stage decorations this time around featured a pioneer's timber cottage. In July the CWA staged a centenary craft exhibition in the lower town hall, and the Council gave an afternoon reception for residents, 60 and over, and resident in Box Hill for at least 10 years. That night there was a free film night.

Among the films shown was the award winning *The back of beyond* about the Birdsville Track area and life there. Clips from the film can be seen online. The following night, a large exhibition, which ran for a week, was opened by Eric Westbrook, director of the National Gallery of Victoria, who had lent works by Frederick McCubbin, Tom Roberts and Arthur Streeton for the display. There were talks on various subjects, by, among others, Nance Donkin, Geoffrey Serle, Bill Wannan, Judah Watten and Westbrook himself. And a commissioned history of the area, written by well-known author Ivan Southall, was launched.

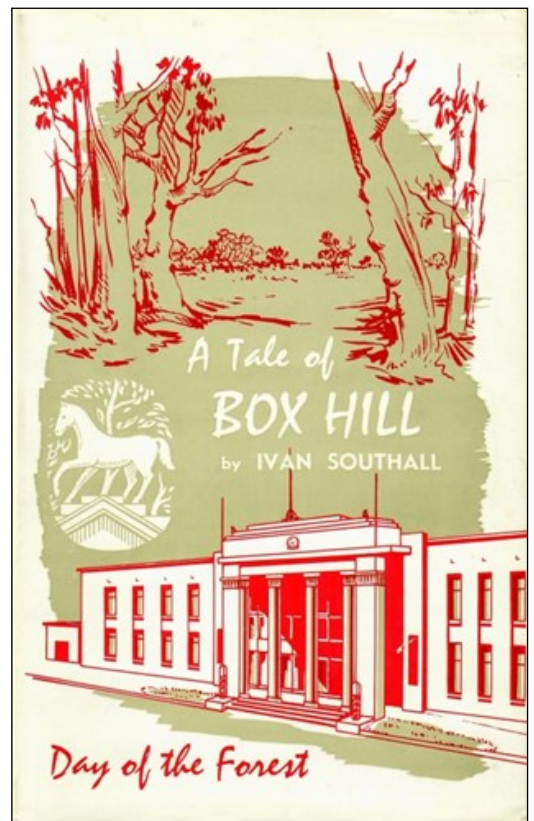


On 7 August all Councillors attended local school assemblies, presenting copies of the Southall book and a commemorative medallion. [The Society has copies of these medallions if anyone would like one.]

That night was the grand centenary dinner, and Margaret Wood recalled that occasion for us.

The dinner was followed by a special centenary meeting of Council, after which the Lieut Governor Sir Edmund Herring officially unveiled the plaque in the foyer of the town hall.

Other activities during this time included a performance by Box Hill ballet, a choral society performance and special church services. The Society holds material relating to most of these activities.





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## Archivist's Report – September 2021

This is brief report only, as our premises at the Town Hall closed in July and remain closed. Despite this, I have continued working from home, on both the preparation of material for Heritage Week and the subsequent Zoom general meetings in August and September, at which I spoke on the 1954 Royal Visit and the 1957 Centenary celebrations of local government, respectively. Since my last report I have also undertaken research to fulfil requests by Council staff and others on specific families, houses, street names and a memorial avenue of trees.

During this research I came across some columns in the *Eastern Times* of 1957 headed *Strictly for the Girls* and which contained recipes. I've reproduced below some here, for the interest of readers:

- ◆ Apples stuffed with sausage are a tasty change. Core apples and fill centre with sausage mince. Place in a baking dish and bake in a moderate oven for about 20 minutes.
- ◆ A delicious snappy soup that you can make in a few minutes. Dissolve 4 teaspoons of meat or vegetable extract in 3 cups of boiling water. Mix a small cup of milk with 3 level dessertspoons flour to a smooth paste and add to water. Blend thoroughly, stir until just boiling. Add a wineglass of sherry and serve.
- ◆ For a delicious topping for waffles, mix equal parts of apricot jam and honey. Spice lightly with cinnamon, cloves and nutmeg.
- ◆ Try cooking rice in chicken broth or beef bouillon or consommé instead of water. Add a little colour with a dash of paprika.
- ◆ A delicious peach desert is made combining 1 cup lightly crushed corn cereal with one third of a cup of melted butter. Dip drained peaches in half a cup of melted honey, roll in cornflake mixture, and toast under griller. Serve with ice-cream.

I am delighted to report that Lola Brown has allowed us to take copies and archive her wonderful 1954 photographs (a couple of which are shown here), and newspaper cuttings. This means her time as the *Spirit of the Southern Cross* will be permanently recorded.

A collection of old and rapidly decaying negatives, many of which are of debutantes of the 1950s and 1960s, have been given to an expert to scan and produce high resolution digital copies.

Donations in the last two months include:

Secondhand books from both Yvonne Fitzmaurice and the Davidson family for our next sale – whenever that will be! These books include a number relating to military and naval history, which are listed.

"Til next time,

Helen



Lola's outfit for the final judging.



Lola (standing, centre) in borrowed bathing competition, with other finalists.

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## They once lived in Box Hill

*Continuing our series of notes on interesting former residents of Box Hill, the following note is offered for the interest of readers. Once again, this is the result of research and detective work by our secretary and archivist, Helen Harris OAM.*

Among the interesting occupations listed in the rate valuation books was that of a film cameraman, Alan Charles Weatherley, who rented a brick flat of three rooms at 17A Prospect Street, from December 1966 until November 1968. A *Google* search showed that Alan, who had died in 1986, had originally trained as a stills photographer, before moving to film in 1956 when he became a newsreel cameraman. In the 1960s he worked at ATVO and ABV 2 television studios. Alan had married Margaret Gurney, who has a *Wikipedia* entry and her own webpage. Through that information, the archivist contacted Margaret to see if she would like to comment on her time in Box Hill. Margaret kindly responded and we are pleased to reproduce her communication here:

In 1967 I married Alan Weatherley. He was a cinematographer and I was a graphic designer, both of us working at ATVO. We decided to live in the flat in Prospect Street because it was easy to get to work and affordable. Someone Alan knew was living there and recommended it to Alan. He moved in six months to 1 year before we married. It was really half a house, some rooms had been divided off, including a bathroom and a makeshift kitchen. The train line was at the bottom of the garden, very close.

I had all our beautiful Scandinavian glass wedding presents on the shelves, when the trains went past the house vibrated and the glass fell off the shelves and broke! I was devastated.

I learnt to cook everything in an electric fry pan because the stove was such poor quality.

The landlord whose name I can't remember used to listen at the walls and time our showers, coming to us afterwards and reprimanding us for showering every day.

We bought a block of land in lower Templestowe and saved for our house. We stayed in the flat for two years I think and moved out when our house was built in 1968.

Details of Margaret's interesting life and work can be read here:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margaret\\_Gurney\\_\(artist\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margaret_Gurney_(artist))

<http://www.gurneyart.com.au/>



Photo Courtesy of Leader Newspapers

**Box Hill Historical Society Inc.**  
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**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, Caitlin Stevens**



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.