

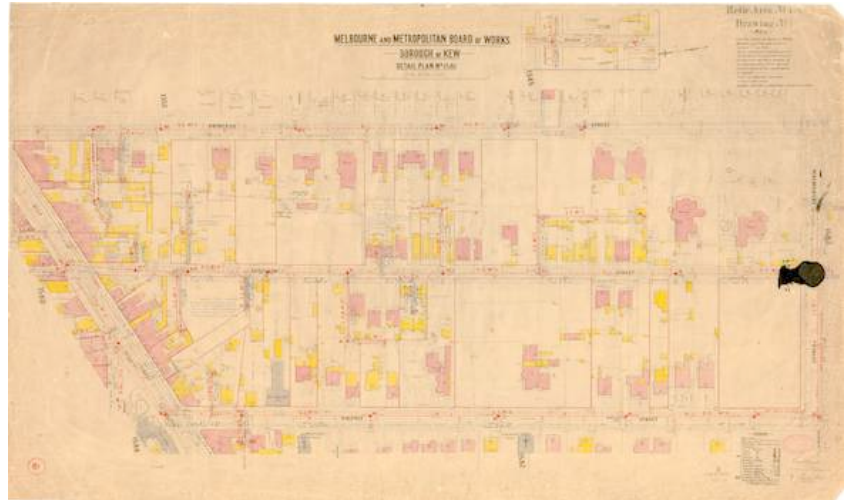


**HISTORICAL
SOCIETY INC.**
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community,
families, schools,
students,
historians and
other researchers*

NEWSLETTER

No. 112
SEPTEMBER 2015



HISTORIC MAPS OF KEW

In 2015-16, the Kew Historical Society is the recipient of a Local History Grant provided by the State Government through the Public Record Office of Victoria. The purpose of the grant is to digitise, print and exhibit approximately thirty-five of our Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) maps of Kew.

The State Government formed the Board of Works in 1891 to map the water and sewerage requirements of Melbourne. It continued to perform this role until 1991. The number of maps required for a suburb was determined by the geographical size of the suburb; 'Detail Plans' were created to a scale of 40 feet to 1 inch. Index Map Series 10f includes all of Kew and parts of surrounding suburbs. It includes 160 separate maps. The earliest map in this series was created in 1901 and the latest in 1950.

Thirty-five of the Society's extensive collection of MMBW maps are uniquely hand-coloured to identify if the building was a public or privately built structure, and to record whether the building was constructed of brick/masonry or weatherboard. A number of these maps include observations and annotations added by the private contractors who were charged with installing the sewerage system in Kew.

The MMBW Maps have always been of great interest to researchers and historians of local history, as they include the street names; the number or name of a house; the outlines and dimensions of built structures on a block; and also structures within a garden such as paths, fountains and outhouses. Each plan represents a snapshot in time, showing every extant structures in the year in which the section was surveyed.

> Page 2

CONTENTS

3

SOCIETY ACTIVITIES

News about exhibitions, special events, and future meetings

4

FOR WHOM THE BELLS TOLL

Suzanne McWha explores the pageantry of funerals at the start of the 20th century

6

THE RED MENACE

Politics and art intertwine in Kew in the 1940s and 50s

8

DAILY LIFE IN KEW

Part 2 of Andrew Frost's exploration of life in Kew in 1885/86 uncovers the seamier side of Kew life

10

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Important advice for members about the AGM including nomination and proxy forms



Public Lecture

Wednesday 21 October, 07:30 for 8:00pm
Just Theatre, Kew Court House

The Melbourne Mansion

Professor Miles Lewis AM, FAHA, will present the second annual Dickinson Lecture on the evolution of the Melbourne mansion.

Details: Page 3

Front-page

MMBW Detail Plan No.1581, 1904

Map. Kew Historical Society Collection

Right

Alexandra Gardens, Kew

Postcard. Kew Historical Society Collection



SURVEY MAPS OF KEW (cont.)

The MMBW Detail Plan on page 1 is No.1581 of the MMBW survey maps. It represents all extant built structures in 1904 when it was released. This map shows the outline of buildings abutting Princess, High, Brougham and Walpole Streets. The publically-owned buildings are coloured grey and include the Town Hall, the Roman Catholic and Congregational Churches in Walpole Street, and the former Post Office in High Street. Named houses in Princess Street include 'Ormsby', 'Chatto', 'Elsmere' and 'Illapa'. The quaintly named 'Gnarlbine' is shown on a massive block stretching between Walpole and Princess Streets. The numbering of houses on a map such as this does not correspond to current street numbers, due to subsequent demolition and subdivision of larger properties. By examining and comparing old and new numbers, it is possible to explore the history of a house or building.

Due to their rarity, the maps in the Kew Historical Society's collection have until now been stored in our archive at the rear of the Kew Library, enabling only limited access to researchers. The aim of the Local History Grant is to make copies of these more widely available for genealogical or local research.

While each of the maps to be digitised and printed has been identified, we still have a number of tasks to be completed before they can be made publically accessible. A printer needs to be sourced, which can create high quality digital images from which full scale maps can be printed. A plan cabinet also needs to be sourced that can hold each plan flat without it being folded. This is no easy task, due to the physical size of the maps, which can measure up to 1335x770 cm.

