



**HISTORICAL  
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historians and  
researchers*

# NEWSLETTER

No. 127  
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## YARRA VIEWS

### CONTENTS

3

#### SOCIETY NEWS

Information about events, grants, acquisitions and awards

4

#### STITCH YOUR WAY INTO HISTORY

Steps towards completing the Bicentennial Kew Tapestry Project

5

#### BROADCASTING FROM KEW

The history of radio broadcasting in the district

8

#### KEW HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Part 2 of our history covering the period 1974-1989

9

#### RESURRECTION

Part 2 of a history of the Outer Circle Railway

10

#### EDGEVALE ROAD

Reflections on the residences and businesses that once lined the street

In February 2019, the Colville Gallery in Hobart advertised for sale by auction a rare and important painting by G B Richardson of the River Yarra. Its low auction estimate presumably resulted from it being a 'Victorian' painting. After extensive due diligence, the Society decided to bid for and purchase the painting; an unusual decision as the Society normally acquires items by donation. The final cost of the painting, when including fees and charges, was higher than that set aside by the Committee, however three benefactors met this shortfall. The Society is grateful for their generosity.

But why is this painting important? It is historically significant as perhaps the earliest artwork showing the Yarra River at Kew. It is artistically significant as the earliest known 'Australian' work by the British artist George Bouchier Richardson (1822-77). The reverse of the painting includes the title, an inscription and the signature of the artist. Richardson called the painting 'Creek and Old Watering stage, on the Yarra East Collingwood 1854', which initially led us to hesitate in purchasing the work, uncertain as to its relevance to our collection. Investigations of early newspapers and maps by members of our research group, and field research by David and Janet White, allayed these doubts.

The point of view selected by the artist is from the banks of Blind Creek in East Collingwood, looking across the Yarra to the Kew side of the river. Blind Creek was located between the Abbotsford Convent and what is now the Collins Bridge in Studley Park. In an 1858 map of East Collingwood by Clement Hodgkinson, in the State Library of Victoria, one can see how the creek was originally a significant landmark in Collingwood; remaining vacant land until a barrel drain enclosed it. The area was later filled in, surveyed and developed. The position where Blind Creek entered the Yarra was in the immediate vicinity of Hodgson's Punt, which had linked Kew to the other side of the Yarra from 1839. The Punt was purchased by the Colonial Government in 1852 and was in use until the opening of the Studley Park Road (Johnston Street) Bridge in 1858 made its continued use redundant.

*Continued page 2*

Front-page

**G B Richardson (1822-77)**

**Creek and Old Watering stage on the Yarra, East Collingwood 1854**

Ink & wash on artist's paper, 18x22 cm

## **YARRA VIEWS** (from page 1)

A number of works by G B Richardson are in public collections, including the National Gallery of Victoria. Richardson was born in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in 1822 and migrated to Melbourne on the *Great Britain*, disembarking at Port Melbourne on 19 August 1854. An engraver and lithographer like his father, brother and uncle, he acted for some time as librarian of the Melbourne Mechanics' Institute, eventually becoming a journalist and editor of the *Walleroo Times*. From 1874 he taught drawing and watercolour painting at Adelaide, where he died on 28 November 1877.

Colonial paintings of Kew rarely appear at auction, so it was with some surprise that we became aware of an oil painting by Herbert James Woodhouse (1854-1937) of *The Yarra, Studley Park* for auction by Leonard Joel in April. The painting was in excellent condition but had been badly reframed at a later date. The absence of backing paper meant that the artist's annotation on the reverse was exposed. He described the location as 'near Dights Falls'. Looking at the painting carefully, it would appear that the city of Melbourne is on the horizon. The exact location may however be difficult to ascertain given the changes to the landscape caused by the creation of the Eastern Freeway, which included changes to the course of the Yarra.

Herbert Woodhouse was born in Essex in 1854 and arrived in Australia with his family in 1857. A painter-lithographer like his father and three of his brothers, he was a prizewinner in the South Australian Society of Arts exhibition of 1885. He also received commendations in exhibitions at the Victorian Academy of Arts and the New South Wales Arts Society. At an exhibition of his paintings at Scott's Hotel in Collins Street in 1892, the reviewer for *Table Talk* noted that the 'artist paints almost solely in the open air, and his studies are generally carried out during the trips of the Victorian Sketching Club'. One of the paintings singled out for praise was: 'A very effective river scene at Willsmere, aptly named *A Midstream Mirror*, ... a picture powerful in its effective reflection of sunlight in the river.'

Herbert Woodhouse died in Geelong in June 1937, aged 82, and was buried in the Eastern Cemetery. A number of his sketchbooks are held in the collection of the State Library of Victoria.

The Society purchased both artworks out of funds from accumulated tax-free donations made to the Society by members and friends. At the May meeting, when displaying the oil painting to members present, the Society sought additional donations to cover the purchase and reframing of the Woodhouse painting. Subsequently, \$250 was contributed from members. If you would like to contribute towards the purchase and reframing of this important painting, please contact our treasurer or archivist.

### **DISCLAIMER**

Whilst every effort is made to check the accuracy of articles published in this newsletter, the Society accepts no responsibility for errors and the views expressed are not necessarily those of the Society.

