

*Serving the  
community,  
families, schools,  
students,  
historians and  
other researchers*



## A VIEW FROM ROCKINGHAM

*View of Abbotsford from the garden of Rockingham (1952)* provides a fascinating insight into both built heritage and the natural landscape, which in the 1950s must have seemed permanent, yet which now reminds us of the inexorable changes wrought by re-zoning and re-development.

The painting was created by V Maloney, whose vantage point was the garden of *Rockingham*, one of two mansions overlooking the Yarra owned by the Syme family. The extensive formal landscaped gardens of *Rockingham* had been created in the 1860s, and by the 1950s remained bordered to the south by the Barkers Road cutting, and to the north by *Blytheswood*, the neighbouring Syme family property,

By 1940, the Syme family were no longer the occupiers of *Rockingham*. John Herbert Syme had died in October 1939, and by August the following year, his wife had made the house and garden available, rent free to the Red Cross as a convalescent home for Australian soldiers injured in the Second World War. At the time, the house was described as containing twenty rooms, including a ballroom and a billiards room, with a garden of eight acres overlooking the Yarra. The task of renovating the house to conform to its new function as a convalescent home took a year, finally opening in August 1941.

Community support for *Rockingham* was widespread and included the decision by the National Gallery of Victoria to loan pictures from its collection to decorate the walls. Calls were made for women around Victoria to donate fruit and vegetables from their gardens, which the railways agreed to freight for free. Other local support included the work by a team of boys to establish a three-acre vegetable garden within the formal terraced gardens.

From the beginning, occupational therapy formed a key component of the rehabilitation of psychologically injured soldiers. This is confirmed by contemporary newspaper accounts of weaving, ironwork, leatherwork, basketry and gardening by patients. Numerous photographs, held by the Australian War Memorial (AWM) and the State Library of Victoria (SLV), record the importance of these rehabilitation activities.

The painting of the view across the river to Abbotsford may have been painted in one of these occupational therapy sessions. For many decades it

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## ROCKINGHAM (from p.1)

hung in the occupational therapy room. It must have been on view following the sale of *Rockingham* by the Syme family to the Red Cross in 1955, and subsequently, until the house was demolished and its grounds finally subdivided in 1977.

Members of the Society were shown the painting by Rosemary Lade, at our July monthly meeting, at which members had been invited to bring along and talk about items in their personal collections. Rosemary recounted how she had rescued the painting at the time of *Rockingham's* demolition, and that for the next forty-two years it had been hanging on her lounge room wall. After describing the painting and how it had been acquired, Rosemary announced that she was donating it to the Society. We are grateful for this important gift, which happily joins two other earlier paintings of the Yarra, described in our June Newsletter (No.127/2019).

The Society has a number of other items in its collection relating to *Rockingham*. These include a set of 'face paints' used in the occupational therapy unit for drama, which were previously donated by Rosemary. From a much earlier period, a rare photograph of the garden of Rockingham provides visual evidence of the extent and style of the garden in the 1870s.

The 1870s photograph and this 1950s painting are both historically significant. The photograph is possibly the earliest photograph of a major private garden in Kew. It is also a rare, surviving panoramic photograph of the period. The painting, from sixty-seven years ago, depicts a landscape that has been obliterated due to demographic and economic change. Some features can be identified by a closer examination of the work: in the foreground the Walmer Street Bridge and the gardens of Young Street stretching down to the river; and on the horizon St Patrick's Cathedral, the Exhibition Building, Russell Street Police Station, and the tower of Collingwood Town Hall. The distinctive factories and chimneys of Abbotsford, painted by the artist, have largely disappeared under the wrecker's ball.

Like the photographs of the staff and soldiers in *Rockingham* in the AWM and SLV Collections, the painting is socially significant as evidence of the work of patients in an important Red Cross convalescent facility during and after the Second World War.

The changes wrought by development along the River Yarra was to regrettably affect the mansions and gardens of Kew as well as the factories of Abbotsford.

## KEW HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

### PATRON

Sir Gustav Nossal AC, CBE

### MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

**President:** Judith Voce

**Vice President:** Brad Miles

**Secretary:** Desley Reid

**Treasurer:** Robert Romanin

**Archivist/Newsletter editor:** Robert Baker

**Curator:** Judith Scurfield

**Members:** Richard Bowen | Mary Kelleher | Debbie McColl-Davis | Janet Walker | David White

### MONTHLY MEETINGS

The Kew Historical Society holds monthly meetings in the Phyllis Hore Room at the rear of the Kew Library. Meetings are held at 8.00pm on the second Wednesday of the month. Refreshments are provided.

### KEW COURT HOUSE

Members of the Society played a key role in the preservation of the historic Kew Court House. Volunteers staff the Kew History Centre on Level 1 every Friday & Saturday (11.00am-1.00pm). At the Centre, you can ask questions about Kew's history and view displays from the Society's collection.