The final component of the grant is to curate an exhibition of a number of plans in the exhibition space at the Court House. In the exhibition, nine of the maps will be selected for display and information about each made available, as well information about how to use the MMBW plans personal for research. The first exhibition of the maps will open on Friday 4 September.

Until now, we have not had digital copies of the maps to use in public presentations. This generous Local History Grant will allow us to do so from this point on.

ROBERT BAKER, ARCHIVIST

KEW HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

PATRON

Sir Gustav Nossal AC, CBE

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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Archivist/Newsletter editor: Robert Baker

Acting Curator: Robert Baker

Members: Andrew Frost | Mel Lawrence | Mary Kelleher
Debbie McColl-Davis | Suzanne McWha | Judith Scurfield
Janet Walker

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, unless otherwise announced. Refreshments are provided. Meetings are open to members and visitors. Details of meetings and lectures are listed on page 3.

KEW COURT HOUSE

Members of the Society played a key role in the preservation and restoration of the historic Kew Court House. Volunteers staff the Kew History Centre on Level 1 three days a week: alternate Thursdays (11.00am-1.00pm), and every Friday and Saturday (11.00am-1.00pm). At the Centre, you can ask questions about Kew's history and view displays from the Society's collection. Inquiries about houses and past residents can be made using the Sands & McDougall Directories.

NEWSLETTER

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

WEBSITE

www.kewhistoricalsociety.org.au

MEMBERSHIP INQUIRIES

See page 12 of the newsletter or contact the Secretary, Tony Michael.

Phone 0419 587 939

Email: secretary@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au

OUR PATRON

The Kew Historical Society is pleased to announce that Sir Gustav Victor Joseph Nossal, AC, CBE, the distinguished Australian research biologist, has agreed to become patron of the Society.

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EXHIBITIONS

The Kew Historical Society mounts regular exhibitions in the History Centre of the Kew Court House (Level 1, 188 High Street, Kew) and at Kew Library (Civic Drive, Kew).

KEW COURT HOUSE

Survey Maps of Kew

4 September - 11 December

An exhibition of MMBW maps drawn from the collection of the Kew Historical Society. The exhibition is being funded by a grant from the Government of Victoria through a Local History Grant administered by the Public Record Office of Victoria. (See pages 1&2).

KEW LIBRARY

The Technology of Communication

28 August - 11 December

It is easy to forget past changes in communication technology in an age of mobile phones and computers. The exhibition in the large glassed display space at the south end of the Kew Library will focus on a century of technological change, including rare items from our collection that once were used in the town halls of Kew.

QUARTERLY BOOK SALES

In addition to memberships, money raised at our quarterly book sales in the Phyllis Hore Room, contributes a significant amount to our annual operating expenses. Funds raised allow us to hold regular exhibitions, as well as providing money to purchase materials used to conserve and store our collection of items relating to Kew's history.

In the second half of the year, book sales are scheduled for **Sunday 16 August** and **Sunday 22 November**, **between the hours of 1-4.00pm**.

You can help by donating books for sale, by assisting in setting up on the preceding Saturdays, and by joining us on the days of the sales. For more information, please contact Andrew Frost by phone (03) 9817 5481. You can also contact Andrew by emailing him - info@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au.

MEETINGS & LECTURES

SEPTEMBER

Annual General Meeting

Cr. Phillip Healey, Councillor for Studley Ward

Phyllis Hore Room, Kew Library
Wednesday 9 September, 8:00pm
Cr. Healey will describe Council's heritage activities and other matters relevant to the history of Kew. At the Meeting elections will be also conducted for the Management Committee for the year 2015-16. (See pages 10&11 for more information).

OCTOBER

2015 Dickinson Lecture

**The Melbourne Mansion
Miles Lewis AM FAHA**

Just Theatre, Kew Court House
Wednesday 21 October,
7:30 for 8:00pm

In October, we will be holding the second Dickinson Lecture, named to honour the founder of the Kew Historical Society - Mr W.H.S. Dickinson. Miles Lewis AM FAHA will present this year's lecture. (See Column 3 for details).

All members are encouraged to attend and to promote the event to friends and neighbours.



NOVEMBER

The Kew Band

Ian Mathers B.E.M. & Michael Mathers

Phyllis Hore Room, Kew Library
Wednesday 11 November, 8:00pm
Michael and his father Ian have close to (perhaps over) 100 years association with the Kew Band. Combining that with Michael's mother, his uncle who passed away this year, and his wife, the Mathers have a combined contribution of well over 200 years to the Kew Band (and the former Kew Citizens' Band). Their presentation will explore the Band's history and its role in Kew's social and civic history.

DECEMBER

ANNUAL XMAS DINNER

The annual Xmas Party of the Society will be held again at the Kew Golf Club. Members will be advised of details at future monthly meetings.

2015 DICKINSON LECTURE

The Melbourne Mansion

Miles Lewis AM FAHA

Just Theatre, Kew Court House
Wednesday 21 October,
7:30 for 8:00pm

The Kew Historical Society is pleased to announce that Professor Miles Lewis AM FAHA will present the second Dickinson Lecture during History Week.

Professor Lewis is an architectural historian with a special interest in the cultural history of building, and his on-line 'Melbourne Mansions' database is a fundamental resource for researchers in this area.

