



**HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY INC.**

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families, schools,  
students,  
historians and  
other researchers*

# NEWSLETTER

No. 111  
JUNE 2015



## A HISTORIAN'S LEGACY

When Dorothy Rogers published *A History of Kew* (Lowden Publishing Co., 1973), she was already an acknowledged historian. Earlier publications had included a monograph on 'Fairyland Cottage, 1860-1960', a history of the descendants of Philip Gidley King (1963) and *Lovely Old Homes of Kew* (1961). She had also become better known through a series of articles on aspects of Kew's history, which were published in locally-distributed newspapers.

Before or shortly after her death in 1973, a number of items from her family's collection were gifted to the Kew Historical Society. These included a number of scrapbooks, items of ephemera, and framed pictures relating to her family. It was understood that her 'papers' had been donated to the State Library of Victoria.

In February 2015, the Society was contacted by Mrs. Roger's son, John, who expressed a desire to donate to the Society items in his possession that belonged to his mother. When the items finally arrived in March, they were neatly packed in a large cardboard box. Unpacking revealed a treasure trove of items including historic photographs, manuscripts, scrapbooks, booklets and ephemera. All told, John Rogers sent almost 500 items from his mother's records. Of this number, over 400 were photographs, many taken by Mrs. Rogers' other son, for inclusion in her books and articles. While the quality of images in her self-published books was fair to middling, the original photographs are crystal clear, allowing us to appreciate the fabric of many of the great houses of Kew. In addition to the photographs of grand and great architecture, the collection includes photographs of numerous small cottages and buildings.

Particular houses clearly attracted her interest, as a number of photographs relate to specific houses. They include Studley Hall and Studley House in Nolan Avenue, which are now part of Xavier Preparatory School.

When we were preparing for an exhibition on 'Dancing in Kew' (Kew Court House, 2013) for the Kew Festival, one of the houses we described was Studley Hall (later Burke Hall), the home of the Pinschof family. We knew that the Pinschofs were noted patrons of the arts and frequently held soirees in their ballroom. On this occasion, we visited Burke Hall and the photographed the ballroom, which is now used as a library.

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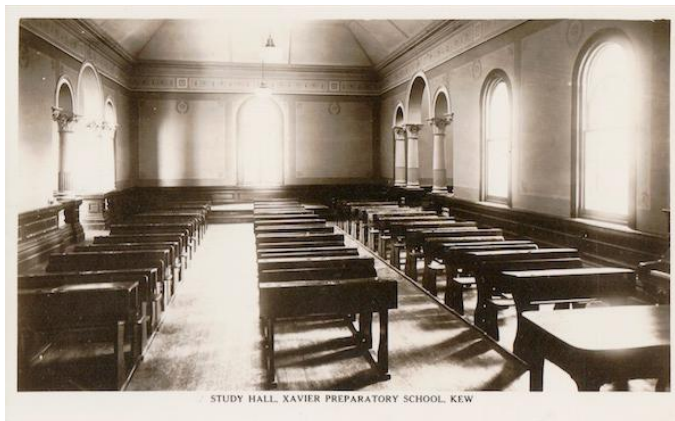
### KEW TRAM DEPOT

In 2015, the Kew Tram Depot celebrates its anniversary. Tony Michael recounts some of its milestones.

Cont. Page 2

Front-page  
**M&MTB W1 Class Tram**  
Tony Michael, photograph

Right  
**'Study Hall, Xavier Preparatory School, Kew**  
Dorothy Rogers Collection, Kew Historical Society



## **A HISTORIAN'S LEGACY (cont.)**

The ballroom had been much restored so we were interested to find in the Rogers Collection a series of postcards of Burke Hall, one of which shows the original wall and ceiling decoration of the room (above right).

Dorothy Rogers considered a number of houses for inclusion in *Lovely Old Homes of Kew*. By the time her book was ready for publication, a number of these had already been demolished. This did not prevent her from including an introductory section on Tara Hall in Studley Park Road, which had been demolished in 1960, but there were clearly limits to what she could write about, particularly if a house was no longer extant. The collection includes photographs of houses that had fallen victim to a development boom. These included 'South Esk', 'Ellerslie', and 'Madford'.

The photographs in the collection are useful to owners and researchers in that they often show houses before alterations were made. The latter frequently compromised the architectural integrity of the building. 'Ramornie' in Pakington Street can be seen with its balconies intact, before two were demolished in the period when it was a rooming house called 'The Towers'. Similarly, 'Otira' on the corner of Walpole and Eglinton Streets is shown with its original balcony.

The manuscripts in the Rogers Collection provide an insight into the workings of a historian in the mid 20th century, in a period before computers had transformed the workload of a writer. They include a number of typescripts, including two original copies of *Lovely Old Homes of Kew*, one of which has each chapter signed by the owner-occupier of the house that she had described.

In one bound folder, Dorothy Rogers added typed notes on the graves of Kew pioneers who were buried in the Boroondara General Cemetery. Now we can buy a CD-ROM that lists the inscriptions on each headstone in the cemetery. In the 1950s and 1960s, Rogers dutifully recorded these, hand typing inscriptions and adding annotating when required.

Some of the irreplaceable items belonged to her family members. One is a certificate issued by the Victorian Department of Education in 1876, testifying that her father, William Homer Richardson, had been 'sufficiently educated'. Another is a photograph of a group of 'Kew Flyer' cyclists. Cooper's Kew cycle manufacturing business in Cotham Road had added relevance to her, as her brother, Charles Field Richardson, worked there as a motor mechanic before he volunteered to fight in World War I. Charles was to be wounded at Gallipoli, and later died in Egypt where he is buried. She kept a photo of Charles in his military uniform to be passed on to her family. Now Charles Field Richardson and the items preserved and collected by the members of his family returns to Kew.

