



KEW

HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

ESTABLISHED 1958

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

NEWSLETTER

No. 135
JUNE 2021



CHANGING VALUES

CONTENTS

1

CHANGING VALUES

Reflections on the history of rifle clubs in Kew

3

HISTORY NEWS

Volunteering opportunities, exhibitions, and new acquisitions

4

THE HENS THAT LAY ARE THE HENS THAT PAY

Chook breeding in the genteel suburb of Kew

6

BRUCE B HEDDERWICK'S SHOOTING CAR

The Hedderwick family of A'Beckett Street

8

PINAFORES & APRONS

Plain needlework and fancywork protective wear

10

ARTHUR HENRY MIERS

A Sportsman for all seasons and sports

12

MEMERSHIPS & DONATIONS

Payment and donation options

In 1870, British Imperial troops were withdrawn from Victoria. Taking their place was the Victorian Artillery Corps, which had been formed in 1870. This volunteer force became the primary defence force of the Colony until 1884, when it was replaced by a professional force funded by the Victorian Government.

When my great-grandfather arrived in Melbourne from County Tyrone in 1873 on the clipper *Ranee*, he joined the Artillery Corps. A year later, he transferred to the Victorian Police. He remained a policeman for the rest of his life, serving in Melbourne, Avenel, Heidelberg and finally Footscray. A skilled shooter, he was the winner of a number of shooting competitions that were dutifully reported in the press of the day. He was also active within the Church of England, volunteering as a Sunday School teacher in Heidelberg. Shooting and a commitment to Christian values were not irreconcilable.

The lead photograph of the newsletter depicts eight men, formally dressed in suits, formally posing for a professional photographer. At centre front is very young boy holding a rifle. The group were members of the Star of Kew Tent, local Rechabites whose commitment to abstinence from alcohol did not extend to the avoidance of what might now be considered by some to be a violent sport. In addition to this photograph, the Kew Historical Society's collection includes a number of items relating to membership of local rifle clubs, including photographs, trophies won in competition and a 1910 Borough of Kew plan for a miniature rifle range in Brougham Street.

While these items date from the first decade of the twentieth century, local rifle clubs had been in existence for a number of decades. The first was the Hawthorn & Kew Rifle Club, formed in 1860. The Club was amalgamated into the Royal Victorian Artillery in 1863. FGA Barnard also records in his *Jubilee History of Kew* (1910) that to meet the need for outdoor exercise of its students, a rifle range was constructed in the grounds of Xavier College. Similarly, a miniature rifle range was established at Trinity Grammar School '...so the bodily welfare of the pupils ... [was] not neglected.'

Front page

KEW RECHABITE RIFLE TEAM c. 1905

Gift of John Rogers, 2015
Kew Historical Society

CHANGING VALUES *(from page 1)*

The main rifle range in Kew was partly located in Hyde Park and partly in the Asylum Reserve. It was this range, described by Barnard as 'one of the most picturesque in Victoria' that was used by the Kew Rifle Company; formed in 1900, and listing a membership of 100. Boys could join the Club at 16 years of age.

A Miniature Rifle Range, approved in 1907 and constructed in 1910 in the rear yard of the Town Hall, facing Brougham Street, was funded by Council and approved by military engineers. The Range was put under the control of the Kew Rifle Club with a guaranteed tenure of five years, and designed to cater for Club members, cadets and the members of friendly societies. A journalist from the *Box Hill Reporter* noted an added advantage of the range as: '...a means also to divert the at present dangerous enthusiasm of uninstructed youths for the pea rifle into safer and more useful channels.' [The range was still operating in 1937, when it was claimed that the captain of the club, G Davis, strung together 33 consecutive bullseyes: the latter being 5/16th of an inch in diameter. The achievement was claimed by one observer to be an Australian if not a world record.]

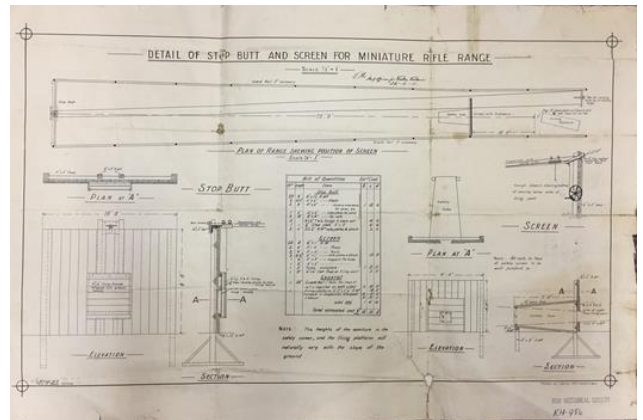
An increase in the participation of the sport of shooting by men and boys occurred in the lead up to the Great War. The *Defence Act 1909* outlined a new compulsory training scheme for senior cadets. On Empire Day in 1910, Council organised a competition on the Kew Rifle Range '...between teams representing the cadet corps of the several schools.'

In describing mobilisation, newspapers reported that the Port Philip Horse, drawn from Melbourne, Kew, Caulfield and Box Hill '...will represent Australia's most distinctive arm', adding that '...the sight of young men with rifles and packed kits passing through the city gave a filip to the interest of the crowds who were waiting for news from Europe.'

