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other researchers*

# NEWSLETTER

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## TRAM TRACKS IN BOROONDARA

In November 2023, the Society was approached by a donor with an offer for us to digitise and publish photographs taken by her grandfather in the second decade of the twentieth century. These rare photographs were important as they amply illustrate the third of the Victorian Historical Themes: 'Connecting Victorians by transport and communications'.

The series of photographs records the construction of new, and the extension of existing tramlines in Kew, Hawthorn, Camberwell and Surrey Hills. Other photographs capture the redevelopment of the railway line between Auburn and Camberwell Station, while one photo provides a panoramic view of the entrance to Boroondara General (Kew) Cemetery including the horse tram that ran from Victoria Street Bridge.

The photographs taken by E.J. Dower are of an unusually high quality for an amateur photographer of the period. Apart from six smaller photographs in a separate album, the remaining 30 photographs are expertly mounted on card. Together with the immediacy of individual images, hand written annotations by the photographer on the reverse of each photograph, identify the location and the date. Some record that horse drawn drays collected the rails from the Hawthorn [Station railway] siding. The siding is also represented in this new photographic collection with massed drays ready to collect their loads of steel track.

But who was Edgar James Dower and what inspired him to record developments in tram and rail transportation. Born and raised in Olinda, his family later moved to Surrey Hills. As an adult, he worked as a clerk in the city office of the Metropolitan Gas Company, and in this role as a 'collector', he was able to photograph scenes including the construction of tram and train lines. Later he established a real estate agency with his brother - the E.J. Dower Real Estate Agency, Dandenong Office.

To an extent this brief summary of his life suggests why he had the opportunity to take these photographs, but it is the photographs themselves that reveal his real interests in the value of labour and the role played by machinery in enabling what was for the eastern suburbs of Melbourne a revolution in transport.

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**PREPARING FOR ELECTRIC TRAMS, COTHAM ROAD KEW,  
TAKEN NEAR BARRINGTON AVENUE**

Edgar James Dower, photographer, 1913  
KHS

**TRAM TRACKS IN BOROONDARA** (from page 1)

The image on page 1 is a posed photograph of the construction of the tramline in Cotham Road in 1913. While the streetscape reveals other forms of infrastructure such as power lines, the workers and machinery take centre stage. The location in Cotham Road is recorded on the reverse of the photo as being near Barrington Avenue.

While new forms of transportation were being employed to replace hard manual labour, the same principles did not apply to animals. As well as the photograph of the massed horses and drays collecting the new steel track at the Hawthorn siding, another shows horses and drays in Cotham Road, unloading the crushed rock used to support the rails.

So why were tram tracks being laid in this part of Kew and what impact did they have on the social and cultural life of the period. While central Kew had a train line and stations at *Barkers* in Barkers Road, and *Kew* in Denmark Street, the only other form of public transport was the horse tram to the cemetery. The new electric tramline catered for a growing urban population in the eastern section of Kew who had no previous access to public transport. The tramline accelerated the subdivision and sale of the original large estates, and the new line became a major selling point in real estate advertising.

In order to create these new tramlines, Kew and Hawthorn had to join the privately run Prahran and Malvern Tramways Trust in 1913, which enabled the construction of tramlines from High Street [Malvern] to Cotham Road along Glenferrie Road and another line from the Kew Post Office to Burke Road along Cotham Road.

Later in 2024, Kew Historical Society is mounting an exhibition of the E.J. Dower collection at the Kew Court House to tell the convoluted story of the development of electric trams throughout what is now the City of Boroondara.

**ROBERT BAKER**

**GRANTS & SPONSORS**

In 2023–24, KHS is supported by a *Triennial Operational Grant* from the City of Boroondara, a *Stronger Communities Grant* from the Australian Government, and a *Community Heritage Grant* from the National Library of Australia.

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**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.



[above] **CAMBERWELL RAILWAY STATION**  
Edgar James Dower, photographer, 1915  
KHS

**KEW HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC**

**PATRON**

Sir Gustav Nossal AC CBE FRS FAA FTSE

**MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

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**Vice President / Newsletter editor:** David White

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**Treasurer:** Byron Smith

**Archivist:** Robert Baker

**Curator:** Judith Scurfield

**Members:** Lisl Bladin | Mary Kelleher | Julie King | Debbie McColl-Davis | Margaret Robinson

**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 January 2024 and 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 11am and 3pm. 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 AND SOCIAL MEDIA**

[www.kewhistoricalsociety.org.au](http://www.kewhistoricalsociety.org.au)

[victoriancollections.net.au/organisations/kew-historical-society](http://victoriancollections.net.au/organisations/kew-historical-society)

[www.facebook.com/kewhistoricalsociety](http://www.facebook.com/kewhistoricalsociety)

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# HISTORY NEWS

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## CONSERVATION

Conservation of items by trained conservators is often beyond the financial capacity of organisations such as historical societies, and thus grants represent significant opportunities to gain funding for this highly trained work.

