

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



INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY

For most of Kew’s history, the institution that weighed most heavily on the minds of its citizens was the Metropolitan Lunatic Asylum (1873-1988) and the Kew Cottages (1887-2008). A glimpse into the conditions experienced by the inmates of Asylum is provided in *The Maddest Place on Earth* by Jill Giese, which was awarded the Victorian Premier’s History Award in October 2018.

The society’s continuing interest in the history of the Asylum and the Cottages is reflected in the large number of items in our collection, relating to these institutions. The oldest item in the collection dates from the mid-1880s. It is an original silver albumen photograph (above) by the Victorian photographer, Charles Nettleton (1826-1902). There are also examples of Nettleton’s photograph in other public collections, however two superb panoramic photographs from the 1920s, donated by Fran Van Brummelen, are unique to the collection. Ms Van Brummelen joined the staff of Kew Cottages in 1969, became senior social worker in 1971, and with Dr. Cliff Judge founded the Kew Cottages Historical Society in 1987.

In 2017, Astrid Judge, a daughter of Dr. Cliff Judge, opened an exhibition of historic photographs and memorabilia relating to these institutions at the Kew Court House. The exhibition included a number of framed photographs assembled by the Kew Cottages Historical Society that had been donated to our Society in 1994 by Dr. Judge. Also exhibited were a number of documents from the large collection assembled by Irena Higgins, the first social worker at the Kew Asylum and Cottages.

The Irena Higgins archive is primarily comprised of published documents, but also includes a number of manuscripts. Many of the latter arose from her establishment of the Kew Cottages Parents Association. Some of the most touching items amongst these include handwritten correspondence exchanged between patients and volunteers that illuminate the historic human dimension of intellectual disability.

Emma Russell, in the Significance Assessment of our collection, highlights the importance of collecting “contemporary material for researchers of the future”.

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INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY (from page 1)

While the era represented by the Kew Asylum and Kew Cottages ended thirty and ten years ago respectively, our aim is to add new and unique items to our holdings that add significance to this sub-collection. Accordingly, we are pleased to announce the donation of four new items by three donors.

From the collection of Dr. Cliff Judge, his daughter Astrid has donated a large unframed photograph of boys and men exercising in the grounds of Kew Cottages. The original photograph, from which this old enlargement was made, is believed to date from the end of the 19th century. Also donated by Astrid is a volume compiled by Irena Higgins for Dr. Judge including manuscripts, mostly dating from 1962 that describe the history of the Kew Cottages, and copies of correspondence, newsletters and reports by the Psychiatrist Superintendent Dr. A.W. Brady. The earliest sections of the volume date from the 1950s, including numerous guidelines for staff published by successive superintendents.

Other significant donations that will add additional dimensions and depth to this sub-collection, include: four original 'drawing books' belonging to a patient, donated by the son of Herbert Chambers, who worked at the Asylum for over 30 years; and a framed aerial photograph, a trophy shield and a centenary visitors book from the collection of Dr. Fred Stamp, the last Psychiatrist Superintendent of Willsmere.

The Kew Asylum and Kew Cottages collection is therefore an expanding collection, which in its entirety represents one of the main sub-collections or themes within the Kew Historical Society collection. Items included span over 100 years, and are accessible to interested researchers.

KEW HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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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

victoriancollections.net.au/organisations/kew-historical-society

Kew Historical Society Inc.

Inc. No. A0010789W | ABN 97 824 890 237

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Female Staff of the [Kew] Hospital for the Insane, c.1925

Donated by Fran Van Brummelen, 1994

VALE

The Kew Historical Society recognises and pays tribute to the contributions of three of our members who died in the last quarter: Mel Lawrence, Anne Glasson and Max Sartori. Detailed recognition of their contributions will be included in our next newsletter.

SOCIETY NEWS

EVENTS

In September 2018, the Society held its Annual General Meeting and concurrently celebrated its 60th anniversary, with Sir Gus Nossall, Cr. Jim Parke the Mayor of Boroondara, and Cr. Philip Healey among the distinguished guests present. Over 50 members and friends were in attendance and a specially baked 60th Anniversary cake was cut.

The highlight of October was Victorian History Week where we launched two exhibitions and held the annual Dickinson Lecture at the Kew Court House. At the latter, Dr. Gary Presland paid tribute to the contributions of F.G.A. Barnard in the fields of local government, history and botany. In the same week, we also participated in a Seniors Week Active Lifestyle Expo at the Hawthorn Town Hall.

In November, we welcome Ms. Myra Dowling to our monthly meeting on Wednesday 14th, when she will outline the history of library services in Boroondara, which in Kew's case date back to the 1860s. On the same evening we will be represented at an event at the Hawthorn Town Hall to celebrate the 2018-19 Annual Community Strengthening Grants. The Society made two applications for grants, which were both successful. On 25 November, we will hold the fourth book sale for the year at the Kew Library. Donations of books can be made on the preceding Saturday.

