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NEWSLETTER

No. 138
MARCH 2022



EXHIBITIONS AND GRANTS

During the first half of 2022, Kew Historical Society (KHS) is committed to fulfilling a number of grants and exhibitions.

Our first new exhibition at the Kew Court House focuses on photographs and artefacts relating to the history of the Kew Seniors Citizens. Exhibits include pictures of venues, photographs of members, and artefacts used at the Kew Senior Citizens Centre.

The second exhibition, 'The Interpreted Landscape', running from 12 April to 21 May at the Town Hall Gallery [Hawthorn Town Hall], explores how the landscape within Kew, Boroondara and Victoria has evolved through natural progress and human intervention. The exhibits explore the history of Kew through the eyes of cartographers, artists and photographers working between 1830 and 1950. It features works from our collection, including rare and historically significant maps, original oil paintings, watercolours and pastels, and a series of silver albumen photographs from the Washfold Collection.

And finally, another exhibition of fashion and textiles from our collection will be held at the Villa Alba Museum from 23 April to 1 May as our contribution to the Australian Heritage Festival. Included will be the 1850s English-made, unlined silk patchwork quilt, once owned by the Denbigh family of Cotham Road. The quilt (*pictured above*) was donated to the collection in 1974 and has rarely been exhibited due to its size and fragile state. Other items exhibited will include items of fashion and design from our collection, which date from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The quilt is also one of the items featured in our forthcoming book *Stories They Tell* [working title], which tells the story of Kew through thirty-one items from our collection. A number of the items featured in the book are comprised of multiple parts, so our photographer, Christian Capurro, pictured above with the quilt, spent many hours photographing artworks, costumes, textiles and artefacts in the Phyllis Hore Room on 23 February. As the quilt has not been displayed flat for a number of years, it gave us an opportunity to assess old additions such as the shattered silk border, which totally disintegrated on one side, and also note missing or degraded silk hexagons that form its design.

Front page

PHOTOGRAPHING THE DENBIGH QUILT

Robert Baker (photo), 2022

KHS

EXHIBITIONS AND GRANTS (from page 1)

Extensions to community grants from the City of Boroondara until 30 June 2022 will allow us to complete the Oral History Studio at the Kew Court House. Training for members of our Research Group will take place in March. All of the technology and furnishings are in place and ready for use. In the meantime, we have been digitising old reel-to-reel magnetic tapes and cassettes, and conducting interviews using mobile technologies. An interesting addition to our oral history collection was the donation by Astrid Judge in February of items assembled by her father, Dr Cliff Judge, through his involvement with the Kew Cottages Historical Society. The donation includes three cassettes of recorded interviews with former workers and patients, including one with Dolly Stainer, about whom Cliff Judge and Fran van Brummelen were to write a book - *Kew Cottages: The World of Dolly Stainer* (Spectrum Publications, 1992).

The text, as well as layout and design of the aforementioned *Stories They Tell* has now been completed, and with the photos taken by Christian Capurro will soon be ready for final proof-reading and printing. The selection, writing, and editing has been undertaken by eight members of our Research Group and will be the third book to which members of the group have contributed collaboratively. The items described in the book range from a presentation sock made by women inmates of the Kew Asylum in the early 1890s, to the formal evening gown worn by the Mayoress of Kew, Doris Dickinson, to the Centenary Council Meeting in the new Kew Civic Hall in 1960.

As we go to print, we can also report that we have been the recipient of a Round 2 Small (Biannual) Grant from the City of Boroondara which will allow us to purchase a Fujitsu overhead scanner to digitise our archives and the records of organisations that have been deposited with KHS, including bank signature books, dispensary books, pound records, and a number of records of community groups.

2020-22 has been a challenging period for KHS and other community groups in maintaining contact with members through meetings, working groups, and exhibitions. Our program of events, outlined above, as well as our progress in achieving grant outcomes will hopefully be a sign of the resumption of normal activities during the coming year. KHS would like to thank its members and supporters for assisting us during this period and hope that you can join us in future face-to-face events and activities.

ROBERT BAKER



CONSTRUCTION OF THE KEW BAPTIST CHURCH

Unknown (photographer), 1922

Gift of Diane Washfold, 2021

KHS

KEW HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

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MONTHLY MEETINGS

Public 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). There is usually a guest speaker. Visitors are welcome to attend.

KEW COURT HOUSE

Members of the Society played a key role in the preservation of the Kew Court House. General enquiries can be made, and viewing of our current exhibition, on Fridays (excluding public holidays) between 11am and 1pm. Our room is on the first floor of the former Kew Police Station at 188 High Street, Kew.

