

*Serving the
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families, schools,
students,
historians and
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NEWSLETTER

No. 134
MARCH 2021



FAMILY PORTRAITS

Apart from the abortive, officially sanctioned settlement at Sorrento between 1803-04, led by Lieutenant Colonel Collins, the Henty family, originally of West Tarring, Sussex, were the first European colonists in Victoria. Arriving in Portland in 1834, they rapidly established themselves in the Portland area and later on immense pastoral holdings in Western Victoria, initially as squatters and subsequently as landowners.

The connection between the Henty family of the Western District and what is now the City of Boroondara, mirrored the tendency of colonial pastoral dynasties to establish secondary houses in Melbourne. In the case of the Henty family, it was also the preferred place to be buried.

Findon, the home of Stephen Henty, bounded by High Street, Barkers Road, Stevenson Street and Findon Crescent was demolished c.1912, while three major Henty houses remain: *Field Place*, the home of Francis Henty; *Roxeth*, the home of Herbert James Henty; and *Tarring* (now Ruyton), the home of Henry Henty.

There are so many descendants of Thomas Henty (1775-1839) of West Tarring [and later Launceston] that understanding the generations and relationships in the extended family tree can be daunting. Stephen George Henty (1811-72) of *Findon* and Francis Henty (1815-89), of *Field Place* and *Merino Downs* near Casterton, were two of the eight children of Thomas and Frances Elizabeth (Hopkins) Henty. Henry Henty (1833-1912) of *Tarring*, and Herbert James Henty (1834-1902) of *Roxeth*, were both nephews of Stephen and Francis Henty.

The early generations of the Henty family in Australia were significant pioneers and landholders of Victoria, Tasmania and Western Australia. Items associated with them are treasured possessions of cultural organisations such as the State Library of Victoria.

The Kew Historical Society has a small collection of items relating to the family. It was therefore with interest that we responded to an offer by an antique dealer in Geelong to purchase a number of photographs, including daguerreotypes and a tintype, of members of the family; as well as an artefact: a hollow 'cartwheel penny', containing a lock of the hair of Thomas Henty, the family's progenitor.

Front page

ALICE (HENTY) HINDSON

Lafayette Photographic Studio, Melbourne (photographer)

Kew Historical Society

FAMILY PORTRAITS (from page 1)

Cartwheel pennies, named because of their size, were the first copper pennies to be minted in Britain. They were also to become the first coins exported to New South Wales, becoming the first official coinage in Australia; in contrast to the use of rum as a payment and as a means of exchange.

The purchase of this historically significant Henty collection was made possible through a Triennial Operational Grant by the City of Boroondara, which was awarded to the Society to enable it to deliver its core community services, of which our collection is a significant component. The cartwheel penny, self-evidently, is a nationally significant item, both as a provenanced item of early Australian currency, and as an example of familial memorabilia, holding a coiled piece of hair of one of Australia's most notable European colonists.

The identity of two of the sitters has already been identified. They include Elizabeth (Milligan) Gaunt (1844-91), the half-sister of Mary Anne (Lawrence) Henty who married Francis Henty in Launceston in 1842. Also, Alice (Henty) Hindson (1852-1932), the second daughter of Francis and Mary Anne Henty.

The portrait of Alice Hindson (*page 1*) is undated yet probably dates to the period 1910-25. The convex portrait is mounted as a pendant, surrounded by rolled gold with a velvet backing. It is a studio portrait by the Lafayette Photographic Studio, which flourished in Melbourne between 1906 and 1930. The pendant is housed in a kid leather case, lined with shattered silk. At one stage the casing has suffered water damage which has not affected the portrait.

Alice Hindson is a significant figure in Boroondara. She and her stockbroker husband, John Hindson were the owners of the mansion *Shrublands*, 16 Balwyn Road, Canterbury. After his death in 1919, she donated the house to the Anglican Church in 1923, becoming St John's Home for Boys between 1926 and 1958, and St John's Home for Boys and Girls from 1958 to 1997. Alice Hindson died in 1932 at *Field Place*, her sister Louisa's house in Studley Park Road (now entered from Henty Court). Alice and her husband are buried in the Boroondara General Cemetery.

Each item in this newly-acquired Henty family collection has been added to the *Victorian Collections* website, to enable members of the extended Henty family and researchers to identify each of the sitters and add to the known provenance of the collection.

The cartwheel penny will feature as the first item in a book, featuring significant items from our collection, which will be released later in 2021. The publication of this volume has been made possible by a Strengthening Communities Grant provided by the City of Boroondara and the Rotary Club of Balwyn.

ROBERT BAKER



Above
CARTWHEEL PENNY, THOMAS HENTY (1775-1839)
Mixed media, 1839
Kew Historical Society

KEW HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

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MONTHLY MEETINGS

Monthly meetings of the Kew Historical Society are held in the Phyllis Hore Room at the Kew Library on the second Wednesday of each month (excluding the months of January, March, October and December). The doors open at 7.30pm for an 8pm start. There is usually a guest speaker. Visitors are welcome to attend. At present attendees are limited to 34 persons by the COVIDSafe Plan of the Boroondara Library Service.