**ROBERT BAKER, ARCHIVIST**

## **KEW HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.**

### **MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

**Acting President:** Assoc. Prof. Don Garden

**Secretary:** Tony Michael

**Treasurer:** Andrew Frost

**Archivist/Newsletter editor:** Robert Baker

**Curator:** Tony Michael

**Members:** Margaret Robinson | Mel Lawrence | Mary Kelleher  
| Debbie McColl-Davis | Suzanne McWha | Judith Scurfield  
| Jan Watson

### **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 and 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](http://www.kewhistoricalsociety.org.au)

### **MEMBERSHIP INQUIRIES**

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

Phone 0419 587 939

Email: [secretary@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au](mailto:secretary@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au)

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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). From June until the end of August, there will be an exhibition at the Court House and at the Kew Library.

### KEW COURT HOUSE

#### J. E. Barnes: The 'Embarkation Photographer'

17 April - 29 August

Josiah Earl Barnes, Kew's greatest photographer, worked locally as a photographer from ca. 1908 until his death in 1921. From an early interest in photographing yachts, Josiah Barnes progressed to become an official 'embarkation photographer', taking numerous photos of departing ships, soldiers and nurses at the Port of Melbourne.

Drawing on photographs from the collections of the Kew Historical Society, and of the descendants of Josiah Earl Barnes, this photographic exhibition is enhanced by objects relating to soldiers of Kew who sailed on the ships he photographed.



### KEW LIBRARY

#### Kew at War

8 April - 29 August

A display in the large glass enclosed wall cabinet in Kew Library focuses on the home front in Kew. In addition to items in a typical home of the period, specific items from the collection that have a local provenance and which date from the period are used to illuminate the involvement and losses faced by local families during the war.

A large reproduction of the 'Unveiling of the Kew War Memorial' highlights themes of remembrance. [The original is on permanent display in our room at the Kew Court House]

## MEETINGS & LECTURES

The Society holds monthly meetings in the Phyllis Hore Room at the rear of the Kew Library in Cotham Road. Meetings are held at 8:00pm on the second Wednesday of the month unless otherwise announced. Visitors are always welcome.

### JUNE MEETING

#### Dr. Suzanne McWha Under Wraps: the unveiling of the KHS wedding dress

Phyllis Hore Room, Kew Library  
Wednesday 10 June, 8:00pm

In the 1960s, a 19th Century cream silk wedding dress entered the collection. Its provenance is currently being established. Textile and clothing historian, Dr. Suzanne McWha will examine the key features and style of the dress and explore what these tell us about the period of its construction and use.

### JULY MEETING

#### Fr. Michael Kalka Sacred Heart Catholic Church & School 1875-2015

Phyllis Hore Room, Kew Library  
Wednesday 8 July, 8:00pm

The first Catholic Church in Kew was located in Walpole Street on the corner of Walton Street. By 1910 it was described as 'disused' and the congregation were already planning for a new church in Cotham Road. Since the move, Sacred Heart Church has been the main Catholic parish church and school in Kew. Since 2009, Fr. Michael Kalka has been the Parish Priest of Sacred Heart. 2015 is the 150th anniversary of the school. The talk is our contribution to the anniversary.



Kew Catholic Young Men's Society Picnic, 1920s. McArdle Family collection

### AUGUST MEETING

#### Judith Scurfield

#### Using maps to investigate local and/or family history

Phyllis Hore Room, Kew Library  
Wednesday 12 August, 8:00pm  
Judy Scurfield was Map Librarian at the State Library of Victoria from 1974-2014. Her presentation will explore how maps can provide clues to finding out about local and genealogical history.  
[Editor: Judy is now a valued member of our Management Committee]



### NEW MEMBERS

We would like to extend a warm welcome to the following new members of the Kew Historical Society: Robert & Gwenda Brown, Nancy Costin, Ian Job, Rosemary Lade, Judy Scurfield and Fred & Libby Shade.

### 2015 MEETING CALENDAR

#### 10 June 2015

Suzanne McWha: Under Wraps: the unveiling of the KHS wedding dress.

#### 8 July 2015

Fr Michael Kalka: Sacred Heart Catholic Church & School 1875-2015.

#### 12 August 2015

Judy Scurfield: Using maps to investigate local and/or family history.

#### 9 September 2015

Annual General Meeting.

#### 14 October 2015

The 2015 Dickinson Lecture\*  
Prof. Miles Lewis AM: The Melbourne mansion of the 19th century.

#### 11 November 2015

Ian Mathers B.E.M. & Michael Mathers: The Kew Band.

#### December 2015

Annual Xmas Party.

# WHAT'S IN A BOX?

What's in the box? Well, there is nothing in the wooden box except two accoutrements. There is an internal box-shelf to store small items and a very shiny, small oval brass plaque neatly tacked to the inside of the lid of the box. The medallion states that the travelling trunk was manufactured by 'S. W. Silver & Co Works, Canal Cut, Limehouse' [River Thames, East End, London]. The firm specialised in the sea freighting of goods to colonies all over the known world from about the 1830s. Interesting, but what does this have to do with Kew history? The Kewriosity of the object lies in the stencilling on the lid of the box. It reads:

PHILLIP FULLER  
PASSENGER TO MELBOURNE  
AUSTRALIA  
BY STEAMER "DURHAM"  
NOT WANTED ON VOYAGE

Phillip Fuller was born in 1852, the fourth son of an English couple, John, a grocer and a brewer, and Julia who was simply a 'grocer's wife'. At aged 14, Phillip, and his brothers alike, entered the family business, conducted at Kelevodon, England. When not working the family engaged in amateur musical and dramatic entertainment, for which they were highly noted. It has to be assumed the family business was profitable as Phillip called himself a 'gentleman'. And, he was a man of means for he travelled to Melbourne on the brand new, fastest travelling steamer, the *Durham*, as a saloon [first] class passenger. Phillip boarded the vessel at London on 25 January 1875 with his midnight blue painted iron-braced container.