December marks the end of the year with our end-of-year dinner at the Green Acres Golf Club, on Wednesday 12 December at 7.00PM. The cost is \$52 per head which may be paid in cash, OR by cheque made out to Kew Historical Society Inc., to KHS, PO Box 175, Kew, 3101, OR paying by direct bank deposit to KHS account 063-142 10066376 with your surname as the subject or reference.

Finally, we would like to remind members and friends that our rooms at the Kew Court House will close for the year on Saturday 15 December, and reopen on Friday 1 February 2019.

In this final newsletter for 2018, we also wish to acknowledge the contributions of our volunteers who have made the numerous activities during the year such a success.

EXHIBITIONS

HISTORIC HOUSES OF KEW

The focus of our current exhibition at Kew Court House is a series of watercolour paintings and sketches of houses in Kew by Joy Stewart. Joy, who died earlier this year, was born in Melbourne in 1925. She studied at Swinburne Technical College Art School from 1941-45, then at the National Gallery Art School from 1946-48. Her career included employment positions as a display artist, designer/painter, gallery assistant, and art teacher. She was a founding member of Kew Historical Society, and its Secretary for most of the 1970s.

Her watercolours and sketches were mainly done in the late 1970s, and show houses large and small in Kew. Grand mansions such as *Black Hall* (now part of Preshil) and *Elsinore* or *Roberts House* (part of Trinity Grammar School) are still standing, while others such as *Ordsall* or *Southesk*, and a pair of handsome terraces in High Street South sadly no longer exist. Private dwellings in Peel Street, Belvedere and Wellington Street are shown in beautiful detail, and the Wellington Street house, *Cromhurst*, features in an article by David White in this issue (p.8). A story accompanying each building explores its architectural significance as well as the lives of its inhabitants.

Kew Court House, Level 1, 188 High Street, Kew 3101
Each Friday & Saturday 11.00AM-1.00PM

VICTORIAN SILHOUETTE

The Kew Library window (below) holds a display entitled *Victorian Silhouette*. It includes three Victorian-era dresses from the 1860s and 1870s. These costumes have not previously been displayed because of their fragile condition, so they have been very carefully dressed on museum mannequins by members of our Collections Group. The display also uses curtains from the mansion *Tourmont* in Balwyn (now part of Fintona Girls' School), which were donated to the Society by Pamela Thompson in 2015.

Kew Library, Civic Drive, Kew, 3101 - Library hours.



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE SIGNIFICANT?

It means you have something of value to your community. But what is that 'something' and how do you measure it, describe it, care for and preserve it? Who is the community and what should they expect to get from it?

These are the questions that get asked of a collection when it undergoes a significance assessment, a process the Kew Historical Society collection underwent earlier this year. The Society was successful in receiving a Significance Assessment grant from the National Library of Australia's Community Heritage Grant program in 2017. These grants are not easy to get and the applicant must be able to show evidence that their collection has or is likely to have national significance. This measure of significance is not as arbitrary as some might think.

Significance 2.0, published by the Collections Council of Australia in 2009, describes the methodology assessors are expected to use when conducting an assessment. This has a two-tiered set of criteria – four primary criteria that identify historical, aesthetic, research or scientific, and social or spiritual significance; and four comparative criteria that identify the degree or extent of the primary criteria, and these are the provenance, interpretive value, condition, and rarity or representativeness of the item or collection. Together the primary and comparative criteria serve as the windows through which a collection manager, and assessor, ought to look through when working with the collection. They are also the tools by which a description and a measure of the collection's significance can be made.

Although the collections funded by the grant are likely to include items of national significance, in most cases they are locally based. The development of the collection at Kew is guided by the Society's Mission and Aims, ratified in 2012, which include 'to stimulate our community's interest in the economic, social, cultural and environmental history and heritage of Kew and its environs'.

I have worked with many local history collections over the years and firmly believe that, regardless of their threshold (whether they are of local, state or national significance) the best collections have a consistent set of characteristics. These include:

Being dynamic rather than static, with collection managers promoting and using it regularly, judiciously acquiring material relevant to the history of their locality and community, and embracing a range of themes that cover the period from Aboriginal occupation through to early settlement, the twentieth century and contemporary times. This ensures the managers are knowledgeable, that historical significance is always considered, interpretations are evidenced based and interesting, and research by community members or people further afield is more likely to be productive. It also means items are more likely to be rare or particular to the locality, in good or reasonable condition, and will have strong provenance.



Adeney Avenue, William Nichols Anderson, 1906.
Oil on canvas. Donated by Lucy Hornby, 1984

The second characteristic of great collections is to be proactive to their community's interests. In other words they know who their community is and what it is likely to be interested in. Local history collections ought to have the capacity to enable research into all things local, but also to show the way to, and make connections with, larger state and national themes, events and processes that shaped our communities. Responding to the interests of the local community inevitably boosts the research potential of the collection and builds its interpretive value.