Previously, we were able to refurbish the nationally significant sequence of framed mayoral portraits through funding from the Victorian Government, in a grant managed by Public Record Office Victoria. That grant of \$14,500 enabled the conservation framers to clean each photograph and mount, repair, clean the frames, and provide new backing sheets to prevent pest incursions.

In 2024, we have applied for a grant from the National Library of Australia for conservation of a number of items in the Henty Family Costume Collection. In preparation for the application, we consulted with the head textiles conservator of Grimwade Conservation Services at the University of Melbourne, to assess each outfit and provide an analysis of conservation requirements.

On the basis of these evaluations, four costumes were prioritised within the application. Priorities were based on age, rarity and the urgency of conservation. Three of the costumes were owned by Mary Ann Henty, the wife of Francis Henty and include her 1842 wedding dress. The other is the child's dress made for Mary Ann's daughter, Alice, in 1858. While a number of other costumes were recommended for conservation treatments, these fell outside the scope of the grant. The latter includes the bodice (below), worn by Alice Hindson (nee Henty) for which we will try to raise funds locally.

The approved grants have not yet been finalised, however we hope our application is successful, given the agreed national significance of the collection.



## NEW POSTAL ADDRESS

Kew Post Office has now closed. The Society's new mailing address is PO Box 3147, Cotham, Vic. 3101. Our email address remains [info@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au](mailto:info@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au). Please amend your records accordingly.

## DONATIONS TO THE COLLECTION

The Society actively seeks donations to its collection that tell the story of Kew and its environs. This is particularly the case with gaps in our collection. Donations since March 2024 include:

- A gold medallion presented by the City of Kew to Cr Jack Tanner, as well as related ephemera, donated by Anitra Doyne.
- Two rare, illustrated books: *Addresses to HRH The Duke of York and His Excellency the Governor General. The Earl of Hopetoun from the Municipalities of Victoria* (1901), donated by Margaret Robinson and Robert Baker; and *Joint Address to His Majesty King Edward VII from the Municipalities of Victoria* (1901), donated by Robert Baker.
- A collection of paper dress patterns produced by Madame Weigel, donated by Rosemary Lade.
- A collection of ceramic items, created and fired by gifted amateur potter, Violet Ayling, in her kiln at her home in Pakington Street, during the 1950s and 1960s, donated by Kerrie Winslett.
- A book, *Australian Galleries: the Purves family the first four decades 1956-1999*; written and donated by Caroline Field.
- Documents and ephemera; donated by Diane Washfold.
- The archive of Barbara Giles relating to Australian poetry et al; conditional donation.

**ROBERT BAKER**

## MEMBERSHIPS

These are due on 1 July 2024. 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 BSB 633-000, Account 171300288. Please send any queries to the Secretary: [secretary@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au](mailto:secretary@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au)

## NEW MEMBERS

Since March 2024, we have been pleased to welcome Trish & Imre Lele, Kevin Bain, and Jan Palich as new members.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS

Subscriptions to the Society should be paid either by cash or cheque directly into our account BSB 633-000, A/C 171300288 at the Bendigo Bank, 278 Whitehorse Road, Balwyn, Vic. or by direct funds transfer. Please identify your payment by using your last name and the word Subs.

Donations to the Society should be paid directly into our account 633-000 171 300 395 at the Bendigo Bank, Balwyn, using your chosen payment method as above. Please use your last name and the word Donation in the reference or subject line. Donations to the Society are tax deductible. Please use the email [info@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au](mailto:info@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au) to request a receipt for your donation.

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# THE VOYAGE OF THE *JOHN BUNYAN*

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The separation of the Colony of Victoria from New South Wales in 1851 and the discovery of its rich alluvial goldfields caused a spike in immigration to the newly declared colony. In 1852 forty-two ships arrived in Victoria carrying 15,477 people. The *John Bunyan* was one of these ships, leaving Liverpool on 14 August 1852 and arriving in Hobsons Bay on 24 November after a 102-day voyage.