### **EDITOR**



**Herbert J Woodhouse (1854-1937)**

**The Yarra, Studley Park, c. 1892**

Oil on board, 60x44.5cm

## **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 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

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# SOCIETY NEWS

## EVENTS

The events program for the months of June to October 2019 includes:

12 June	Phyllis Hore Room Kew Library 8.00-9.30pm	Jill Giese	The Maddest Place on Earth
10 July	Phyllis Hore Room Kew Library 8.00-9.30pm	Members & Friends	Show & Tell
14 August	Phyllis Hore Room Kew Library 8.00-9.30pm	John Semmens	Magic Lantern Shows
18 August	Phyllis Hore Room Kew Library 1.00-4.00pm	Kew Historical Society & Kew Library	Quarterly Book Sale
25 August	Hawthorn Community Precinct, 584 Glenferrie Road 1.00-4.00pm	Boroondara Historical Societies	Valuation Day
11 September	Phyllis Hore Room Kew Library 8.00-9.30pm	Speaker TBC	Annual General Meeting
16 October	Kew Court House 6.00-9.30pm	Cr Jane Addis and Helen T Harris OAM	Book launch, exhibition and Dickinson Lecture

## GRANTS

The Society was advised in May that its application for a Local History Grant to fund the conservation of eighty-seven historically important portraits of the mayors of Kew had been successful.

In awarding the grant, the assessment panel noted that:

*Full funding was recommended by the panel to conserve a series of eighty-seven City of Kew Mayoral Portraits. The funding will be used to engage a conservation framer to undertake the work. The project will ensure that the portraits are accessible for current and future generations of Victorians. The panel commended this project for following heritage collection best practice standards.*

The grant is provided by the Victorian Government and is administered by the Public Record Office Victoria. The supplier selected is Art Conservation Framers, 118 Bridport Street, Albert Park. The conservation is being undertaken in batches of twenty portraits, and will be completed for our third exhibition at the Kew Court House, opening in October 2019. The exhibition during History Week will coincide with the launch by Cr Jane Addis of our new publication *From Municipality to City: Chairmen and Mayors of Kew 1860-1993*, and the delivery of the 2019 Dickinson Lecture by Helen D Harris OAM on *The Right to Vote; the right to stand: the involvement of women in local government in Victoria*.

## NEW EXHIBITION

Following our highly successful exhibition on railways in Kew, our new exhibition at the Kew Court House focuses on the interiors of three Victorian mansions - *Southesk*, *Tara Hall*, and *Villa Alba*, the first two of which were demolished in 1960 and 1970 respectively. The proposed date for the opening is on Saturday 6 July at 2.30pm.

## THE COLLECTION

Recent additions to the collection include:

- Colville Gallery - GB Richardson, *'Creek and Old Watering stage on the Yarra, East Collingwood 1854*, ink & wash on paper.
- Leonard Joel - HJ Woodhouse, *The Yarra, Studley Park*, oil on board, c.1892.
- Megan O'Brien - Jill O'Brien, archival material.
- Vic Sabaliauskas - Model Dairy plastic milk bottles.
- Susan Baker - First and Second World War items belonging to Len Baker.
- Glenda Shomaly - Kites and related items from the Helen Bushell collection.
- Leila Thomson - White wedding dress and veil, Hartnell of Melbourne, 1960s
- Gail Norman - 2 swimming certificates.

## RHSV AWARD

The members of the Kew Historical Society who attended the Annual General Meeting of the RHSV (Royal Historical Society of Victoria) in May were delighted to see Robert Baker, our talented and hardworking archivist presented with an Award of Merit in recognition of his distinguished service to history in Victoria. The RHSV President, Richard Broome made the presentation and outlined the extent of Robert's outstanding contribution over many years to the preservation of the history and heritage of Kew. We are very privileged that Robert gives his time so generously and effectively to the Kew Historical Society.



Award of Merit presentation, RHSV AGM 2019  
L-R Desley Reid, Judith Scurfield, Robert Baker, Margaret Robinson



# STITCH YOUR WAY INTO HISTORY

In 1988, an article appeared in the journal *Kewriosity* calling for support for a Australian Bicentennial project. The article is printed below as background information.

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*Every Thursday afternoon between 2 pm and 4.30 pm - or every Tuesday evening between 6 pm and 8.30 pm - Kew residents are visiting Kew Library to stitch their way into history. They are part of a Kew Bicentennial Tapestry Project - a panel of eight separate tapestries which depicts the history of Kew. So far more than 500 people, men, women and children - have put a stitch or two in the panels which will be framed and hung in the Kew Library when they are complete.*

*Panels for the tapestry were designed by artist and former Kew resident, Joy Stewart. Joy, who lives and paints in Cairns, is also a former archivist and secretary of the Kew Historical Society. Before designing and drawing the panels, Joy spent a great deal of time researching Kew history, checking details of each period and checking colours used in the costumes of each era so that she could make her sketches as accurate as possible.*

*[The] Kew Tapestry is similar in its style of embroidery to the Bayeux Tapestry. The Bayeux Tapestry is 70 metres long and depicts the Battle of Hastings in 1066 and the Norman conquest of Britain which followed. It was embroidered in the 11th Century and is on public display in the tapestry museum attached to Bayeux Cathedral in the French province of Normandy.*

*The Kew Tapestry Project is being organised by members of the Kew Historical Society for the Kew Bicentennial Committee. Society members are on hand in Kew Library, in the designated hours, to supervise the embroidery of the tapestry and to teach any Kew resident who wants to contribute their stitches to the work.*

*One of the Tapestry's organisers, Dorothy Benyei, said, "As well as the wonderful support we've had from individuals in the Kew community, groups like the Kew/Balwyn branch of the Country Women's Association and the Victorian Embroiderers' Guild have given us much assistance and advice. We're very grateful for that." Dorothy said a book which includes the names of everyone participating in the working of the tapestry will be kept with the work as a complete historical record of the Kew Tapestry Project.*

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During 1988 and 1989, six of the eight panels were completed, framed and displayed on the south wall of the Kew Library. In 2019 the six tapestries were 'rested' after thirty years on permanent display and are now stored under archival conditions.