As the Australian Expeditionary Force trained in the 'theory and practice of shooting', their instructors were drawn from metropolitan rifle clubs, with apparent success. The words of Lord Kitchener summed up what had previously been a sport: '...that to be able to shoot straight was the first and most important duty of a soldier'.

A decade later, all notions of shooting as a sport had been diminished by the reality of the War.

ROBERT BAKER



Above
DETAIL OF STEP BUTT AND SCREEN FOR MINIATURE RIFLE RANGE
J.C. Brown, 1910
Kew Historical Society

KEW HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

PATRON

Sir Gustav Nossal AC, CBE

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

President: Judith Voce

Vice President: David White

Secretary: Desley Reid

Treasurer: Jerome de Almeida

Archivist/Newsletter editor: Robert Baker

Curator: Judith Scurfield

Members: Richard Bowen | Mary Kelleher | Julie King |
Debbie McColl-Davis

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). In the Winter months, the doors open at 7.00pm for a 7.30pm start. There is usually a guest speaker. Visitors are welcome to attend. Numbers are currently restricted to 55 persons.

KEW COURT HOUSE

Members of the Society played a key role in the preservation of the historic Kew Court House. Volunteers open our current exhibitions to the public on Fridays and Saturdays between 11am and 1pm. Our room is on the first floor of the Court House, 188 High Street.

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

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

DISCLAIMER

The views expressed, and information provided by the authors of articles in this newsletter do not necessarily mirror the views and values of the Kew Historical Society. We also rely on authors checking the accuracy of their data and apologise if errors of fact have been made.

Kew Historical Society Inc.
Inc. No. A0010789W | ABN 97 824 890 237
PO Box 175 Kew VIC 3101
KHS Newsletter, No.135/2021
ISSN 0155-1337

HISTORY NEWS

VOLUNTEERING

The Kew Historical Society is currently seeking Expressions of Interest (EOI) from individuals who would like to extend their knowledge and commitment by volunteering with us. Volunteers are an integral part of our daily operations and are vital in reaching our mission. Volunteers can donate their time across a range of tasks including:

- Handywork – some general maintenance.
- Digitisation – scanning and indexing.
- Collection – assisting with collection management tasks, conservation, cataloguing and data entry.
- Administration – assisting with administration tasks where needed.
- Events and Exhibitions support.
- Front of House Support – meeting the public at the Kew Court House.
- Technology – setting up for meetings, installing software, troubleshooting, database development.

If you would like to volunteer for one or more of these areas, please complete the EOI form on our website.

COLLECTIONS

The Society wishes to acknowledge the following donations to the collection, which have been received in March, April and May 2021:

- Lisa Sylvan - aprons, pinafores and examples of household linen.
- David Paterson - gravure printing plate of Mr & Mrs H.W. Tompkins of *Fenwick*, Fenwick Street.
- Barbara Kemp - Edwardian muslin dress belonging to a member of the Ballantine-McQueen-Kerr family of East Kew.
- Noel Kelly - series of digital photographs of sites in Kew.
- John Simonton - digital copies of advertisements and stationery for Simonton's Model Dairy in Belmont Avenue, and biographical data about his grandfather.
- Mark Cauchi – March and May editions of *Newsrail* one of which has an article on the final years of the Kew Railway Line.
- Debra Askew - original 1907 postcard of a 'Scene at Kew' [the Yarra and Zig-zag Bridge].
- Friends of the Boroondara (Kew) Cemetery - *Leaving their Mark: the Boroondara (Kew) Cemetery*. [Copies available from the Cemetery for \$25].
- Felicity Renowden - Gown worn by her Kew-born aunt to the Coronation of Elizabeth II in 1953 and accompanying photograph.
- Diane Washfold - Artefacts, family and landscape photographs of locations in Kew and regional Victoria.

EXHIBITIONS



JAN MOSLEY VISITS THE KEW COURT HOUSE, MAY 2021

The current exhibition at the Kew Court House contains treasures from the combined collections of Kew Bowling Club, Auburn Heights Recreation Club and Kew Heights Sports Club. Jan Mosley, who was instrumental in transferring the entire collection to the Kew Historical Society, is pictured above with our archivist. The exhibition has been extended and will close on 19 June 2021.

GRANTS & SPONSORS

The Society is 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. Kay & Burton (Hawthorn) is a corporate sponsor. Printing of this newsletter is generously provided by Tim Smith MP, State Member for Kew.



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.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Memberships are due for renewal each year on 1 July. Please access our online renewal form on our website at www.kewhistoricalsociety.org.au and make your subscription payment to our bank account 633 000 171300288. Please send any queries to secretary@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au

THE HENS THAT LAY ARE THE HENS THAT PAY

In 1841, immigrant diarist Mrs Georgiana McCrae (1804-90) acknowledged 'Mr Dean's' present of a 'bush [native] turkey', before he invited himself to dinner. Eating domestic fowl was rare and expensive table fare in the fledgling Port Phillip Colony. Kangaroo tail soup was the Abbotsford domestic house speciality for Georgiana's guests. Utilitarian domestic egg laying chooks and fowl consumption was yet to become a regularity and a business concern in the Colony.