The *John Bunyan* has a special association with the Derrick family, some of the earliest residents of Kew. Among the 373 names on the passenger list for the voyage were labourer Thomas Derrick and his wife Patience, both 52, their daughters Elizabeth, 19, and Esther [sic Hester], 13, and son John, 11. The Derricks were travelling to join their sons, Samuel and William, who had arrived in Melbourne in August 1851 as assisted immigrant labourers, and daughter Ellen who had arrived in Melbourne with her stonemason husband John Quick in January 1849.

In April 1852, after a successful trip to the goldfields, Samuel and William Derrick, in partnership with their brother-in-law John Quick and friend James Venn Morgan, had purchased Portion 86 of the Parish of Boroondara for £482/16/- from its first owner Samuel Watts. Six months earlier, in October 1851, Watts had paid only £200 at the Government land sales for the thirty-two-acre block of arguably stolen, unceded Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung land which extended from the present-day intersection of Cotham Road and High Street to a line between the intersection of Glenferrie Road and Cotham Road and the intersection of Parkhill Road and High Street.

The Kew Historical Society collection includes a copy of a testimonial presented to the boatswain of the *John Bunyan*, following the ship's arrival in Port Phillip Bay.

*To Uriah Whidycombe Boatswain*

*We the undersigned passengers on board the ship John Bunyan, desiring to express our sense of your civility and the uniform kindness of disposition you evinced towards us during the voyage, wish to offer you the accompanying testimonial, which though small will shew to you the good feeling and respect you gained from all classes of passengers in this ship. - We wish further to express our admiration of the very able and seaman-like manner, in which, during very trying weather, you have performed the arduous duties committed to you - [followed by 108 signatures and amounts donated totaling £6-2-0]*

The signatures include that of Thomas Derrick against his donation of sixpence.

Uriah Whidycombe left the *John Bunyan* in Melbourne and married Elizabeth Derrick. James Beven, another passenger on the ship married Hester Derrick. Both couples joined the extended Derrick family living in Kew.



**FRAMED TESTIMONIAL 'TO URIAH WHIDYCOMBE, BOATSWAIN',**  
Passengers on the *John Bunyan*, 1852  
KHS

In our collection there is also a cutting of an article from *The Age* of 27 August 1955, titled *An Emigrant Voyage to Australia During the Gold Rush*, written by Frank Fitzgerald following a meeting with Mr William Whidycombe Bevan, of Rowland Street, Kew, the son of James and Hester Bevan and nephew of the boatswain Uriah Whidycombe. The article suggests that the captain and first mate of the *John Bunyan* were not sober after the first day out from Bristol and that it was the boatswain, Uriah Whidycombe, who took over the captain's duties and brought the ship and her passengers safely to Port Phillip Bay.

Research of newspapers on *Trove* has encountered some differing accounts of the voyage. An advertisement in *The Argus* of 26 November 1852, included the text of two testimonials presented to George Coyle, Commander of the *John Bunyan*, on its arrival in Hobson's Bay on 24 November 1852 and the responses of Captain George Coyle and the ship's surgeon Richard Close.

The testimonial from the first cabin passengers, gave thanks to Almighty Providence that they were about to land in health and safety after a long and prosperous voyage. They expressed their very high opinion of Captain Coyle for his many acts of kindness and his courteous and gentlemanly conduct towards them and the able way he had worked the ship during the voyage.

In reply, Captain Coyle accepted their satisfaction and praise of his conduct during the voyage from Liverpool to Melbourne and joined them in deeply felt thanks to Almighty Providence for permitting so prosperous a voyage without the loss of one adult passenger, or loss or damage to the ship of any kind.

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## THE VOYAGE OF THE *JOHN BUNYAN* (from page 4)

The second and third cabin passengers' testimonial, advised deep felt thanksgiving to the Almighty for the blessing of a speedy and prosperous voyage from Liverpool to Melbourne and recorded their praise of the commander, Captain George Coyle, the mate, Mr Peter Campbell and the boatswain, Mr Airiah Weddycomb [sic], for their united attention and nautical ability in the management of the vessel in light winds and strong gales. They praised the unusually excellent quantity and quality of provisions and water provided during the voyage which, together with their well-ventilated accommodation and the skill of the ship's physician, preserved them from contagious disease while passing through the tropics with not one adult seriously ill during the voyage. However, it finished with the observation that the cooking facilities on board the ship were far too limited for the number of passengers and a recommendation that emigrant ship owners should devote special attention to these matters.