At the time when the Kew Tapestry was being completed, the constraints of time prevented the final two tapestries from being completed. In recognition of the contribution of Joy Stewart and Dorothy Benyei, as well as the stitches of those who part-completed the remaining two panels, we are aiming to complete the Kew Tapestry.



The two remaining embroidered panels, number 6 and number 7 (pictured), are part completed. These two panels depict Kew's Churches and the War Memorial. Both panels use wool stitching on a plain woollen background. The stitches to be used are identified on a hand-coloured template created by Joy Stewart, which will guide the completion of the panels.

Our Collections Group is leading the completion of the panels under the guidance of Jan Walker. We are treating the activity as a conservation exercise, ensuring that the completion follows the standards set by the designer, using moth-proof embroidery wool in the colours designated on the original templates. Each of the two remaining panels is mounted on wooden stretchers to facilitate their completion.

Jan is seeking volunteers from within and outside the Society to complete the final stages of this living history project that pays tribute to the efforts of the men, women and children who began these panels over thirty years ago. The two panels will be on display at the June Monthly Meeting, where we hope that members and friends can volunteer to complete each panel.

## COLLECTIONS GROUP

The Collections Group meets each Wednesday between 10 am and 4 pm in our archive at the south end of the Kew Library. The group's members include: Robert Baker, Kathleen Gervasoni, Les Littlechild, Prue McColl, Margaret Robinson, Judith Scurfield, and Janet Walker. Activities undertaken by the group include exhibition preparation and development; archiving, cataloguing and digitising collection items; and basic conservation.

The group welcomes new members with an interest in working in teams or individually on short or long-term projects. If you are interested in finding more about our activities, please contact one of the members of the group listed above.

# BROADCASTING FROM KEW

3MBS, the first FM radio station in Victoria, operating from a studio at 146 Cotham Road, began its first broadcast at 6:30pm on 1 July 1975 with Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*.

Seven years earlier in 1968, Brian Cabena, a Kew resident, radio engineer and music lover, concerned about the diminishing amount of classical music broadcast by the ABC's Melbourne AM radio stations, had written to *The Age* calling for a public meeting to establish 'listener controlled radio'. Two hundred people attended the meeting and the Music Broadcasting Society (MBS) of Victoria was formed. Classical music enthusiasts were attracted by the clarity of FM radio transmission and the ability to broadcast in stereo.

The Post Master General's Department had established experimental FM broadcasting stations in the late 1940s, which continued in operation until 1961 when it was decided that FM should be reserved for extra television stations. However, in 1974 a Royal Commission headed by Sir Francis McLean presented a report arguing that there was considerable scope for introducing FM radio. The commercial radio industry and the ABC showed little interest and the first licences for FM stations were for Music Broadcasting Society stations in Melbourne and Sydney. 2MBS-FM in Sydney was the first FM radio station in Australia to commence broadcasting on 15 December 1974, followed by 3MBS-FM about six months later.

3MBS-FM continued to broadcast from the studio in a converted shopfront and first floor residence at 146 Cotham Road until moving to its current location at the Abbotsford Convent in 2007, where it continues its aim 'To be the premier broadcaster and supporter of classical music experiences in Victoria' into the digital era.

...

Eighty-five years earlier, the parents of the aforementioned Brian Cabena - returned Flying Corps mechanic Harold Cabena, and his wife Gertrude of 22 Uvadale Grove - had announced the birth of their son in *The Argus* on 26 January 1922. Radio or 'wireless' as it was then known was in its infancy in Australia. Wireless was the exciting new communications technology of the early 20th Century and amateur licences provided an opportunity for 'tech nerds' of the day to explore the new medium. Numerous individuals and groups were to compete for a place in this new territory.

In 1911, a meeting was held at the Esperanto Hall, Elizabeth-street at which fifty enthusiasts formed themselves into the Amateur Wireless Society of Victoria. In May 1919, a meeting was held in the Marconi School of Wireless, Little Collins Street, chaired by Mr H Firth, the superintendent of the school, at which the Wireless Institute of Victoria was formed. The object of the Institute was to 'encourage the scientific study of wireless telegraphy and telephony, to promote intercourse between the members, and to aid them with advice and instruction.'



FM Radio Station 3MBS, 146 Cotham Road

On 20 March 1924 the 'Wireless notes for amateurs' column in *The Herald* reported that a meeting of the East Kew Radio Club had been held on 12 March and had been well attended. Mr TP Court had delivered a lecture on 'Elementary Valve Theory'. The club was reported as making very satisfactory progress and already possessed its own apparatus. Messrs Gadsden and Macey were appointed delegates to the State Council of the Institute and Mr A Morrison of 26 Belford Road East was Hon Secretary.

On 29 May 1924, the East Kew Radio Club changed its name to the Kew Radio Club. Mr SW Gadsden was elected president, and Mr Morrison secretary. It was hoped that as Kew had been without a club, the change would result in a larger membership. The first meeting of the newly renamed club was in the Kew City Band Room, Brougham Street, on 4 June, at which Mr Court delivered a lecture on tuning. The ability of listeners to tune in their wireless sets to listen to a broadcast seems to have been of some concern to the members of the new Kew Radio Club. So, on 19 November 1924, the club conducted a demonstration evening in the clubroom in Brougham Street at which a number of broadcasting receivers were shown and their methods of operation explained. An elementary explanation of the operating principle of wireless receivers was also given. Members of the club had decided that many of the complaints against the quality of music provided in broadcasting were due to the inability of the owners of listening sets to understand how to adjust their sets to obtain clear reception.