The box is not a gentleman's travelling trunk used by men who made grand tours of the world at the time. These containers were often covered in leather attached with decorative studs, sported superlative locks and were lined in the interior. Fuller's box has none of these features. It was essentially a cheap and nasty, hastily constructed item, designed to be disposable, in a nineteenth-century manner, namely as firewood. This suggests Fuller's voyage was one-way. His intent was to become a colonial. Indeed, his older brother, Alfred, had migrated to Australia in 1871, and was successfully brewing award-winning beer next to Samuel Minchinton's *Kew Hotel* [later *Clifton Hotel*] in Bulleen Road [High Street], Kew.

Given that the box has no zinc lining suggests it was stored in the hull of the ship, not on the deck which would have been subject to constant dousing by seawater. Extra money had been spent on the dry storage of the container, the contents of which must have been special. The journey was eventful. The start of the nautical race against time via means of steam alone (with sail backup if required) commenced with a horror head-on wind and a high-running sea on the run down the channel from Gravesend. The eating and laying fowl, caged to the side of the bulwark were washed away as were two lifeboats after they broke from the davits. Six of the crew refused to man the new-fangled vessel on the high seas and were tried for desertion.



At 9 am precisely, the ship left Plymouth on 28 January 1875 for a 12,202 nautical mile [22,598 km] run using the Cape route (Plymouth, Madeira, Palma and the Cape of Good Hope). Further adverse weather resulted in a sailor overboard. Rescue was unsuccessful; a general gloom marred the passage. Otherwise the food and wine was of no complaint, stewardship was exemplary and the sanitary state of the bathrooms beyond reproach.

Phillip and his trunk safely arrived at Melbourne at 4.30 pm on 19 March 1875, a 'sultry hazy' sort of day, after a record-breaking time of precisely 48 days and 18 hours. His brother had made the same journey on the *Oxford* in 1871 in 140 days. The inspecting Immigration Officer officially declared the ship to be free of disease. Phillip disembarked and his box was landed with the rest of the cargo of chiefly drapery, along with mail and newspapers.

Phillip's immediate movements in the colony are not clear. Undoubtedly, he was more than pleased 'to meet the eye' of his brother. On 2 December 1876 he was standing before the altar of Holy Trinity Church, Kew, being married to local lass Sarah Ann Maslen (ca. 1859–1910) by the Reverend Vance. Sarah, Australian born, was the first of three children to William, a labourer, and Elizabeth Maslen, free settlers from Wiltshire, England, who had permanently located to Kew, shifting to various residences.

In the footsteps of his father, Phillip established himself as a wine and grocery merchant, the business being located on the corner of Derrick Street and Cotham Road (building not extant). Roughly, about the same time, 1885, his brother Alfred abandoned the fickle brewery business and re-established himself as a financially successful organ builder. He remains well linked to the history of Kew.

Phillip, unfortunately, seems to have been a victim of the economic recession of the late 1880s and the 1890s. He slipped behind the scenes of Kew history. Employment to provide for nine children was probably the motivation for the family's move from Kew to Surrey Hills, to Box Hill and to Balwyn before returning to a cottage in Cobden Street, Kew at the turn of the century. Phillip's occupation was now listed as that of carpenter.

*Continued p.5*

## WHAT'S IN A BOX (CONT.)

His chronic ill-health declined due to untreatable heart disease and he finally died at 95 Pakington Street [today no. 53], in a double-fronted wooden Victorian cottage located in pleasure and produce gardens, on the 3 March 1912, aged 60 years old. His second son, also Philip (*sic*) duly buried him in the Boroondara General Cemetery after 37 years in the colony. Here, he joined his wife who had died 16 months previously at the age of 51. Colonisation for Phillip was one of personal, social and economic decline; the gentleman had become a chimney sweep in the concluding years of his life. He made no mark on the history of music in the colony as his brother did.

The travelling trunk did not go to the grave with its owner but remains, to this day, in remarkably good condition. It was not sold despite a good market in reselling such objects at the time. It was not used as fuel for fire. A brown paper label glued to the side of the box attests to a locomotive journey outside of the sea voyage. It was loaded onto a rail car at East Kew Outer Circle Railway Station at some point. Where it went we don't know. The station disappeared, but the box continued to travel. It made a brief public appearance at auction rooms at Geelong in 2014. From that locale the box made an automotive journey to a fashionable Fitzroy curio shop where it was again purchased. In the back of a BMW the box again arrived at Kew where it remains in a private collection. Today, Phillip Fuller's trunk is a symbol of colonial immigration at a specific moment in maritime history when the canvas sail became subservient to coal. The Motherland and the distant colony were physically drawn closer together through the concept of time through technology.

What was in the box? This we will probably never know. It would be good to think the box contained the imported English organ pipes used to furnish the first superlative organ his brother built at his workshop in Kew. But, alas, this is pure speculation. What's in the box today? Nothing except the drawer and the manufacturer's identifying medallion.