### NEWSLETTER

This is published quarterly and distributed to all members. Additional copies are made available to the community. Past newsletters can be downloaded from the website.

### WEBSITES

[www.kewhistoricalsociety.org.au](http://www.kewhistoricalsociety.org.au)

[victoriancollections.net.au/organisations/kew-historical-society](http://victoriancollections.net.au/organisations/kew-historical-society)

### Kew Historical Society Inc.

Inc. No. A0010789W | ABN 97 824 890 237

PO Box 175 Kew VIC 3101

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### Garden of Rockingham, c.1870

Gift of R. Gardiner, 1981

KHS Pictures Collection



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# SOCIETY NEWS

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## EVENTS

### OPEN HOUSE MELBOURNE 2019

During Open House Melbourne 2019, we held four guided tours of the Kew Court House. Volunteers also welcomed visitors to our current exhibition - 'The Poetic Home'. As a number of the pictures in the exhibition featured the interiors of the *Villa Alba*, many visitors travelled between the Villa Alba Museum and the Court House. The Society acknowledges the support of Council staff in preparing for and being involved on the weekend, as well as the contributions of its own volunteers.

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Cr Jane Addis, Mayor of Boroondara, is our guest speaker at our 60th Annual General Meeting. In addition to her address, we will be receiving reports of the year's activities and must elect a new Management Committee. Please consider if you would like to nominate for the Committee. The role is not arduous and many hands make light work. A notice of the meeting and nomination and proxy forms are on pages 10 & 11.

Wednesday 11 September, Phyllis Hore Room, 8.00PM

### NOVEMBER MEETING

**Ferguson & Urie: Colonial Victoria's Historic Stained Glass Craftsmen 1853-1899**

**Ray Brown**

Victoria's famous stained glass company, Ferguson & Urie left their artistic mark on Australian history between 1853-1899. Well over a century later many of their stained glass windows still exist, including the Prince Consort (west) window in Holy Trinity Church, restored in 2009. Our speaker, Ray Brown has written a history of Ferguson & Urie, which received a commendation in the Victorian Community History Awards in 2012.

Wednesday 13 November, Phyllis Hore Room, 8.00PM

## COLLECTION

Since the last newsletter, our Heritage Collection has been augmented by the following gifts, which we gratefully acknowledge:

- Artwork - V Maloney, *View of Abbotsford from the garden of Rockingham*, 1952, donated by Rosemary Lade.
- Photographs - Three digital images of the Yarra in flood, donated by Jan Coutts.
- Artefact - Annett key stamped 'Kew' and used at Kew Railway Station, donated by Harry Jackson.

## EXHIBITION

### THE POETIC HOME

Our second exhibition at the Kew Court House in 2019 explores the lavish décor of the interiors of three nineteenth century houses in Kew: *Southesk*, *Tara Hall* and *Villa Alba*. The exhibition includes rare photographs and artefacts illustrating the work of Victorian interior decorators, artists and architects. The exhibition will be open until early October.

Kew Court House, Level 1, 188 High Street, Kew 3101

Open Friday & Saturday 11.00am-1.00pm



## HISTORY WEEK 2019

### BOOK LAUNCH

The collaboratively written history of the Chairmen and Mayors of Kew is in the final stage of editing and proofreading. We aim to have the book launched at the Kew Court House on 16 November by Cr Jane Addis. Arrangements are described on page 3.

### DICKINSON LECTURE

**The Right to Vote - The Right to Stand: the involvement of women in local government in Victoria**

**Helen D Harris OAM**

Helen D Harris OAM is a former Mayor and Councillor of the City of Whitehorse. She served as both National and Victorian secretary of the Australian Local Government Women's Association, was made a Life Member in 2016, and is currently the Victorian Executive Officer and archivist. She researched and wrote *The Right to Vote; the right to stand*, as part of the centenary of women being allowed to run as candidates for local government. Her lecture will explore how the law preventing women from standing came to be enacted, when it was removed, and the remaining barriers faced by women in voting and running as candidates. Helen Harris' lecture will follow the book launch and exhibition opening. Copies of Helen's book will be available for \$10 at the lecture.

**Wednesday 16 October, Just Theatre, Kew Court House, 7.30 for 8.00pm.**

**Entry is \$20, which includes the lecture and pre- and post-lecture refreshments. See page 3 for booking advice.**

# CONSERVING OUR CIVIC HERITAGE & HISTORY

The Kew Historical Society is conducting and hopefully concluding a number of projects in 2019 relating to the chairmen and mayors of the former City of Kew.

The first of these projects has been managed by members of our Collections and Research Groups. This project was funded through a Strengthening Communities grant provided by the City of Boroondara. It involved the hire of a professional photographer to produce high quality digital images of eighty-three mayoral portraits. This activity was completed in December 2018. Digitised copies of the portraits have been uploaded to *Victorian Collections* and have been provided to the Boroondara Library Service.