KEW COURT HOUSE

Our rooms at the Kew Court House, 188 High Street, Kew are open to members and visitors on Fridays and Saturdays between 11am and 1pm.

KEW HERITAGE CENTRE

The new Heritage Centre at the Kew Library is generally staffed on Tuesdays and Wednesdays between 10am and 4pm. Entry is by appointment.

NEWSLETTER

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

WEBSITES

www.kewhistoricalsociety.org.au

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HISTORY & HERITAGE

KEW HERITAGE CENTRE



WORKROOM, KEW HERITAGE CENTRE

In February 2021, the Society moved its administration to the ground floor of the Kew Library. This move improves access for our members and volunteers; wheel chair access is now achievable. The new space has allowed us to redefine how we deliver our services to members and visitors.

The new centre includes a foyer containing our subject files and the large collection of framed photos of the mayors of Kew. The foyer leads into a passage off which are a combined kitchenette and workspace, an administration and research room, and an archive store and research library. Our collection of fashion & textiles, maps & plans and 3-dimensional objects will remain housed in the adjacent Collection Store. We hope to investigate how the original staircase that originally linked the two areas can be re-opened.

This new centre, which is part of a revised lease arrangement with the City of Boroondara will be a transitional arrangement before we move to a new heritage centre at the Michael Tuck Grandstand at Glenferrie Oval with the Camberwell and Hawthorn historical societies. The three societies continue to advocate to Council that the proposed Heritage Centre be brought forward in 'forward estimates' to allow it to open on the date originally proposed by the former Council.

JUDITH VOCE

KEW COURT HOUSE

Our rooms at Kew Court House have been open to members and visitors since Friday 5 February. The Society acknowledges the contribution of a small group of volunteers who each week greet visitors, answer questions about exhibitions, and Kew's history generally.

A new exhibition is planned to open in March, using parts of the massive collections of the Kew Bowling Club, Auburn Heights Recreation Club and Kew Heights Sports Club. The exhibition aims to tell the stories of these historic clubs and of men and women who over many decades played the outdoor sports of lawn bowls, croquet and tennis.

The exhibition will include framed photos, trophies, pennants, uniforms, items of regalia and plaques.



KEW LADIES' BOWLING CLUB TEAM. WINNERS DIVISION C2, 1992-3

SPONSORS

As an incorporated, not-for-profit community organisation with Deductible Gift Recipient status, the Kew Historical Society's income is predominantly sourced from memberships and donations by individuals and families, as well as income derived from quarterly book sales, held in partnership with the Boroondara Library Service.

The Society is also generously supported by a Triennial Operational Grant from the City of Boroondara, as well as funding for specific projects provided by the National Library of Australia, the City of Boroondara and The Rotary Club of Balwyn. Printing of this newsletter is generously provided by Tim Smith MP, State Member for Kew.



In 2021, the Society is pleased to welcome Kay & Burton Hawthorn, 553 Glenferrie Road, 3122 as a corporate sponsor.

KAY & BURTON

If you would like to be an individual, institutional or corporate sponsor, we are happy to discuss with you the ways in which you can support our core and special projects.

For more information, please contact our Secretary, Ms Desley Reid, or our President, Ms Judith Voce.

MAJOR EVENTS

THE 2021 MCINTYRE LECTURE

The McIntyre Lecture is one of two annual public lectures held by the Kew Historical Society. The Lectures are traditionally held in March and October in the Just Theatre at the Kew Court House. The location is important as the Society raised \$500,000 towards the purchase and restoration of the complex (excluding the former post office) by the City of Boroondara. We have undertaken to support the public use of the Court House as a community cultural centre by mounting exhibitions there, by initiating a dedicated Oral History Studio and holding two lectures in the Just Theatre each year. The lectures are also important fundraising events for the Society.

The McIntyre Lecture was named to recognise the important contribution of local residents, Dione and Peter McIntyre to the history and heritage of Kew. Dione was for many years an energetic and valued leader of the Society. Her contributions to history and heritage were recognised by an Award of Merit from the Royal Historical Society of Victoria in 2011. Her husband, Peter McIntyre, is one of Australia's most distinguished architects. Dione and Peter are the designers of a number of significant buildings in Kew.

In 2021, due to the public health requirements imposed by the Government of Victoria in response to the Coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic, tickets are limited to 40 persons. As the Lecture was fully subscribed, we regret that many applicants were unable to purchase tickets.

PRE-EUROPEAN INDIGENOUS CULTURE IN THE KEW AREA



2021 MCINTYRE LECTURE

Gary Presland is an archaeologist and historian, with long-standing research interests in the pre-contact Indigenous culture, and natural history, of the Melbourne area. He has written extensively on these topics over the past 40 years. He is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria and an Honorary Fellow in the School of Geography at University of Melbourne.

Lecturer: Dr Gary Presland

When: 10 March 2021

Where: Just Theatre

Time: 7.30 for 8 PM

Other: Cost \$20

The Kew Historical Society's 2021 McIntyre Lecture will focus on the society and culture of the Indigenous clan whose estate took in the area that is now Kew. Members of the Wurundjeri-willam clan identified with this area but they also had binding cultural connections with clans whose estate were as much as 185 kms away, to the north of Kew.