KEW HERITAGE CENTRE

The Kew Heritage Centre, at the rear of the ground floor of 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.

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HISTORY NEWS

ACQUISITIONS

The Kew Historical Society (KHS) wishes to acknowledge the following donations to the collection, which have been received between January and March 2022:

- Wood and silver trophy of the 3rd Kew Inter Patrol Competition - from Brad Miles.
- Kew and Kew East postcode map and various documents including a tramway timetable from 1979 - from J. Jones.
- Painting of *Madford* (demolished) in Wellington Street - from Jim Pearson (*see page 4*).
- Additions to the Dr Cliff Judge Collection, including documents, professional papers, audio tapes and photos - from Astrid Judge.
- Collection of historic documents, photographs, and books belonging to Dorothy Benyei - from Jamie and Jonathan Benyei.

VICTORIAN COLLECTIONS

We are constantly adding items from our collection to the Victorian Collections website. As the March 2022 Newsletter goes to print, we will have photographed and described 5,542 items. One of the recent series published includes 17 black and white photographic proofs donated in 2013 by the Queenscliff Historical Museum. The series includes photographs of ferries playing their trade on the Yarra. The main company shown is Hicks Bros Motor Launches which ran services from Princess Walk to Studley Park from the 1920s to the 1950s. You are encouraged to access Victorian Collections to view this series and to search for other items of historical interest to Kew and Kew East.



GRANTS & SPONSORS

KHS is generously supported by a Triennial Operational Grant from the City of Boroondara, as well as funding for specific projects provided by 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

2022 MCINTYRE LECTURE

The McIntyre Lecture is one of two annual lectures held at the Kew Court House in the 'Just Theatre' by KHS. The naming of the lecture honours Dione and Peter McIntyre, and their significant contributions over time as members, and in particular their leadership role in saving the Kew Court House as a publicly-owned community asset.

Scheduled for Wednesday 9 March at 7.30 for 8.00pm, Katherine Sheedy of Way Back When Consulting Historians will present the 2022 lecture on the history of the Kew Senior Citizens.

Seventy years ago, Kew residents came together to form the Kew Elder Citizens Association. The first meeting was held in 1952 at the old Town Hall in Walpole Street. From its beginnings, what would become the Kew Senior Citizens provided a place of community and connectedness for older residents in Kew. Offering support services, entertainment programs, special events, and a vibrant place for people to share food, friendships, challenges, celebrations and reminiscences.

To commemorate its founding, a history of the Senior Citizens has been written by Katherine Sheedy and Vicky Ryan. Tickets for the lecture can be purchased from the Hawthorn Arts Centre Box Office or at the door. The lecture is a catered and ticketed event.



QUEEN COMPETITION 1967 ~ SOUTHESK ~ WON BY MRS HARKENSEE
Kew Elder Citizens' Club, 1967
KHS

MEMBERSHIPS

For new membership applications and renewals, please use the printed form on page 12 of this newsletter, or the online form on our website, making your subscription payment to our bank account 633 000 171300288. Please send any queries to secretary@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au

MADFORD

A FORMER MANSION IN WELLINGTON STREET

The Victorian-era mansion *Madford* in Wellington Street had several incarnations before it was finally demolished. While the precise details of its original construction have not been discovered, we know that it was originally named *Elm Lodge*, and that the property was offered for sale in 1863 by Thomas Mitchell, of the firm Mitchell & Bonneau, wholesale ironmongers and merchants, on the occasion of his impending return to England.

The house was reportedly a brick house, containing six rooms, and large detached brick kitchen, stabling, coach-house, &c. It included a large garden, well stocked with the choicest fruit trees of every description. Advertisements claimed it to be located in the finest situation in the colony.

Mitchell's return to England was the subject of a major scandal in the Colony and resulted in a drawn-out court case during 1874-75. He had allegedly deserted his wife and two daughters in 1870 and refused to pay their upkeep. From the safety of the motherland, Mitchell accused his wife of infidelity and claimed that his daughters were fathered by various colonial notables including John Halfey, his next-door neighbour at *Ordsall*. The case scandalised local society and concluded in 1875 with alimony awarded to Mitchell's wife.

The house was sold in about 1873 to William Siddeley (1827-1905), who was described on the occasion of his death as 'the father of Australian shipping'.

The next owner was Arthur Septimus King (1827- 99), who renamed the house *Madford* after his purchase of the property in 1875. It was A.S. King for whom this artwork (below) was completed. Following his purchase of the house, it was extended, with new wings at the rear to accommodate his large family. There is no indication of these extensions in the painting so it must predate the renovations, and perhaps depicts the original building on the site.