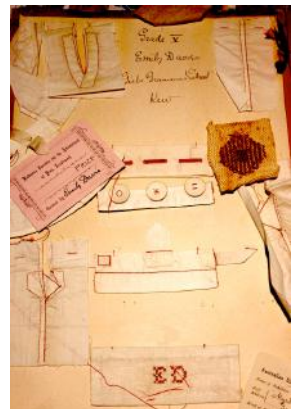


[Editor: Dr. Suzanne McWha will be the speaker at our Monthly Meeting on 10 June 2015 when she describes a 19th Century wedding dress in the collection of the Kew Historical Society. See p.3].

## NEW ACQUISITIONS

On Page 1, the gift to the Kew Historical Society of the remainder of what we call the Dorothy Rogers Collection is described. Since March, a number of other new items have been gifted to the Society.

In March, Peta McGinley, who is a member of the Brighton Historical Society, contacted us, offering to donate a number of items of plain needlework from the first decade of the 20th century. These 110-year old prize-winning samplers were created by Emily Davies (1890-1973) while a student at Baldur Girls' Grammar School. Baldur Grammar was a private girls' school established in 1897 by a Mrs A. Tuxen. The school was located in Denmark Street. Emily lived with her parents in Moore Street Hawthorn, and was the daughter of the Mayor of Richmond.



**Australian Exhibition of Women's Work.**  
**'Set of Specimens (all stitches etc) by Emily Davies, Grade V, Kew Grammar School.**

Last year, we were contacted by Mary McArdle, who offered to donate items belonging to her father. In April, her brothers, Fred and Ed McArdle, visited the Kew Court House to hand over a number of items including an illuminated certificate, a World War II RAAF kit bag, a Gladstone bag and a mantle clock. A number of the items relate to the Sacred Heart Church, and the local branches of the Catholic Young Men's Society and the Children of Mary.



**Students, Sacred Heart School, 1924. McArdle Family collection**

[Editor: At the time of the 'handover' of items, Fred and Ed agreed to be filmed by our curator, Tony Michael, and to answer questions about their own and their family's history. The tape when edited will be added to our collection.]

# A HISTORY OF COMMUNITY ACTIVISM

## Saving the environs of Glass Creek / Kilby Park

Residents of Kew have a proud history of protecting their urban amenity from the encroachments of bureaucrats. The actions of residents, in particular the members of Kew Natural Environment Group (KNEG), in the 1970s and 1980s to create an area for passive recreation, rather than acquiesce to the proposed series of ovals over the top of a barrel-drained Glass Creek, is an example of one such battle.

The KNEG had originally been formed in 1964 to provide a focus for community objections to a State Electricity Commission proposal to place a Power Terminal Station with substations, accompanying pylons and in-coming power lines in what was then known as the Kilby Park area. After a series of community meetings in 1965, the Council rejected the proposal. A quid pro quo deal between the Country Roads Board and the Kew City Council in the late 1960s was to lead to the re-activation of KNEG, in 1973.

This area was again under threat in 1973. As a consequence of the construction of the Eastern Freeway, the community had lost an area of natural bush and passive, riverside recreation in the area formed by the curve in the bend of the Yarra River north of Kellett Grove. This was an area of mature red gums, walking tracks, picnic spots, and swimming and boating. As compensation, the Council was given part of the compulsorily acquired Kilby Park Stud. This 8.8 hectares, when added to the adjoining vacant Council lands at Kilby Reserve, made available a total of 13.8 hectares of unbuilt-on land to the community.



In 1973, even before the Country Roads Board had formally transferred the compensatory land, the Council, in anticipation, put forward a proposal to clear this open space to enable the construction of five football-size ovals for active recreation in what was to be known as Hays Paddock. Residents opposed this plan for an active recreation complex, the construction of which would involve the Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works barrel-draining the eroding Glass Creek. Residents wanted the development of a passive, bushland recreation area that would, as far as possible, replicate the area of natural bushland that had been taken from them by the freeway construction.

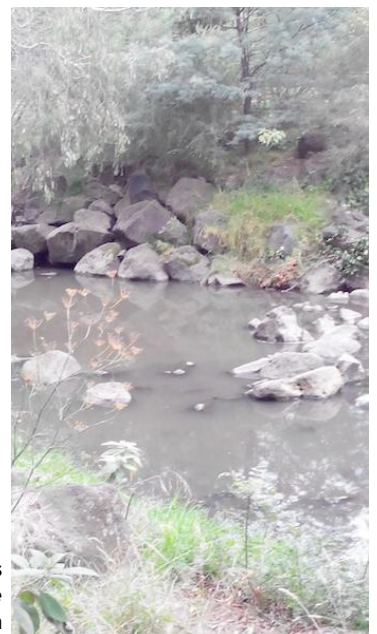
KNEG was resurrected to spearhead community resistance to Council's plan. KNEG Committee members in 1973 included Keith Lodge, Ken Hume, Bill Sheares, Julian Simpson, John Newall, Murray Wood, Anne Druzniak, Peter Wharton, and George Dodd.

This well-organised and articulate group began spirited negotiations with Council in 1973. The group wanted suspension of plans to barrel-drain Glass Creek and agreement to develop the area as a passive recreation and natural bushland area. The natural watercourse provided by a stabilised creek was to be a focal point of this bush setting. Ellis Stone, a well-respected landscape designer, assisted the KNEG case. He developed a landscape plan that would stop the erosion caused by the rapid flow of water through the creek. The idea was to dissipate the water's speed, hence energy available for erosion, by reducing the flow gradient of the stream. Although the plans were only schematic, they fulfilled the concept of 'passive recreation parkland design'.

The State Rivers & Water Supply Department confirmed the efficacy of Ellis's proposal to use a series of drop structures, as well as rocks placed at the outside of curves along the eroding banks of the waterway, and the creation of a large boulder-strewn pool where the water entered Glass Creek at Frater Street. KNEG submitted these plans to Council in 1974, arguing that they be used to create a low impact, passive recreation, bushland landscape plan.