Sponsors: City of Boroondara

Kay & Burton Hawthorn

2021 AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE FESTIVAL



This year the Kew Historical Society will be holding an exhibition at the Villa Alba Museum, 44 Walmer Street, Kew, on the weekend of 1 and 2 May. Bookings will be made online through Eventbrite for one or more of the planned four sessions. Admission to a session will cost \$15, with the money raised used to support *Villa Alba's* continuing role as a House Museum.

It is intended that a free member-only event will be held separately.

In the exhibition, a series of installations will utilise items from the diverse Fashion & Design Collection of the Society within the heritage interiors of *Villa Alba*.

In keeping with *Villa Alba's* year-long event – *Flowers at Villa Alba* - visitors will be able to explore the use of printed floral fabrics and embroidery by Australian and international designers. The exhibits will include displays of 19th and 20th century costumes, millinery, soft furnishings and accessories; a number of which have not previously been displayed.

Due to the requirements of social distancing, numbers will necessarily be limited, and pre-bookings essential. Further details of this National Trust of Australia event will be released, on the Society's website and on the Australian Heritage Festival's website.

ARTISTS AT HOME IN KEW

Kew has had more than its fair share of artists living and working within the suburb. Perhaps the picturesque nature of the landscape, with its varied terrain, hilly streets, river flats and the steep banks of the Yarra River has attracted painters since the 1850s. One of the earliest depictions of Kew from the Yarra is G.B. Richardson's *Creek and Old Watering Place, on the Yarra East Collingwood 1854*, which, along with Herbert Woodhouse's *The Yarra, Studley Park*, painted in about 1892, is described on our June 2019 newsletter.

These two artists are not known to have had any particular connection to Kew, apart from these paintings. But there are several others who were born in Kew, like George Bell (1878-1966) and Horace Brodsky (1885-1969) or lived here for at least part of their working lives. More tenuous connections can be made with some artists of the Heidelberg School, including the 'father of Australian landscape painting', the Swiss-born Abram Louis Buvelot (1814-88). He had an artist friend, Charles Bennett (1863-1930), who lived in Redmond Street, Kew, and they probably set out on painting excursions from there. Buvelot is buried in the Boroondara General Cemetery.

Several other well-known members of the Heidelberg School - Tom Roberts, Arthur Streeton, Charles Conder, Frederick McCubbin and Louis Abrahams - painted just across the river in Eaglemont and formed part of the artists' collective established by Walter Withers at *Charterisville* in Lower Heidelberg Road. Roberts' connection with Kew continued through his son, who lived for some time in Fitzwilliam Street, and grandson, also called Tom Roberts, who had a gallery in High Street. A less famous member of the Heidelberg School was the Portuguese-born Arthur Loureiro (1853-1932), who came to Australia in 1885. By 1887 he had established a studio in Denmark Street, and while there, painted a portrait of the 83-year-old Georgiana McCrae, who was living two doors away. The exact location of their houses is unclear. However, in 1890, Loureiro built a new house and teaching studio at 8 Stawell Street. This imposing red brick Queen Anne style house still stands on the corner of Fernhurst Grove.

Mention should certainly be made of the artistic women of the Sutherland family. Jane (1853-1928) studied at the National Gallery School under Eugene von Guerard, and sometimes joined the men of the 'en plein air' art movement, like Roberts and McCubbin, on their excursions to Heidelberg and Box Hill. Jane's sisters, Julia and Jessie, were talented musicians, and her niece Margaret is one of Australia's best-known composers. Margaret's sister Ruth (1884-1948) followed in her aunt Jane's footsteps as an artist and lived at 12 Studley Park Road; often painting in the area near her home.

It has been an interesting exercise, during a year of restricted social activity, to walk the streets of Kew and try to identify where various artists lived, and whether their original homes still exist. Sadly, many of them do not, having fallen victim to redevelopment.

Two or three decades ago, if you had walked down, say, Walpole Street, you might still have seen the former homes of several artists. Horace Brodsky's family had lived at number 51, and George Bell at number 55 (the site now occupied by Karana Baptist Community Care) until the 1920s. Walter Withers (1854-1914) is recorded as living at number 38 in 1892-93, though there are also references to his having a studio built for him in the orchard of *Granville Cottage* in Walpole Street. Whether this was the same residence as number 38 is unclear; the house is no longer there. Almost opposite, at number 39 was a studio occupied in the 1920s and 1930s by Alice Bale (1875-1955) and at some time during this period, by another artist, Carl Hampel (1891-1942).



83 WALPOLE STREET

Judith Scurfield (photographer), 2021
Private Collection

Alice Bale's family home was at 83 Walpole Street, and here we can still see the gracious Victorian villa where she lived for much of her life, painting and encouraging younger artists, and where she set up an art foundation and scholarship. Did she or any of her protégées paint the magnificent gum tree in the front garden, I wonder? It probably pre-dates white settlement in the area.

Another, even more prominent artist to set up a studio at his home in Kew was Max Meldrum (1875-1955). He was born in Scotland, and came to Melbourne at the age of thirteen, studying at the National Gallery School before winning a scholarship and travelling to London and Paris from 1899.