The third characteristic is keeping faith with a thoughtful collection development policy. This needs to be written for the local area or relevant community and include the collection of contemporary material for researchers of the future. Keeping the faith ensures historical relevance is maintained through judicious decision-making, provenance information is collected and verified, the condition and integrity of objects is maintained, and both rare and representative items are acquired.

The final characteristic is a high level of respect, support and appreciation given to the voluntary work required for so many local history collections. This work needs to be consistent and is often time consuming in order for a collection to keep its faith and to be responsive and dynamic.

So how did the Kew Historical Society collection fare during this significance assessment? Here is an extract from the section of the report that considers the criteria:

The Kew Historical Society Collection holds material of huge significance to understanding the development of Kew, the surrounding suburbs that constitute Boroondara and beyond and, to a lesser extent, the state of Victoria. The collection represents the people who have lived and worked in Kew, as well as social and developmental changes since the mid-1800s. It is broad, varied and has considerable depth and breadth both thematically and temporally.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE SIGNIFICANT?

(from page 4)

There are a few items and sub-collections possibly of state or national significance for their associations (e.g. the Robert Russell map, Prime Minister Menzies' Kew centenary speech, Josiah Barnes' portraits). Many costumes are associated with nationally significant designers (i.e. Prue Acton, Jinoel of Melbourne, Oggi Fashion House), or with donors who have made an impact on society at a local, state and national level. Likewise, parts of the Kew civic collection are associated with national and state significant mayors (e.g. Stanley Argyle, William Kerr). The coloured, annotated MMBW maps provide information about building materials and construction techniques not provided in the standard MMBW plans...

Largely due to a strong degree of provenance across much of the collection the research value is high at a local, and even in some instances at a state level, for researchers of fashion, textiles and dressmaking; for political developments at a municipal level; for genealogy and family history of Kew residents; and for the development of a number of important institutions in Kew...

Where the Kew collection stands out is in the rarity of several parts of its collection, namely the coloured MMBW map collection, the Russell map of early Melbourne, the temporal extent of its costume collection, and some of the portraits...

As the large number of exhibitions and the detailed quarterly newsletters indicate, the Kew Historical Society Collection has strong interpretive potential from which a number of stories can be told. The interpretive capacity for understanding the history of Kew and of wider stories on a state or national stage is very high...

And from the Statement of Significance itself:

The collection as a whole fulfills the criteria for very strong historical, aesthetic and research significance at a local level. It also has many outstanding associations with state themes, figures and events and quite a few that resonate at a national level.

The costume and textiles, map and picture collections each have very strong historical, research and aesthetic significance of their own accord. The degree of their significance is greatly enhanced by all of the comparative criteria: interpretive value, provenance, condition, integrity, rarity and representativeness...

Provenance for much of the collection is strong, and therefore supportive of its historical, research and interpretive value. Certainly the interpretive capacity for understanding a detailed and nuanced history of Kew on many levels, as well as touching or reflecting on wider stories on a state or national stage is very high.

This grant was particularly for the costume, picture and map collections but when the work began I felt strongly that these three couldn't be understood properly without placing them in the context of the overall collection.



Centenary Dinner, Kew Civic Hall, 1960.

Donated by Judith Goodes, 2018

This meant at least exploring what else was there, which proved to be useful but also fascinating. I came away with many favourites but offer my two top picks here:

The tape-recorded, now digitized but not transcribed, speech by Prime Minister Robert Menzies, also the Member for Kew, at the commemoration of the centenary of the City of Kew in 1960. It is, of course, eloquent and wide-ranging in its topics and he is humorous, thoughtful and incisive. While 1960 was within the lifetime of many, many people today it was also a completely different world from today. This fifteen-minute recording gives listeners an insight into the times, the concerns, the pleasures and the attitudes of the era as well as an appreciation of the City of Kew as it then was – a place that Menzies spoke fondly of, 'being a Kew man' himself. You can listen to it here - <https://bit.ly/2Pf9PvO>.

My other favourite is the hand drawn 'Site of the first house in Kew Central' (1852). It is on the site of the former Kew Court House and Police Station and includes drawings indicating the location and name of all trees, flowerbeds, beehives, garden beds, sheds and the house plan itself. It records so meticulously the garden layout and tells such a detailed story of domesticity and husbandry in the early days of settlement in this area, I feel the person who drew it must have been very proud of developing such a bountiful garden. It is a fascinating and a rare find in any local history collection, particularly as it enhances the original deed of conveyance that is also held in the collection.

The purpose of the grant program is to ensure that locally based collections with national significance can be accessed by their communities and preserved for future generations. The purpose of the significance assessment is to document the value and meaning of the collection. The significance of this collection leads me to recommend you access and appreciate it if you have not already done so.