The second component of the Strengthening Communities grant was the writing and publishing of *From Municipality to City: Chairmen and Mayors of Kew 1861-1994*, a collaborative effort by members of our Research Group. Research, writing and editing has involved ten of our researchers: Robert Baker, Kerry Fairbank, Don Garden, Julie King, Suzanne McWha, Felicity Renowden, Desley Reid, Margaret Robinson, John Torpey and David White. For more recent mayors, we acknowledge and are grateful for the contributions of autobiographical material from ex-Mayors: Kaye Cole, Tom Indovino, George McKenzie, Michael Montalto, Daryl Oldaker, Joseph Ormando, Martin Solomons, Robin Saunders, Jim Tutt, and Noel Whiting. We also acknowledge the contribution of material from the families of former mayors including: John Cremin, Kathleen Gervasoni, Elaine Hutchinson, Megan O'Brien and Sarah Economou, Joan Tierney, Glenda Wade and Marjorie Wallinga. Through our communication with ex-Mayors and their families, we have also been able to access a number of original colour portraits taken by Council-employed photographers. Additional photographs from our own and from private collections have been sourced to use in the introductions to each decade.

The other grant received was a Local History Grant funded by the Victorian Government and managed by the Public Record Office Victoria for the conservation of the mayoral portraits. This amounted to \$14,500 and has been completed by Tony Rich, Art Conservation Framers, Albert Park. Conservation included the removal of the photographs and their original inscribed mounts from the frames; cleaning the interior and exterior of each frame; repairing damaged frames where required; sealing the reverse of the mounts with acid free card; and adding consistent picture hanging d-rings to each frame.

Separately, John Torpey is creating frames for those portraits that have been separated in the past from their frames. These are intended to match the style of the originals.

October 16 will be a significant date for the Society in that it will see the launch of our history of the chairmen and mayors by the current Mayor of Boroondara, Cr Jane Addis; the opening of our new exhibition at the Kew Court House in which we will display as many of the conserved portraits as space permits; followed by the 2019 Dickinson Lecture by Helen D Harris OAM who will speak on the history of women in local Government. (Kew had a number of significant women mayors including Marie Dalley, Kaye Cole, Jill O'Brien and Phyllis Hore.)

Regrettably the Court House imposes constraints on how many people can attend an event, so the launch will only be for invited guests and those attending the Dickinson Lecture. Information about ticketing arrangements is included below:



Kew City Council Meeting, 23-8-1955, Cr Marie Dalley OBE JP Mayor

KHS Municipal Collection

**WEDNESDAY 16 OCTOBER 2019**

**BOOK LAUNCH, EXHIBITION OPENING AND DICKINSON LECTURE**

**Venue: Kew Court House (foyer and level 1)**

6.00-7.30: Book launch and exhibition opening by Cr Jane Addis, Mayor of Boroondara, invited guests, and ticketholders for the Dickinson Lecture.

7.30-8.00: Refreshments

8.00-9.00: Dickinson Lecture by Helen D Harris. Entry to the Just Theatre by ticket (\$20)

9.00-9.30: Refreshments

Tickets for the Dickinson Lecture may be purchased by phone from the City of Boroondara Booking Office or online.

Phone: 9278-4770, OR

[www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/events/dickinson-lecture-2019](http://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/events/dickinson-lecture-2019)

# VICTORIA'S FIRST SELF-SERVICE SUPERMARKET

In October 1951 it was reported in *The Argus* that a novel style of shopping was spreading through Melbourne suburbs. Housewives were deserting their family grocers, 'with credit, home delivery and all,' for the 'new self-service shops'. Self-service or 'Cash and Carry' grocery shops had first begun to appear in Australia in the early 1920s. Geelong grocer, Sidney Edmund Dickins, later a resident of Kew, opened a Self-service Grocery and Cafeteria in Little Malop Street, Geelong in 1926, the first of what was to become a chain of SE Dickins Self-service Grocery stores throughout Victoria. The gloomy response of one Kew grocer quoted in *The Argus* in 1951 was that, 'It won't last long, but when the novelty of it wears off the housewife, unless she wakes up in time, will be destined to carry her groceries home for the rest of her life.'

When the Rishon Supermarket (*rishon* - Hebrew for 'first') opened its doors at 204 High Street, Kew on Wednesday 3 December 1952, it was reported in the press of the day as being both the first supermarket in Victoria and the first supermarket in Australia with a liquor licence. A crowd of women had gathered on the footpath outside for nearly an hour waiting for the doors to open before streaming into the brightly decorated and well-lit American-style interior. Children were left in a 'playpen' near the doors and housewives wheeled their trollies along rows of display stands, laden with tinned foods that had been scarce or unobtainable since the war. In the deep freeze section, fillets of fish wrapped in transparent paper were on display with snap frozen chickens and vegetables. The few 'men customers' who had accompanied their wives were reported as not straying far beyond the big displays of Scotch whisky.