ARTISTS AT HOME IN KEW (from page 4)

Meldrum became a highly regarded, though sometimes controversial painter, teacher and theoretician. He established schools and studios in various Melbourne locations, where his students included Clarice Beckett, A.D. and Elizabeth Colquhoun, Justus Jorgensen, Percy Leason and Colin Colahan. In the 1930s, Meldrum moved to a large house at 67 Wellington Street, and then to 24 Belmont Avenue. It was here that he built a studio behind the house and established another art school. He died there in 1955.

An associate of Max Meldrum's was John Longstaff (1861-1941), perhaps best known as a portrait painter; he won the Archibald Prize five times between 1925 and 1935. Towards the end of his life, he lived at an exclusive boarding-house at 19 A'Beckett Street. This is now *Baraga House*, the Slovenian Catholic Mission's Religious and Cultural Centre Hostel, on the corner of Barry Street.

Two other prominent houses associated with artistic families still exist: *D'Estaville* at 7 Barry Street, and *Swinton* at 25 Swinton Avenue. *D'Estaville*, originally the home of Sir William Stawell, Chief Justice of Victoria, was built between 1857 and 1859, and from the late 1940s was occupied by the Figuerola family. Best known of its members was Alma Figuerola (1895-1970), who studied under Max Meldrum and successfully exhibited her interiors, flower studies and landscapes, including a painting of *D'Estaville*.

Swinton (below right), built in stages between the 1860s and 1880s, is one of the earliest examples of an Italianate home in Melbourne. It has a graceful tower, bay windows, and gardens which slope down to the Yarra River. It was a cultural centre for the artist Archibald (A.D.) Colquhoun, son of painter and art critic Alexander Colquhoun and his wife Beatrice, and his associates in the 1950s. His sister Elizabeth, and his wife Amalie were also artists, and A.D. and Amalie conducted an art school and held exhibitions at *Swinton*.

So many other artists are associated with Kew that it is impossible to include them all in this article. One, however, brings us right up to the present, although she died in 2019. Leopoldine (Poldi) Mimovich lived at 31 Miller Grove, and many of her sculptures in wood and bronze can be seen in civic locations such as Kew Library and the Alexandra Gardens. For Christmas 2020, Australia Post used two of her brilliantly coloured icon-like images, blended with native flora and fauna, to be used on Australian stamps. Her home was featured in an article in our December 2017 newsletter. This house has been extensively and sympathetically restored to something like its 1920s appearance. Many other artists' homes, however, have fallen victim to destruction or drastic reconstruction. We owe it to their past occupants and their artistic achievements to have such buildings recognised, and, where possible, preserved.

Several other 20th century artists who lived in Kew include:

William Nicholls Anderson (1873-1927) at 4 High Street South, *Merion* Belford Road, 218 Cobden Street, 32 Park Hill Road; Frances Derham (1894-1987) at 10 Studley Park Road, 33 Wellington Street, 6 Glendene Avenue; Louis Kahan (1905-2002) in Second Avenue; Alistair Gray (1898-1972) at 91 Sackville Street; Nornie Gude (1915-2002) and Lawrence Scott Pendlebury (1914-86) in Stawell Street; John Loxton (1903-71) in Gellibrand Street, and at 17 Kellett Grove; Joy Stewart (1925-2018) at 281 Barkers Road, and at 5 Bramley Court; Eric Thake (1904-82) at 48 Harp Road; and Melvyn Napier Waller (1893-1972) at 92 Cobden Street.

More information can be found about these and other artists in the following useful references:

Anderson, Penelope F.B. *Frankie Derham; A Refuge Within*. St Kilda, Grey Thrush Publishing, 2006.

Clark, Jane & Whitelaw, Bridget. *Golden Summers; Heidelberg and Beyond*. Melbourne, International Cultural Corporation of Australia, 1985.

Jennings, Sonia (with Jill Barnard). *Telling Lives: Locating and Mapping the Cultural Heritage of Boroondara*. Hawthorn, City of Boroondara Library Service, 2002.

Mackie, Elizabeth. *The Artists of Kew*. Kew, Kew Historical Society, 1981.

Perry, Peter & John. *Max Meldrum & Associates; Their art, lives and influences*. Castlemaine, Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historical Museum, 1996.

JUDITH SCURFIELD, 2021



SWINTON

Rogers Collection, c.1960
Kew Historical Society

THE CENTENNIAL CHOIR

THE ARTISTRY OF 19TH CENTURY LITHOGRAPHERS

The Exhibition Building in Melbourne was built in 1879-80 to house the Melbourne International Exhibition of 1880-81. Inspired by the success of that event, a second international exhibition was held by the Colony of Victoria in 1888-89 to commemorate the centenary of European settlement in Australia. The architect responsible for the design of the building and the grounds was Joseph Reed, who also designed the State Library of Victoria (1856), the Rippon Lea Estate (1868), Scots Church (1871-4), and the Melbourne Trades Hall (1873). Later again, the building was to be used in 1901 for the opening of the first Parliament of Australia. It is not surprising, given the significance of these events, that the building has world heritage status.