Following King's death in 1899, portions of the property were sold, including to the Borough of Kew in 1905, to form the Alexandra Gardens. Then, in 1920, the house and its remaining lands were sold to the Catholic Church who opened St Anthony's Home for Children on the site in 1922. That organisation remained in Wellington Street until its transfer to Footscray in 1975. The building was promptly demolished, and the site redeveloped circa 1976.

The fine perspective drawing of the architectural elements of the house is contrasted with the freer addition in watercolour of the layout and plants of the garden facing Wellington Street.

ROBERT BAKER, 2022

MADFORD: THE PROPERTY OF A.S. KING

Unknown (artist), circa 1875
Gift of Jim Pearson, 2022



LIFE ON THE RIVER

MACAULAY'S BOATHOUSE

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries there was growing interest and enjoyment in boating and other recreational activities on the Yarra River during the summer months. Boathouses and teahouses began to appear along the river either side of Dight's Falls. Along with Macaulay's Boathouse there were other boathouses of note located along the stretch of the Yarra from Dight's Falls to Willsmere Road, East Kew: namely Studley Park Boathouse (originally named *Riversdale*, 1863), Fairfield Park Boathouse (originally named *Willow Dell*, 1908), *Rudder Grange* (1904) and Chipperfield's *Moorings* and pontoon (1920).

In 1887, Isaac Macaulay purchased land at the river end of Molesworth Street, Kew. He built a two-storey family residence around 1890 on the riverbank. He and his wife had four sons: Isaac, Thomas, John, William (Bill) and two daughters, Annie and Elizabeth (Lizzie). A double-storey boathouse was developed later beside the home to provide rowing boat hire to Kew residents. It was named Macaulay's Boathouse sometimes referred to as The Kew Boathouse. The boathouse comprised on the ground level a small kiosk, well-stocked with confectionary and sandwiches and canoe storage on racks for private canoes, and above, the men's dressing room. An adult paid threepence at the counter for use of the dressing room and one penny if a child. The dressing room has a long, tongue and groove, wood-panelled attic ceiling with individual storage lockers along each side and showers. Later a women's change area was provided. An original photo on file reveals that in time a long ramp was constructed, running down from the boathouse to the staging to enable canoes to be single-handedly dragged into the river.



MACAULAY'S BOATHOUSE

Real photo postcard, Unknown (publisher), 1907-1915
KHS

The postcard (above) which dates from between 1907 and 1915 shows Macaulay's Boathouse and its position on the Yarra at the end of Molesworth Street, with its extensive boat ramps and tied-up boats.



MACAULEYS' BOATHOUSE, KEW
Real photo postcard, circa 1900
KHS

Macaulay's was not only popular for rowing boat hire but was also a popular swimming spot. There was a three-mile swimming race for men from Fairfield Boathouse to Studley Park Boathouse and a two-mile swimming race for women from Fairfield Boathouse to Macaulay's Boathouse. *The World* newspaper, (Hobart) reported: that in 1918, '... prior to entering the water for the three mile race the swimmers nearly trod on a tiger snake, which they promptly killed!' Many a young child learned to swim above the sandy river bottom along the edge of the boat staging. However, there have always been drownings in the river.

As reported in *The Age* on December 1897, '... a sad drowning of a 14-year-old boy happened near Macaulay's on a Saturday afternoon... He was accompanied by some other lads about his own age, but they declined to enter the river, so he went in alone. After swimming about for some time, he went after a stick which was floating down the stream, and suddenly disappeared... Mr. Thomas Macaulay, of the Kew boat sheds, dived for him several times, ... but failed to bring it (sic) to the surface... the body was recovered by Mr. John Macaulay with the aid of drags.'

Then, after 1910, canoeing became a popular pastime, not only for regattas and informal competitions but for picnic and party destinations and romantic outings. A canoe-courting trend meant that, rather than getting hot and out of breath rowing a boat, a young man could more freely and comfortably paddle his sweetheart in a canoe. Perhaps this is where the popularity of scandalous 'canoeing' came about!

A 'Kew Canoe Carnival' was held annually in the summer months at Yarra Bend National Park from 1910 until the late 1930s in aid of charity.