Captain Coyle's reply accepted the praise of his command of the *John Bunyan* and the conduct of his officers, acknowledged their reference to the quality and quantity of provisions, and promised to support their recommendation for enlarged cooking facilities, suggesting this would render the *John Bunyan* one of the most commodious emigrant ships that ever sailed from Liverpool. He finished by congratulating the passengers on their arrival in good health and spirits in a land so highly favoured as Australia.

The ship's surgeon, Richard S. Close MD, added that it was mainly under the guidance of Divine Providence, the capacious ventilation of the ship and the excellent quality of provisions that the passengers had enjoyed the greatest of all earthly blessings – Health. He wished them all health, prosperity, and happiness and trusted that their energies in a foreign land would meet their expectations.

The passengers' testimonials appear to conflict with the recollection in *The Age* article of the drunkenness of Captain Coyle and his first mate. Although, despite misspelling his name, the second and third cabin passengers include a note of praise for the abilities of boatswain Uriah Whidycombe.

To modern ears there appears to be an unusual emphasis on the role of Divine Providence in the safe arrival of the ship. Reference to the lack of adult deaths during the voyage suggests that perhaps some of the children aboard may not have been so lucky. Infectious diseases could decimate the passengers on board a ship, particularly the children, and as the *John Bunyan* entered Port Phillip it would have passed by the emigrant ship *Ticonderoga*, on which 104 passengers had died, moored off the Point Nepean quarantine station. A further 165 passengers had died on the emigrant ships *Bourneuf*, *Marco Polo* and *Wonota*, which had also arrived in Port Phillip shortly before the *John Bunyan*.



**EMIGRANT FLEET IN HOBSON'S BAY**

Captain D.O. Robertson, comm. the *Lightning*, artist  
Reproduced in *The Age*, 27 August 1955

There seems to have been more to the discontent of some of the passengers on the *John Bunyan* than the adequacy of the cooking facilities. However, on 2 December 1852, another advertisement in *The Argus* carried the text of an open letter from the second and third cabin and steerage passengers of the *John Bunyan*, with Thomas Derrick's name appearing among the 128 signatories. Addressed to the Secretary of State for the Home Department in the United Kingdom, their complaints were that the ship had been permitted to leave Liverpool with insufficient provisions for the voyage, several staple foods having run out before eight weeks into the voyage due to the alleged negligence of the emigration officer and the ships commander to ensure that there were sufficient provisions for a 22 week voyage as required by the *Passengers Act, 1849*. It was also alleged that George Coyle had disregarded the requirements for the preservation of order and cleanliness on board the ship and had permitted to excess the sale of intoxicating liquors.

As with much historical research, finding out more about the voyage of *John Bunyan* has raised some further questions. The advertisements from *The Argus* leave us wondering was Captain Coyle a kind and courteous gentleman rather than the drunkard from the family story. Might the testimonials published in the advertisement in *The Argus* have been intended to advertise the arrival of the *John Bunyan* with its passengers in good health compared to some other ships arriving in 1852, or were they intended to salvage Captain Coyle's reputation for drunkenness as portrayed in the family story; and was the letter to the Secretary of State a response to the testimonials in *The Argus*? A reading of the letter suggests that there were problems with the adequacy of the provisions for the voyage, criticism of the way Captain Coyle ran the ship, and that the sale of intoxicating liquors to the passengers may have been the cause of the drunkenness remembered in the family story.

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# FAMILY RECORDS

## THE DIARY OF MRS HENRY HENTY OF *TARRING*

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In 1919, Mrs Henry Henty (1859–1919) died. There was a short service at her 'home' *Tarring*, Kew. Then, her mortal remains were 'laid to rest in the Kew Cemetery'. There was no public fanfare as there was for her illustrious father-in-law, James Henty (1800–82). In death, the family patriarch was elevated to the status of a colonial hero for his 'conquest' of Portland in *Australia Felix* [Victoria]. His story has often been told. In contrast, Mrs Henry Henty was, seemingly, a mere helpmate [housewife] to her husband, Henry (1833–1912), the eldest son of James Henty. However, her private journal reveals much more about her life and personality.

Born in England, Marion Anne McKellar arrived at colonial Geelong with her family. Here she spent her youth in the comfort of a rural retreat of some opulence. The McKellar and Henty families were familiar to each other through business associations and social concourse. Thus, it was no surprise that Marion and Henry joined the families together through Holy Matrimony at the Anglican Church, Geelong. The day was significant for three reasons: It was Marion's birthday; it signified a shift of female primary allegiance to the Henty family through marriage; and Marion commenced her diary to document her married life. Soon after her marriage, Marion's father finalised his business transactions in the Colony and, with his wife and junior children, sailed away to England, all the wealthier for his venture. Marion was left in the Antipodes.