Overnight thieves forced the back-door lock, making off with two-dozen bottles of Australian gin, but fortunately not disturbing anything else. The following day the pandemonium continued with the doors closed three times because all the wire baskets and trollies were being used by customers, some of whom had come from suburbs ten and twelve miles away. Male staff were posted outside to see that the crowd entered in an orderly fashion. By the following Saturday, the Kew police were required to attend to prevent the crowd of shoppers from obstructing traffic in High Street.

From the newspaper reports it almost appears that the future of shopping had materialised, Tardis-like, on High Street, setting off an orgy of consumption among not only the local housewives and their more diffident husbands, but also women from across the metropolis, not to mention the criminal underworld. Further research has revealed that, while in its own way an attractive idea, this was not the case. The historical record has revealed a story that follows the changing pattern of grocery shopping in Kew, with links to some of Kew's earliest businesses.



Tramways Terminus [The Block], Kew, c.1901  
Postcard, KHS Postcard Collection

FGA Barnard's *Jubilee History of Kew, Victoria* (1910) recalls that soon after the opening of Kew's first store in High Street in 1853 'a Mr Fleming opened a store in Cotham Road, the origin of the business successively carried on, among others, by Messrs Kellett & Co, Fishley, Howieson, and Bradshaw; the site is now included in the buildings known as 'The Block', erected in 1900.' An advertisement for WH Bradshaw - Family Grocer, Wine and Spirit Merchant, Oil and Italian Warehouseman - appears in the opening pages of Barnard's history.

In 1939, WH Bradshaw's licenced grocery business moved to new premises at 204 High Street where it continued to trade until June 1951, when it was advertised that the Bradshaw Grocers and Spirit Merchant's licences were to



Advertisement, [Rishon] Supermarket  
The Kew Advertiser, Thursday 27 November 1952

Although Wednesday was apparently not Kew's usual shopping day, a customer a minute was passing by the three cash registers at the door, while the other shops in High Street were deserted.

*Continued p.6*

## VICTORIA'S FIRST SELF-SERVICE SUPERMARKET (from p.5)

be transferred to Ronald Ernest Disney. He was later identified in a report in *The Herald* of the opening of the Rishon Supermarket as its general manager.

Shortly before the opening of the Rishon Supermarket, an article in *The Australian Women's Weekly* had reported the return of 34-year-old Joy Burns, after twelve months in America as the guest of the Supermarket Institute. 'Blond good looking and enthusiastic, Joy [had] left her East Kew home four years ago to travel'. After working for two years as a secretary in Johannesburg, she had gone on to Great Britain and the Continent. Then, her brother Reg, who had experienced supermarkets while training with the RAAF in Canada, had asked her to go to America to do some research for him into supermarkets. Their father, Reginald Flemming Burns, already operated a grocery store in Glenferrie Road and by May 1953, RA Burns of 139 Glenferrie Road, Glenferrie and 107 High Street, Kew was advertising 'Self-service Specials' in *The Herald* in competition with the Rishon Supermarket.



**204 High Street.**

Formerly WH Bradshaw Licenced Grocers, Rishon Supermarket, Brook-Tozer Supermarket and Fred Young of Kew.  
David White, photographer 16 August 2018



**Burns Self-service Grocery.** Lyle Fowler photographer. [ca. 1951]  
Harold Paynting Collection, State Library of Victoria

The SE Dickins chain of fifty-four mainly self-service grocery stores was acquired by Coles in 1958. In 1960, Coles' first freestanding suburban supermarket complete with carpark, still under SE Dickins branding, opened at the corner of Doncaster and Burke Roads, North Balwyn. It is possible that both the Rishon Supermarket and RA Burns' Self-service Grocery were unable to compete with the attraction of Melbourne's first 'freestanding' supermarket.

In 1962, the JJ Murphy licenced grocery, until then the long-term occupant of 103 High Street, replaced RA Burns at 105-7 High Street and in 1963 Rishon became the Brook-Tozer Supermarket, itself replaced in 1966 by Fred Young of Kew.

In December 1971, no doubt as a result of the impending demolition of buildings at Kew Junction associated with the widening of Princess Street, the JJ Murphy Retail bottled

liquor licence was relocated to 5 Brougham Street, where the writer remembers from 1976 a drive-through bottle shop associated with the Tuckerbag Supermarket, now Leo's Fine Food and Wine.

Research for this article has revealed a history of both continuity and change in grocery shopping in Kew. Long established businesses such as WH Bradshaw's and JJ Murphy's were found to have relocated within the shopping area and emerging grocery businesses with new retailing methods such as the Rishon Supermarket and RA Burns have appeared and disappeared. Law notices advising of the transfer of liquor licences have proven useful for tracking generational succession within existing businesses and the relocation of their place of business, as well as linking changes of businesses operating from existing premises.