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MACAULAY'S BOATHOUSE (from page 5)

The location of the carnival was upriver from Macaulay's Boathouse at the Asylum Reserve at the old white bridge [the precursor of Kane's Bridge]. The event was a great and picturesque success; a scene of 'fun and frolic'. The river would be covered with a flotilla of upwards of a hundred canoes, mostly paddled by ladies, and brightly decorated rowing boats and other craft. Thousands of spectators lined the riverbanks. A souvenir programme would be printed giving the details of the event, with numerous advertisements and photos of local river landmarks such as Willsmere Park Dairy, the Pipe Bridge and Macaulay's Boathouse. The program usually comprised canoe races, comic diving, musical lifebuoy competitions amongst other interesting and entertaining events. The aim was for the annual carnival to develop into the Henley of the Upper Yarra but snagging [removing large, woody debris] of a section of the river was required. The government and Board of Works had already expended £1,000 by 1912 from Studley Park up to Darebin Creek.



KEW CANOE CARNIVAL

Henry B Christian (photo), circa 1927
Gift of Diane Washfold, 2021
KHS

My father, his brother and his friends were among local boys who spent many of their school days in the 1930s messing about, swimming and exploring the riverside around Macaulay's. He recalls they would chat with 'Old Bill' Macaulay, the proprietor, while he was making his boats. He meticulously decorated them and then gave them a feminine name; that was a tradition then. Bill was a very particular man about his boathouse, clearing any rubbish and rowing out into the river in his work boat to pull out snags from the river to keep it clear for swimming and boating.

Dad recalls the area being 'alive' with tiger snakes, with some swimming beside them and at times, thinking it best to not disturb them. Bill had a daughter, Barbara, who was an Olympic diver. He built a diving platform and springboard to enable her to practice her diving skills. She won the gold medal at 1954 British Empire and Commonwealth Games in Vancouver, Canada in 10 metre platform, while in the 3-metre springboard, she finished second.

Barbara also competed in the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games and married Olympic diving coach Tom Donnet. Bill's wife and daughter appeared to run the business. As boat hire was quite expensive, money would be saved up by some of the wealthier boys to pay the fee of two shillings per hour to enjoy a row on the river.

The district of Kew suffered considerably with major flooding of the Yarra from 1863 through to the early 1950s. In particular, the 1891, 1916 and 1934 floods devastated Melbourne, and Yarra Bend facilities were destroyed. In the 1934 flood, Macaulay's Boatshed, and other boatsheds were almost totally submerged when the Yarra River rose 26 feet [7.9 metres] in 14 hours. Some boathouses disappeared altogether, while a few were rebuilt. Residents of Macaulay's, many decades later, found mud behind walls in the top storey of the boathouse during renovations. While the construction of the Upper Yarra Dam in 1957 reduced the levels of water flowing downstream, local and riverine floods continued with less destructive effects.

In the late 1950s, the inner-city parkland of Yarra Bend and Studley Park lay forgotten as Melburnians' enthusiasm for river boating declined. Post-war, they began to enjoy motoring in their more readily attainable cars, travelling further for Sunday drives to the distant hills and coastal locations. Many of the city boathouses decayed from neglect and most closed. Macaulay's Boathouse continued being operated by the Macaulay family until it closed in the 1950s. *The Herald*, Wed 9 Nov 1949 reported: 'Hundreds of Kew children and their parents lost a friend today when Mr. W.L.H Macaulay died suddenly at his boatshed on the Yarra at the end of Molesworth Street. "Bill." as he was known throughout the district, was 58. He spent all his life with his boats and was well known to the youngsters and adults who for generations have been swimming, boating and canoeing from his riverside shed. Successful Melbourne men of today will remember his kindness to them as youngsters during the depression years when they spent many idle hours swimming and playing at the boatshed. Mr Macaulay was one of the old school of fine craftsmen, building many of his canoes and boats himself.'

The boathouse became a private residence and was named *Mole End*, the name appropriately chosen from the enchanting book, *The Wind in the Willows*. It still stands on a 130-metre river frontage in a cul-de-sac at River Retreat, at the corner of Molesworth Street; the original address being 65 Molesworth Street. It has been extended and renovated over the years, but the present house still retains its charming period details. It is now one of three remaining boat houses and the only residential boat house. It is believed that the beautifully made Macaulay's boats ultimately ended up at Studley Park Boathouse.

© JULIE KING, 2022

WHAT'S A QUOLL?