Early Kew settler, financially successful, 'Greenlaw, [of] Walmer and Raven Streets, Kew' advertised farmed, rare, prize winning Spanish *Minorca* poultry for sale in 1889. Prospective buyers were requested to enter his estate via the tradesman's entrance accessed by the Shamrock Brewery footbridge from Abbotsford, close to where Georgiana lived. Breeding and sales of chooks was an occupation for the rich and poor alike.

Speciality utilitarian domestic, and semi-commercially farmed fowl had such a value that trafficking of Kew poultry was a regular event and heavily penalised by the Kew Court. Poultry fancier, Mr Collins, awoke from deep slumber by his roosting fowls cackling. He, with the Kew night constable, went in pursuit of the thieves who were travelling post-haste along Studley Park Road to the city. The thieves escaped, the cart overturned, the stolen horse was 'knocked up' but survived; a number of fowls died at the scene.

Thomas Sweetman & Co held a monthly market of live produce at the Kew Sale Yards. Poultry sold at 'advanced rates' compared to heifers and pigs. Many 'back-yard' poultry producers such as Mr Thornton could never fill his orders for strong, vigorous *Black Orpington*, incubator-hatched chickens. He only had to kill three chicks due the 'inherited weakness' of 'crooked feet'. Selective breeding was paramount. Demand for prime quality fowl stock was vigorous and profitable. A.E. McGill had to cease advertising his fertilised *Andalusian* eggs such was the over-demand for his product.

But, domestic and/or commercial fowl culture, for the table or financial profit was not without problems. 'J.H.' learned that chooks with 'bumble' swollen feet were 'cactus'. Fowl foot physiotherapy cost more than the price of the chook. By law, an unfortunate Kew resident had his fowl-occupied property thoroughly torched, except for the main house, by the Kew Fire Brigade to eradicate every blood sucking tick that caused a fowl to die a dreadful paralytic death.

Some people became collectors of rare and beautiful fowls for the purpose of competitive showing. The Royal Melbourne Agricultural Society built a new pavilion at the Flemington show grounds to cater for the great interest in showcasing fancy fowl. The grandson of early Kew pioneers, the Quicks, Herbert D Quick, groomed splendid Indian cockerels before his death on active service in France in 1917.

Many 'gentlemen' residents such as the Austro-Hungarian Consul, Carl Ludwig Pinschhof employed specialist in-house farm bailiff/gardeners to care for their chooks. Visitors to his mansion, *Studley Hall*, admired the fowl premises as much as the panoramic view from the veranda. The Kew Asylum employed a fowl keeper who designed the fowl enclosure and huts. He supervised the 'inmate's' construction of the facility, their care of the hens and the collection of some twenty dozen eggs per week, which met the institution's kitchen requirements. Backyard poultry was usually the good all-rounder, the *American Bard Rock* bird. Vigorously healthy, it required little care, laid well, was fat and flavoursome making it a winner for consumption. The unusual five-toed *Faverolles* fowl, bred by a Kew lady poultier, was also favoured for the domestic table.

Henry [Harry] Barton James (1873-1956) took a major career change from dealing with automotive tyres to commercial chook farming. It was not a naive venture as he was well versed in poultry science. In 1914, Harry purchased a substantial acreage of land in Molesworth Street. The property sloped down to the Yarra River at the point where it bends on its sinuous course [now known as Yarra Bend]. From the highest aspect of his property, the vista 'gladdened the eye'. There was natural vegetation, woodlands, fertile pastureland, a glistening river and a visual sweep of Melbourne central and the inner suburbs.



White leghorns

THE HENS THAT LAY ARE THE HENS THAT PAY (from page 4)

By 1916, Harry had his stud poultry farm operational at a cost of £150. It was not an ordinary egg-laying farm but an up-to-date 'plant'. Initially, he commenced with ten *White Wyandotte* birds sourced from a renowned English breeder. All buildings and fowl pens were painted sanitised white, and the enterprise named *White Lodge*. Harry personally managed the farm, living on site. He methodically recorded the egg laying and general activity of each fowl. Vigorous scratching, for example, was an indication of egg laying capacity. The hens were identified by a metal leg band, imprinted with a number.

Each bird had an individual draught-free pen with a scratching compartment and a free-run grassed exercise area for use in fine weather. Every day the pens, roosting area and nesting boxes were thoroughly cleaned, aired and limed to prevent infection. During the moulting season, the birds were removed to other accommodation and their health rigorously monitored. Similarly stud roosters were relocated after they had performed their function. Fertilised eggs were placed in incubators to produce further stock. Unfertilised eggs were marketed for the table.