By and large, by 1979 the Council had agreed to a compromise whereby corridors of bushland separated passive recreation areas, giving a natural feel to the Hays Paddock area. However, just as KNEG felt its work was done, a new threat loomed to the bushland setting they hoped to achieve. The Victorian Tennis Association put a financially attractive submission to Council that the Association would pay for the development of the Hays Paddock area with a 24-court complex. All talk of passive recreation was suspended.

Here was a way to make money from the area. KNEG rallied anew, calling meetings of residents and organising deputations to Council. After a strong campaign, supported by the local press, the Council rejected the Association's proposal. KNEG's concept for the area was back in favour. *(continued p.6)*



Glass Creek at Hays Paddock, 2015. Valerie Bourke, photograph

## Saving the environs of Glass Creek/Kilby Park (cont.)

In 1980, Council appointed Gerner, Sanderson, Faggetter & Cheesman, Landscape Architects, to prepare a master plan for Hays Paddock based on principles that took into account community wishes that had been negotiated with KNEG. Design objectives included incorporating Glass Creek as a natural watercourse, retaining Hays Paddock as a place of unstructured as well as low key structured activities, and development of the bushland and rural character of the parkland. In 1987, Council strengthened the controls on use of the parkland by issuing guidelines for its use.

Community vigilance had reaped a great reward for the present and future generations of Kew residents.

VALERIE BOURKE

This article owes much to Keith Lodge, who was interviewed by the author.

## KEW TRAM DEPOT

In 1915, the Prahran and Malvern Tramways Trust opened the Kew Tram Depot on the corner of Barkers Road and High Street, but due to World War I there were no celebrations for its opening. 2015 marks its 100th anniversary. During the last few months, our curator, Tony Michael, has represented the Society on the organising committee. On 3 May, Tony and a number of members of the Society attended the anniversary celebration and mounted a display using items from our collection such as the photo below. (See also p.11)



# BOROONDARA REMEMBERS: STORIES OF WORLD WAR I

In 2015, as part of the Gallipoli and Beyond Commemoration, a special history was commissioned. Its title is *Boroondara Remembers: Stories of World War I*. In launching the book, Cr. Coral Moss, Mayor of the City of Boroondara wrote:

'This is a book about people you never met. They lived in the suburbs you know. They grew up in houses you walk past. Many went to the same school as you, played in the same parks, went to the same church and were members of the same sporting club. Like you, they made their life in Boroondara. All of them left our shores to fight in the Great War and many of them died on the battlefields of Gallipoli or France. They died thousands of kilometres from those they loved, who loved them and from their homes in Boroondara.

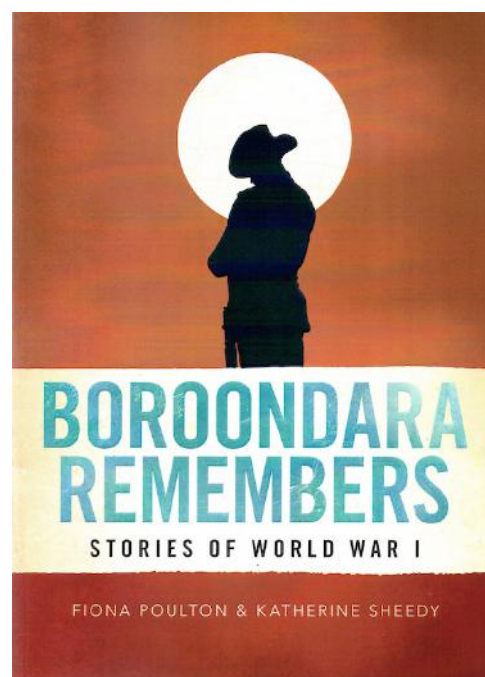
For many of us, World War I seems a world away. Only a handful of our residents were alive when the first Australian soldiers left in 1914. Many of us only know the people who went to war by their names on an honour board. I hope this book, by detailing the lives of Boroondara Anzac's, brings to life the unbelievable conditions they endured, their feats of courage, sense of duty and for some – the ultimate sacrifice.

It also provides an insight into how the people of Boroondara behaved on the 'home front'. It details the clothing drives and plethora of local fundraising. It gives an insight into the conscription referendums and details how Boroondara bucked the national trend and supported conscription. The Boroondara story is one of generosity, patriotism, but above all, community. A legacy which endures today.'

There will be many histories written for the centenary of Gallipoli. But this is a deeply personal local history and we are the richer for knowing about the lives of just some of Boroondara's Anzacs. We are delighted to honour and proud to recognise them.

Lest we forget.'

[Editor: Copies will be available at meetings for \$15, or may be purchased at the Kew Court House].



# DAILY LIFE IN KEW: THE SUMMER OF 1885/86

## PART 1 - A PRETTILY SITUATED TOWNSHIP

What was daily life like in Kew in the middle of the 1880s? These articles explore the summer months of 1885/86, with a peek into late November 1885 and early March 1886 to examine the evidence provided in local newspapers and other sources, to arrive at a description of life in the mid 1880s.

### A charming locality

Kew in the summer of 1885/86 was a good place to live. Property advertisements lauded the suburb's virtues: It was a 'charming locality', and was 'unquestionably the prettiest and healthiest suburb of Melbourne'. There were views of the hills and valleys of the Yarra, Dandenong and Plenty Ranges. Kew also had 'snob appeal'. Property advertisements listed the 'neighbours'. At Belmont Avenue, for instance, one could be surrounded by the 'mansions' of J. Halfey, A.S. King, Thomas Maidment, and Henry Henty Esq.

