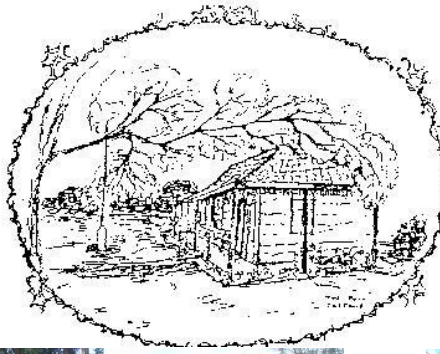


# City of Moorabbin Historical Society

“Box Cottage” Museum  
Joyce Park, Ormond

PRESIDENT: Jim Dale  
Telephone: 0395553320



REG. No. A0020547

**June  
2014**



## April Open Day

I must say that our Open Day on 27<sup>th</sup> of April had more excitement in it than I could bear.

It all started very well with several groups waiting for us to open the gate. While I was talking to a couple who had made an effort to visit us, I was called away urgently by Joan into the Cottage where there was a scene of mayhem and disaster.

First thoughts were that the vandals, who had graffitied our notice board and the McKinnon Bowling Clubs signs, had broken in to do more damage. However, there were no broken windows. Valma, Joan, and Carol made a search of the area while Dennis started to clean up and I took photos to be sent to Glen Eira Council or the Police.

The damage was curious to say the least. Pictures and paintings ripped from the walls; lamps, pots and kettles knocked from the mantelpiece and kitchen dresser; and the cake of homemade soap eaten. The discovery of possum castings everywhere made it a certainty that it was not break-in. But where was the culprit? It didn't take long before Carol found him – a large brush tailed possum hiding under the Miner's Couch. Carol woke him up and chased him behind a Cabinet against the wall.

My only act of bravery appears to have been to poke him with a broom stick to dislodge him from behind the Cabinet. He raced out and dived behind the cast-iron pot in the fireplace. From there Carol grabbed our culprit with a thick plastic bag and carried him out the door. Whereupon he charged towards the fence, ran around fence line and over the fence behind the Barn.

Glen Eira Council is now taking action to cap the chimney that our 'soap-eater' came down. Dennis installed a temporary barrier across the fireplace and Valma, Carol, Joan and Robina thoroughly cleaned the Cottage.



Some of the damage.

After all that and the clean-up, Open Day ended being a very nice sunny day that was entertaining for the visitors, especially the children. We had a visit from a bus enthusiast, and Valma brought a friend Lauren Bialkower who was related to Henry Dendy and who was able to help me with a family called Buelke.

## **May Open Day**

The May open day though not as eventful, it ended up a pleasant day. The nice weather attracted some interested visitors and a special visitor as well.

**Next Open day is Sunday the 29th June and the 26th in July.**

## **From Joan on the 25th May**

I have just arrived home from Soup kitchen(8pm) cleaned up and sat down to read the post.

WE HAVE BEEN GRANTED \$ 2,500 FOR A MUSEUM DISPLAY CASE FOR THE BOX WEDDING DRESS.

The letter is from the Minister for the Arts Hon Heidi Victoria and says that we will be contacted shortly regarding presentation of the Certificate and Grant.

Thanks everyone for your help and guidance.  
Coagulations Joan and carol.

## **Artists of cultural significance in the Glen Eira area.**

Council's Arts and Culture Department is are creating a webpage on artists of cultural significance in the Glen Eira area.

These are people who have lived/worked in Glen Eira and made a significant contribution culturally.

So far the web page includes the Murrumbeena Boyds, George Johnston, Erica McGilchrist and Wolfgang Sievers.

Lauren Bialkower, Arts and Culture Manager has asked me to contact you to see if your Societies had any other relevant names that should be included on the web page. If you know of anybody who should be included, or have any queries about this project please contact Lauren Bialkower via the following email address: [lbialkower@gleneira.vic.gov.au](mailto:lbialkower@gleneira.vic.gov.au)

Any help you can provide will be greatly appreciated.

**Elizabeth Triarico**

**History and Heritage Coordinator**

## **Will Lees, the soldier that wouldn't give up.**

Working with the Glen Eira First World War group I came across the story of W F Lees. Going through the National archives I had found that he had returned to Australia before the end of the First World War. But, he appears on the memorial in McKinnon Road, this is highly unusual as the names on these monuments were meant for servicemen that did not return.

It also appeared by his enlistment papers at the National Archive that he had been discharged not long after enlisting.





I contacted Lois at the Brighton Cemetery and she put me in contact with Janet Rigby who is a relative of the Lees family. In our discussions I had told her that I had contacted Alan Lees who knew nothing and was not interested in the history of his own family and would rather talk about four wheel drives and touring the country.

Story of Will Lees Born in Exhibition St Bentleigh starts when he enlisted in 1915 and turned up at the training camp at Seymour for preparations to be sent to the Dardanelles, however he had an appendix removed only a year before and was found to have a hernia. Unperturbed Will enlisted again and was sent directly to France, Just in time to meet the Germans head on during the Battle of the Somme.

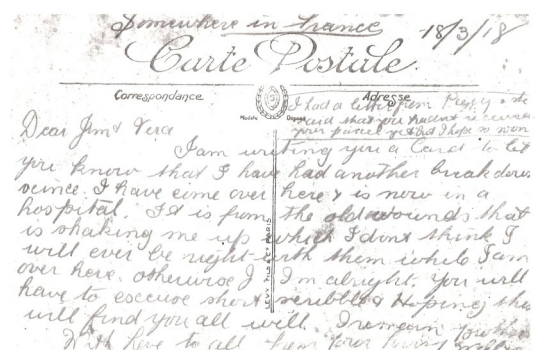
During this time he was gassed, sent to England to recover, gassed again and then after the second time was sent home to Australia. Before his final discharge he swnt a post card to his Brother Jim, I think you will get the idea of his state of mind when he wrote this and is more than likely the reason for his discharge.

Somewhere in France 18/3/18

Dear Jim & Vera,

I had a letter from Peggy she said that you hadn't received your parcel yet but hope so soon

I am writing you a card to let you know that I have had another breakdown since I have come over here and is now in a hospital. It is from the old wounds that is shaking me up which I didn't think I will ever be right with them while I am over here, otherwise J am alright. You will have to excuse short scribble & hoping this will find you all well. I remain with love to all from your loving brother Will



POST CARD FROM 'SOMEWHERE, IN FRANCE' 18/3/18 TO JIM AND VERA LEES FROM BROTHER, WILL LEES

He was received by his father Joseph and was home when the rest of the boys from McKinnon were picked up in Station Pier by cart and received at a public party on McKinnon Road with a bonfire.

Will Lees went it on to have two children by his wife Mary and died in 1928 and was buried at the Cheltenham Pioneer's Cemetery, Row 87 plot 46 RC. Mary went on to marry again and died at the age of 82 in 1980.



Because of Joseph's influence in the area and his connection with Sir Thomas Bent he must have been able to get Wills name on the memorial when it was erected in the 30s. It appears that the McKinnon Memorial is not in its original position and was been moved from next to the foot path some time in the 50s when the road was widened and the trees on the Avenue of honor in McKinnon Road were removed. There is one more mystery that Will Lees has left for us, he appears not only on the Ormond and McKinnon Primary School Honor Rolls, but the Benteigh West Roll as well.

My thanks to Lois and Janet for their help, photos and material.

Jim Dale



**Wills Grave at Cheltenham.**

**Both the McKinnon and the Ormond Honor rolls can be found at the Ormond Primary School.**