Professor Lewis contends that an understanding of the larger houses of 19th century Melbourne is often in terms of the grand rooms of few preserved examples, many of them in Kew and neighbouring suburbs. The lecture will explore what can we know about where these houses came from, what they imitated, and how they were financed? It will also cover what we know of the servants' hall, the privy, the speaking tubes, the stables and the tennis court?

Professor Lewis's lecture will survey the evolution of the Melbourne mansion in this broader context.

A limited number of seats will be available, so bookings are essential. For tickets, phone (03) 9278-4770. Tickets \$10 for members, \$20.00 for non-members.

NEW MEMBERS

We would like to extend a warm welcome to the following new members of the Kew Historical Society: Margaret to provide

The old clock tower at the Boroondara Cemetery has had a facelift and looks all the better for it. Being a late nineteenth-century symbol of 'civic order and stability', it points to heaven in all its former glory. The weather vane tells us the wind direction. Faith, Hope and Charity, the three bells within the tower, chime the half and full hour. The renaissance of the grand tower, designed by architect Albert Purchas and built in 1899, recalls an era long past.



'Entrance to Kew Cemetery', Postcard, ca. 1916, Private collection.

Did Faith, Hope and Charity peal away at 4.30pm on Thursday 29 May 1903? The answer to the question is unknown. We do not know if the bells tolled to tell of yet another graveside funeral at the Boroondara cemetery. That is a detail lost to history.

On this particular day, the people of Kew lined the 'main street [Bulleen Road now High Street]' to witness a funeral pageant in Kew that has possibly never been surpassed. The weather vane to the tower never faulted in its telling of the 'bleak wind' on that day in May. The rain fell unrelentingly. The heavenly water turned the red brick of the tower a stain or two darker than its usual hue. As a mark of deep respect, the local Kew crowd removed their hats and bowed their heads, but peeped from under lowered eyelids at the fantastical procession that slowly progressed along the abandoned street towards its destination, the Boroondara Cemetery.

A somewhat ghostly press photograph gives us a visual idea of the event. It was taken at the very moment the procession veered to the right, from High Street, to enter through the cemetery gates.



'Funeral of Captain Staughton', *Australasian*, 30 May 1903, p. 26. Reproduction permission, National Library of Australia.

FOR WHOM THE BELLS TOLL

A pillar of the iron fence posts to the cemetery, at that time, is visible in front of the house in the upper right quadrant. In the lower left quadrant is the Royal Artillery band playing Handel's sombre 'Dead March' from the oratorio *Saul* that, in its slow tempo, set the pace of the procession and the tone of the prevailing mood. The Royal Australian Artillery 'firing party', twenty-one in number, is not seen as they had already entered through the gates, at the head of the procession. The four black horses drawing the four-wheeled gun carriage are evident. Upon the carriage lay the oak, lead-lined coffin with brass trimmings. A Union Jack, the national flag of the United Kingdom, was draped over the coffin. The floral wreath upon the flag is visually evident. The man's tools of trade, his sword and other military accoutrements, have not been visually captured by the camera, but were on the coffin with the flowers. Behind the rear wheel of the carriage is a man who had been delegated the task of leading the dead man's beloved companion, his saddled horse.

The picture was taken before the horse 'suddenly stopped, lifted his head, and neighed loudly' in a spontaneous symbolic gesture as it passed through the cemetery gates. The absence of his master upon the saddle was painfully poignant to witnesses. In the stirrups were his master's riding boots arranged in the reverse to the norm when riding. Upon the saddle was the man's 'brown gauntlets and his Mounted Rifles soft hat'. Following the un-named horse were 'floral cars' [horse-driven decorative enclosed drays] that are indicated by the two coachmen wearing formal black top hats. The floral tributes were nothing short of sensational, with the colour theme being 'cold winter white' relieved with violet. In the colour symbolism of the day, violet denoted religious humility in the face of God. Wreaths had been 'sent [ordered]' from interstate and even England such was the fame of the deceased.

From this point on the visual representation, in the newspaper image, of the very long cortege fades away. From textual newspaper reportage it is known that the chief mourners followed in hired funeral carriages with the mourners screened from the onlookers by curtain coverings to the windows.

The widowed mother, and the young pregnant wife of the deceased, were in the leading carriage. Following were numerous public and private carriages transporting an astonishing number of male dignitaries, most of whom were dressed in their ceremonial dress of office.

Continued p.5

FOR WHOM THE BELLS TOLL (CONT.)

Many people, in the tightly packed crowd that day, had never seen the special brown 'coronation uniform' with the signature 'cock's feathers to the slouch hat'. This unique uniform was worn by a select group of distinguished military men, including the deceased, who had been chosen to represent Australia at the Coronation Parade of Edward VII in London in 1902. All social classes were represented including the Mounted Rifles, the Military, the Navy, the Coronation Corps, State and Federal parliamentarians, associates of the Church of England Grammar School, Old Melbournians, the Bohemian Club as well as ordinary people.

Another press photograph depicts the graveside service. It captures the moment when the deceased man was being formally committed to eternal life within an underground family crypt.



'Funeral of Captain Staughton', *Australasian*, 30 May 1903, p. 26.
Reproduction permission, National Library of Australia.