Harry rejected the traditional system of grouping six laying hens together in one pen. He believed a poor-producing egg-laying bird could be overlooked by the egg-laying capacity of the other five fowl. He introduced the 'single test system'; one fowl to one pen. This ensured he was cognisant of the laying capacity of each hen, and he subsequently bred from the 'exceptionally productive' hen. This method of selective breeding resulted in hen no. 11 coming close to the world coveted title of 300 eggs laid per year. By 1917, he had about 700 fowls 'with prodigy'. Many, such as hen no. 11, could 'shell out' a 56.7 gm egg per day and remain 'resilient'. He then commenced competitive breeding. This involved renting a competition pen at Burnley or Bendigo, where the bird would spend a year being monitored by the Utility Poultry Society of Victoria for egg production.

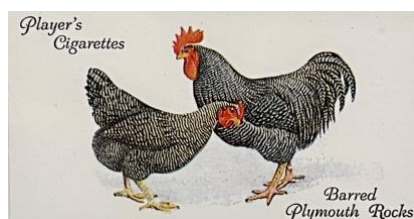
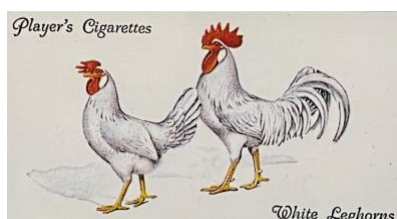
James' best egg layer, a White Leghorn, became known as *Lady Constant*. She constantly laid 332 eggs in 365 days, thus breaking the world record. She even laid during her moult without disadvantage to her health. Indeed, she laid 19.5kg of eggs, which was 11 times her weight.

By 1921, she had laid a record 1,000 perfect eggshells. James' *Lady Bendigo* won the 1918 Bendigo Single Test laying competition, a fine feat considering the very cold weather.

James self-published a booklet *Prolific Layers and How to Breed Them* in 1918. *White Lodge* was included in all-day commercial country motor tours for people interested in egg production as a hobby or a money maker. Demand for his sale stock and his booklet always exceeded his supply. His chooks became celebrities. In 1918, pullet no. 32 'broke down' in her egg-laying production due to the stress of being photographed by the press. *White Lodge* became the home of world class *Leghorns* and *White Wyandottes*. In 1954, aged 81, Harry was still managing the farm. However, the vista had been impacted by the Yarra Boulevard in the 1930s and the property eventually succumbed to subdivision in the mid-1950s, following his retirement. The farm is remembered by *White Lodge Court*, Kew. The old farm site is, today, a well-built residential area with a good vista. From the summit of the hill, there are a variety of roofs, including terracotta, and one can peek into swimming pools in neighbouring backyards. Chook housing has been consigned to a previous era.

In 2021, the cock no longer crows the crowning of the dawn in Kew. A governmental policy of subdivision of large blocks of land has eroded the ideology of the suburban backyard that once defined the beating heart of Kew. But the domestic chook is still present. No longer part of a commercial enterprise, the backyard chook industry is a means of social exchange between neighbours of diverse ethnic backgrounds. Post WW2 Italian immigrant, now long widowed, makes a tottering daily, early morning journey across the sealed street to her neighbours, Australians with colonial heritage. She hangs two eggs on their front door handle for breakfast. Such is the conviviality between the neighbours, nothing is said when the eggs are ink stamped with a date indicating they are commercially purchased; her chooks are in moult and not producing! But a chook, like a dog, has social valency.

SUZANNE MCWHA, 2021



BRUCE P. HEDDERWICK'S SHOOTING CAR

Family photographs can be a powerful connection to the past, they take us to a particular moment in time which a family member wanted to record. They can also provide valuable incidental details of the surrounding environment at that time and link by association to the family history both before and after the event. This photograph was among a recent donation by Prue Beck of Highton of biographical information and photographs depicting members of the Hedderwick family.

The photograph was taken in the early 1920s in the stable yard at the Hedderwick family home, *Garoopna*, which was on the north eastern corner of A'Beckett and Barry Streets. The house has since been demolished and was replaced by United Age Well's Carnsworth Community aged care home. The houses in the background on the southern side of A'Beckett Street have also since been demolished. They are in the area now occupied by the Servants Community Housing Inc's Mother Roman Home.

The car, a substantial Mercedes open tourer has metal disk wheels and is fitted with dog boards above the running board behind which sit three English Pointers. Bruce Pitcairn Hedderwick is the man in the driver's seat. An unidentified man is seated in the back of the car with another dog behind him on the folded-down canvas hood and a third man, also unidentified, stands at the back of the car. All three of the men are looking dapper and well-dressed although Bruce Hedderwick is hatless. Attached to the car is a cart or trailer with spoked artillery wheels and on the cart are the neatly turned out Hedderwick children. Left to right they are Betty Patricia (*never Elizabeth*), Peter John, Mary Pitcairn (at back) Bruce Pitcairn and Marjorie Alice. Betty, the little girl first on the left in the row of children on the cart, is Prue's mother.

Missing from the photograph is Bruce Hedderwick's wife Alice who may well have been behind the camera to catch the happy moment when her children posed on top of the trailer before her husband embarked on a shooting expedition with his friends.

By the early 1920s, when this photograph was taken, photography was no longer the sole province of men hiding under black cloths behind bulky glass plate cameras mounted on ponderous wooden tripods. Cameras had become smaller, hand-held and easily managed. Images were recorded on rolls of film, which could be sent to be developed and printed at the Kodak factory in Abbotsford to return as black and white photographs for the family album.