LIVELY AND APPEALING SQUIRREL-LIKE SPOTTED CATS

In 1906, Bessie Mullins of Sydney, purchased a postcard to send to England. Of the postcard series, 'Birds and Animals of Australia', she chose No 8, the 'Native Cat', which she hand-corrected as the 'Australian Wild Cat'. It is not known why she choose this particular animal in the series. Had she seen a live specimen of this reclusive nocturnal marsupial? Was she seduced by the image of pointed nose, all-seeing eyes, upright ears, signature spotted fur, long un-spotted tail and clawed feet clinging to rockery? Some people thought the creature to be like a squirrel, others more ferret-like.

The quoll is not to be confused with its larger cousin, the 'tiger cat', which has a spotted tail, is a solitary animal and very fierce to the point that one man in Camperdown constantly feared being attacked in his bed while asleep. The 'native cat' is known today by the name of Eastern Quoll (*Dasyurus hallucatus*), which references its previous distribution throughout mainland Australia and Tasmania and its Aboriginal name. The quoll is now virtually extinct in the wild except for a small natural pocket in Tasmania.

Captain Cook, in 1770, is credited as the first European to see and name the native animal. This was the beginning of the extinction of a number of 'curious' native animals considered vermin by ill-informed but self-industrious and self-righteous immigrants.

For early pioneers the 'native cat' was a notorious and unwelcome poultry 'thief'. Being omnivorous nocturnal creatures, roosting imported chooks were fair game for the quoll but considered foul play by the owner of valuable fowls. Some early settlers thought the 'vile' animal ate their grain supplies, but knowledge of the animal today seems not to support this idea. In 1847, on a Merri Creek property, close to the yet to be named Kew, a 'single terrier' dog took a mere hour to kill 27 of the 'destructive little animals'. Thereafter, the champion dog became a member of a nocturnal hunting party, akin to the colonial version of an English fox hunting club. The female quoll was prized. Some farmers set traps to snare the animals. A record 70 were caught and killed in a single night by this method. Some settlers decided on poison to kill the 'pests', but this was controversial as it impacted on other animals such as sheep, which were the livelihood of farmers.

At the end of the nineteenth century, a 'mysterious epidemic' seemed to solve the problem by reducing the quoll population. Some 'experts' also claimed that the introduction of the European fox had been beneficial in eradicating the animal; others argued the introduced feral cat was a blessing. The advent of the automobile added to the demise of this nocturnal animal.



NATIVE CAT, SERIES 18 – BIRDS AND ANIMALS OF AUSTRALIA
Postcard, Kerry, Sydney (publishers), circa 1906
Private collection

Dazzled by night driving lights, the stealthy quoll would 'freeze' on the road.

Into the early twentieth century, as the quolls became rarer, 'road-kill' was collected, and placed on display in the Melbourne Museum. The marsupial was visually cute. Women of refinement, in 1926, lamented the lack of the sumptuous black quoll fur to embellish their garments. Quoll fur had fiscal and feminine social value.

In 1949–50, the quoll became the subject of a massive advertising campaign by Carlton United Breweries Ltd, to promote beer as a 'nourishing beverage'. This went as far as controversial advertising in children's school textbooks and advertisements in a wide selection of press publications within Victoria. Initially, the beer promotions were educative ethnological reportage on Australian and New Guinea native animals. The subject matter then changed in 1950, to 'Save our Natural Fauna'. The Studley Park quoll was No. 3 in the series. The articles were designed to appeal to a new generation of beer drinkers through a subtle, subliminal, inoffensive, concluding line that suggested knowledge of historical information was as healthy as beer consumption.

Melbourne Museum has in its collection vaults numerous examples of Eastern quolls in various posthumous states. These include skeletons, skulls, mounted specimens, partial skeletal bits and pieces, tissue, DNA and vertebrate palaeontology. In 1950, the Museum created a number of promotional postcards for an exhibition, in which, there was a quoll specimen, such was its exoticism.

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WHAT'S A QUOLL? (from page 7)

In 1948, a 'gentleman' of salubrious Rockingham Street, Kew, woke one morning to find 20 of his fowls dead. He considered the attack 'vampire like'. He informed a newspaper reporter that they had been sucked of blood by the 'native cat'. However, night film footage shot by Tasmanian naturalist, Simon Plowright in about 2020, reveals the quoll tears and rips flesh from prey rather than sucking its blood.

In 1937, Kew council employee, Mr F. Foster working in the Walmer Street 'gardens', off Studley Park Road, was shocked to uncover a niche, in a stack of wood, containing a family of quolls. The parents escaped. He dressed his working hat with the exotic fur of one of the offspring.