'HOWLY' TRINITY CHURCH AND THE HENTY FAMILY

The iconic bluestone Anglican Holy Trinity Church in High Street, over the past 155 years has, like most European churches, a history of evolution, devolution and revitalisation. In peak hour traffic, travelling past the church, one cannot but help watch the transformation of a precinct that was once considered a noble edifice in the streetscape. Scaffolding surrounding the progressive erection of an architecturally designed building in the once tranquil 'parish green' to the side of the church announces an emerging major change to the visual sweep of the streets. The two majestic oak trees [*Quercus robur*] in front of the signature turreted church tower are being dwarfed by this new enterprise. The church's website describes the change as a 'Parish Centre Development'. This terminology embraces a 'mixed use' development composed of 'commercial tenancy', 'residential apartments' and church facilities.

In 1887, an anonymous writer for *The Argus* described the now heritage listed building as a 'neat, plain little parish church, with a big stained window, not too brilliantly illuminated, ... with grounds thickly planted with shrubs. The writer thought the bell 'tanged feebly' and the 'interior decoration unremarkable'. He found the building cold and particularly draughty when the doors were opened. Further, the writer went on to suggest "a Mr Henty" called this High Church of England, of Catholic persuasion, as "Howly (*sic*) Trinity", a reference to William Howely (1766-1848), the nineteenth-century English educationalist and Archbishop of Canterbury

On settling in Kew, after marriage, Van Diemen's Land born Henry Henty Esq (c.1833-1912), a major merchant, continued the religious tradition of his famed English pioneering colonial family. Prior to his death, he was the oldest lay canon of St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne. The fine and pleasant weather on the day of his funeral was fitting for a man of colonial merit. His body left his mansion, *Tarring* in Selbourne Road, Kew [today part of Ruyton Girls' School], for a short service at Holy Trinity before final prayers were read at the graveside in Boroondara General Cemetery.

A local colonial 'man of mark' was laid to final rest. 'Thine eyes shall see the King [God] in His Beauty' was the ethos of Henry's life and death. Helping officiate the service was Henry's son-in-law, the Bishop of Wangaratta, Thomas Henry Armstrong (c.1857-1930).

Twenty years previously, in 1892, the scene at the church was vastly different. It was a gloriously sunny Thursday afternoon on the 19th May. The occasion was a colonial society wedding, nineteenth-century style. Henry Henty's eldest daughter, Marion Ruth, known as May, (1863-1928) was to marry the young dashing, red-headed, Irish born 'incumbent' of St Columb's, Hawthorn, Thos. (*sic*) Armstrong. He was a 'catch'; the marriage was to prove to be a 'match' after a six-year engagement to test matrimonial suitability.



Holy Trinity Church. Postcard, pre 1914.
Kew Historical Society

Holy Trinity was filled beyond capacity with uninvited, young, unmarried, non-working ladies who had congregated to witness the sartorial display of the bride, the bridesmaids and the nuptials. This social phenomenon of the 'general public' at a marriage was the norm, not the exception. As her 'headcover' [a horse drawn fancy coach with a driver] turned into gravelly High Street, May's mother was excited and relieved to see the conglomeration of carriages parked outside the church. This was a distinct sign the wedding was socially prestigious. The local newspaper described the event as a "brilliant spectacle" with the most prominent residents in the "pretty little borough" of Kew being present. Ladies who were too late to avail themselves of the 600 available public seats in the church had to be content with waiting in their carriages. The theatricals of a colonial high society wedding were a complex interweave of the public display of a rich, private family and a discerning voyeuristic upper class clutch of young females. The Henty-Armstrong wedding was no exception.

The female friends of the bride had transformed the interior of the church for the momentous occasion. The decoration was highly symbolic. There were four triumphal floral arches composed of palms and expensive, exotic, rare white chrysanthemums. The latter were a symbol of wealth and the former referenced Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. By passing through the floral arches, May was making a triumphal entry into marriage and a religious life as a helpmate to Thomas. Hanging from the chancel was a floral bell composed of fresh white carnations and chrysanthemums, which symbolically rang out the nuptials. To either side of the bell were white flower encrusted initials of the bride and groom. The rest of the church was decorated with exotic hothouse blooms and foliage 'lent' by May's aunt, Louisa Henty (c.1851-1924), of *Field Place*, Studley Park. These 'lent' plants were far from a cost cutting exercise. They were a display of Henty wealth. Specialised 'gentleman gardeners' were employed by wealthy Kew residents to nurture and cultivate rare plant specimens obtained from around the globe.

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'HOWLY' TRINITY CHURCH (from page 6)

This ostentatious display of wealth and horticultural connoisseurship was a backdrop to the star of the attraction, the bride.