Born on 30 January 1881 at *Illapa* (now Rylands) in Princess Street, Bruce Pitcairn Hedderwick was the son of the successful solicitor Henry Hedderwick, an early Kew landowner who had been Mayor of Kew for two consecutive terms between 1873 and 1875 and Rebecca Hedderwick (*née Green*), Henry Hedderwick's second wife, and the sister of Henry's first wife Catherine, who had died in 1874.

Bruce Hedderwick was educated at Caulfield Grammar School and studied law at the University of Melbourne. He served his articles in the office of Lewis, Hedderwick and Fookes where his father was a partner and, following the dissolution of this partnership in 1906, became a partner in the new firm of Hedderwick, Fookes and Hedderwick.

> Page 5



**BRUCE P HEDDERWICK'S
SHOOTING CAR**
Gift of Prue Beck, 2021

B.P. HEDDERWICK'S SHOOTING CAR (from page 4)

In his university days Bruce Hedderwick had been an athlete and sportsman, boxing and playing lacrosse. He also became a member of the Melbourne and Hawthorn Gun Clubs. He was regarded as a good shot and although he preferred field shooting, he often shot over the traps at Hawthorn. He was a member of many clubs and associations including the Australia Club, the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria, the University Club, the Victorian Racing Club, the Victorian Amateur Turf Club, the Tattersalls Club, the Ormond Collegians Association and the Old Caulfield Grammarians' Association.

For many years he was a vice-president of the Victorian Poultry and Kennel Club, and in conjunction with Mr. and Mrs. A.C. Morley bred and exhibited many excellent bull terriers. By the time the photograph was taken, most of his spare time was devoted to shooting, and for this purpose he owned several good working pointers.

Bruce Pitcairn Hedderwick, who at the time must have been one of Kew's most eligible young bachelors, and Alice Katherine Barry were married on 21 September 1910 in St. Francis' Church in Lonsdale Street. At the time, Alice was living at the Oxford Hotel on the corner of Swanston and A'Beckett Streets, where her mother Ellen had been the licensee before transferring the licence to another daughter, Elizabeth, in 1910.

The Hedderwick 'family story' is that he met Alice at the sale of the Oxford Hotel when he was acting as the solicitor. They also seem to have shared a common interest in dogs. A newspaper report of the 34th Annual Show of the Poultry & Kennel Club in June 1910 advised that in the Bull Terrier puppy class B.P. Hedderwick's *Garoolina (sic) Gem* won, and Miss A.K. Barry was third.

Alice Barry was born on 6 October 1881 on the Woolshed goldfield near Beechworth, where two years earlier, her mother's fifteen-year-old eldest daughter had married Aaron Sherritt, an associate of the Kelly Gang. In 1880, shortly before the final siege of the Kelly Gang at the Glenrowan Hotel, Sherritt was murdered in front of his pregnant wife and mother-in-law by gang member Joe Byrne. While many Kew families would have had stories of their experiences on the Victorian goldfields, this must rank as one of the more colourful.

Following their marriage, Bruce and Alice Hedderwick lived at *Barringa* in Lisson Grove, Hawthorn where their first child, Mary, was born in 1911, then at *Tilecote*, 4 Studley Avenue, where three more children were born: Marjorie in 1914, Bruce in 1916 and Peter in 1918, before moving to *Garoopna*, 14 A'Beckett Street, where Betty was born in 1920.

In May 1925, Bruce and Alice Hedderwick left for a combined health and pleasure voyage to America. Bruce's health had been a cause of anxiety for some time and on 1 December 1925, he died in Los Angeles. Shooting at a Melbourne Gun Club event was abandoned for an interval of five minutes at the request of the president, shortly after a telegram advising of Hedderwick's death arrived in Melbourne.

Perhaps as a result of concerns about his health, Bruce Hedderwick had made a will in 1922 which, in addition to instructing that a trust be established to provide for the maintenance and education of his children and a lifetime annuity of £1500 per annum for Alice, made a number of bequests, including legacies to most of the Melbourne hospitals, friends, relatives including his aunt Martha Green, both his own and Alice's brothers and sisters, his gardener and members of his office staff. A codicil added to the will in May 1925 left his 'gun by Purdie with case and accessories' to his friend Harold Dunstone, although Prue Beck recalls handling it carefully as a child before it was handed on to a now-deceased cousin and never seen again. The probate inventory of Bruce Hedderwick's real estate reveals that by the time of his death he owned the Oxford Hotel which was let at £16 per week. There seems to have been a business relationship with the Barry family in addition to a relationship by marriage.



'GAROOPNA', A'BECKETT ST, KEW
Alice with sons Bruce (left) and Peter (right)
Gift of Prue Beck, 2021

Bruce Hedderwick's remains were brought to Melbourne from America and the funeral left *Garoopna* for the Boroondara Cemetery on 15 January 1926 where he is buried in the Independent section with other members of the Hedderwick family.