**TARRING** [now Ruyton Girls' School]  
Robert Baker, photographer, 2014  
KHS

Henty men tended to choose emotionally solid, no fuss women. Mrs Stephen Henty, nee Jane Pace (1817–1906) is a prime example. She travelled far and wide on the seas in large and small ships to arrive in an isolated Eden at Portland. She was the only white woman among white men of all social classes and 'the Blacks'. For this Jane earned the title of: 'The First Woman to set Foot in Victoria'.

In old age, Jane set her record straight by penning her story. She was a woman of 'strong principles, deep feelings and an iron will'. Marion, as Mrs Henry Henty, in her *Family Records* immediately sets the tone: '1859 May 26 Our wedding Day'. The entry is short, sharp and to the point. She continued in this style for sixty years. The record of immediate and extended births, deaths and marriages are solid facts, studded throughout the text. In contrast, many women listed the facts on the inside of the family bible cover. Marion's journal was a very private affair, never intended for public consumption, as was a family bible.

Marion's strong Christian principle of being a Christian helpmate to her 'Dear Henry' is peppered throughout the text. Like Kate Middleton [Catherine, Princess of Wales], Marion made no colonial social faux pas when she attended many social functions and private dinners. For example, she attended the luncheon opening of the Deaf and Dumb Institute [Pahran] in which Dear Henry followed the Governor, Sir Charles Darling's official opening, with a speech. 'Of course,' she adds, 'Dear Henry's social status is assured!' Shortly, thereafter, she sat at the Government House dining table with Henry, both being the Governor's intimate guests. Marion mixed freely with the upper ruling echelons of colonial society. She knew what to do and how to do it. As such she was essential to the Henty family's presence and position within Melbourne society. This was a role greater than the frequently received image of a Victorian Era woman contained within the social boundaries of the house.

Like Jane, Marion could endure hardship as is evidenced by her travel with Dear Henry to Round Hill [Culcairn, New South Wales]. A Henty pastoral concern, the station was in the 'deep interior' of Australia. The 'overland' journey started from Spencer Street Train Station in Melbourne to Echuca and thence by buggy with frequent stops to rest horses or acquire fresh horses, take meals and to sleep. At one overnight stop, Marion was very pleased with Mrs Mitchell. The wife of the inn's host, mistook Marion for a newly married woman, not a mother of five children and secretly pregnant with another. This diary entry exposed a degree of vanity that Marion rarely expresses in her private notes, let alone in public. She described the isolated wooden hostelrys to be merely 'clean', 'nice' or 'tidy'. In other words, she could tolerate primitive conditions. They sometimes set off early and arrived late as they 'kangaroo' hopped along the route like the Queensland flying milk drop. It was a stop-start slow method of travel.

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## FAMILY RECORDS (from page 6)

With Dear Henry, she toured the station on foot, as he appraised the operations in the outer paddocks, the sheep washing pens and the shingle-roofed, wooden work buildings. In the wool shearing shed she nearly fainted. But Marion rallied well enough, outside, in the hot, dry air under a suffering sun. The Overseer may well have suspected a pregnancy, but he merely laughed and diplomatically, assured her women found the shed 'close'.

The next day she sat upon a rough-hewn bench, within a makeshift church, for a Sunday church service. In the absence of an officiating priest the Overseer gallantly conducted the service. This was an exercise in God-fearing civility before 'the boss', Dear Henry. The congregation was a motley crowd of labouring employees. There were weary wives dotted throughout the 'mob'. If they were not on their best behaviour, Marion made no journal note. Then she was off for a luncheon, partaken on the parched grass on the way to the rounded hill, which she climbed. Marion 'rode' back to the homestead. It is unclear if this refers to a horse ride or a ride in a trap. After a final 'goodbye', the return trip home was unavoidably delayed resulting in a prolonged stay at Echuca. The condition of the river-side inn was not, on this occasion, penned in her journal. Three days behind time, the steamer's new estimated time of arrival remained unknown for some further days. Marion had the strength of character to endure, physically and emotionally, outside of the comfort and security provided by seclusion at *Tarring* in Kew.