The coffin is in situ. The smooth lilac granite memorial stone erected to denote the passing of the man's father, a short two years previously, can be seen in the middle of the right third of the photograph. He was being buried alongside his father, a very successful land-owning old colonist and parliamentarian, who initially had land interests in the Parish of Boroondara. The father's funeral was a quiet affair as requested. Not so for the son.

The crowd at the graveside can be seen to be deep and abiding. What we definitely do not see is the Royal Artillery dramatically poised with raised rifles to fire the symbolic three rounds followed by the muffled roll of the drums and the bugle playing the 'soldier's goodnight': the 'Last Post'.

Presumably the clock bells were reverently silenced from interjecting into the final military farewell. What we do see are two grave diggers [bottom left quadrant] in their shirtsleeves, waiting to complete the final task of the ceremony: the filling in of the grave.

Who was the deceased that caused the citizens of Kew to ignore the weather vane and brace themselves on time as indicated by the cemetery clock, to watch the funeral of a man who never lived in Kew?

Twenty-six year old Captain Samuel Thomas Staughton, Junior, was a man who had a spectacular military career by distinguishing himself in the Boer War. Despite his family's colonially acquired wealth, he was a people's man who understood his duty to kin, kith, country and, above all, Motherland. He had become a well-known icon of what an Australian man should be: robust and resolute in the face of duty. Appendicitis, in the pre-antibiotic era, had tragically robbed Victoria and his family of a man with a promising public career.

The white and violet flowers have long withered, the violet marble memorial stone has weathered to almost black with bleached green-grey lichen encroaching upon the memorial base, symbolising the passage of time. The monumental funerary event of 1903 has virtually faded into lost history.

Over the course of a century, funerary pageantry has changed dramatically. Today, the restored solid red brick tower to the Boroondara Cemetery administrative building is a divine memorial to dead funerary customs. The toll of time heralds Kew history.

SUZANNE MCWHA, 2015

TUESDAY VOLUNTEERS

During the last few years, volunteers have been adding to, as well as sorting and filing information in, the Society's research files. Many interesting early documents on Kew and its personalities have been uncovered. The sorting into files is almost complete and the team will be turning to indexing the files the Society holds.

If you are interested in joining this group on Tuesdays on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis, please phone Judith Vimpani, the team's leader on 0425 737 704.



Tuesday volunteers. L to R: Judith Vimpani, Shirley Spielman, Rodney Fernald, Margaret Robinson. [Absent - Mel Lawrence]

THE RED MENACE

In the penultimate chapter of *Kew's Civic Century* the author, Cr. W.D. Vaughan, lists a random selection of 'Council Brevities', dating from 1910 to 1957. The 87 items assembled by Vaughan tease the reader or researcher to delve further into events, both inconsequential and substantial. The list includes novelties such as the gift of a goldfish to the Colac Council in 1911, and other events of greater significance such as the City of Kew's responses to a polio epidemic in 1937. Vaughan's list also includes a reference to the Communist Party of Australia. He writes that:

"In September, 1948, the Council unanimously carried a resolution debarring any Communist from becoming a member of the Council staff, contracting with Council, or using any hall or other facilities of the Council."

Apart from noting the resolution, Vaughan offers no further analysis of the background to, or consequences of the Council's actions.

Community debate about the legitimacy of the Communist Party in Australia reached fever pitch during the attempt by the Menzies Government to ban the Party in 1951, firstly through legislation and later, unsuccessfully by referendum. The perceived threat posed by the communists was to have far reaching consequences, with a split within the Australian Labor Party that contributed to its failure to win office until 1972. Looking back from 2015, 60 years after the split within the ALP, the first half of the 1950s could be seen as a watershed in the confrontation between conservative and radicals in Australia.

In the previous decade, the attempt by the Kew Council to place 'A Ban On Reds' might appear as an inconsequential decision to thwart a perceived political, social and economic threat to the residents of Kew. Yet, the resolution actually followed earlier proposals in 1948 by the State Government to ban the Communist Party. Following regular reports on strikes in Melbourne over the basic wage, *The Argus* reported on 16 September that 'Militants Threaten Big Strike' over proposed changes to the *Arbitration Act*. The threatened industrial action was in response to a petition by the Victorian ALP Executive to 'protect union members against victimisation and intimidation by Communist union officials.'

Cr Simpson was to argue in support of the aforementioned motion before Kew Council on 22 September 1948 that: '... he did not accept the argument that the Communist Party was a political Party. "I believe it is an organisation of disruption, which aims at the destruction of everything dear to those people whom this council represents. I make it quite plain," he added, "that I have no intention of protecting the interests of any member of the Communist Party who may be a ratepayer in my ward."

The perceived power of the CPA in Victoria oddly contrasts with its electoral support. While the CPA attracted 3.64 per cent of the Senate vote in the year of the Referendum, its vote was just over 2 per cent in 1949. The latter corresponded to 87,958 votes Australia-wide. From the vantage point of the present, one might wonder whether a significant proportion of voters in the electorate of Kew were die-hard communists, or whether there was a demand by local cadres to hire Council controlled halls or other properties.

Establishing who were Communist supporters or paid up members of the CPA in Kew presents a challenge. The National Library of Australia's online newspaper collections and the online version of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* provide some insights.