The prediction of the Kew grocer was proven right, lower prices were to outweigh personal service in the grocery marketplace. The combination of groceries with liquor sales adopted by WH Bradshaw and JJ Murphy has proven to be a durable formula for retail success, despite the change from counter-service grocery shops offering free delivery to self-service supermarkets. The emergence of working mothers and online shopping has resulted in a resurgence of home deliveries that may yet see the demise of supermarkets as we have come to know them, possibly leading to further change in the retail landscape of Kew.

**DAVID WHITE**

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# KEW HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## 1990-2000

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Earlier articles in our newsletters have explored the social, cultural and economic history of the Kew Historical Society following its formation in 1958. Part 1 (Newsletter 126/2019) covered the period 1958-1973, while part 2 (Newsletter 127/2019) concluded its survey in 1989. (Earlier articles are available on the Publications pages of our website.) This third article covers the decade, beginning in 1990. As the articles progress into the 'modern' period, the risks in making erroneous statements are multiplied, given that a number of the participants during this period are still active members of the Society. The account therefore relies on the published minutes and newsletters and any errors, hopefully, are due to ambiguities in these.



Kew Festival Parade, 1991

The 1990s would prove to be a challenging period for the members of the Kew Historical Society (hereinafter KHS), not because of any drastic changes to leadership, finances or facilities, but rather because of the uncertainty caused by the amalgamation of the City of Kew into a new City of Boroondara. That change would lead to altered relationships, the formation of new alliances and disagreement about how the former collection of the City of Kew should be distributed. In 1990, these challenges were unforeseen and unanticipated.

It is worth reflecting on the narrow world of 1990 before elucidating the major themes affecting the activities of KHS. The year began with an evaluation of the finances, healthy at that time with \$3,800 held in the cash account, a term deposit and the Winifred Hall Memorial Fund. The amount was bolstered by a generous community grant of \$800 from the City of Kew. In contrast to the stable financial situation, the monthly meetings of KHS were still held in the cold and drafty Manchester Unity Hall in Union Street, which had previously been lamented as uncomfortable. As the year progressed, the heritage value of historic buildings and large institutions loomed large. At the January meeting in 1990, Dorothy Benyei, the archivist, warned that the future of the Kew Court House and Police Station needed to be closely monitored and that active liaison with the National Trust was required. A more urgent issue emerged due to the imminent demolition of *Houghton*, a house at 120 Princess Street, and the redevelopment of the Willsmere Mental Hospital, for which the Society resolved to maintain observer status in the Willsmere Coalition.

The Minutes of the Society for 1990 are succinct, and essentially describe the activities of KHS but are occasionally illuminating about broader issues affecting the City of Kew. Such is the case with the summary of the speech given by the Mayor of Kew, Cr Daryl Oldaker to members at the Annual General Meeting in October. Cr Oldaker spoke about the issue of waste management and the impending 6-month trial of 200 householders in Belmont Avenue, who were to be provided with 120 mobile litterbins for recyclables. At the same meeting he gave KHS two brass plaques from the

original Jubilee Rotunda in the Alexandra Gardens. In concluding his address, he referred to the deficit of \$300,000 in the City of Kew's Annual Budget; a precursor of the impending political changes that the decade would bring.

Earlier decades had witnessed the demolition of numerous houses and mansions in Kew. Heritage protection legislation in Victoria, enacted in 1974, had reduced the likelihood of that. However the emerging issue of the 1990s that would have an impact on heritage was the interest by governments in privatisation of government assets. After the Willsmere Mental Hospital had closed in December 1988, the financial constraints facing the Caine and later Kirner Governments meant that its future remained a cause of concern. Conservation studies in 1988 had recommended that its major buildings be preserved, however its future use remained problematic. In 1991, control and management of The Boulevard was given to VicRoads, leading to speculation that the former hospital would be the site of a new casino, and that the road would form its gateway. Instead, the sale of the complex to Central Equity was to lead to the site becoming a gated residential complex, opened in September 1993 by Premier Jeff Kennett.

Privatisation of local government assets was also to result from the amalgamation of the City of Kew into the City of Boroondara. In December 1995, members were dismayed to learn of the sale of the Kew Civic Offices in Charles Street, leaving the former Civic Hall (since 1987 the Kew Library) as one of the few buildings in Kew held by the new City. Rationalisation of human assets was also a feature of Council amalgamation. David Thomas, one of the Commissioners responsible for the transition of the former cities into a new administrative and political structure, announced at the Annual General Meeting of KHS in 1995 that amalgamation had led to efficiencies that resulted from a 10-12 per cent turnover of the staff of the former Councils.

*Continued p.8*

## KEW HISTORICAL SOCIETY 1990-2000 (from p.7)

Perhaps coincidentally, Alex Tarr, Kew Librarian and valued life member of KHS, had retired earlier in the same year.