Marion was decorated in a bridal ensemble designed to express the family wealth, social privilege and familial finesse. The fabric of her bridal costume was expensive imported pearl-white French bengaline silk. The design of the *robe deluxe* was avant-garde. The superb 'soft and hard' decorative elements to the garment were an example of labour intensive manual needlework. The pearls to the 'hard trim' of her costume were noted in the press to be 'genuine', and some were 'extremely large'. The base of her very long shoulder length train was cut round signifying she was unmarried. After marriage the train would be recut square or on the diagonal to socially identify May as a married woman. At the time, bridal-wear was recycled as evening wear. Some brides cut costs by having a train buttoned on at the waist of the garment and cut for the married state. This form of cost cutting was considered vulgar. The Henty family 'knew what to do and how to do it' in terms of socially maintaining their position on the colonial stage through female sartorial display on special occasions such as a wedding.



Marion Ruth Henty.

Cabinet Card. F.B. Mendelsohn & Co, photographer, May 1892.
State Library of Victoria

Underneath the train of May's garment was a lace *balyuese* [Fr: street sweeper] designed to keep the expensive lining of the train clean as it trailed behind her. It also functioned to give a visual impression that the train was floating, as opposed to being bodily dragged, across the red carpet into the church and down the aisle. It added to May's physical poise. In her gloved hands she carried a bouquet of expensive and exquisite white roses and carnations. In the flower language of the day the bouquet was symbolic of a couple's commitment to each other for 'time and eternity'.

She also carried a handkerchief, trimmed with Maltese lace. The signature Maltese cross in the design of the lace was a symbol of Christian servitude. May's costume was adorned with fresh orange blossom to bless her with children through the union.

After the signing of the marriage register, May and her husband walked from Holy Trinity church to an awaiting headcover under a shower of rice and many well wishes. For May, her moment of public glory disintegrated as she stepped up into the headcover, which would symbolically transport her to a life of servitude to her husband and God.

On her return to her childhood home, *Tarring*, for her wedding reception at which some 250 people attended, she was also transported to the private life allocated to married women. May bore three children. The first, Muriel (1896-98) died, aged two, from possibly snakebite. Their 'bub' was buried in the Boroondara General Cemetery. On her death from pneumonia, Marion, now aged 65, was privately interred with her daughter. It was an exceptionally discreet burial compared to the public glory of her wedding. After a life of standing in the shadow of her husband, the press imprinted upon her sacred memory that she was 'the wife of a Bishop'. There was no press mention of a memorial service at Holy Trinity Church. In contrast, when her husband died in 1930, Bishop Armstrong was given a 'royal' farewell service at St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne. It was noted that the Cathedral included a full congregation of predominantly representative men. As the hearse and overladen floral motorcar made its slow passage along High Street to Boroondara General Cemetery, it passed by Holy Trinity church; final prayers for the Bishop were conducted at the family gravesite.

Since the day of the Henty-Armstrong marriage "the neat, plain little parish church" had been extensively developed. In 1909, the chancel was extended and a vestry added. The axis of the asymmetrical tower was completed in 1913 and the chapel in 1922. At some point an organ had been installed. Today, motoring past the church at night, if the electric lighting in the church is operating, the lead-light windows are stunningly brilliant when illuminated. The oak trees have matured and the white picket fence surrounding the precinct has been replaced with a low, solid blue stone surround to encompass the church while the entry gates invite parishioners and visitors to enter the church and parish green.

Today the church is a 'non-hire venue' for traditional Christian weddings and funerals. From a historical point of view, one awaits the social function of the Parish Centre Development within the heart of Kew.

SUZANNE MCWHA, 2018

'Howly' Trinity Church and the Henty Family is derived from my PhD entitled *Momentous for Time and Eternity*, published 2008.

WHAT'S IN A NAME

63 WELLINGTON STREET

Joy Stewart selected 63 Wellington Street, located between Charles Street and St. John's Parade, as a subject for a pen and wash sketch in the late 1970s. Her watercolour (right) is currently exhibited at the Kew Court House, but details of the house's history were unknown until David White, a member of our Research Group, agreed to fill in the gaps. What follows is his story of the house and its occupants.



63 Wellington Street
Ink & coloured wash, Joy Stewart, 1978

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A useful reference for researchers seeking information on grand old houses is *Melbourne Mansions*, an online database created by the architectural historian, Professor Miles Lewis. The database contains a brief record on 63 Wellington Street, including a suggested construction date of "1890's". It records that Pru Sanderson (*Kew Urban Conservation Study*, 1988) nominated it as a B-graded building, and describes it as a "2 storey face brick Italianate with side entry". Not much to get excited about. No builder, architect or owner, and I had doubts about identifying the building's style as Italianate.

Using Sands & McDougall directories and the Kew Rate Books, I was able to identify the names of the occupants and owners of the house and subsequently locate more information about them in the online repository of newspapers published by the National Library of Australia on its *Trove* website.

The 1892 Kew Rate Book lists the initial occupant and owner of the house as Henry Mallet, however the house was to be recorded as vacant in the following year. In 1894, the occupant is listed as Mrs Frances McCarthy O'Leary, teacher of music, and the owner as D.R. McGregor. The latter was mayor of Kew from 1878 to 1880, but in 1894 resided in Hawthorn. Although McGregor owned the house until his death in 1912, it would appear that he never lived there.