A search of the *Dictionary of Biography* returned the names of thirty-two individuals with a connection to Kew, who were claimed to be supporters, members or opponents of the Communist Party of Australia. Some were only linked to communism by reputation. The historian, Geoffrey Serle, in the entry on Vance Palmer (1885-1959) wrote that: 'From 1942 he was a member of the Commonwealth Literary Fund's advisory committee and from 1947 to 1953 chairman; he suffered despicable allegations that he was a communist' (Serle, 1988). Serle also noted that Palmer, a liberal socialist of the broad left, was defended by R.G. Menzies. Others were linked through marriage. Gwendolyn Kent Hughes (1889-1965), the third daughter of Wilfred Kent Hughes, was married to Victor Reginald Lloyd (1895-1964) in 1930 in Holy Trinity Church. Lloyd '... had strong ties to the trade union movement and belonged to the Communist Party of Australia' (Barbara Falk, 2000).

Perhaps the most intriguing of the entries is that for the artist, Marguerite Henriette Mahood (née Calloway) (1901-89), and her husband, the engineer, Thomas Orrock George (Tom) Mahood. Alisa Bunbury writes that '...she and her husband were actively involved in the Communist Party of Australia. Party meetings were held at their house in Kew, beneath which was secreted a printing press. She designed posters, banners and other political ephemera for the party, although her politics were rarely evident in her exhibited art.' (Bunbury, 2012).

Marguerite's husband, Tom Mahood, collaborated in her artistic and political endeavours. His engineering talents enabled him to assist in developing a kiln that could be used to fire her ceramics. Today, he is best known for his photographs, a number of which are held in the collection of the State Library of Victoria.



May Day [Communist Party of Australia speech],
ca. 1940-ca. 1950. Thomas O.G. Mahood, photographer.
State Library of Victoria

THE RED MENACE (CONTINUED)

The notion that Marguerite and Tom Mahood held Party meetings at their home and housed a printing press beneath their house inevitably leads to questions about where they lived. The Sands & McDougall directories held in the local history collection of the Kew Library show that by 1938, the Mahoods were living at 22 Stawell Street in Studley Park. The house is still one of the largest in Stawell Street, occupying a large block on the corner of Sir William Street.

In her 1981 survey of artists in Kew, Elizabeth Mackie wrote of Marguerite Mahood that: 'Her imaginative ceramic sculptures of medieval women, gryphons, lizards, Spanish dancers and nature sprites became well known to the public at the Seddon galleries. ... She received a Ph.D. at the age of 70 for her thesis entitled *Australian Political Caricature 1788-1901*.' Despite being still designated as 'well known' in 1981, Marguerite Mahood's reputation as an artist eventually declined.

A re-evaluation of Mahood's artistic legacy occurred in 2007, when one of her ceramic works at a Sydney auction of Australian Art Pottery realised what was then a record price, selling for \$23,400. James Cockington, writing in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in 2010, reported that 'Five years ago Marguerite Mahood was an almost-forgotten Australian artist. Her ceramics were treasured but so few appeared on the market it was hard for new collectors to acquire them. One source said only 50 pieces had been listed at auction in the previous 30 years.'

Collectors also value some of the books illustrated by Marguerite Mahood. She had strong links to other intellectuals, including the writer Carmen Figuerola. Mahood was to provide the linocuts that illustrated

PHILIP SLOBOM

Sadly, Philip Slobom passed away on 13 July. Philip was one-eyed about Kew, having come to live in Kew as a youngster, returning in the prime of his life.

For Philip his love of Kew meant being in the midst of the action. He was a Kew councillor in 1994 when the Council was amalgamated into the City of Boroondara. As President of the Kew Association he led an unsuccessful campaign for 'Riverside' splitting off from the City of Boroondara. He also fought hard to keep a Police Station in Kew, the result being the Harp Road police complex.

Philip joined the Kew Historical Society in 2000, was elected to the Committee in 2006, and became Vice President in 2007, holding this position until 2012, with a brief stint as secretary, when Brad Miles was elected a councillor.

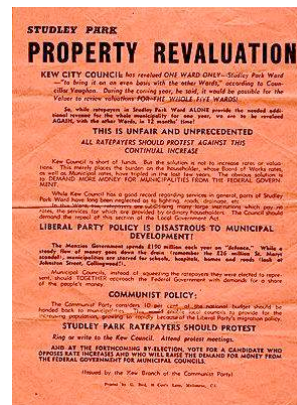
Phillip's most famous role was as Town Crier, initially during Kew Festivals and then in 2006 as the emblem for the Save the Kew Court House campaign.

Philip will be remembered for his rich baritone voice, giving the commentary on the Festival Bus Tours and his wealth of knowledge about Kew. He made many of us laugh with his Trivia Quiz at our annual Xmas Parties.

Our condolences to Terrell, and to his closest family and friends.

Figuerola's book for children - *Family on Phillip Island* (Whitcomb and Tombs, 1955). Copies can sell for almost \$100. Mahood's overtly political, and more important works, such as *The Loaded Line: Australian Political Caricature 1788-1901* (M.U.P., 1973) have fared less well. A first edition can be purchased for under \$10.