The most immediate concern of both members of the KHS Committee and of the membership was the fate of the former City of Kew's Municipal Collection, which KHS, largely unsuccessfully, advocated should remain within the borders of the former City. Dorothy Benyei and Jill O'Brien were the nominees of KHS to the City of Boroondara Memorabilia Working Group. The use of the term 'Memorabilia' does not adequately convey the 'spoils' that were potentially at stake. While KHS had benefitted from extensive gifts of items from the City of Kew such as maps and framed pictures in the 1980s, they were to be disappointed that the only items they were given by the new City was a plain velvet ceremonial cover, a cup and saucer, and a scarf! The Public Seal of the City of Kew was removed 'from the care of the Society'.



**Port Phillip District-Yarra Yarra District MUIOOF Honor Board (1864-1990).** Donated by Dot Adams, 1993  
KHS Heritage Collection

The 'Archive' of KHS, had been conveniently located in an enclosed area located on the southern stage of the former Civic Hall since 1987. Sue Leong, a former president of KHS, recalls how she had rescued Dorothy Benyei and the KHS heritage collection from a damp, dark basement under the current Kew Library before it moved into commodious new quarters. What must have seemed like palatial surroundings in 1987 were, by the 1990s, already looking cramped, hence the decision to create a multi-level wooden mezzanine structure in the archive.

That extra space was required was not unusual given the nature of the growing, large collection of information files and artefacts. The latter had increased in number as KHS adopted an increasingly ambitious series of heritage displays in the Phyllis Hore Room of the Kew Library. Looking back from the present, the 3-dimensional structures and objects created by Graeme Lindsay to showcase these seems extraordinary, given that the displays were often used for from two to three days, once a year. These displays needed big objects to fill them, perhaps the inspiration for the donation by Graeme Lindsay of the largest gift that KHS had received in forty-four years, a galvanised iron bathtub. The heritage displays perhaps encouraged other members to donate additional household items, which perhaps resulted in Dorothy Benyei and Dione McIntyre announcing in 1996 that KHS should consider selling bric-a-brac in a car boot sale.

Between 1990 and 2000, KHS was to acquire a number of historically important items for its heritage collection. These included a first edition of Robert Russell's map 'Shewing the site of Melbourne' in 1837, from the Town Planning Department of the City of Kew in 1991. Numerous donations to the Fashion & Textiles Collection included an 1830s embroidered sideboard runner from Mrs Docherty and later in the decade, a collection of 1980s clothing, by Australian and international fashion designers, from Annie McIntyre. The Pictures Collection was further augmented by the donation of a large number of framed and unframed photographs, once held by the Kew Cottages Historical Society, and donated by Dr Cliff Judge and Fran van Brummelen. A Port Phillip District-Yarra Yarra District MUIOOF Honor Board (1864-1990), donated by Dot Adams in 1993 overtook the bathtub as by far the largest item in the heritage collection. And finally, donations from Jan Dods and Gwlad Wade of memorabilia relating to Cr Hugh Ferguson and Cr Ivan Wade augmented the Civic Collection held by KHS. (All these donations have been photographed and described on *Victorian Collections*.)

The Kew Historical Society is now an Incorporated Association and has Tax Exemption Status as a registered charity. Correspondence between KHS and the Australian Tax Office regarding the status of KHS as a recipient for tax deductible gifts is recorded in April and June 1991. It was not until August 2000 that KHS was provided with an Australian Business Number and Income Tax Exempt Endorsement as a charity in December of the same year. That KHS was able to more-or-less maintain its healthy budget status throughout the decade was due to regular grants from the Cities of Kew, and subsequently of Boroondara, and local fundraising through 'stalls' selling a range of items including pickles. This may seem insignificant, however the efforts of members in selling items at a 'Fair' in 2000 raised \$1,371.

Most of what gets highlighted in historical accounts such as this focuses on big picture events or developments, ignoring or minimising the enormous contributions of individuals who provide support by organising monthly meetings, bus and walking tours, working bees, and exhibitions. While not seeking to downplay the contributions of many individuals over this decade, a number of individuals stand out, at least for the writer, for their significant contributions: notably Dorothy and Laszlo Benyei, Thea (and Max) Sartori, Raymond and Rosemary Vaughan-Smith, Dione McIntyre, Graeme Lindsay, and Jill O'Brien.

The ensuing decade, too complex to include here, would see the enormous challenge of securing the Kew Court House and Police Station as a community asset. Many of the individuals mentioned above were to be in the vanguard of that campaign.

**ROBERT BAKER**



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# THE KEW SPUR LINE

## A KEY TO THE PAST

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Our first exhibition for 2019 at the Kew Court House, *Railways of Kew*, focused on the Outer Circle Railway, with a smaller display on the Kew Spur Line. The exhibition attracted many visitors, including Harry Jackson who donated to our collection an 'A pattern' Annett key (right) which was used at Kew Railway Station prior to its closure.

Established histories can tell us a great deal about the general history of events but they rarely, and understandably lack the detail that eyewitness accounts provide. In March 1976, at a meeting of the Kew Historical Society, two accounts were presented to members that fleshed out the 'mechanics' of the railway and how people viewed and used the line. Both are highly individualistic and characterful. The historian John O'Neill read the first account by **Lewis Campbell**. Mr Campbell's account (below) begins in the 1900s and concluded when the line was closed and subsequently removed.