It may have been a coincidence but in October 1924, the Broadcasting Company of Australia's new high-powered wireless station, 3LO, was officially opened with a live broadcast of *La Boheme* from His Majesty's Theatre. Billed as Dame Nellie Melba's final performance on the operatic stage, the performance was preceded by a speech from the Prime Minister, Stanley Melbourne Bruce, broadcast from the 3LO studio at 197 Collins Street.

*Continued p.6*

## BROADCASTING FROM KEW (from p.5)

Some listeners had been critical of its quality, with 'Wireless notes for amateurs' in *The Herald* commenting that: 'For a first transmission the recent opera was highly creditable, and great improvement was noticed towards the end.'

In May 1925 a wireless exhibition organised by the Victorian division of the Wireless Institute was held at Wirth's *Olympia* in St Kilda Road. The Postmaster General, Mr WG Gibson, opened the exhibition. In his speech, he recalled that it was only 53 years since a marine cable first established telegraphic communication with England and suggested that great progress had been made since then. Presciently, anticipating the mobile telephone, he looked forward to the establishment of wireless telephone stations, which would work in conjunction with the post office telephone services, enabling a subscriber to be placed in direct touch with a passenger on an ingoing or outgoing steamer. Two years previously, when he had presided over the first Australian Wireless Broadcasting Conference, there had been practically no receiving sets in the country but by 1925, 59,543 licences had been issued. A report in *The Age* stated that 'there is on view [at the exhibition] every kind of wireless appliance necessary to the successful conduct of that new amusement listening in.' In addition to displays by commercial suppliers and distributors there was a display of amateur apparatus. Among the recipients of prizes in this category was Mr SW Gadsden for Best Transmitting Set and Best Complete Station.

The first annual meeting of the Wireless Institute of Australia, Victorian Division was held at the Athenaeum, Collins Street in May 1926. Mr SW Gadsden was elected chief of council in the election of office bearers for the organisation.

On Monday 1 November 1926, John Russell Alsop, broadcasting under his call sign 3MI from his parents' home, *Nirvana*, at 28 Molesworth Street was the first of seventeen competitors to present a program of music in a competition intended to identify the best amateur wireless broadcasting station in Victoria. The competition had been arranged by the Broadcasting Company of Australia, operators of 3LO, and the Wireless Institute of Australia. Two other Kew residents were also competing: Royal William Bryson, call sign 3JM, of 149 Eglinton Street, and Stanley Wilkinson Gadsden, call sign 3SW, of Miller Grove. Gadsden was to finish second in the competition, collecting a prize of £5/5/-, ahead of Bryson in fourth and Alsop in fourteenth position; both, unfortunately, out of the money.

Since his appointment as an East Kew Wireless Club delegate to the council of the Wireless Institute of Victoria, Stanley Wilkinson Gadsden had increased his profile in Victorian amateur wireless circles. Born in 1887 he was 39 years old when he participated in the 3LO competition. At the time of the competition he lived at 5 Miller Grove and was listed as a 'manufacturer' on the electoral roll. His father, Jabez Gadsden who lived at *Ferndale*, 4 Fernhurst Grove, had arrived in Melbourne in 1879 and in 1884 had become a partner in a bag making business.



**WIRELESS EXHIBITION**  
Mr S W Gadsden, Chairman of the committee of the Wireless Institute, operating his amateur transmitter 3SW, at the Wireless Exhibition. The display was opened by His Excellency the Governor-General (Lord Stonehaven) In the Exhibition Building.  
*The Argus*, 7 March 1927, p.15.

In 1889, Gadsden became sole proprietor of the business J Gadsden Pty Ltd, manufacturers of textile bags and tin containers. SW Gadsden became managing director of the business following the retirement of his father.

The fourth placegetter in the 1926 competition, Royal William Bryant was a 40-year-old electrical fitter. Compared to the other two Kew participants, little more could be found on Bryant other than that his station 3JM incorporated the crystal control system of wave length stabilisation; the latest refinement in wireless transmission and used by only one other telephony station in Australia. The other Kew competitor, John Russell Alsop was the son of Henry John Alsop, company secretary of Bryant & May Pty Ltd, and Kate Penelope Alsop. In the *1931 Electoral Roll* his occupation is listed as 'radio expert'. He went on to work with Eclipse Radio Pty Ltd which was established in Queens Bridge street, South Melbourne by 1931. by which time it was producing 60 radio sets a day.

## DAVID WHITE

David White is the convenor of our Research Group, which meets on the third Tuesday of each month at the Kew Library. The group welcomes new members with knowledge about, and an interest in researching and writing about aspects of the history of Kew. Some of the projects on which members have collaborated include *Remembering Melbourne 1850-1960* (RHSV, 2016), and the forthcoming history *From Municipality to City: Chairmen and Mayors of Kew 1861-1994*.



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# KEW HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## 1974-1989

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*This is the second in a series of articles charting the growth and development of the Kew Historical Society. Writing the article involved reading and summarising 605 pages of the minute books and perusing copies of the newsletters from 1977 to 1989. Luckily for the writer, the latter have been indexed. It is impossible in two pages to report on all of the extraordinary achievements of these 15 years and the emphases necessarily reflect the writer's predilections.*

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The uncertainty expressed about the future of the Kew Historical Society at the end of 1973 may have been exacerbated by the death of one of our foundation members, Dorothy Rogers, in December of that year. That sense of anxiety was compounded by the death of the Society's founder, WHS Dickinson on 22 August 1974. Inevitably, the transience of human life was emphasised for members given their age and the shared ties that had been established during the early years. While identities such as WHS Dickinson, Alma Figuerola and Margaret Dumaresq were to dominate the first sixteen years of the Society, their contributions were taken up in the following decades by others such as Winifred Hall, Joy Stewart, Mavis Rolley and Dorothy Benyei.