DAVID WHITE, 2021

PINAFORES & APRONS

PLAIN NEEDLEWORK AND FANCYWORK

Aprons and pinafores are often regarded as ubiquitous items of protective clothing. They range from rugged items used in industrial settings to hostess aprons that are essentially decorative. Interest in the art and history of aprons and pinafores has been gaining momentum in recent years. For example, the Ballarat Heritage Festival has been holding a domestic Apron Festival since 2013. The collecting and preservation of aprons and pinafores is not a regional predilection. The Victorian & Albert Museum, England and the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences [MAAS], Powerhouse Museum, Sydney have such items in their collections.

Defining and categorising the different elements of aprons and pinafores can be a challenge. Historically, the term pinafore implies the gender of the wearer whereas aprons are gender neutral. Typically, a woman's pinafore is characterised by the use of a yoke. Similarly shaped protective wear for men are just aprons!

Our collection includes thirty-one aprons and pinafores, twelve of which were recently donated by Lisa Sylvan. Of these, five are aprons, and unlike others in the collection which are essentially decorative, these were designed for everyday use. All but three were hand manufactured by Rivkah Dorevitch (1908-79), Lisa's grandmother-in-law.

Soon after the donation was received, we were visited by Rosemary Lade, who brought along for us to view a collection of her mother's patterns for aprons and pinafores. The number and range of these indicated that her mother may have created aprons for others, that they had a short shelf life, or that she was responding to changes in fashion and design. Peter Cox, a curator at MAAS, suggests an alternative explanation for the creation of aprons by contending that they can illustrate the sewing skills of housewives with a decorative flair, and '... indicate that women at home had time to spend on sewing and needed to make things themselves because of the cost of buying.'

One of the earliest references to aprons that can be found in [online] Australian newspapers is in 1804, when *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser* reported the stealing of items of costume and textiles from the home of Joseph Hatton of Kissing Point, Sydney. Items included a 'sprigged muslin apron'.

During the early colonial period, retailers typically sold fabrics for the creation of aprons and pinafores rather than finished items. Therefore, from the earliest days of colonial settlement, the making of aprons and pinafores frequently became 'women's work'.



FANCYWORK PINAFORE, 1950s
Unknown (maker)
Kew Historical Society

The publication of patterns in newspapers and journals reached its apogee in the 1920s when there were approximately 49,000 references to apron patterns in local, regional, state and national newspapers and magazines. This trend extended from the 1880s to the 1940s. In contrast, during the decade beginning in 1960, there were only 441 references to apron patterns rather than to the eight thousand in the previous decade. A decline in the publication of patterns is indicative of the changing priorities of women's work, to the emergence of washing machines and to cheaper clothing.

The items in our collection include those that can be categorised as plain needlework or 'fancywork'. The earliest examples date from the turn of the twentieth century, and like the example stolen from the home of Joseph Hatton are constructed of white muslin. They were made by or for Edith Weir (nee Betteridge) of Broken Hill [and later of 84 Princess Street]. They are in immaculate condition so clearly avoided damage in the wear and tear of the Victorian-era kitchen. It has been suggested that they were probably 'front-of-house' service garments designed for the serving of food.

In contrast to the traditional white aprons of yesteryear, later home manufactured aprons in the collection began with the use of a published pattern, followed by the selection of a fabric for decorative effect; probably offcuts left over from the creation of other garments.

PINAFORES & APRONS (from page 7)

The essential element in fabric selection was the requirement for washable cotton and stable dyes that would survive vigorous scrubbing, boiling in a copper, starching and wringing in a mangle.

One 'pinny' in the most recent donation has a pattern depicting kitchen items in shades of red, green, blue and black. It has a single irregularly shaped pocket, trimmed with red binding as are the edges and straps. That the pinafore was constructed from a larger piece of fabric is evidenced by sections of the pattern being excised in its construction, leaving only parts of pots, recipe cards, hats and food at the edges.



COTTON PINAFORE

Rivkah Dorovitsch, 1950s
Donated by Lisa Sylvan, 2021

In contrast to these 'working' aprons, others donated by Rosemary Vaughan-Smith and Desley Reid are archetypal 'hostess aprons' (right). The use of the term to describe these garments appears to have entered popular usage in the late 1930s as the exigencies of the Great Depression were lessening in Australia. *The Weekly Times* of February 1938 published a paper pattern - No.W155, a '... dainty hostess apron of muslin, organdie or voile, lace-trimmed, [that] will protect your frock and preserve your dignity at an afternoon tea-party. It takes only one yard of 36-inch material, and three and an eighth yds lace'.

An advertisement in *The Australian Women's Weekly* in September of the previous year, includes the whole gamut of purposes and designs to which aprons could be put, ranging from 'gay, colourful aprons' to a paper pattern for a 'hostess apron cut in sizes 32 to 38 inch bust. Material required one yard, and one yard contrast. 26 inches wide.' For this pattern, the charge was 10d with an additional cost of 1/- for a transfer or embroidery.