Kew was the home of merchants and superior tradesmen, with their 'elegant houses, cottages and well kept gardens'. Studley Park lay within the boundaries of Kew, being the 'most picturesque' reserve in the colony. Even the Lunatic Asylum (a source, it seems, of some shame for Kew residents) was 'as little seen or noticed by the burgesses as if it were in any adjacent municipality'.

Infrastructure was improving. There was gas and water (at least in central parts of Kew.) Rail and tramway services were approved and ready to be built. This had the effect of trebling the prices of some properties. There was a new 'handsome and substantial' Town Hall. A new Post Office and Police Station were soon to be built. A service reservoir was to be built on Cotham Road, which would improve the water supply to high lying areas. Street lighting was being extended bit by bit across the suburb.

Overall, Kew was a 'prettily situated municipal township' and convenient to the city. A pleasant place to live.

### A semi-rural community

Kew was also a semi-rural community. There are many pointers to this in Kew in the middle of the 1880s. The Kew Court almost always had cases of wandering cattle before it that resulted in fines. Henry Kellett, a Kew auctioneer, held a livestock sale at the Harp of Erin hotel to enable local people to buy and sell cattle. This indicates that the local people probably held small quantities of livestock for their own consumption. Studley Park was leased out for cattle grazing by the Lands Department.

The *Sands and McDougall Directory* for 1886, shows Kew had blacksmiths, produce stores and a saddler; all essential to a community that relied on horses for transport, but also for a semi-rural environment. Francis Barnard, a pharmacist in Kew, sold cattle and horse medicines.

Compared to Hawthorn, Kew had a higher number of cattle, sheep, horses, and especially pigs. Kew had more acreage of tillage and hay than Hawthorn. Population density was low for Kew: 1.3 people per acre. (1886 Estimated population: 4,708, and 3,553 acres.) By comparison, in 1880, the population density for Melbourne (low by world standards) was 3 people per acre.

## Shopping

Kew had a diverse range of shops in 1886. The *Sands and McDougall Directory* for 1886 lists: Drapers, Tailors, Bootmakers, Bakers, Butchers, Grocers, Green Grocers, Hotels, a Watchmaker and Jeweller, Real Estate Agents, Refreshment Rooms, Livery Stables, Produce Stores, Hairdressers, Chemists, Banks, a Newsagent, Engineers and Architects, piano tuners and teachers, Ironmongers and Tinsmiths and Wood Merchants. There were also tradesmen, such as carpenters, plumbers and decorators. Being close to a cemetery, it is not surprising to find two Monumental Masons in Kew. There were a number of private schools as well. The only manufacturing enterprises mentioned were a Ropemaker and a Coachbuilder.

Kew people also had available to them commercial services in Hawthorn, in particular Burwood Road; and in Richmond, especially Bridge Road. Victoria Street, Richmond is barely mentioned in advertisements in the local newspapers of the day.

The local newspapers were circulated in each of Hawthorn, Kew and Richmond; hence advertisements covered all three suburbs. Of these three suburbs, Kew had the least number of advertisements, probably because Kew was the least populated and the youngest of these suburbs. There is evidence that people from Kew shopped in Hawthorn and Richmond. For instance, there is an advertisement for T. Symons' 'New Glenferrie Boot Warehouse' informing 'residents of Hawthorn, Kew, Camberwell and Glenferrie' that he has new stock. Mr J. Beaumont of Elgin Street, Hawthorn announced to 'residents of Hawthorn and Kew' that he had opened a photographic studio. F.S. Mawson, an upholsterer and mattress maker in Hawthorn, informed 'the public of Hawthorn, Kew and vicinity', that he had commenced business in Burwood Road. Kew people were more mobile in the 1880s than might be imagined.

Shops were also less specialised than might be suggested by their main line of business. For instance, James Day in Main Road, Kew, a Stationer, also sold books, fancy goods, religious books, sheet music, school books, stamp albums, postage stamps, and was the agent for an insurance company. James Kay advertised as both a decorator and a plumber. Frances Barnard, the pharmacist, also sold horse and cattle medicines, was the agent for the Victorian Insurance Company and was the Registrar of Births and Deaths.





## THE SUMMER OF 1885/86 (CONT.)

### Kew People Got Around

There were bus services with connections to the city, and elsewhere. Some buses were two-horse passenger carriages; some were one-horse wagonettes. There were two routes: from Kew to Hawthorn Railway Station with a connection to the city by train, or from Kew to Richmond, connecting with the horse tram to the city. In Parliament in 1884 it was stated that there were 116 buses a day travelling to and from Kew. There was a proposal for a new bus route to run from Cotham Road to Glenferrie Station along Edgevale Road.

There were also cabs. Many people walked, rode or drove their own carriages to Melbourne.

In the summer of 1885/86, neither the railway nor the tram service had yet reached Kew. Both were about to be built. The prospect of these services being provided was a selling feature for real estate sales advertisements in Kew. For instance, a sale of land in Belmont Avenue was advertised as being within a few minutes' walk of the railway station. Similarly, a sale of property in Union Street was advertised as being within 200 yards of the proposed railway station and tramway.

Hence, shopping in Hawthorn, Richmond or the city was probably part of everyday life for many residents of Kew, especially the more well off. In addition, there were announcements in the press for events such as lectures in Richmond.

Transport services enabled Kew people to travel widely in the city. Special arrangements were made for transport to these events. The Children's Flower Show in Oakleigh arranged for cabs to run from Camberwell Railway Station to the show all afternoon. A private party to Olinda was organised with a special train from East Richmond for attendees, with a stop also at Camberwell. The Market Gardeners and Fruit Growers' Annual Picnic at Beaconsfield had a train pick up passengers at Camberwell, Box Hill and Surrey Hills. Kew people would have joined these trains by walking, or taking a bus.