The decline in the value of Mahood's political writings and illustrations parallel the decline in the political fortunes of the Australian Communist Party. By 1990, it was generally accepted that it had less than 1,000 members. It was to be officially dissolved in 1991.



The Kew Historical Society has only one item of this communist legacy in its files. It is an undated electoral tract, appropriately printed on red paper, advising electors in a local government election to vote against rate rises in Studley Ward.

It is tempting to contemplate whether it may have been produced in the bowels of 22

Stawell Street by a group of dedicated communist cadres. Its focus on property values is, however, a sad decline from when this once significant political party rattled the cage of the worthies on Kew Council in 1948.

ROBERT BAKER



Town Criers at the 2011 Kew Festival Parade. L to R Terrell De Lacy, David Benwell, Les Littlechild and Philip Slobom

DAILY LIFE IN KEW: THE SUMMER OF 1885/86

PART 2 - LIFTING THE CARPET: WHINGES AND AN UNDERSIDE

Kew may well have been a pleasant place in which to live as was seen in Part 1 of this article, but it was no utopia. Under the carpet lay other realities of daily life in Kew. There were petty complaints about living in Kew. There was also an underside of larrikinism, drunkenness, poverty, violence, fire and disease.

...

After years of lobbying for a railway connection to the city, the railway was approved in 1885. However, in the summer of 1885/86 there was controversy over the site for the station. Kew people wanted the railway, but on their terms.

The Railway Department wanted the station to be situated on Wellington Street near the Kew Recreation Hall, as this was the cheapest option because there was no need for a cutting. Kew people wanted a station closer to the business district. There was a large, rowdy and divided public meeting about this issue in Kew in November. The meeting decided on a deputation to the Minister of Railways to ask him to reconsider the site. The Minister rejected any change. Kew people had to accept this decision if they wanted a railway. They were not happy.

There were constant complaints about the condition of streets, street lamps and “nuisances” that involved stagnant water and smells from contaminated water and sewerage. J. Wilkinson complained to the Kew Council about the “useless” positioning of street lamps in Cotham Road, since trees grew in front of them reducing their effectiveness. G. Lush complained about the poor lighting on the Kew side of the Victoria Street Bridge. W. Stawell reminded Council to complete promised works in Stawell Street. There was a complaint about “impassable and disgraceful” conditions in Park Street in wet weather. Similar problems were reported in early March in Normanby Road, Stawell and Wellington Streets and St John’s Parade. People, it seems, were preparing for winter rains.

Disease was a constant worry in the summer months in Melbourne and Kew due to the absence of a sewerage system in the city. In February, there were reports of Typhoid Fever at the Lunatic Asylum and a fatal case in Sackville Street, during a summer in which there were relatively low numbers of such reports.

Reports of poor drainage in Kew indicate this fear of Typhoid in the community. Ermington Lane and Derrick Street were reported to be health hazards with stagnant water due to lack of drainage. Mr Parsons complained about offensive material on a neighbour’s property due to lack of drainage. He feared that when the wind blew from that direction, he might contract Typhoid Fever, like his recently deceased wife. This shows the belief that many held that disease was caused by “bad vapours.”

There were less serious complaints about life in Kew. The transport system did not always work well. For instance, there was a stoppage of trams one Saturday evening.



The grip on one of the cars was jammed in a curve in Spring Street in the City. The service stopped at 10.30 pm and did not resume till midnight. No money was refunded and people had to find alternative transport arrangements.

Kew citizens also complained that they had acted as jurors in the Coroner’s Court at the Kew Asylum for three cases on one day, but the government only paid them for one. Kew residents were the pool of jurors for the Coroner at the Asylum, and they clearly resented having to do such an unwelcome duty in an institution they would have preferred not to be located in their district at all.

...

Fire in summer was a constant issue in Kew due to timber buildings that relied on fire, gas and candles for power. The Kew Fire Brigade assisted also in Hawthorn when necessary. The volunteer brigade was on constant alert, and was inconvenienced by being called out to false alarms caused by people burning rubbish.

In January, a major fire occurred in a Bulleen Road bookmaker’s shop causing “total destruction.” The shop was destroyed before the fire brigade could arrive. The building was described as a “tenement,” and the owner was known for his lack of payment of debts, but had insured the property for £1000. The fire was considered to be suspicious.

Another major fire occurred in February in Wellington Street. A weatherboard cottage was completely gutted before the fire brigade arrived. The owners were away in Queenscliff and the house was left in the care of a maid who was absent when the fire started. The fire was caused by gas left burning, and when the jets blew out, the escaping gas accumulated and was ignited by another burner.

...

The seamier side of Kew is found in the reports of the cases before the Kew Court, held weekly. The underside involved poverty, alcohol, larrikinism and violence. Some family names appear more than once in such cases.

For instance, there were cases dealing with poverty and vagrancy, often with alcohol as a contributing factor. Twelve-year-old Charles Dennis was found sleeping around Kew. He was an abandoned child, son of a warder at the Kew Asylum. He was released into the custody of friends and his sister. A charge of neglect of one son by the Boyle family, who was just out of reform school, was dismissed after it was shown the father earned only 7/6 per day and had seven children to support.

THE SUMMER OF 1885/86 (CONT.)