Mrs Frances McCarthy O'Leary occupied the house from 1893 to 1900. She was clearly active in social and musical circles of Kew and Melbourne. In 1894, an article in *Table Talk* reported on a meeting at her home, *Claragh*, of the organising committee for a 'Margeurite Ball' at the Kew Recreation Hall. This was the first mention of a name for the house. Following Frances O'Leary's departure, the occupants of the house changed almost annually.

An advertisement in *The Age* of 9 November 1912 gives some sense of the extent of the house before the First World War. It describes an "Executor's Realising Auction Sale in Estate of Late D. R. McGregor, Deceased" to take place on Saturday, 16th November. The property is listed as:

"CROMHURST, 99 Wellington-street, KEW, a SUPERIOR TWO-STORIED BRICK HOUSE of 8 rooms, bath, pantry, slate roof on LAND 50 feet 9 inches by a depth of 150 feet to a 10-foot right of way. The property is situated within one minute new electric tram and seven minutes railway station.

The position is one of the best, being on a good rise, with splendid drainage, and a fine outlook. This is a special opportunity for anyone in search of a good home at a reasonable price in a rapidly rising district."

After the sale in 1912, there were several owners of the property. In 1918, the house, by then re-numbered 77 Wellington Street and renamed *Carindale*, became the home of the Winter family; naturalised German immigrant Carl Friedrich Adolph Winter, his Australian-born wife Ethel May Winter and their children Carl, Carmen and Carina.

Carl Winter, the son, was dux of Xavier College in 1924 and was awarded a residential scholarship to Newman College at Melbourne University, where he completed a Bachelor of Arts with honours. In 1928, he sailed for Europe to continue his studies in Germany, before going up to Oxford. Following a period of study at Exeter College, and after being awarded a Master of Arts from Melbourne University in absentia, Carl Winter took up a position as an assistant keeper of the engravings and paintings collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1931.

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Carl Winter. Photograph.
Trinity College Chapel website

By 1936, Carl Winter had married Theodora Barlow, daughter of Sir Thomas D. Barlow, a wealthy Manchester industrialist and art collector. They had three children but were to divorce in 1953.

During the Second World War, like many academics, he was involved in intelligence work. He was to serve as a translator at Bletchley Park, scene of the breaking of the Enigma Code by Alan Turing. Ironically, Winter's fluency in German led to his suspension from this posting. It may have been his intelligence work, which led to Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies, once a neighbour in Kew, meeting with Carl Winter early in his 1941 trip to Britain.

In 1946, Carl Winter left the Victoria and Albert Museum and became Director and Morley Curator of the Fitzwilliam Museum, the arts and antiquities museum of the University of Cambridge, and a Fellow of Trinity College. He remained there until his death in 1966.

My research appeared to be going well. Carl Winter seemed an interesting and talented person to associate with 63 Wellington Street, however a web search on "Carl Winter" returned a web page on the Trinity College Chapel that introduced a new dimension to his story.



Carl Winter. Memorial Plaque
Trinity College Chapel

Biographical information accompanying a photograph of a brass memorial plaque in the Trinity College Chapel commemorating Carl Winter states that:

"Together with Patrick Trevor Roper and Peter Wildeblood, Winter gave evidence to the Wolfenden Committee, whose report led in 1967 to the decriminalisation of sex between adult male homosexuals."

Established by Britain's Conservative Government in 1954, under Sir John Wolfenden, Vice-Chancellor of Reading University, the Committee was to consider the law in relation to both homosexuality and prostitution. There had been difficulty securing homosexual men to give evidence, understandable in view of the illegality of their activities, and the committee focused on only three men. These were Carl Winter, Patrick Trevor-Roper, a distinguished London ophthalmologist, and Peter Wildeblood, a former editor employed by the *Daily Mail*.

In their 1957 *Report of the Committee on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution*, the Committee recommended that: "homosexual behaviour between consenting adults in private should no longer be considered a criminal offence". Their recommendation was initially rejected, but finally

achieved parliamentary support, resulting in the passing of the *Sexual Offences Act, 1967*. The legislation applied in England and Wales, the law in Scotland and Northern Ireland changing in 1980 and 1982 respectively.

In Australia, similar changes to the law followed. In South Australia in 1975, the ACT in 1976, Victoria in 1980, the Northern Territory in 1983, New South Wales in 1984, Western Australia in 1989, Queensland in 1990 and finally Tasmania in 1997.

Carl's sister, Carmen, visited him in Europe several times during the 1930's and she and Carina were active participants in Melbourne Society. Carina married Geoffrey Howell in 1940, and moved to a property near Kyabram following the death of her mother in 1941 and her father in 1942. Carmen continued to live at 63 Wellington Street until 1955.