The September 1937 edition of the *Women's Weekly* where this was advertised, includes a staggering number of pages devoted to advertisements for hand-sewing domestic items, ranging from 'snappy zodiac designs for cushion covers' to 'embroidered five-piece luncheon sets' and garments ranging from 'peasant' aprons to dresses for summer cruises and beach vacations. All in all, twenty pages of the edition were devoted to needlework.



EMBROIDERED SATIN HOSTESS APRON

Unknown (maker)
Gift of Rosemary Vaughan-Smith, 1997-98

The reference in the advertisement for the hostess apron requiring two types of fabric, one for the base design and one yard for contrast is perhaps best represented in another of Rivkah Dorovitsch's aprons, where the 'contrast' is achieved through selecting either a separate part of the fabric's design for use in the ruffled trim of blue, green and yellow fabric, to contrast to the base material of the apron, which includes floral and figurative images in shades of pink, green, blue, yellow and purple; or it is a complementary fabric with a similar design.

In quite a separate tradition of apron making is an embroidered silk and cotton apron from Hungary. The Matyó region of Hungary, which includes Mezőkövesd, is known for its rich costume traditions, specifically embroidery. The apron, donated by past-member Rosemary Vaughan-Smith, is a rectangular apron worked in three panels. The waist tie is of a floral fabric. Tape is attached to both vertical sides and there is a black fringe attached to the bottom panel over floral printed fabric. The needlework techniques employed in the embroidery include flat stitch which is used to create the effect of quilting and creating large, brightly coloured flowers in the middle section. This apron was to be loaned to the Ballarat Apron Festival in 2020 before it was cancelled due to the current pandemic.

ROBERT BAKER, 2021

ARTHUR HENRY MIERS

A SPORTSMAN FOR ALL SEASONS

This article had its genesis in a donation made to the Society in 2021 by Elizabeth (Betty) Nolan, the daughter of Arthur Miers. Betty, who lives in regional New South Wales approached the Society with the offer of a significant donation of sports team photographs, winner trophies and family biographical information. We are always keen to add items of this type to our collection, so were delighted to accept the donation. The trophies, photographs and biographical details relate to her father who had a diverse sporting career in Kew and surrounding suburbs and are the basis for this article.

Arthur Henry Miers was born in Kew in November 1901. He was the second of five children of Rodolph (Dolph) Theophilus Miers and his wife Margaretta (Margaret) Frances (nee Fry), all born between 1900 and 1911. The Miers family had strong links to Kew. Rodolph's father, Charles Washington Miers, was a long-term resident of Wellington Street. In 1898, when Charles Miers was naturalised, he was living at 118 High Street. Rodolph's family was renting 16A Brougham Street when Arthur was born, but by 1904 had moved to Brunswick where they lived at a number of different addresses.

As a teenager, when the family was living at 16 Park Street, Hawthorn, Arthur worked after school for a number of different retailers in Glenferrie Road. It was at about this time that Arthur became a Rechabite and a lifelong teetotaler. In 1916, Arthur joined the Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board (MMTB), then called the Prahran & Malvern Tramways Trust, as a junior ticket clerk, initially working at the Malvern and Kew tram depots before moving to the Head Office in Little Collins Street where he joined the Rosters Department. Promoted up the ranks, Arthur ultimately became Superintendent of Rosters; a role he held until his death in January 1966.

At the age of 25 years, Arthur married Adelaide (Pearl) Pearson in Hawthorn in 1927. They lived in Hawthorn before moving to Kew in about 1930. Initially, they lived in a number of rented houses in Childers, Gladstone and High Streets before finally settling at 1 Bright Street, where they lived until Arthur's death. Arthur and Pearl's three daughters, Marjorie, Elizabeth and Beverley were all born in Kew between 1928 and 1937.

Interestingly, Arthur's sister Marjorie married Leslie Tyack (MBE) in 1953. Leslie served as MLA for Hawthorn at different times between 1939 and 1952, regularly losing his seat. He was a Hawthorn City Councillor between 1930 and 1951 and Mayor in 1948-49. Leslie was also a member of the MMTB, among other directorships.

Arthur was a keen cricketer from an early age and played for Kew Juniors First Grade team in the Junior Cricket Association.

In 1914, in a game against North Melbourne, he scored 17 runs in a match score of 88 and took 2 wickets for 23 runs. Later he played for the Hawthorn Lacrosseurs Cricket Club, winning the batting average on numerous occasions. He joined Kew Cricket Club in 1927 but only played for one season. It was not until 1932 that Arthur again joined Kew Cricket Club and this time made it his cricketing home. His engagement with the Club showed him to be a good team man. He was Captain of the 3rd XI in the 1932/33 season and again in 1933/34. In 1932/33 he was the leading run scorer with a total of 259 runs for the season. In 1933/34 he was presented with a cricket ball with a silver plaque attached, which recorded his bowling score of 7 wickets for 9 runs.



CRICKET BALL TROPHY
Kew Cricket Club, 1937/38

This unusual trophy is part of the donation made to the Society. Arthur's best bowling season at the club was 1937/38 when he played in the 2nd XI and took 33 wickets for the season. This represents an average of 12.52. His best batting season, also in the 2nd XI, was in 1938/39 when his highest run score was 103 with an average of 30.08. In subsequent years, Arthur moved up the grades playing in the 1st XI and 2nd XIs until 1946 when he again played in the 3rd and 4th XIs. In subsequent years, Arthur moved up the grades playing in the 1st XI and 2nd XIs until 1946 when he again played in the 3rd and 4th XIs.