But what is the connection of the Exhibition Building to Kew, as well as to our collection. Firstly, we have a number of illuminated invitations to the events surrounding the opening of the Australian Parliament. These were issued, in the main, by the Victorian Government to notable residents such as the three-time Mayor of Kew, James Maitland Campbell. Campbell was the owner of *Ramornie* in Pakington Street; built 1890. Another three illuminated invitations to the events surrounding the opening of the first Australian Parliament were formerly displayed in the *Fairyland* collection of Grace Tabulo. The latter were presumably given to or collected by the historian Dorothy Rogers, before or after Grace Tabulo's death in 1965, and became part of a large collection of items donated to the Society by her John Rogers in 1974.

This certificate, awarded to a member of the Centennial Choir, is printed in shades of yellow, brown, blue, green, pink and white on a cream background. It was not issued to a suburban grandee. Rather it was given to Miss L. Wilson, a volunteer member of the Centennial Choir, which performed during the Centennial Exhibition of 1888-89.

Information about the setting up and the management of the choir can be deduced from contemporary reports in Australian newspapers. A visual analysis of the design of the certificate can also be found on Museum Victoria's website. The Museum copy, much faded, was purchased in 2005 at an auction held by Nobles Numismatics. Apart from these two examples, no other copies have been published online from national collections; surprising when one considers that the choir included nearly 800 men and women.

The certificate, a masterwork of the late Victorian designer's art, tells its own story through the centrally placed printed and handwritten text, as well as through the visual symbols employed by the designer. It is addressed 'To Miss L. Wilson, in recognition of valuable services, rendered as a Member of The Centennial Choir during the currency of the Centennial International Exhibition, Melbourne 1888'. Miss Wilson's name is handwritten in ink using a variety of cursive script, whereas the printed text employs a range of gothic lettering,



CENTENNIAL CHOIR
CENTENNIAL INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION MELBOURNE 1888
Unknown (designer)
Kew Historical Society

To the left of the main body of text are two scrolls that list the compositions to be performed by the choir: Handel's *Messiah*, Hayden's *Creation*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, a *Stabat Mater*, and *Ruth*. The second scroll, separated from its companion by a roundel picturing a violin, a trumpet and pan pipes lists lesser works including the *Golden Legend* a *Song of Thanksgiving*, a *Ceremonial Cadenza*, *Gallia*, a *Choral Fantasia* and *Sleeping Beauty*. A poll conducted after all the performances were concluded listed the most popular works as Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony*, Wagner's overtures for *Tannhauser* and *Rienzi*, Handel's *Largo*, and Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsody Number 1*, none of which are listed on the certificate.

The floral emblems used at the upper left side and at the base of the certificate are a little more difficult to identify. The cataloguer for the Museum Victoria certificate evades making a positive identification by referring to the 'green and white stylised flowers'. Perhaps the identification of what is clearly a spray of wattle in the header was made more difficult by the muted colours of their copy. At the base of the certificate is a spray of white narcissus. That the floral symbols were challenging to identify may also have resulted from the designer's desire to employ sinuous stems and leaves in order to satisfy the overall blend of classical motifs with the contemporary arts and crafts (i.e. neo-gothic) style pre-eminent in the 1880s.

THE CENTENNIAL CHOIR (from page 7)

A highlight of the design are the two roundels depicting both the exterior and interior of the Exhibition Building. The upper roundel depicts the main entrance of the building facing Nicholson Street, along which progress a cable tram and a series of horse-drawn carriages. To the front, and positioned at the left side of the Nicholson Street entrance is the Aquarium, built in 1885 and demolished following a fire in 1953. The second roundel (*below right*) positioned at the lower left of the certificate shows the massive organ with a row of musicians, behind which stand the massed choristers; ladies in front, and gentlemen behind. The conductor stands, arms elevated in a pedestal-like box before the assembled musicians.

The certificate is signed by significant individuals: the President, Executive Vice-President, Secretary, Music Business Manager and the Musical Director & Conductor. The British conductor, Sir Frederick H Cowen was enticed from England to conduct over 260 performances during a period of ten months, including his own *Song of Thanksgiving*. His oratorio *Ruth* was to be given on five occasions in contrast to the single performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. He was to be paid £5,000 for his work.

While the design and content of the certificate remain the primary interest, an additional item accompanying the version in the Kew collection reveals the lived experience of the participants. A document attached to the mount is a memorandum from the Music Business Manager, E Miller, to Miss Wilson.

Dear Madam

In answer to your note I have the honor to inform you that you may remove your dress at any time, though you may need to show your choir pass & may have to submit to parcel being looked at - as the Customs officers are obliged to keep a very careful watch on any outgoing parcels.

Yours obediently

E. Miller

The memorandum's reference to Miss Wilson's presumably fine attire was not an early case of sexual enticement or harassment but may have referred to the logistics of performing in the required performance outfit, and the need to reach public or private transport in order to return to her home. That the compulsory dress of the female members of the choir was 'purest white' may also have been a contributing factor.