During the Second World War, Carmen Winter organised Red Cross volunteers at Rockingham, the former Syme family home in Kew, following its conversion to a convalescent home for ex-servicemen. In 1952, she was appointed organising secretary of the Children's Hospital Auxiliary. She maintained a long association with the Children's Hospital, founding and becoming patron of the Royal Children's Hospital Volunteer Service; the first volunteer organisation of its kind in Australia. In 1978 Carmen Winter was awarded an OBE for her services to the community.

DAVID WHITE, 2018

NEW ACQUISITIONS FOR THE COLLECTION

The Society gratefully acknowledges the following gifts to our collection:

Judith Goodes - photographs of Kew Council dinners and dances in the 1940s and the 1960s, and for an evening gown worn by her mother, the Mayoress Mrs Doris Dickinson, to the Centenary Dinner of 1960.

Malcolm Carkeek - rare books and pamphlets relating to economics, Australasian coinage and the proposed Australian Constitution.

Astrid Judge - manuscript compiled by Irena Higgins in 1962 containing information on the Kew Cottages and their history; a book by David Pitt on his life and medical career; a large unframed photograph of boys and men exercising at Kew Cottages.

Les Littlechild - wooden sewing gauges, made in the 1930s, advertising the Hollywood School of Dressmaking.

Helen Heathcote - 1850s muslin sun bonnet, worn in Bendigo during the Gold Rush.

Jennifer Olver - *Growing Together: a book of letters between Frederick John Cato and Frances Bethune 1881-84*, edited by Una B Porter.

Rosemary Barnes - Framed aerial photograph of Willsmere, a Fairview Golf Club trophy shield won by 'ladies' of the Kew Mental Hospital and a 1972 Centenary Visitors Book.

VINCENT BUCKLEY

A CATHOLIC LITERARY INTELLECTUAL

Over the years, many distinguished writers have made their homes in Kew. This article is the first in an occasional series focussing on their work.

Vincent Buckley was a central figure in Melbourne's literary, political and Catholic life for nearly 40 years. He was a major poet, leading literary critic, book reviewer and professor of English. He had a considerable intellectual and literary influence in Melbourne through his writing and teaching.

Buckley was born in 1925 at Romsey, north of Melbourne and died in November 1988 in Kew. He attended primary school in Romsey and between 1938 and 1942, St. Patrick's College, East Melbourne. On arrival in Melbourne he boarded in Mount Street, Kew and then in a series of boarding houses. While a schoolboy, Vincent became interested in the Fenians and resistance. His poem 'The Men of 98,' reflects his interest in the Irish cause.

In 1943 Vincent enlisted in the RAAF intent on pilot training. While posted in New Guinea he contracted rheumatic fever. The resulting rheumatic carditis troubled him for the rest of his life. His war service entitled him to enter the University of Melbourne under a scheme run by the Repatriation Department for ex-servicemen and women. In 1949, Vincent obtained his B.A. and won the John Masefield Prize for Poetry with two poems, 'Death of a Spinster' and 'New Year Ode, 1949'. In 1950 he entered the M.A. course and graduated in 1954. His thesis on James Joyce's *The Dubliners*, *Stephen Hero* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* won him the Mannix Scholarship to Cambridge, which had been established to allow young Catholic scholars to study overseas.

Vincent became a tutor at the University of Melbourne, where he co-founded the Apostolate to the University among members of the Newman Society. The members were Catholic intellectuals who were interested in Christian humanism, not an authoritarian Church.

Prior to his departure for Cambridge, Vincent was invited to *Raheen*, in Studley Park Road by Archbishop Daniel Mannix. He records in 'Cutting Green Hay' that the evening was pleasant and he viewed Archbishop Mannix, "like some old Gaelic Chieftain, he was the father of his clan". A.D. Hope, Vincent's friend and fellow resident of Kew, drove him to *Raheen* for his interview with Dr. Mannix. Alec Hope was an important mentor to Vincent and of Alec he said, "There are some debts you can never repay".

Vincent was at Cambridge between 1955 and 1957. He used this proximity to Ireland to visit there in 1956 and again in 1957. He lived in or visited Ireland many times between the mid 1950's and 1986, intent on connecting with his Irish ancestry. Vincent completed his Cambridge degree by writing the book *Poetry and Mortality* instead of a thesis.



Vincent Buckley, c.1963
Private Collection

Upon his return to Australia, he filled in as a tutor at the University of Melbourne until the end of 1957 and in 1958 became inaugural Lockie Bequest Fellow in the English Department.

At the University of Melbourne, Vincent discovered that the English Department was almost entirely interested in English literature. When an opportunity to teach a course on Australian Literature came up, Vincent found that some students could not see much value in the course. Some were interested if they could study Patrick White, Martin Boyd and John Morrison but Vincent wanted to teach Henry Lawson, Vance Palmer and Joseph Furphy. Xavier Herbert was one of the writers Vincent included in his inaugural Australian literature seminar.