Dasyurus hallucatus

Elizabeth Gould (illustrator), 1863

John Gould, F.R.S., *Mammals of Australia*, Vol. I Plate 52, London, 1863

Courtesy Museums Victoria

Amateur naturalist Mrs D.M. Vander Sluys was aware of quoll activity in and around the Studley Park Boathouse, 1 Boathouse Road, Kew. Via a press reporter, she informed the public, the quoll inhabited pockets in the steep multi-faceted rock face along the Yarra River. They fed on birds, lizards and frogs. She knew of a woman who succoured a struggling quoll family using an eye dropper to rear the young. Three offspring died and one scampered into the wild. A Fisheries and Game inspector found a 'night prowler' dead on the Studley Park roadside. He had never seen such an animal. He 'rescued' the deceased quoll for educational purposes in the Museum.

Local city boys were encouraged to 'investigate' the Studley Park quoll community, given their country 'cousins' were denied the opportunity to study the lively and appealing 'squirrel-like', 'spotted cats'. The history of the Studley Park Reserve is riddled with unfortunate stories of youthful males tampering with the local indigenous flora and fauna despite an employed resident caretaker. Did some quolls die due to youthful 'investigation'?

Shortly thereafter, in 1956 *The Argus* announced the last known isolated colony of the Eastern Quoll, at Studley Park Reserve was believed to be extinct. At this time artist and naturalist, Eric Prentice Anchor Thake (1904–82), of 48 Harp Road, Kew, alerted Phillip Crosbie Morrison (1901–58) of a new bellbird colony having formed in a reclusive part of the Studley Park Reserve, just behind *Raheen*. Erik Thake attributed this relocation of the bellbird to the urban sprawl.

Morrison, a naturalist, radio announcer, science journalist, foundation president of the National Parks Association and Hawthorn resident stated: '*We should guard this National Park within the suburban area all the more jealously because of this latest evidence of the confidence of the creatures of the wild in our reservation and sanctuary*'. Unfortunately, both men were unable to protect the rare native quoll within the Studley Park Reserve. A 1956 law to protect the rare quoll arrived too late. The marsupial was declared extinct in mainland Australia in the same year.

Today, the quoll is the subject of a massive wildlife rehabilitation program associated with a Canberra sanctuary. Simon Plowright continues to foreground the plight of and fight for the rights of a small quoll colony located in Tasmania.

© SUZANNE MCWHA, 2022

IN MARCH 1922

- The famous 'Cradley Estate' was opened for subdivision due to a chronic land shortage in the best residential part of Kew.
- Overcrowding at the Kew East School resulted in a request to the State Treasurer, who guaranteed that a new school would be constructed.
- Lady Forster declared open a new Kindergarten Teacher Training College in Madden Grove, built in the grounds of *Mooroolbeek*.
- Frederick Derham, former MLC, MLA and Postmaster-General died at his home *Haptree* in Sir William Street.
- An earthquake was felt by residents of Kew in the early hours of 1 March.

A CORONATION DRESS

FROM WESTMINSTER ABBEY TO KEW

This year is Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee. In 1953, as a very young monarch she wore a coronation gown resplendent with a regal train of great length to signify her importance as Queen of Great Britain and her vast Dominions. To be a guest in Westminster Abbey witnessing the ceremony was to be highly privileged. Two such persons were Mrs Margaret Hollis (1919 - 2008), née Piesse, and her son Julian (1944-) who, within the grand pageantry of the ceremony sought out their husband/father, who played a significant role on this solemn occasion.

The dress Margaret Hollis wore to the Coronation was donated to our costume collection in 2021 by Felicity Renowden, who received the gown from her Hollis relatives in Castlemaine. Of her family, their connection with the Queen's Coronation and her acquisition of the garment, Felicity writes:

Margaret's Coronation Dress is part of an interesting and personal family history. My aunt was born at 39 Broadway, Camberwell on 18 February 1919. In 1922, her parents, Edmund L. Piesse and Christina Piesse, settled at *Merridale*, 43 Sackville Street, Kew [still extant] where Margaret lived for 20 years. Educated at St Andrew's College, Kew and at St Margaret's School in Malvern, she began studies in 1937 at the Conservatorium of Music where she majored in Aesthetics and Flute. At the 'Con' she met the handsome, gentle and musical Howard Hollis, whose Bachelor of Music included Instrumental School-Organ-Concert Performance. Graduating in 1940, his entrée into the Church was through music and particularly, church organs. Margaret graduated in April 1943, specialising in Instrumental School- Flute- Teaching and Concert Performance. The couple married at Christ Church, South Yarra, on 14 February 1942. It was a 'marriage made in heaven'.