The survival of the organisation was not solely due to the efforts of individuals. The Minutes of these years record the very gradual growth of the Society's funds through donations and activities such as annual cake stalls. While the Society was the recipient of regular Council grants, these were largely expended on the rental charges for meeting rooms, which increasingly replaced the use of private homes. In 1974, the Society's finances were reported to be \$160, which grew to \$5,239 by 1989. There must have been numerous cakes sold!

In 1974, Cr Petrie initiated the first Festival of Kew in the modern era. The Society was invited to the inaugural planning meeting and went on to mount a display of historic items in the Auxiliary Room of the Civic Centre. During the early years of the Festival, held every two years, displays were regularly mounted, often using the historic dresses that had been donated to the Society in 1961.

While we continue to actively participate in the Kew Festival, we are unable to match the extraordinary range of activities held during the 1970s and 1980s. These included a series of pioneer services held at local churches and regular tours to external locations. In 1987 alone, members attended tours to the Port of Melbourne, the MCG and the McCrae Homestead.

During these two decades, two activities stand out. The first was a re-enactment during the 1978 Kew Festival, of the party of exploration of Charles Grimes in 1803, which reached above Dights Falls to what would become Kew. The re-enactment was deemed a great success and a highlight of the Festival.



**Tour of the Boroondara General Cemetery, 1976**  
Kew Historical Society

Participants included the Mayor of Kew, Cr Whiting, Year 9 history students from Trinity Grammar and members of the Society in period costumes. Great expectations were perhaps muted by the cost of hiring a number of the period costumes.

Commemorations of European exploration did not mean that members ignored Kew's first inhabitants, as the Society had been active ten years earlier in funding a plaque commemorating the 'Canoe Tree' in Bowyer Avenue. It was also to acknowledge the first inhabitants in one of the panels of the Kew Tapestry, which was one of the Society's contributions to the Australian Bicentenary celebrations of 1988.

This 'celebration' was representative of the ways in which community organisations are largely dependent on government funding to engage in, and contribute to major events. Whereas the Society was able to regularly fund its participation in successive festivals by holding parades, tours on foot and by bus, or exhibitions, external funding was required for complex activities such as those that occurred during the Bicentenary year.

Discussion about the latter is first recorded in the Minutes of 14 April 1982, but actual preparations began in 1987 when a series of proposals were made as to what should occur. These included: the Kew Tapestry Project (see page 4), a pictorial history of Kew, markers on 'history trails', the relocation of a horse trough and hitching post, and the building of a replacement rotunda in the Alexandra Gardens. Most of these projects were to eventuate in 1988, but some were to extend beyond that year. A project such as the 'history of Kew', for which \$25,000 was allocated, was to morph into *Kew Living 1988*, which was finally released to the public in February 1989 at a cost of \$35. Two of the embroidered panels, that formed part of the Kew Tapestry Project, were publicly hung on the walls of the Kew Library in December 1988. Another four completed panels joined these in 1989.

*Continued p.7*

## **KEW HISTORICAL SOCIETY 1974-1989** (from p.6)

In October 1989, Dorothy Benyei advised the Committee that 1,235 residents had contributed stitches to the Kew Tapestry, however two remained to be completed. The hitching post, which the Society considered purchasing if funds were unavailable, and the horse trough were relocated to the entrance to the Boroondara General Cemetery; an event at which Dorothy Benyei and Sue Leong dressed up in period costume. In retrospect, the decision to rebuild the Jubilee Rotunda in its present style was regrettable, but the new structure was presumably constrained by the funding available.

Preservation of Kew's built and natural heritage remained a continuing issue for members during this period. The Society was in the vanguard to protect *Southesk* from demolition in 1970. Many of its efforts to protect other great houses of Kew facing demolition during this period were similarly unsuccessful. These included the 'hall', which once formed part of *Neama* in Studley Park Road. Following extensive research by our archivist, Mavis Rolley, we attempted to persuade the City of Kew to purchase the building, relocate it, and provide it to us for our headquarters. This did not eventuate. Nor were our attempts successful in preserving the Congregational Church in Walpole Street from demolition in 1979. The Society belatedly worked to fund a plaque on a wall of the *Bodalla* nursing home, commemorating the Church's prior existence on the site.

Some heritage issues were resolved with the support of the owners of a property. A significant example of this was *Villa Alba* in Walpole Street. In 1982, the Mount Royal Hospital invited three representatives of Council and the Society to inspect the site. A year later, the Hospital sought the support of these two parties in applying for a restoration grant. At the time, Councillors proposed that *Villa Alba* might become a museum of Australian art; wishful thinking considering that the use of *Banyule* as a major gallery of Heidelberg school art was short-lived. Regardless, members of the Society were instrumental in ensuring that the house was registered by the Victorian Heritage Council, and participated in a number of fairs, exhibitions and fundraising activities, including that which saw the purchase of the original overmantel in the drawing room and its installation.

The Society's most significant contribution to heritage during this period was its support for the first urban conservation study to be conducted in Kew. While the final *City of Kew Urban Conservation Study* was not to be completed until 1988, the Society was actively engaged with the planning Department to scope the study and to identify significant buildings. In 1983, the Town Planner reported at a meeting of the Society that whereas Heidelberg had over 200 sites registered, Kew had only 20. His department had ascertained that there were 850 Victorian-era buildings extant in Kew and Kew East and probably the same number of Edwardian buildings.