On 31 January 1889, a report in *The Age*, lauded the success of the exhibition and also the performances of the Centennial Choir, the Centennial Orchestra and the conductor. The report noted that a decision had been made to award each member of the choir '... a certificate suitable for framing and which will record the services of the person whose name it bears to the musical performances'.

Long after the exhibition had been dismantled and extraneous buildings demolished – revealing a group of starving dogs who had lived underneath the buildings, as well as a legion of rats that promptly advanced into nearby residential areas, a *Report of the Commissioners* was presented to the Victorian Parliament. This 1891 report noted that:

'The great Musical Festival, which was inaugurated and maintained during the time the Exhibition was open, was such as had never before been attempted. In that comparatively short period, no less than 263 orchestral, grand choral, and other concerts were given by the Centennial Orchestra and Choir, numbering nearly 800 performers, under the conductorship of Mr. F. H. Cowen.

At these concerts the works of the great masters were performed in a manner hitherto unknown in these colonies, and your Commissioners are encouraged to hope that the stimulus given through their agency to the study of Music will prove strong and lasting. They also desire to return their thanks to the ladies and gentlemen composing the Centennial Choir, who devoted much time to the rehearsal and performance of the great choral works given during the Festival, and whose valuable services were rendered gratuitously.'

An interesting sidenote is that items from the past sometimes have an unexpected life span beyond their publication. In 1935, *The Shepparton Advertiser* reported the discovery of a Centennial Choir certificate issued to Mr W. Urie. The certificate had been discovered during reconstruction of 'Martin Brothers corner'. It was subsequently discovered that Mr Urie, a saddler, had been an occupant of the building before its purchase by Martin Bros.

The Kew copy of the Centennial Choir certificate was viewed by Vanessa Kowalski during our recent Preservation Needs Assessment of our collection and recommended for conservation. The recommended action was that the certificate, which is currently in two pieces, one of which is attached to a sheet holding the original letter, requires lining or tear repair and removal by a trained conservator of this significant certificate from its non-archival backing paper. Hopefully we can raise the funding to achieve this outcome in the future.

ROBERT BAKER, 2021



PUBLIC AND PRIVATE MURALS

STREET ART EMERGES IN BROUGHAM STREET

Art critic Bert [Bertram] Stevens (1872–1922) critiqued the artistic work of Kew-born Norman St Clair Carter (1875–1963). Carter lived, until young adulthood, in a rented house in Princess Street, until his grain merchant father was forced to move his family to Sydney in about 1903 for financial reasons. Stevens, in his 1916 article for *Art in Australia*, lamented the fact that mural decoration of architectural spaces, such as internal and external walls in the domestic and commercial sphere ‘received little encouragement’, and talented muralists such as Norman received few commissions that were often far apart. For Stevens, murals ‘gladdened the eye’ in the same way a good meal satiated one’s appetite.

In Kew, known examples of murals seem to have been few and far apart; but not absent. In the early 1880s, Scotsman William Greenlaw (1831-95), a banker, built a ‘splendid mansion’, *Villa Alba*, in Walmer Street. In 1885, a reporter for the prestigious *Table Talk* journal described the interior murals of this villa in Studley Park as having a ‘bewildering wealth of decoration’. The journalist’s eye was more than ‘gladdened’. Over the passage of time the murals ‘disappeared’ under layers of plain overpainting. Today, a visitor to *Villa Alba* is rewarded with more than a mere glimpse, but a tantalising insight into restoration work to reveal the ‘lost’ murals.

Ordsall [later *South Esk*], the home of businessman and politician John Halfey (1825-89), had hand-painted murals on the ceilings of his hallway, ballroom and dining room. At the time, these murals were described as ‘home art decoration’. The *Ordsall* murals were executed by artists employed by Cullis Hill & Co, including the designer artist Vandebrent [or ‘Vanden Branden’], of whom little is known, and Signor Ulysses Rizzi (c.1850-1902) a well-known set designer, decorative artist and art teacher of Victoria Parade, Collingwood. The legacy of the latter as a decorative artist has survived in the paintings of flowers in the internal decoration of *Villa Alba*.

Stonemason and Kew based artist Bill [William Richard] de Neefe (1866-1943) was commissioned to paint murals on the interior walls and the altar dome of Sacred Heart Church, Kew in the 1950s. He used children from the associated Catholic school as models for cherubs/angels. In 1953, murals with animal motifs were painted in Kew Cottages by volunteers with expertise in mural work.

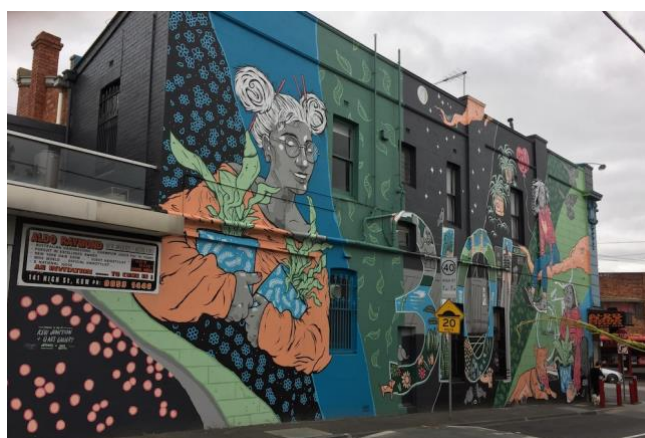
Ethnic Aboriginal Jeswri [a contraction of Jesse Wright], a Kew resident, has recently completed a commission for an external wall mural on Aldo Raymond’s hairdressing salon in High Street. The salon is located on the corner of High and Brougham Streets. The old duck egg blue paint on the wall has vanished. It has been overpainted and is now a completed mural; vibrantly alive in design, colour and meaning. This article is a documentation of history in the making, before history is lost.