Arthur joined the Kew Cricket Club committee and became Club Secretary in 1934, serving in this role until 1940. He was Club Vice President from 1946 to 1961 and Treasurer between 1948 and 1952. Arthur's cricketing was of a high standard, always compiling a large number of runs. He played in the Eastern Suburbs Cricket Association competition until 1950/51 – when he was 50 years of age. In 1956/57 he was scorer for the 3rd XI and also played in one match for the 4th XI when he took 6 wickets for 54 runs!

ARTHUR HENRY MIERS (from page 9)

When Arthur died in 1966, an article written for the *Kew Cricketer* reported on his contribution to the Club over many years, calling him a 'good Kew man'. He was a Life Member of the Club.

Not only was he a keen cricketer, but his sporting interests also included baseball and Australian Rules football. Two photographs of Arthur wearing the uniform of the Kew Baseball Club seem to have been taken years apart.



KEW BASEBALL TEAM c.1948

The later photograph (above) was taken in about 1948 and included in the team is Arthur's cousin John Jardine (Jack) Simonton. Jack Simonton's father was one of the founders of Simonton Brothers Model Dairy in Belmont Avenue, Kew, which later moved to Cotham Road. Also in the photograph, at the rear on the right is our donor, Betty Nolan, wearing the full skirt fashionable at the time. Betty was scorer for her father's team for a number of years in the mid to late 1940s. Betty recalls the effort of attending away matches without private transport. A match at Williamstown entailed a tram trip to Flinders Street railway station, a train to Williamstown followed by a walk to the ground. All to be done in reverse after the match. At this time, Arthur was possibly the oldest player in the team, but was still playing well.

There are few records of the Kew Baseball Club surviving. We have been told that all documentation was destroyed when the Club closed in 1976. However, one contemporary account describes Arthur as a solid left hander scoring a 'two bagger with three runners on'. The Kew Baseball Club newsletter in February 1966 recorded that Arthur was a Life Member of the Club and a driving force. Kew had a few home grounds over the years as the City of Kew relocated the Club from Victoria Park to Willsmere Park and finally to Stradbroke Park. The number of playing members dwindled during the Club's final years and when the Club was closed some members went to play with new clubs being formed in outer Melbourne suburbs.

Arthur was also an able angler and a member of the Deepdene Angling Club. In season 1948/49, he landed the heaviest trout at 3lbs 3ozs (1.44kg) and was awarded the T.A. Slattery Trophy in recognition. This engraved silver cup on a pedestal (above right) is part of Betty's donation to our Collection.

Arthur spent a lot of time angling at Thornton, 123 kms from Melbourne on the Goulburn River. Arthur didn't own a car until the 1950s, so often his cousin Jack Simonton would drive him back and forth between Kew and Thornton, where Arthur camped on a farm by the river. A Life Member of the Angling Club, Arthur took out his final angling licence in 1965 only months before his death.



T.A. SLATTERY TROPHY
Deepdene Angling Club 1948/49

Kew Football Club was disbanded during the Second World War but was revived in about 1946. During the closure of the Kew Football Club, Arthur played baseball with the North Balwyn team at Myrtle Park. Two of the photographs in the collection indicate that Arthur played for different football clubs, one of them a works-based team of the MMTB.

His other interests included the Holy Trinity Church Men's Club where he played billiards and snooker, both socially and competitively.

Not one to bow out of sporting involvement as he aged and was too old to play, Arthur umpired cricket and coached the St. Anne's Primary School girls' softball team to a premiership in 1960.

Arthur was cremated at the Springvale Crematorium in 1965 and subsequently his ashes were interred in a niche at the columbarium at the Boroondara General (Kew) Cemetery.

DESLEY REID, 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 *Note: Renewals are due on 1 July each year*
- 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: All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.*

NAME/S: _____ *[PLEASE PRINT]* TITLE/S: _____

POSTAL ADDRESS: _____ POST CODE: _____

PHONE PAYMENTS: MOBILE: _____ EMAIL: _____

Please mail form and cheque, made out to Kew Historical Society Inc., to KHS, PO Box 175, Kew, 3101.
 OR Pay by direct bank deposit to Kew Historical Society Inc, account 633-000 171300288 with your surname as the subject or reference and email payment details and/or scanned form to secretary@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Privacy note: The KHS will not pass your details to a third party without obtaining your permission.

Kew Historical Society Incorporated Registration A001078W ABN 97 824 890 237 info@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au

Amount Paid:	Email data base:	M'ship Data Base:	Mailing label:	Name Tag:
--------------	------------------	-------------------	----------------	-----------

Printing: Courtesy of Tim Smith MP, State Member for Kew.
 Suite 1/400 High Street, Kew 3101
 (03) 9853 2999 | tim.smith@parliament.vic.gov.au | www.timsmithmp.com