Another longer trip was taken in March 1882. This time it was an ocean voyage on the well-appointed *Mizapore* to Europe. The travelling party included her seven children and a maid. First-class tickets paid, the sudden death of her father-in-law, James, just before they sailed proved a hick-up. In the Victorian era, formalities of mourning were decorously overcome by evoking the old patriarch's wish for Marion to visit her aging parents. The fact 'the boys' were being dispatched to a London boarding school seemed not to be part of the equation on whether to stay home or voyage.

A colonial tour of the Old World was an expression of colonial fiscal and social success, akin to a modern day prolonged overseas retirement holiday. It was a relaxing reward for long and hard work. Marion, like Dear Henry, had both earned their rites of passage, being endorsed by James. In England they domiciled in London, near Marion's 'Dear Parents'. They toured the 'Cathedral Towns' of England. In Europe, the visits to tourist highlights were extensive. But the trip was marred. Henry had to break sad news to Marion. Her mother had expired. It was a quick return to England. Then, the cablegram. It was a hurried departure for home – Australia.

But 'my dear husband did not find things [business] very satisfactory' at home. 'My dear Henry broken hearted'. Despondent, Henry refused to 'go out'. In her care and concern for her husband, Marion vents her spleen in the diary.



**MARION RUTH HENTY**  
Mendelssohn & Co, photographers, 1892  
State Library Victoria

She was angry with him for he [Henry] had 'no blame for all this trouble [that] has come upon us, but the daring & I can only say dishonest dealings of his brother, Herbert Henty ...'. She was lost for further penned words. Herbert had been left in sole charge of the business while the family was away for at least two years. In a short time, Herbert had managed to bankrupt the business. 'Henry's money gone!' The upshot. Twenty acres of *Tarring*, a gift from Grandpapa James Henty, was sold. Gone was the 'paddock' that contained a man-made lake deep enough to sail a boat upon. *Tarring*, a status symbol, was reduced to the two-storey home on three acres of produce garden. This is a behind closed doors detail in the life of Henry Henty, and by association Marion, that is skimmed over or skirted around in official Henty histories. Marion stoically soldiered on. Henry overcame his depression and Herbert was quietly 'disposed of' in the family business dealings. Like Jane, Marion was stoic in adversity.

Another private entry pertaining to feeling was when 'our little Gabrielle [was] born – she only lived 5 hours'. Marion and Dear Henry's only consolation was she had been baptized by two Reverends from Trinity Church, before Gabrielle, too, 'was laid to rest in the Kew Cemetery'. Similarly, feeling for and allegiance to monarchy was expressed by Marion when Prince Alfred was 'shot' in Sydney while on his 1868 Australian tour. She seemed relieved the shocking attempted assassination failed, for she noted the Prince 'was not seriously hurt'.

*Tarring* was never a house for Marion but a 'home'. It was a place where she exercised her Henty notion of hospitality in the full sense of the meaning. It was way beyond social entertaining. She cared for the soul of many a person. For example, in a landau, unannounced, and seriously ill, her brother arrived at *Tarring's* large front door.

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## FAMILY RECORDS (from page 7)

Marion nursed him for several months before he died of his un-noted illness. When 'God had called His [and Marion's] 'faithful servant, Henley', to His House after 14 years in her service, Marion, arranged for a Henty male escort 'to lay him to rest in the Kew Cemetery'. Incidentally, the grave was purchased by the Henty family and women did not generally go to the actual burial.

The news of the fatal death by snakebite of her granddaughter did not indispose Marion. She immediately took a [horse] coach on the long, uncomfortable journey to Wangaratta to be with her grieving 'beloved [first] daughter'. As mother and grandmother, Marion accompanied the family and the little coffin back to *Tarring*, the symbol of hearth and home in adversity. Today, their 'Little Bud [is] in Heaven' having 'been laid to rest in the Kew Cemetery'. Obviously, the Kew Cemetery was a focal point for Marion, given her repeated notation of the locale.

It was the place where the final journey to the Eternal Home was made. This, therefore, reflected Marion's unbending and abiding belief in Anglican religious doctrine.

These are but a few examples found in Mrs Henry Henty's *Family Records*. Like Jane Henty, Marion Henty can be considered a woman of historical mark. Marion was sound of principle, deep of feeling and strong of will. The difference between the two women is Jane represents the woman of Colonial Exploration, while Marion represents the second wave of colonial enterprise, Making One's Mark. Marion's *Family Records* is a document that exposes the life of 'mark-making' women in colonial society during the transition from the Victorian to the Edwardian eras. *Family Records* is housed in the State Library of Victoria.