John Britt was charged with allowing his premises to be in filthy condition. There was only a sofa and mattresses in the house. The children were stark naked. There was a corner with a heap of partly covered "stuff" which was a general refuse spot. The kitchen floor was dug up and used as latrine and a kerosene can was used as a urinal. The court found that the "dissolute" habits and drinking to excess of Britt's wife was responsible for the situation. Britt was a "hard working man" who earned 7/6 per day. This case shows how the working poor of Kew lived, the destructive effects of alcohol, and not a little sexist prejudice.

Alcohol related cases often occurred at the local hotels: Edward Sedgwood was charged with insulting behaviour and obscene language outside the Greyhound Hotel. An already drunk young man was served liquor at another hotel. In February, four men, including a member of the Boyle family, were charged with being drunk and using insulting behaviour. A vagrant, an "inveterate drunkard", was gaoled for three months after begging in Kew. Another drunk vagrant threw himself into the Yarra.

Many public safety problems were associated with horses and sometimes involved alcohol as well: John Wolfe and John Larkins were charged with "furious driving" along Cotham Road under the influence of liquor. A carter fell asleep driving along Bulleen Road and stopped just before crashing into a dray. Another did not use a lamp. A milk cart driver was in "a hopeless state" of intoxication. James Kent was accused of carting offal through the streets of Kew without covering it. John Nelson was fined for leaving his horse and dray unattended.

Petty theft occurred, much of which appears to be opportunistic. John Callaghan was found guilty of stealing fruit from Mr Thompson and was sent to the Reform School. A passing vagrant stole a buggy whip from Mr Henty's stables. Charles Fitzgibbon stole a watch while working as a furniture removalist and was sent to gaol for a month. Robert Roberts stole a sunflower while delivering bills. In addition, he head-butted a police officer while resisting arrest. Another youth was sent for six months hard labour for stealing a pair of spectacles that he had seen through a window. Having a skeleton key did not help his case. At the same sitting of the court, two other men were charged with loitering with intent to commit a felony. The Police Prosecutor commented, "there would no robberies in Kew but for persons of this class."

Mr Hoskins, a builder complained that his tools were disappearing. It was admitted that the tools were "borrowed" by some local boys, including Britt and Boyle boys, but it caused inconvenience. The boys also "dirtied" and did "wanton" damage to a building site in A'Beckett Street. Apparently this was not an isolated incident.

More serious cases were also heard at the court. Edward Sedgman, made "improper advances" to Jessie Pearson, a housemaid in Glenferrie Road, on two nights when she was on her way home. Sedgman was alleged to be insane and unfit to put in an appearance in court.

Eugene O'Donnell was charged with assault on the wife of the licensee of the Harp of Erin hotel in February. She



Harp of Erin Hotel, East Kew, ca. 1916.
Dorothy Rogers Collection, Kew Historical Society

ordered him out of the bar, but he returned and struck her on the face and arm with a stick. He was also charged with resisting arrest later that same night. In the same sitting of the Kew Court, there were two other assault cases. In February, a husband was assaulted by his wife but the case was discharged when the court heard that she had a "Blue Ribbon" pledge card.

Kew also experienced larrikin behaviour by young men that involved public nuisance and annoying behaviour.

The Kew Railway meeting held in November, to protest about the siting of the Kew railway station was continually interrupted by larrikin behaviour by the "roughs." At times there was "complete discord." It was noted that the "young fellows" at the back of the hall should never have been allowed into the hall, and that similar behaviour had been noted at previous meetings.

Thomas "Cocky" Lewis was arrested for swimming naked in the Yarra in full sight of bridges and the ferry and running around the park in the nude. A witness collected his clothes and was pushed into the river for his efforts.

Some local youths, including one of the Britt boys, were accused of insulting behaviour outside a wedding reception. Some of the wedding party provided them with beer. They hung a clothesline across the path to trip people up. They threw stones, used bad language, and stole beer, a carving knife and fork. The surly behaviour of the boys continued in court.

A local man "borrowed" his employer's cart, and with some friends, picked up some ladies from a house of "bad repute" in Richmond and went for a picnic in Doncaster. On their return (minus some of the "freight") they were "worked up to full pitch," with boisterous behaviour, "having a regular spree" with the cart being driven at full speed. A Kew citizen managed to take control of the cart and delivered all and sundry to the Kew Police! They were duly fined.

These articles aim to give a taste of daily life in Kew in the summer of 1885/86. It can be seen that there were two Kews: a "respectable" Kew, and a "rough" Kew. The "respectable" Kew was concerned with shopping, transport and the state of their streets, and entertaining themselves in local institutions and pastimes. The "rough" Kew lived a marginal life that led to drunkenness, poverty, petty crime and larrikin behaviour. Maybe it is still so, with the "rough" side just a little more subdued – or perhaps better hidden?

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

Since June, we have received a number of donations to our collection. These include a memorial plaque to James Maitland Campbell from the Uniting Church of Australia, and a collection of badges and buttons from Adrian Rigg.

Adrian Rigg's father, Ken Rigg, was brought up in Belford Road. He died in January 2014, at the age of 91. Adrian's grandfather was **Francis H. Rigg**, an ES&A bank manager and J.P. in Kew during the 1930's and 1940's. Adrian now lives in Childers Street. In July, Adrian contacted the Society with an offer of buttons and medallions after viewing examples of these on our website.