...

'In the 1900s when I first knew it, its only competitor was a horse tram, which ran and walked between the Kew Cemetery and Victoria Bridge where passengers transferred to and from cable trams, wet or fine without shelter. Not unnaturally, the railway was the more popular.

'The Kew station was situated on the southwest corner of Wellington and Denmark Streets and there was a cab rank on the south side of Wellington Street. At one period a cabman's shelter stood inside the station fence alongside the rank. On the arrival of a train, the cabbies watched the station entrance for fares. If a cab was required, the cabby had to drive south along Denmark Street to a gate giving vehicles entrance to the station yard. From the entrance, one path led to the corner and another, shorter and consequently steeper, to Wellington Street and, except to the south, every passenger had a hill to climb after leaving the station. Consequently many businessmen, either on account of their age or figure, found it preferable to continue their journey home in a cab.

'The Kew station in its heyday was quite a busy one. There were three sets of line opposite the platform: one for passengers, one for the engine to get to the other end of the train for the return journey, and one for goods traffic. The mainstay of this traffic was wood and coal and the goods yards were never lacking in large stacks of these materials. This traffic continued for many years after the passenger [service] began its decline.

'The station entrance was near the end of the line and the trains stopped with the engine just beyond the entrance followed by a 'second class smoker'. This had only one door on each side and the seats were round the walls and not across. The engine was usually in those days a six-wheeled E Class [locomotive], which carried its coal and water. After being disconnected, the engine would give a few puffs and stop.

'As far as I can find out, this key was used to secure the home signal at proceed when the station was unmanned - presumably to stop unauthorized return of the signal to the stop position, which would have delayed the train.'

Harry Jackson



A lever was pulled on the station and the section of the line carrying the engine moved east until its rails coincided with those of the return line, the motive power being hydraulic. The engine, having nothing to pull, puffed merrily along until about halfway back to *Barker* where it rejoined the main line, reversed and hitched onto the train.

'The Kew station boasted a large brass hand bell. As [it] neared the time for the train to leave, the Station Master would leave his office and, after a quick look around to make sure that there were no late comers in sight, he would give the bell a couple of clangs, the guard would blow his whistle and wave his flag. If a latecomer was sighted, the Station Master would hold [up] his hand to give time for the late comer to make a dash for the second class smoker. On the Kew platform, besides the lever already mentioned, were others controlling the signals towards *Barker* and the points on the goods lines.

'Very occasionally, because the line in the cutting was greasy, or perhaps because the fireman had allowed the pressure to drop, the E class engine found the seven carriages more than it could pull. In that case, the rear three carriages were disconnected and left sitting in the cutting to be collected later. I experienced this once only but fortunately I was in the front portion.

'At that time I was living in a house near the top of the hill in Walpole Street. When I went out of the front gate I had a clear view of the railway from about Mary Street to Wellington Street and so could judge from the engine puffs of steam how hard I had to run to catch the train. If the puffs emanated from the cutting, I knew a gentle jog would suffice. If it showed the engine backing towards the carriages, I really had to sprint. Fortunately it was all down hill and I had an almost direct route to the station. It did not suit my book when the line was electrified as then there were no puffs of steam to indicate whether I had to run or not, and at what pace if I had to run.

'The deathblow came with the cancellation of the last vestiges of passenger service. On the cessation of the rail service it was optimistically replaced by a bus, which proved predictably even less popular. It ran from outside the Kew station (which had not then been demolished) in Denmark Street to Burwood Road. It was obvious that, sooner or later, the Railway authorities would realise that maintaining the bus service was like pouring money down the sink. I remember being the only passenger at times, and this they did eventually.'

# A PHARMACEUTICAL COLLECTION

The Society wishes to acknowledge an important new donation to our heritage collection by Brenda Johnson. The newly donated pharmaceutical items add to pharmaceutical goods donated by Brenda and her husband Bob a number of years ago.



The Brenda and Bob Johnson Collection is comprised of 19th and 20th century pharmaceutical records, books, apothecary jars and pharmaceutical implements. The most recent donation includes approximately thirty-four apothecary jars labelled with the names of a number of chemists who ran the dispensary.

The items in the collection were used, and or available for sale, by chemists who occupied a pharmacy at 167 High Street, beginning with Francis Barnard, whose original business was on the site now occupied by the former Kew Post Office. Barnard moved his business to what is now 167 High Street in 1880. The most important items in the collection are two dispensary books. Both were owned and compiled by Francis and his son FGA Barnard.

We value the Brenda and Bob Johnson collection as it represents an important continuous historical record of pharmaceutical and commercial practice in Victoria during the 19th and 20th centuries.

As members of the Collections Committee unpacked and stored the new donations in archival boxes, we discussed how to add value to the collection. We agreed that many of the items warrant additional research, particularly into their changing uses as medicines.