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# SIR RUPERT 'DICK' HAMER AC, KCMG, ED

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Rupert James Hamer was born in Melbourne in July 1916 to Hubert Hamer, solicitor, and Elizabeth McLuckie. He was a nephew of Sir George Swinburne, and his siblings were: Alison Patrick, historian, David, MLA Isaacs then Senator for Victoria, and Alan, Rhodes Scholar chemist and managing director of ICI Australia.

Rupert was educated at Melbourne Grammar School and Geelong Grammar School. He graduated in law from Melbourne University in 1939 (a resident at Trinity College from 1935).

Rupert joined the Melbourne University Regiment in 1935 from which he resigned at the start of World War 2 to join the 6<sup>th</sup> Division as a private; by 1940 he was sergeant. He served overseas with the 12/43 Battalion, AIF as lieutenant - intelligence officer. The battalion served in Tobruk, Syria, El Alamein, New Guinea, and Normandy. Hamer was mentioned -in-dispatches for his role in the Normandy Landing. By the end of the war, he had attained the rank of major. Rupert later joined the Victorian Scottish Regiment in 1948 and was its Commanding Officer from 1954 to 1958.

In 1944 Rupert Hamer married Alice Mackintosh. They had five children of whom four survived; two sons and two daughters. Their home was in Kew.

Hamer joined the family law firm Smith & Emmerton after World War 2 and rose to be a senior partner. He also joined the Liberal Party. From 1958 to 1971, Hamer was MLC for East Yarra.



**THE HON SIR RUPERT HAMER  
AC, KCMG, ED, MP  
PREMIER OF VICTORIA  
1972-1981**  
Peter Corlett, sculptor  
David White, photographer,  
2024

He became the MLA for Kew on Sir Arthur Rylah's retirement in 1971, which he held until his own retirement in 1981. He was a member of the Bolte Government. Before he became Premier in 1972, he held the following ministries: 1962-64 Minister for Immigration, Assistant Chief Secretary, Assistant Attorney General; 1964-71 Minister for Local Government; 1971-72 Chief Secretary, Deputy Premier.

Hamer became Premier on Henry Bolte's retirement in 1972. He appointed Lindsay Thompson as Deputy Premier. Hamer's positions also included: 1972-81 Premier; 1972-77 Minister for Arts; 1972-79 Treasurer; 1979-81 Minister for State Development, Decentralisation & Tourism; 1981 Minister for Economic Development.



## SIR RUPERT 'DICK' HAMER (from page 8)

After nineteen years of Bolte's reign the time was ripe for major reform, and under the slogan *Hamer makes it happen* major reforms were enacted, among them: environment protection laws were strengthened, Aboriginal communities were given their land, abortion and homosexuality were de-criminalised, an anti-discrimination law was introduced, tramways were modernised and extended, the death penalty was abolished, shop trading hours were extended, and entertainment was permitted on Sunday. The Department of Education was reformed, and physical education was made compulsory in State schools. In the arts scene, the Victorian Arts Centre was built, the Meat Market Craft Centre was opened, the Heide Museum of Modern Art created, as was Film Victoria, and the Victorian College of the Arts was reconstituted. The underground rail loop, the West Gate Bridge and the Thompson Dam were built during his premiership.

The wearing of seat belts was made compulsory in 1970, and random breath testing of drivers for alcohol and the compulsory blood testing for alcohol of drivers involved in road accidents were introduced in 1976. Hamer faced three elections as Premier: 1973, 1976 and 1979. The first two were won with comfortable majorities, the 1979, however, saw a loss of eleven seats to the ALP, principally because of the simmering scandal of land deals by the Housing Commission and the recession.

All good things come to an end. Hamer yielded to party pressure to find another leader and he resigned in June 1981 and was replaced by Lindsay Thompson his deputy. At the next election in 1982 the Liberals were routed and John Cain junior became premier. Hamer's continuous premiership of 3088 days was second to that of Bolte – 6288 days. Life after politics for Hamer meant many directorships and deep involvement in the art scene and not-for-profit area.

Frank Scully DLP states: *Hamer ... brought 'permissive' government and society to Victoria and what a disaster that has been for all concerned!* Tim Colebatch describes Hamer as: *...intelligent, fair minded, courteous, hardworking and with the long-term interests of the electors uppermost. He was a philanthropist and great patron of the arts.*

Sir Rupert 'Dick' Hamer died at home in March 2004 and was given a state funeral. The Peter Corlett statue of Rupert Hamer is in the Treasury Gardens, Spring Street, Melbourne.