Social media reveals much about the artist. Jeswri is of Aboriginal descent and proud of his origins. He is also politically conversant with Aboriginal issues through his painting. Those who witnessed the transformation of the wall may recall one of his paint splattered tee-shirts, on which the paint was beginning to obliterate the well-known aboriginal logo.

The artist hails from Sydney, where he was raised by his mother; an art teacher. Hence his introduction to art. She suffered from a ‘buckling’ bipolar disorder and ‘crippling’ social ostracism due to her health issues. Her son has had his fair share of the ‘black dog’ on his back. His father was an ‘absent figure’ in his life. Aged 14, he commenced his artistic career using graffiti. The police did not view this as artistic expression. It has presumably been lost to history. ‘Crap’ job to ‘crap’ job, Jeswri tried to stay afloat in a ‘seedy underground culture’ that had the potential to corrupt his creative individualism. He eventually enrolled in a degree course at Billy Blue School of Design, Torrens University. Here, he found people with whom he could emotionally and artistically connect. A few became design soul mates.

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JESWRI. MURAL, BROUGHAM STREET
Robert Baker (photographer), 2021
Kew Historical Society



MURALS (from page 9)

Jeswri's transition, using stepping-stones towards an artistic career, occurred when he abandoned Surrey Hills, Sydney, for Kew, about two years ago. Why did he choose Kew in which to live? It is far from an avant-garde vibrant youthful society compared to say Collingwood, Fitzroy or Brunswick. His artist studio and art gallery, *Honey Bones*, in Budd Street, Collingwood, seems to be more in tune with his social milieu. Perhaps he finds Kew a contemplative retreat from his self-defined persona of 'visual art rockstar'.

Many people would have seen Jeswri upon his 'ladder of death' or in his motorised 'cherry picker' over the Christmas break. He is very personable and took time to 'moolah' [Aboriginal for talk] and answer many questions of passers-by who stopped to witness the transformation of the wall. A body tattoo states his philosophy. He is a man who 'does no harm' and 'takes no shit'.

Inserted within the overall design is the '3101' postcode logo, designed by Holly Walton, a talented, self-defined naïve artist and jeweller. Holly is associated with the QArt Gallery and QArt Studio. The aim of the art gallery and studio is to 'provide employment, mentoring and training for a talented group of artists with a disability'. Jeswri scaled up Holly's pencil design to suit the mural format. In using Holly's work within his own, he is stating that he is somewhere better than in his old Sydney haunts.

The mural contains four portraits, acknowledging their contribution to his personal psychological and artistic journey. Reading from left to right, the first is 'Saint April', a Sydney-based person who has had a tremendous influence on him. Her dominating eyewear is a symbol of clear-sightedness, second sight or clarity while her closed eyes reference inner transcendence. The high arch to her well-defined eyebrows suggests open honesty. Her unusual pompom hairstyle stamps her individuality. She holds two pot plants containing 'stick lettuce', a plant that is not familiar in Victoria. She is a woman whom the artist misses immensely. This has probably been heightened by COVID-19 restrictions, which prevented a return trip to Sydney (if one had been anticipated). Although they are in constant contact.



The second portrait is that of his 'beautiful' wife, Britt [Brittany]. She sits easily upon the bough of the 'tree of knowledge'. The wind splays her hair, and her free spirit is reinforced by two doves, (or are they Kew cockatoos?), that are painted above her; symbols of love, peace and spirituality. She holds a red balloon, vaguely heart shaped, imprinted with the word 'YOU'. This heart shape is replicated on Britt's tee-shirt, reinforcing their love. The spider plants, on the opposite side of the doves, represent the tenacity of their relationship. Jeswri points out that no matter where you stand to view the mural, Britt's eyes are always directed at the viewer. She is 'all-seeing'.

The next portrait, seated on the ground, lower right, is Yabby [Yasmin] (*below left*), another strong feminine influence in his life. She is linked to Saint April through the recurring motif of the potted stick lettuce. Pot plants reference domesticity, a settled life after one of 'stress', 'grind', 'struggle' and 'hustle'. The mural has a feel-good rhythm to it that mimics the music of ABBA, which Jeswri constantly plays when working. The choice of colours replicates the rhythms of the natural world.

The last portrait is of his dog/son, Ace. They are constant companions. Ace is nearly always dressed with a working dog's scarf around his neck. He goes up and down in the cherry picker, loves to be in his best friend's arms and is never far away. Jeswri depicts Ace as a very mellow dog, with a vivid inner life when dozing. He is still alert while sleeping.