Accordingly, we are seeking a suitably qualified and interested volunteer with an interest in researching, describing and evaluating the significance of this collection.

For further information, please contact Judith Scurfield, [curator@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au](mailto:curator@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au).

# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

## Notice of Annual General Meeting

The 60th Annual General Meeting of the Kew Historical Society Inc, will be held on Wednesday 11 September 2019 at 8.00PM in the Phyllis Hore Room, rear Kew Library, Civic Drive, off Cotham Road, Kew.

The following business will be transacted at the meeting:

- (1) Apologies
- (2) Speaker: Cr Jane Addis, Mayor of Boroondara
- (3) Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting
- (4) Report from the President for the year ending 30 June 2019
- (5) Report from the Treasurer for the year ending 30 June 2019
- (6) Report from the Archivist for the year ending 30 June 2019
- (7) Election of Management Committee members for the year 2019-2020
- (8) Appointment of an Auditor
- (9) General Business, including Certificates of Appreciation.

In accordance with the Constitution approved under the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*, all positions become vacant.

The elected Management Committee positions are: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Archivist, Curator and six ordinary members.

Any member wishing to nominate a member for any position on the Management Committee should use the nomination form on p.11 of this newsletter. All nomination forms shall be delivered either personally, or by mail, or electronically to the Secretary of the Society, Desley Reid, by 4 September 2019.

Members of the Management Committee in 2018-2019 were:

President: Judith Voce

Vice President: Brad Miles

Secretary: Desley Reid

Treasurer: Robert Romanin

Archivist: Robert Baker

Curator: Judith Scurfield

Ordinary Members: Richard Bowen, Mary Kelleher, Debbie McColl-Davis, Janet Walker, David White.

If you are unable to be present at the meeting, you can fill out and send the proxy form on p.11.

**DESLEY REID**

Secretary



## FORM OF APPOINTMENT OF PROXY

I, .....  
of .....  
being a member of the Kew Historical Society Inc. hereby appoint .....  
of .....  
being a member of that Incorporated Society, as my proxy to vote for me on my behalf at the Annual General Meeting to be held on Wednesday the 11th day of September 2019.

**Note:**

1. This proxy must be completed and handed to the Chairperson before or at the start of the meeting.
2. Or it can be mailed to PO Box 175, Kew, 3101.
3. Or it can be scanned and emailed to secretary@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au
4. If mailed or emailed, the completed proxy form must be received by the Society at least 24 hours before the start of the meeting.
5. Any queries phone Desley Reid 0413 761 614

Signed .....

Name .....

The ..... day of ..... 2019

✂ .....



## NOMINATION FORM

I, ..... nominate .....

To the Position of ..... within the Kew Historical Society Inc. for the year 2019–2020

Signed ..... Date .....

I, ..... second the nomination

Signed ..... Date .....

I, ..... accept the above nomination

To the Position of ..... within the Kew Historical Society Inc. for the year 2019–2020

Signed ..... Date .....

Nomination forms must be in the hands of the Secretary by 5.00pm Wednesday 4 September 2019.

**Kew Historical Society Inc.**  
**PO Box 175**  
**Kew VIC 3101**

# MEMBERSHIP & DONATIONS

## KEW HISTORICAL SOCIETY – KEEPING ALIVE KEW HISTORY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

The Society has operated continuously for 60 years holding monthly meetings, conserving historical records and items, undertaking historical research, arranging public exhibitions and lectures, and giving guided tours. You can become involved and support the Society's work by becoming a member or renewing your membership and/or making a donation.

*[Tick relevant boxes]*

- I/we wish to join the Society
- I/we wish to renew my/our membership *Note: Renewals were due 1 July 2019.*
- Individual membership (2019-20 annual fee \$20)
- Household membership (2019-20 annual fee \$30)
- Student membership (2019-20 annual fee \$10)
- I/we agree to be bound by the rules of the society.
- I/we prefer to receive the Society's quarterly newsletter by email.
- I/we would like to volunteer – on a committee, on the courthouse or supper rosters, or with research.
- I/we would like to make a donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ *Note: All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.*

NAME/S: \_\_\_\_\_ *[PLEASE PRINT]* TITLE/S: \_\_\_\_\_

POSTAL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ POST CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE PAYMENTS: MOBILE: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail form and cheque, made out to Kew Historical Society Inc., to KHS, PO Box 175, Kew, 3101.  
 OR Pay by direct bank deposit to KHS account 063-142 10066376 with your surname as the subject or reference and email payment details and/or scanned form to [secretary@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au](mailto:secretary@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au).

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Privacy note: The KHS will not pass your details to a third party without obtaining your permission.*

*Kew Historical Society Incorporated Registration A001078W ABN 97 824 890 237 [info@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au](mailto:info@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au)*

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**Printing: Courtesy of Tim Smith MP, State Member for Kew.**  
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