The limitations of heritage preservation in this period are exemplified in the list of built structures in 'Kew City' in *The Heritage of Australia: The Illustrated Register of the National Estate* (Macmillan, 1981, pp.3/36-3/37). The list of eight properties includes: *D'Estaville*, *Ross House*, *Lalla Rookh*, *Field Place*, *Studley House*, Holy Trinity Church, the Kew

Mental Hospital, and *Merridale*. The *City of Kew Urban Conservation Study* was a significant step in redressing this absence of heritage protection.

A site for its meetings and a place to store its collection had been an ongoing issue since the establishment of the Society. The death of WHS Dickinson meant that a more permanent meeting place needed to be found. For most of this period, that place was the Auxiliary Room in the Civic Hall. When that became unavailable, the Society had to meet in the old Manchester Unity Hall (now demolished) in Union Street. Many of our members lamented the lack of comfort in this new haven. The Society continued to meet in the Hall for two years before meeting Room No.3 became available in the Civic Hall.

The issue of a permanent 'store' for the Society's archives and collection was more problematic. During the 1970s, most of the collection had been stored in members' homes. Some parts of it were also on permanent display in Cr Ormando's shop window in High Street near the Junction. Finally, Kew Council agreed in 1984 to provide a space for our archives in the basement of the Civic Centre. This was only a temporary solution, as by 1986 they had been moved to the Auxiliary Room, before being finally relocated in 1987 to the southern stage of the Civic Hall, which had been converted into a new home for the Kew Library.

That the Society had a permanent home for its collection was perhaps responsible for the Council transferring eighty-four mayoral portraits and a series of historic Board of Works plans to our collection in 1989. Additional photographs, records and items from the city's municipal collections were transferred to us in the same year.

As the end of the decade approached, the Society could look back on another two decades of achievement, with significant improvements in memberships, financial sustainability, governance (we had agreed on a Constitution in 1979 and became an incorporated body in 1985), community participation and leadership.

There were of course other elements missing from this narrative such as the creation of the Dorothy Rogers Reserve, the Copy Shop, anniversary dinners, significant gifts to the collection such as the W Nicholls Anderson painting of Adeney Avenue and the 1850s silk patchwork quilt, but these have been described previously or can be written about in future by others.

**ROBERT BAKER**



Festival of Kew exhibition, 1976  
Kew Historical Society



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# RESURRECTION

## THE OUTER CIRCLE RAILWAY - PART 2

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*The first part of the story of the Outer Circle Railway appeared in our March Newsletter. This conclusion to the railway's story starts in 1893 and concludes in 2012.*

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Following extensive lobbying by the public, the southern section of the Outer Circle Railway remained open following the closure of the complete line in 1893, although staff were removed from all stations between Waverley Road and Riversdale.

To service East Kew, a horse bus carried passengers between Glenferrie Station and the corner of Cotham and Normanby Roads. During 1893, some of the line's infrastructure including stations, gatehouses and level crossing gates were removed.

The Riversdale to Fairfield section of the line had been in operation for a little over two years when it closed. By 1895, two more sections of the line were closed. The remaining 4.4km section between Ashburton and Camberwell remained open until 1897, when all trains stopped running. This section was re-opened in 1898 when Victoria began to emerge from depression. Only two stations were staffed; the guard selling tickets on the train.

The Riversdale to Deepdene passenger service had reopened in 1894 and goods trains ran on to East Kew. The goods trains operated without a guards van and a shunter carrying a red flag walked in front of the train at four level crossings on the route. Goods bound for East Kew included firewood, building materials and produce. Passengers to the city travelling on the line changed at the new East Camberwell station. Due to continued poor financial returns, rail motors replaced the steam locomotives in 1906, as a driver could operate them alone. These were replaced four years later by tank locomotives.

In the first decades of the 20th Century, Councils along the route lobbied the Minister of Railways to re-open sections of the track. In 1909, a group requested the re-opening of the Deepdene to Fairfield section, offering to cover any financial losses. A Parliamentary Committee recommended that landowners should contribute to any first year losses. After that, the Kew Council had to guarantee £216 per year for 19 years to re-open that section. Kew Council did not agree and the proposal lapsed. In 1918, following numerous inquiries into the efficiency of railways, the Commissioners resolved to close the entire line. Excepting the Camberwell to Alamein branch, the closure of passenger services was complete by 1927.

During the 1920's the southern section of the line was electrified; the last steam train running to Ashburton in 1924. A service called the *Deepdene Dasher* operated between Deepdene and Ashburton until 1924 and between Riversdale and Deepdene until 1926. In 1926, two rail motors coupled back-to-back replaced the *Deepdene Dasher*. This style of train could be driven from either end and did not need to be turned around.



**Outer Circle Rail Line Filling, 1930s**  
Donated by Eric Sibly 1974  
Kew Historical Society

In 1927, this passenger service was replaced by a bus service, which extended to East Kew in 1929. The service carrying timber and firewood to East Kew continued until 1943, when it closed due to wartime supply shortages.

The last remaining goods service to the Australian Paper Mill siding at Alphington closed in 2012. Today, the Camberwell to Alamein line is the only section of the Outer Circle still in operation. This track was duplicated from Camberwell to Ashburton in 1959. It remains a single track from Ashburton to Alamein.

The Outer Circle Railway was never financially viable, but the self-interest of politicians, land speculators and investors was the driving force behind its construction. The public also supported its construction and their support may also have influenced political decision-making.