In 1947, Margaret, her husband and their three-year-old son Julian, sailed to England where Howard took up a curacy in Croydon, South London. In 1951, Howard was organist and a minor canon at Westminster Abbey. From 1954 to 1959, he was deputy priest-in-ordinary to the Queen. Margaret found herself living at 4A Little Cloister, Westminster Abbey and was thus witness to the Coronation preparations, which included an Abbey closed for security reasons. Julian remembers the closed off Dean's Yard where he watched horses being trained and rehearsing for performance in the pageant. He vividly remembers his adventure with the Dean's son, David Carpenter.



FIGURED SATIN EVENING GOWN

Unknown maker, 1953
KHS

The young boys were invited to travel in the Queen's four-tonne Golden State Carriage [that had been slightly remodelled with pneumatic tyres to modernise the ancient vehicle] in rehearsal for the grand event. Young Julian, sitting in the Queen's seat, found the Coronation Coach uncomfortable and wondered how the Queen would manage with the smells of the horses! Dressed in a McRae family tartan kilt and a white frilly shirt, at the appointed time of 8.30 am, he awaited the commencement of the official enthronement that commenced at 11.00 am. Solemn-faced and the youngest guest, he watched the apogee of the ceremony, the crowning of the Queen, as his father chanted the litany and carried the sceptre.

During the months leading up to the Coronation, Aunt Margaret would have been fitted for the dress she would wear. This must have been a thrilling time for my romantic, then 34-year-old aunt, who loved beautiful clothes, especially dresses. She gave me several frocks of taffeta and embroidered Chinese silk, and evening gowns of velvet and silk. I still wear a black velvet jacket with the label 'Hardy Amies Boutique, Savile Road, London W1'. Sir Edwin Hardy Amies (1909-2003) had the Queen's patronage [post Coronation]. Margaret always accessorised with beautiful and expensive jewellery, hats, gloves and shoes.

A CORONATION DRESS (from page 9)

Recently, her Castlemaine wardrobes were emptied. Julian's wife Sue found a treasure trove of garments including beautiful Oriental gowns dating from 1919. Stuffed in a big bag was Margaret's Coronation gown, identified as such by the photograph of Margaret wearing the dress which is now safely conserved in the collection of the Kew Historical Society.



MRS MARGARET HOLLIS
Chris Hillyard (photo), 1953
KHS

The photograph of Margaret by Chris Hillyard, sacrist at the Abbey, photographer and painter, reveals an elegant young woman posed comfortably, sitting upon an exquisitely carved, French eighteenth century chair, located in the alcove of a window.

Upon her head is a tiara, from her ears hang a pair of pendant earrings, around her neck a matching pendant necklace and covering her hands and arms to above elbow a pair of immaculate white gloves. She is wearing a striking gown of expensive silk satin. The quality of the fabric is evidenced through the light and shadow captured by the camera. The fabric of Margaret's dress had been woven with a repeated generic floral motif. Who manufactured the sumptuous fabric? It was probably of British manufacture from the famed Spitalfields' factories. In the slow economic recovery following the Second World War, 'All Things British' was the catchcry of the day.

The richly patterned fabric lends itself to a plain voluminous skirt that is gathered in at the waist by a medieval inspired antebellum [a V shape from the frontal natural waistline at the hip to a sharp point at mid front of the costume]. This decorative element functions to adhere the bodice to the skirt to create a single garment and, at the same time, it visually makes the waist look smaller. In addition, it pays homage to Queen Elizabeth's wedding dress, which had a star studded antebellum.

The sheer simplicity of the base garment is ingeniously embellished with a same fabric 'shawl' that is high at the back of the neck, covers the upper arm and falls to a low twist mid-front. It is not separate from, but physically incorporated over the top of the base bodice.

As there is no label inside the garment, it is not known who designed and constructed the gown. What is certain is that it is bespoke, being hand manufactured in an era of machine-sewed garments. It was made explicitly for Margaret. It is unique. But the garment is also the product of a set of royal protocols regarding female attire to events such as the coronation. There was a distinct hierarchy in the dress code, at the pinnacle of which was the Queen's. However, in post-war Britain, there was still an acute fabric shortage. Thus, the Coronation Subcommittee for Dress had to make modifications to standard protocol to denote rank.