### Entertainment

Entertainment in Kew was home-grown, amateur and local. There was a Kew Dramatic Club. In December at the Kew Recreation Hall, 'a fashionable audience' saw 'highly creditable' performances of F.W. Broughton's *Fairy of the Glen*, and S. Theyne Smith's *Uncle Will*. An orchestra played as well. Churches undoubtedly had social events, but these were not advertised in the local newspapers.

The Kew Literary Institute held its final meeting of the year in December. There was a program of instrumental and vocal music and elocution. The Institute had a program of similar events throughout the year, but which also included lectures. The Kew Recreation Hall was also the venue for gymnastic classes for men, women, boys and girls.

The end of year brought the Kew High School (a private school) Speech Night and Sports Day. There was a program of music from students. It was reported that four boys had passed the matriculation examinations and five had passed the civil service examinations.



'Railway Station, Kew'. Postcard, Kew Historical Society

A 'large and fashionable' crowd gathered to watch the school's annual sports day at the Kew Cricket Ground. They were entertained by the 'Menagerie Race', where amid much amusement, a she-goat, some rabbits, hens, guinea fowls, cats, a turkey and a duck all competed.

The *Hawthorn and Boroondara Standard* published a supplement in which there was a serialised novel, poetry, and useful information about science, stories and jokes. Typical was the edition for December 4, 1885 that contained three chapters of the novel *Put Asunder, or Lady Castlemaine's Divorce* by Bertha M. Clay. There was an edifying piece about 'a very healthful fruit', which turns out to be 'the fruits of my own industry'. There are articles on the treatment of Whooping Cough, and Consumption, as well as the causes of earthquakes. Poems such as *Compensation*, and *The Undertaker's Wedding* were included along with the Ladies Column. There was a recipe for sweet pickles with peaches and plums. Some of these snippets and articles were printed from foreign newspapers – especially from the United States.

There was sport. In these summer months, cricket was the main activity. The Park Hill Club in Kew played in a competition that was spread from Richmond and South Yarra through Camberwell, Norwood (Ashburton) and beyond, even to Lilydale. Many of these cricket clubs were named after streets where presumably there were cricket grounds. Some teams might have been private teams such as *Bright Future*. Other teams were related to churches, or were company teams – for example, *W.H McNaughton, Love and Co*.

Rowing was conducted on the Yarra in Hawthorn, between the Hawthorn Bridge and the railway bridge. It was an intermittent competition, consisting of crews of private individuals, not representing suburbs or other groups. The Yorkshire Brewery, Collingwood, provided some trophies for a regatta.

For some residents, public meetings might have been a diversion from day-to-day life. For the respectable citizenry they were a chance to socialise and be seen. For the local larrikins, they were a chance to disrupt and mock the 'toffs', and have fun. There was a large, noisy and disrupted meeting in November 1885 concerning the site of the Kew railway station. Election meetings were starting to be held in February 1886 for the Victorian General Election.

## THE SUMMER OF 1885/86 (CONT.)

Given the summer months covered in this paper, Christmas received virtually no mention as a special time except for the Kew Council cancelling one meeting in late December and the Town Clerk receiving a two-week holiday. The tram company put on extra services during the Christmas and New Year period. Only one advertisement made special mention of Christmas: Ellingworth's Gift Depot in Swan Street, Richmond, advertised Christmas cards, books, and presents of every description. No special church services were announced. New Year celebrations were not mentioned. No doubt it was a time of family and private celebration, but, Christmas, it seems, was not a big event.

In conclusion, life in Kew in the middle of the 1880s was residential and semi-rural. There were a wide variety of shops available, especially when one could travel to Hawthorn and Richmond. Transport was making the community increasingly mobile. Entertainment was locally-based and consisted mainly of amateur cultural and sporting activity. Kew life was pleasant, but not without its grumbles and darker side, as Part 2 of this series will describe.

ANDREW FROST

## NEWS FROM THE PAST

The months of June to September 1915 saw the deaths of a number of early colonists, including Thomas Judd of 'Park Hill' at the age of 94, and John James Wentworth of Wellington Street, aged 76. For 35 years, John Wentworth

had been attached to the Kew Recreation Hall, and was a curator of the neighbouring bowling green. The *Camberwell and Hawthorn Advertiser* noted in his obituary that he had also gained distinction as a horticulturalist and poultry breeder.

Reports of episodes and casualties from 'the front' continued during this period. The *Advertiser* on 17 July reported the contents of a letter from Matthew White to his mother in Queens Street, Kew. The letter was written from the hospital at Heliopolis where he was convalescing from wounds gained at Gallipoli. The letter is interesting apart from its description of fighting the enemy for the tone with which Cpl White recounts his injuries:

'We were all formed up and told we were going to advance, and advance we did, the Turks pouring some fire into us. I had got about a 1000 yards before I got hit. I had to throw my pack off, it was too heavy while advancing. We got the order to fix bayonets and were within 400 or 500 yards of them. I felt a burning sensation in my leg — then I knew I was hit. I was still with the line when we got the order to fire, then I got another in the arm. It went through the elbow, shattering the bones. Another bullet scraped the side of my dial. I took off my equipment, left my rifle there and got back to the trenches without getting another scratch.'

Cpl White went on to describe how X-ray equipment, provided by the City of Kew, was used by the doctor to ascertain the extent of his injuries. The doctor told Cpl White to let the people of Boroondara know that it was the Kew X-ray.