Adrian's grandfather also had a collection of assorted button badges from the period of First World War. These included Wattle Day badges, war effort and Red Cross badges as well as some local event badges. Adrian is also donating Kew Cricket Club medallions dating from the period 1922 to 1936 (*below*).



James Maitland Campbell was born in 1847 in Melrose, Scotland. He arrived in Melbourne with his parents in 1861. After completing a Master of Laws and Letters at Melbourne University, he married and settled with his new family in Pakington Street in 1875. [His towered house, 'Ramornie', is once again a private residence]. He was to be Mayor of Kew on three occasions: 1889-90, 1890-91 and 1892-93.

With some other local pioneers, J.M. Campbell became an inaugural trustee of the Kew Presbyterian Church. As well as Superintendent of the Sabbath School for 27 years, he was Session Clerk for 37 years. Following his death in 1930, the Annual General Meeting of the Congregation decided to erect a tablet in the Church in his memory. The Uniting Church of Australia recently donated the tablet (*below*) to our Collection.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 56th Annual General Meeting of the Kew Historical Society Incorporated will be held on Wednesday 9 September 2014 at 8.00 pm in the Phyllis Hore Room, rear Kew Library, Civic Drive, off Cotham Road, Kew.

The following business will be transacted at the meeting:

- (1) Apologies
- (2) Speaker: Councillor Philip Healey, Councillor for Studley Ward
- (3) Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting
- (4) Report from the President for the year ending 30 June 2015
- (5) Report from the Treasurer for the year ending 30 June 2015
- (6) Report from the Archivist for the year ending 30 June 2014
- (7) Election of Management Committee members for the year 2015-2016

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

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

Any member wishing to nominate a member for any position on the Management Committee should use the nomination form on p.11 of this newsletter. All nomination forms shall be delivered either personally, or by mail, or electronically to the Secretary of the Society, Tony Michael by 2 September 2015.

- (8) Appointment of an Auditor.

Elected members of the Management Committee for 2014-2015 were:

President: Dr. Keith Kendall (resigned April 2015)
Vice President: Assoc. Prof. Don Garden
Secretary: Tony Michael
Treasurer: Margaret Robinson
Archivist: Robert Baker
Curator: Tony Michael (resigned June 2015)
Members: Andrew Frost, Mary Kelleher, Debbie McColl-Davis, Suzanne McWha, Mel Lawrence
Co-opted members: Judith Scurfield, Janet Walker (appointed April 2015)

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

TONY MICHAEL
SECRETARY

"At the Annual Congregational Meeting on Wednesday 28 October 1931, it was decided to erect a tablet in the Church to the memory of the late Mr J.M. Campbell to record his service to the Church. The tablet was unveiled at the morning service on 13 December by Mr Legge. The Preacher was Rev. J. Barnaby"



Form of Appointment of Proxy

I,
of
being a member of the Kew Historical Society Inc. hereby appoint
of
being a member of that Incorporated Society, as my proxy to vote for me on my behalf at the Annual General Meeting to be held on Wednesday the ninth day of September 2015.

Note:

1. This proxy must be completed and handed to the Chairperson before or at the start of the meeting.
2. Or it can be mailed to PO Box 175, Kew, 3101.
3. Or it can be scanned and emailed to secretary@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au
4. If mailed or emailed, the completed proxy form must be received by the Society at least 24 hours before the start of the meeting.
5. Any queries phone Don Garden 0417 169 018

Signed
Name
The day of 2015

✂ -----



Nomination Form

I, nominate
To the Position of within the Kew Historical Society Inc. for the year 2015–2016
Signed Date

I, second the nomination
Signed Date

I, accept the above nomination
To the Position of within the Kew Historical Society Inc. for the year 2014–2015
Signed Date

Nomination forms must be in the hands of the Secretary by 5.00pm Wednesday 2 September 2015.

MEMBERSHIP & DONATIONS

The Kew Historical Society is the custodian of an extensive collection of items relating to the history of Kew. To continue the work of the Society your support is needed. This work is ongoing and involves conserving, cataloguing and making the collection available to the public. You can support the Society by becoming a member and/or making a donation. All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

Title: _____ Name: _____
Address: _____ Postcode: _____
Phone: _____ Mobile: _____ Email: _____

I/We wish to make a donation of \$

join/rejoin the Kew Historical Society. I/We agree to be bound by the Rules of the Society.

Signature of Donor(s)/Applicant(s): _____ Date: _____

Please post your cheque with this form to Kew Historical Society Inc., PO Box 175, Kew VIC 3101
or make a Direct Debit: BSB 063-142; Account Number: 1006 6376; Account Name: Kew Historical Society Inc.

Communication preferences:

Please tick if you do NOT want to be included in the Kew Historical Society's email list for the distribution of notices and the Newsletter. Kew Historical Society will not communicate your details to a third party without obtaining your permission.

Annual Membership Fee	
Individual	\$20
Family	\$25
Student	\$ 5

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

16 August - Quarterly Book Sale
09 September - Annual General Meeting
21 October - Dickenson Lecture
11 November - Monthly Meeting
18-25 October - History Week
22 November - Quarterly Book Sale
December - Xmas Party

Kew Historical Society Inc.
PO Box 175
Kew VIC 3101