The Queen's couturier, Norman Hartnell (1901-79), excelled himself in dressing the Queen and a vast number of female guests to the Coronation. His signature style, given post-war constraints, was rich fabric that flowed and rustled, gem-spangled colour, graceful drape, minimalism such as lack of sleeves and a certain severity of cut without loss of style and grace. Above all, he achieved individuality of design within strict rules governing class. For example, a Marchioness required a light and slim gown to reduce the heat created by her heavy crimson caped, velvet cloak trimmed with miniver and three rows of ermine on the sleeves as well as a train of 'one and three-quarter yards long' [approx. 1.6 metres]. Margaret on the other hand, needed some form of shoulder covering given evening attire being worn in the morning, hence the pseudo-wrap.

Norman Hartnell published designs as guidelines for female Coronation attire for other couturiers and dressmakers to follow. In addition, he made designs for the common woman, which were considered acceptable Coronation dress. These were published in the press. Hats and coats were totally unacceptable, but a light sheer veiling draped from the lower rear of the head to shoulder length was acceptable as was a light shawl, but the general aesthetic was afternoon or evening wear, with a calf length or full-length skirt.

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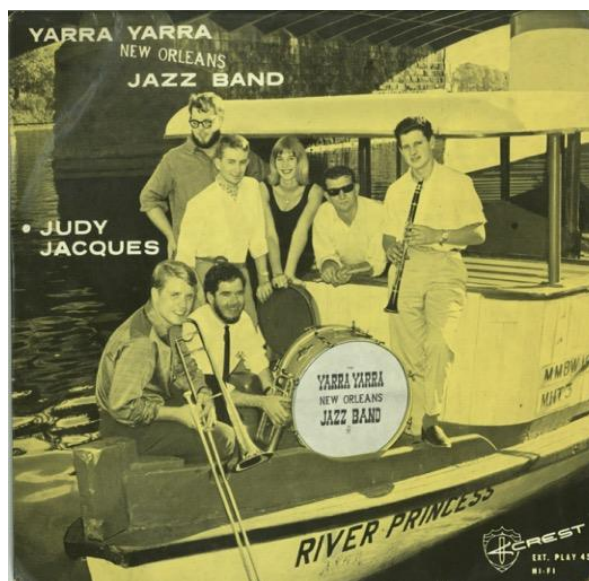
THE YARRA YARRA JAZZ BAND

One of the occupational hazards of working for an op shop is that you end up buying stuff that you don't need. The upside is that sometimes you find a treasure. Recently I found a treasure – a record featuring the Yarra Yarra Jazz Band. Now, I admit that I had never previously heard of this band, but according to the record cover they were a Melbourne band, so I thought the Yarra Yarra reference must be to the Yarra River and hence a possible link to Kew.

Intrigued, I bought the record and subsequently did a bit of research. It seems that the band was formed around 1960 by a chap called Maurice Garbutt (1941-2016). My record cover calls them the 'Yarra Yarra New Orleans Jazz Band', although it seems they generally went by the name the 'Yarras'.

Within two years they were regularly playing at all the big dances, doing lunchtime concerts at the Melbourne Town Hall, appearing on radio and television, and making records. At the time, their average age was 20 years old. The band comprised six musicians who played the trumpet, trombone, clarinet, banjo, bass and drums. Their lead singer was a 17-year-old girl, Judy Jacques.

And they did have links with Kew. They held gigs at the former Kew Civic Hall and, more recently, the Green Acres Golf Club. They continued to play well into the 1980s.



The Yarra Yarra [New Orleans] Jazz Band
Sound recording, Crest
KHS

The record I bought is an 'extended play 45', with the 'extended play' lasting around 12 minutes. Over two sides! It was produced by Crest Records, a Melbourne-based company that recorded many of the prominent local acts of the 1960s and 70s. And what did they sound like? Well, having listened to my new 'hi-fi' record a few times, I can report that they sound quite good.

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A CORONATION DRESS (from page 10)

Those who wore a full-length evening gown were permitted to wear a tiara. Complementary jewellery such as earrings and necklaces could be hired.

Margaret's sartorial display was a component that added to the overall theatrics of the occasion. She had poise and knew what to wear and how to wear it to accord her the position of a 'colonial' Woman of Mark.

Her tiara, but lack of crimson cloak trimmed with the finest of fur, places her in the realm of the middle strata of the Coronation guest list. Did Margaret own a tiara? Did she purchase one or hire one for the occasion? The answer is not known but London jewellers did hire out tiaras to women for the grand day.

Norman Hartnell's motto was 'Simplicity by day, Romance by night'. This traditional ideal of English Romanticism, adopted in 1950s post-war Britain is embodied in the creation of Margaret's Coronation gown. KHS is now custodian of a garment with a wonderful story behind the cut, colour and construction of a piece of woven silk to create a gown.

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With thanks to Richard, Julian and Sue Hollis

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