Interwoven within the design are 'streams' or 'seams' of 'floating blossoms' and twirling leaves that tie the compositional themes together. There is in fact a fifth portrait that references Aldo Raymond, the proprietor of his very long-term Kew hairdressing business and a familiar sight in the surrounding streets. He is depicted wearing his signature glasses. The portrait pays tribute to his insight into the importance of murals to 'gladden the eye'. The contributions of the Kew Association and the QArt Gallery have also been acknowledged on the mural.

Among many of Jeswri's sayings or mantras, one is 'Today is a Good Day'. Well, the onsite street party to open Kew's public mural was not a good day. It rained, but the next opening date was a very good day.

Jeswri™ includes his name in Japanese. He has had a long-term interest in Japanese folklore and the pop culture of *Kokai*. Supernatural monsters and spirits, that are meddling, superstitious and mysterious can be viewed in his other art works. To view Jeswri's previous work and follow his career go to his professional web site.

SUZANNE MCWHA, 2021

JESWRI. YABBI (YASMIN) AND ACE
Robert Baker (photographer), 2021
Kew Historical Society

THE COLLECTION

SIGNIFICANT RECENT DONATIONS

In addition to the significant Henty family items (*pages 1-2*), the Society has received two important donations to its collection in 2021.

The first of these from Prue Beck contains 15 pages of biographical information and six print copies of photographs depicting members of the Hedderwick family and/or their properties. Henry Hedderwick was an early landowner, building notable houses in Kew such as *Illapa* (now *Rylands*) in Princess Street and *Garoopna* on the corner of A'Beckett and Barry Streets. He was a Mayor of Kew for two consecutive terms between 1873-75.

The second donation, from Elizabeth Nolan of Deniliquin, includes group and team photographs of Arthur Henry Miers, a resident of Hawthorn and Kew. The donation includes 16-pages of biographical information and ten original photographs of sporting teams, of which he was a member. Many of these teams were Boroondara-based. The photographs date from the interwar period.

Arthur Miers was born in 1901 and as an adult lived with his wife at 4 Falmouth Street, Glenferrie, and later at 42 Gladstone Street, then 1 Bright Street, Kew. In addition to his active participation in team sports at a local and state level, he had a distinguished career with the Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board for almost 50 years.

While each photograph in the collection is interesting and sheds new light on local sports during the period, the one presented here (*above right*) is a team photograph mounted on board with the names of the team members underneath.



V.J.C.U. PREMIERS: INTERSTATE CARNIVAL, SYDNEY, 1924
Melba Studios, 68 Market Street, Sydney, 1924
Gift of Elizabeth Nolan, 2021

The team, the VJCU [Victorian Junior Cricket Union] Premiers was photographed in Sydney at an interstate carnival in 1924, by photographers from the Sydney branch of Melba Studios. Arthur is seated in the middle of the front row.

Arthur Miers died in 1966 and his ashes were interred in the Mausoleum at the Boroondara General Cemetery. Elizabeth Nolan has also promised to send a number of trophies, won by him as an active sportsman.

ROBERT BAKER

PRESERVATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

In 2019, Society was awarded a Preservation Needs Assessment of its collection by the National Library of Australia. The Society contracted Grimwade Conservation Services to undertake the assessment and make recommendations to improve our collection management practices. The assessment was led by conservator, Vanessa Kowalski.

The Executive Summary recommended that we:

1. Digitise our audio collection, comprising magnetic reel-to-reel and cassette tapes, and update storage of these materials.
2. Continue the collection audit and cataloguing, with consideration for deaccessioning of items that do not align to our collection policy and mission.
3. Undertake a cleaning program of the map collection and furniture.
4. Upgrade costume and map storage systems to reduce over-crowding of these collection items.

5. Undertake rehousing and re-mounting project to ensure all works are framed to conservation standards for long-term preservation.
6. Implement an Integrated Pest Management Program.
7. Implement a Disaster Preparedness and Recovery Plan. Assemble disaster bin for the storage area.

Key issues required to carry out the recommendations include:

1. Additional staff or volunteers to assist with the collection audit, collection cleaning and rehousing.
2. Funds for additional/updating of storage materials and other collection management tasks such as pest management.
3. Funds for the conservation of significant collection objects.

The report is due to be delivered to the National Library of Australia by 31 March 2021.

Kew Historical Society Inc.
PO Box 175
Kew VIC 3101

MEMBERSHIP & DONATIONS

KEW HISTORICAL SOCIETY – KEEPING ALIVE KEW HISTORY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

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

[Tick relevant boxes]

- ☐ I/we wish to join the Society
- ☐ I/we wish to renew my/our membership
- ☐ Individual membership (2020-21 annual fee \$20)
- ☐ Household membership (2020-21 annual fee \$30)
- ☐ Student membership (2020-21 annual fee \$10)
- ☐ I/we agree to be bound by the rules of the society.
- ☐ I/we prefer to receive the Society's quarterly newsletter by email.
- ☐ I/we would like to volunteer – on a committee, on the courthouse or supper rosters, or with research.
- ☐ I/we would like to make a donation of \$ _____

Note: Renewals are due on 1 July each year

Note: All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

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