## The Textiles and Clothing Collection

In December 2014, the Kew Historical Society launched a 'Buy-a-Box' fund-raising drive, in order to purchase archivally sound, polypropylene textile boxes in which to store our most valuable, and often most fragile textiles and clothing.

The Collections Activity Group, which is responsible for maintaining the collection, set itself the goal of raising funds to allow for the purchase of a minimum of ten textiles boxes at a cost of \$640. The Group is pleased to announce that the target has been more than met due to the generosity of members and friends of the Society.

We would like to gratefully acknowledge the following donors: Betty Huston, Robert Baker, Andrew Dixon, Merrilyn Shepherd, John and Sandra Torpey, Jill O'Brien, and a donation in memory of Bruce Le Bransky. These seven donors have allowed us to purchase a total of 12 textiles boxes. The names of individual donors will be recorded on each box.

Following the purchase of the textiles boxes, Tony Michael performed the complex task of assembling each box and lid; itself no mean feat.

To date members of the Activity Group have carefully packed ten boxes. We would like to particularly acknowledge the contributions of Kathleen and Clare Gervasoni, Suzanne McWha, Robert Baker, Sarah Nogare, Janet Watson, Margaret Robinson and Shirley Spielman for their enthusiastic assistance in this process.

Having costumes and textiles safely packed in boxes has allowed us to transport particular items to other locations for assessment. Recently Suzanne, Margaret and Robert visited the Melbourne Costume Collection of Loel Thomson in Bulleen, taking a 19th Century cream silk wedding dress for her to assess. As we unwrapped the dress from its tissue in the entrance foyer its fabulous condition was evident. Loel showed us similar items of clothing in her collection and clarified a number of queries.

At the June Meeting, Suzanne McWha will deconstruct this wedding dress, contextualising it in the context of the period of its construction, describing fashions, fabrics, preferred technologies and the importance of the dress in our collection.

COLLECTIONS ACTIVITY GROUP

# KEW TRAM DEPOT CELEBRATES 100 YEARS

There have been two events held this year to recognise the 100th anniversary of the Kew Tram Depot. On 3 May, Yarra Trams organised an open day for the public to come into the yard and see a range of current trams as well as some vintage models. For younger people, who have never ridden in an old tram, there was an SW6 tram running a shuttle service to Victoria Gardens, and in the shed, a 1927 W1 with its open sides was on display for the public to clamber over.

The Kew Historical Society had an exhibition as part of the events that day which was well received by the public.

May 8 was exactly 100 years to the day when the Kew Tram Depot opened. A plaque to commemorate the event was unveiled by Yarra Trams executive, Aline Frantzen, and the Tram Depot's manager, Tarik Sheikh.



Anniversary logo



Tram M&MTB SW6 #946  
1929-1956. Tony Michael, photo

Kew was originally serviced by a horse drawn tramway in the late 1880's up until the early 1910's. The horses and trams were stalled at night opposite the gates to the Boroondara General Cemetery, on the corner of High and Disraeli Streets. By 1915, the tram route was converted to an electric line, which continues today.

Over the years the High Street route has been extended to Strathalbyn Street, then Burke Road and finally to Balwyn Road. The former stabling shed in High Street later became the City of Kew Works Depot prior to its demolition for the Kew Recreation Centre.



Design for the 100th anniversary  
plaque



Kew Tram Depot, May 2008.  
Tony Michael, photograph

Over the years, the Kew Tram Depot building has remained essentially the same, even though the shed was doubled in size, and Cameron Hall demolished to allow for the tracks to be re-laid to enable the newer and longer trams to enter the sheds.

## BRIEF CHRONOLOGY

1887 (24 Dec): Horse Tram service begins from Victoria Bridge to Boroondara General Cemetery.

1913 (30 May): Prahran and Malvern Tramways Trust (P&MTT) open the first tram lines in Kew.

1913 (Oct): Hawthorn and Kew Councils appoint representatives to the P&MTT.

1914 (1 Nov): Temporary closure of Horse Tram service from Victoria Bridge to Kew Cemetery to allow for its conversion to electricity.

1915 (22 Jan): Foundation stone in Kew Depot laid by the Mayor of Kew (Cr. F. R. Ratten) together with the mayors of Hawthorn, Prahran and Caulfield.

1915 (24 Feb): Horse Tram service from Victoria Bridge (East side) to Cotham Road reopens.

1915 (8 May): Kew Depot on the corner of Barkers Road and High Street opens. Due to World War I, there are no celebrations for the opening.

1915 (30 Oct): Car depot, offices and sub-station are almost complete. The first trams from the Malvern Depot are transferred to the new building.

1915 (22 Nov): An extension, with double track, from the Boroondara General Cemetery to Strathalbyn Street (Harp Road) opens.

1916 (22 Dec): Completion of Cameron Hall, named after Alex Cameron the first Chairman of the Kew Tram Depot.

1920: The Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board (M&MTB) takes over the P&MTT.

1925: Extension of the line from Strathalbyn Street, Kew, to Burke Road via High Street.

1938: Extension of the East Kew line from Burke Road to Balwyn Road.

1951 (12 Jul): Straightening of tracks in High Street at Harp Road. Previously the tracks crossed the former Outer Circle Railway bridge.

1998: Conductors removed from all Kew trams.

2015: Kew Depot celebrates 100-years of service.

## TONY MICHAEL CURATOR



Kew Depot, January 1937. Ray Pearson Collection (TMSV),  
courtesy Melbourne Tram Museum

## 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 KHS, 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

10 June - Monthly Meeting

08 July - Monthly Meeting

12 August - Monthly Meeting

16 August - Quarterly Book Sale

09 September - Annual General Meeting

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