Little of the nearly 16kms of track remains. Eleven stations with twin platforms and other infrastructure have been demolished, although many of the bridges remain. The viaduct over the Yarra was converted to road traffic in 1930 when the section of the line from the Yarra to Princess Street was dismantled to allow the Chandler Highway to be built. The section between Kew and East Kew was dismantled by 1940. By 1946 the last section to be dismantled was between East Kew and Riversdale.

In later years, the Outer Circle route was converted into a linear park used by walkers and cyclists who perhaps appreciate the legacy of the ill-fated Outer Circle Railway.

**DESLEY REID**

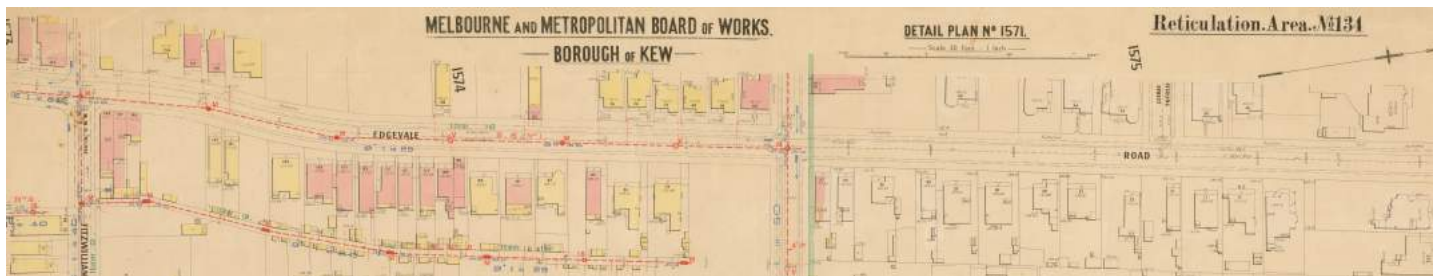
#### **Sources and further reading:**

Beardsell D & Herbert B, *The Outer Circle – A History of the Oakleigh to Fairfield Railway*.

Beardsell, Legacy, Atkins, O'Shaughnessy & Langlands, *The Outer Circle : Melbourne's Forgotten Railway* (DVD)

# EDGEVALE ROAD

## A SMALL SHOPPING STRIP IN KEW



Most of us remember small shopping strips in our neighbourhoods, and regret the passing of the days of small businesses where everyone knew everyone else. These shops usually had unpolished wooden floors, grocers had sacks of dry goods, and tins of Guest's biscuits on high shelves, and often a cat in the window, to catch the mice after hours! One such shop existed in my street when I was a child in the 1950s. Around the corner, along Edgevale Road, which runs between Barkers Road and Cotham Road, there were still several such shops until the early 1970s.

Tracing the history of this street, we can begin with the first subdivision of the land bounded by Cotham, Glenferrie, Burke and Barkers Roads in 1851, and the purchase of large portions by Edward Dumaresq, HB Macartney and Peter Davis. Later, in 1872, Henry Henty bought land east of Glenferrie Road and south of Wellington Street, calling his house *Tarring*. It is now part of Ruyton Girls' School. The land sloped down from *Tarring* to where Edgevale Road is now, and there was often a problem with flooding, the Henty family even recording boating on a lagoon on their property. An auction plan of 1889 shows a 'water course and creek' flowing down a lane towards Fitzwilliam Street near Edgevale Road, and the Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works Detail Plan No. 1571 of 1903 (pictured above) marks a small bridge across a deep gutter on the south east corner. This may account for the name of the road, which was shared with a large house on the corner of Cotham Road, owned by the Gardner family.

Edgevale Road was gazetted in 1893 (*Victorian Government Gazette* 1893, p.1370), and described in the *Borough of Kew List of Gazetted Streets* as being 50 feet wide, with a carriageway of 32 feet and footpath of 9 feet. However, it is first listed in the *Sands & McDougall Directory* in 1888, when there are only two occupants' names listed on the east side. Residential development was flourishing in the boom years of the late 1880s and early 1890s. We can trace the ownership of dwellings and businesses from the *Sands & McDougall Directories* between 1888 and the directories' demise in 1974.

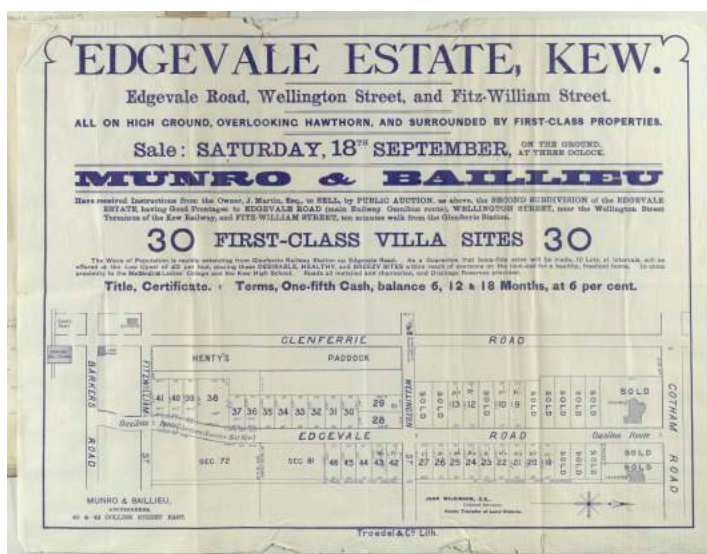
This research is somewhat complicated by the fact that Edgevale Road was renumbered in 1915, when the numbers started from Barkers Road and finished at Cotham Road, a reversal of the previous numbering system, and also changed from one side of the street to the other, odd numbers now being on the west side and even numbers on the east side (as they still are).