Vincent's wife Penelope recalls that when she first met him, she was a student, and found him to be a deeply engaging tutor and exceptional teacher. His poetry reading aloud captured the rhythm of the work and inspired both students and colleagues. His literary friends were many and included Vance Palmer, James MacAuley, Carolyn Masel, Gwen Harwood, Thomas Kinsella and Seamus Heaney. Former student Barry Oakley wrote in his article 'Murder in the Cathedral', that Vincent was a stimulating teacher who inspired awe in the undergraduates. He was charming, charismatic and an enthralling orator.

In 1956, Vincent was at Cambridge when the Hungarian Revolution occurred. He was horrified by the events and was keen to fight alongside the rebels, however his health proved an impediment and he was unable to go.

The Apostolate continued to be important to Vincent and he felt that the results of the Second Vatican Council between 1961 and 1965 reflected the aims of the Apostolate. He believed that Catholicism should be part of one's way of life, not separate to everyday living.

Continued page 11

VINCENT BUCKLEY (from page 10)

Penelope recalls that he was anti-clerical and rejected the authoritarianism of the Church.

The Personal Chair in Poetry at the University of Melbourne was created especially for Vincent in 1967 making him a poet professor.

In 1969 he became founding President of the Committee for Civil Rights in Ireland and became fully engaged with his Irish heritage and social justice in Northern Ireland. In 1973, while working in Dublin he successfully lobbied to establish a Chair in Australian Literature at University College, Dublin.

Vincent and Penelope were married in 1976. Initially they lived in a flat in Studley Park Road and afterwards at 36 Willsmere Road in Kew. Vincent's book *Late Winter Child* came out in 1979 and was a celebration of his love for his wife and pending paternity. Also in 1979 a collection of poems including one called 'The Blind School' was published. This reveals his reaction to seeing the children from the Blind School in Kew.

Fiercely anti-communist, Vincent initially supported the involvement of Australian troops in the Vietnam War. However he was appalled by the conduct of the War by the US and marched in the final Moratorium on the War.

Between 1981 and 1983, Vincent worked in Ireland. He was deeply affected by the hunger strikes in Northern Ireland and was surprised that the public and the press in the Republic were not moved by the 'troubles'. He mourned the deaths of the strikers in a series of poems called 'Hunger Strike', which was published in 1981.

In 1986, Vincent retired from the University of Melbourne intent on concentrating on his poetry. That year, Vincent and his family spent three happy months in the Irish village of Ardmore while he worked as Visiting Professor at the University of Cork. His poem, 'Child of Ardmore' published in *Last Poems*, was written for the children of the local school and set to music so that it could be sung. Soon after, Vincent was diagnosed with diabetes and his heart was failing. Back in Melbourne he suffered a heart attack while at the races with his friend Robert Manne.

Penelope and Vincent's daughters attended St. Anne's Catholic Primary School and Ruyton Girls Grammar School. Vincent found working at home was difficult due to the noise made by his daughters playing. To overcome the problem he worked with the television at full volume. He relished the rustic view from his desk, which was at tree line and faced the river.

When Vincent and his family moved to Elm Grove in 1986, the open space along the Yarra River below their house was largely natural bush. It was before the bike track and the shared walking/cycling bridge over the Yarra River was built. Walking to the billabong, now called the Willsmere Billabong, was a favourite family activity.



Vincent Buckley.
Radio interview, 1968-74. Private collection

From his Elm Grove home, Vincent could smell the bush and this was important to him:

"to be put into words, together with the colour, and the shine and everything else about the habitat. It doesn't seem as if there are words to do it. But I'll keep trying, because in all the repeated acts of smelling and seeing and hearing, all this has acquired in my mind a language which is not yet shaped."

and "who cares if I am dying if the banks are green" again referring to the billabong.

In 1988, Vincent was working on *The Faber Anthology of Australian Poetry* when he suffered two heart attacks and died in November of that year. The funeral was held in the Newman College Chapel at the University of Melbourne. The eulogy was delivered by Chris Wallace-Crabbe and the homily by Peter Steele. He was buried at Melton Cemetery. Vincent was survived by his first wife Edna, Penelope and his four daughters, two from each marriage.

During his lifetime, Vincent published seven volumes of poetry and edited several anthologies. He was poetry editor of *The Bulletin* from 1961 to 1963 and edited the journal *Prospect* from 1958 to 1963. After his death, Penelope published many poems left by him. They form the volume, *Last Poems*. The Faber Anthology was also published posthumously.

The Vincent Buckley Poetry Prize was awarded for the first time in 1994. It was established by Vincent's widow Penelope, his daughter Brigid, Chris Wallace-Crabbe and Susan and Michael Crennan and is alternately awarded to Irish and Australian poets.

Vincent Buckley was an enigmatic figure in Melbourne. His poetry was admired and his teaching lauded. He was political, ethnically Catholic and a supporter of freedom and civil rights everywhere.

DESLEY REID, 2018

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