Public transport was made easier for shoppers and residents in the 1890s by the advent of a bus line, which ran along Edgevale Road from Glenferrie Station to East Kew. Real estate sales flourished at this time, and the Omnibus Company, which owned some of the land, was able to advertise that there were 'Buses every few minutes' and that 'the new main omnibus route passes through the subdivision'

Subdivisions such as the *Omnibus Reserve*, *Edgevale Estate* and *Wellington Reserve*, as well as being on this bus route, could pride themselves as being close to the terminus of the Kew Railway in Wellington Street, and to schools such as Kew High School (later Trinity Grammar) and Methodist Ladies' College. In addition, the home sites were advertised as being 'desirable, healthy and breezy', and 'within reach of everyone on the look-out for a healthy, freehold home!'

Supporting residential development were a number of businesses. The number of these grew rapidly on both sides of the road in the boom period of the early 1890s, with 23 names on the east, and eleven on the west side three years later.

*Continued p.11*



**Batten & Percy. Edgevale Estate, Kew, c.1886**  
Courtesy State Library of Victoria



## EDGEVALE ROAD *(from p.10)*

The proprietors listed include Solomon Harris, grocer; J Martyr, estate agent; GW Simpson, builder; and John Little, architect. From 1903 to 1905, *Lillsden* ladies' school, run by Misses Macey, Maxwell and Whitney, occupied 32, on the corner of Stirling Street. Long-standing businesses from this period include the butcher, JE Marsh at 149 (later renumbered 53, now 47). His shop still stands, as part of a group of three frontages, and can be recognised by the faint blue and white stripes painted on the brick wall. Marsh's was obviously a flourishing business, as he later opened another, larger shop in High Street, near Kew Junction (now 129).

Another essential food provider was the bakery, beginning with J Bramwell in 1900, at 147 Edgevale Road; one door from the northeast corner of Fitzwilliam Street. His business was taken over in about 1904 by James Bentley, who, until 1948 supplied bread to the neighbourhood. Bentley married another local resident, Nurse Black, a much-loved nurse and midwife. Their son Dick became a well-known British comedian, as a member of the 'Take it from Here' BBC comedy team. By 1940, the bakery had moved to a larger building on the southeast corner of Fitzwilliam Street, where there is now a small reserve. Its address had become 50 Fitzwilliam Street, and Bernard Store the proprietor. From 1960, it was owned by the Roumeli brothers. Opposite the bakery was the fuel merchant and woodyard, run first by AJ Smith, later by George Paxin, William Naumann, then Joshua Mansfield, before being taken over in about 1930 by Dunning's. The latter was to become a household name in Kew, with their main business near the Harp Road junction, where timber was transported to a nearby siding of the Outer Circle Railway.

Many businesses in Edgevale Road seem to have been small shops, serving their local community: suppliers of dairy products, butchers, grocers, fruiterers, confectioners, a tobacconist and hairdresser, a fancy goods emporium, and a library. By the late 1940s and 1950s, there were a number of larger establishments such as Wilson's Service Press and *Sportsman's Review*, the Sultex Sun Blind Company, and Lawrence and Pattersons' picture framing business on the corner of Wellington Street. In recent years, the only remaining shops were two milk-bars on the corners of Wellington and Fitzwilliam Streets. The former was known as Arthur's after its proprietors, Arthur and Frida Kakousis, who ran it from about 1978 to 1993. It sold well-brewed coffee and lunches as well as basic grocery supplies and the always-popular sweets from large jars. Don't we all remember asking for musk sticks at a penny each, and black cats at three for a penny in our local milk bar? The other corner shop became a café, known first as The Quartermaster's Store, and now as Brandy, catering for local coffee-lovers.

Transformation of these local businesses is representative of the changes that have occurred along streets such as Edgevale Road. Many of the former shops here have been renovated and become dwellings; some are still recognisable by their shop-front appearance. Among these are the terraces at 45-49, including the aforementioned Marsh's butcher's shop. Another is 97, with its porch right on the street.

It was initially a dairy produce store, then another butcher's, owned successively by Edward O'Grady from about 1915, then John Ploughman, Albert Cockerell from about 1925, EW Perry from 1941 to 1947, and JL Smith & Sons from 1948 to at least 1959. 106 was obviously a shop too, and we see from the directories that it was a greengrocer's from about 1915. The double-fronted premise at 125-127 was a grocer's through the 1920s and 1930s, then a confectioner's, and later a cake shop, before becoming a surveyor's office and then a well-being centre in the 2000s.

Perhaps, however, Edgevale Road is unusual in the number of former business premises which mingle with residential buildings, mainly Edwardian or Federation in style, to form a coherent small neighbourhood within Kew.

Barbara Giles, who lived at 101 and ran a private press called Pariah Press, wrote a pamphlet in the 1970s called *Leaves from the history of Kew: The Lost Village - Edgevale*. [Copies are available at the Kew Court House]. I am grateful to her for some of the above information, and to Margaret Robinson, and the late Mavis Rolley, who compiled extensive lists of names from the directories. The more information we can gather about former land use, occupation and the lives of the people living in our suburb, the more we can appreciate them, and, we hope, persuade others to do the same. This knowledge can enable us to recommend their inclusion in Heritage overlays, as pockets of local Kew living, like Edgevale Road, deserve preservation and acknowledgement as a vital part of the fabric of suburban Melbourne.

**JUDITH SCURFIELD**



**Former Shops, 68-72 Edgevale Road**

Judith Vimpani, photographer, 2012

If you are interested in writing a history of your house or street for possible inclusion in one of our newsletters, please contact the editor - [archivist@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au](mailto:archivist@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au)



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