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**ERECTED IN MEMORY OF SIR HENRY DE CASTRES KELLETT BART**  
Memorial plaque from Kew Town Hall [Walpole Street], 1924  
Gift of the City of Kew, 1989  
KHS

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# 100 YEARS AGO

## MAY – JUNE 1924

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### FATHER OF FOOTBALL ACCIDENT

Mr H.C.A. Harrison, 87 years of age, who is known throughout the Commonwealth as the father of Australian football, was badly shaken and sustained a severe shock after a fall from a Kew tram in Richmond last night. He was driven to a doctor then to his home in Walpole Street, Kew, by Mr Syd. Sherrin, the football maker, of Collingwood. Mr Harrison's chief regret, as expressed to Mr Sherrin, was that he would not be able, to attend one of the matches today.

*The Herald*, 3 May 1924, p. 1

### EMPIRE DAY IN KEW

Hundreds of children from several State schools in the district assembled outside Kew town hall yesterday morning to join in the local celebration of Empire day. Streams of flags were hung across the street. Short patriotic addresses were given to the children, who then ceremoniously saluted the flag. In the afternoon, at the invitation of the council, the children enjoyed a free entertainment at the Rialto Picture Theatre.

*The Age*, 24 May 1924, p. 14.

### MOTOR SKIDS AT KEW

Driving a motor car along High-street, Kew, at 10.30 a.m. yesterday, Mr R.W. Selkrig, of 25 Fitzwilliam-street, Kew, swerved to avoid a cab going in the opposite direction. The car skidded on the slippery road, and dashed into a verandah post. At the same time the driver of another car, who was apparently watching the accident, lost control of his machine, which swerved to the side of the road, knocking down two verandah posts.

*The Age*, 10 June 1924, p. 6.

### HIGH STREET, KEW

Last night Kew Council confirmed its original opinion that the widening of High-street scheme is essential to the progress of the city, and will continue to urge Parliament to enact the desired legislation at the earliest possible moment.

*The Sun News-Pictorial*, 18 June, p. 8.

### SENSATIONAL KEW CRASH

Sir Henry Kellett (Baronet) died last night from a fractured skull received in a collision in Cotham Road between an electric tram and a motor-car in which he and other members of the Kew Council were riding. Four other passengers in the car were injured.

*The Sun News-Pictorial*, 21 June 1924, p. 2.

DAVID WHITE



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# BRANCHING OUT

## THE COLES FAMILY OF KEW

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Over the years there have been many Coles families living in Kew. The most famous is the family which built the empire of G.J. Coles & Co. The scion was George W. Coles of 22-24 Hillcrest Avenue, Kew. George W. and his wife Elizabeth were successful shopkeepers in regional Victoria. Their eleven children were born between 1883 and 1900 in Stawell, Jung, Nhill, Geelong and St. James. Elizabeth died in 1900 and in 1902 George W. married Annie Topp. Their son Norman was born in 1907.

George W. and Annie lived in High Street, Kew from 1920, in a house which no longer exists. In 1931, George W. died at his newly built home *Trevallyn*, at 22 Hillcrest Avenue. This modest 3-bedroom brick house has a terracotta tiled roof and was built in 1930 in the *Parkhill Estate* subdivision. Until recently a 175-year-old Bunya Bunya pine tree planted by Kew pioneer, Thomas Judd, grew in the garden. Annie lived in the house until her death in 1941. In 1999 number 22 Hillcrest Avenue was officially amalgamated with number 24 and the number 22 became redundant. Both George W. and Annie are buried in the Boroondara Cemetery.

There were six sons in the 'first family': George, commonly called GJ, Jim, Arthur, Dave, Frank and Edgar. All but Frank joined the Australian Imperial Force during the Great War and fought overseas. They were all wounded in action and Jim and Dave died of their injuries.

Jim had joined GJ in 1914 in founding the Coles Variety Stores chain and Arthur quickly followed. Located in Smith Street, Collingwood, it was staffed by eight employees. The opening company slogan was 'nothing over 1/-', then later, 'nothing over 2/-'. GJ had been influenced by the '5 and 10 cents' stores, pioneered by F.W. Woolworth which he had visited in the United States during a study trip in 1913. Counters were arranged with a central aisle for sales staff to traverse while serving customers. The merchandise was on display for shoppers to handle without the assistance of staff. Earlier retailers had kept all merchandise behind the counter to show to customers upon request. When the brothers were deployed overseas during the war, their uncle James, a Kew resident, bought the store but agreed that GJ could buy it back on the same terms if he returned from overseas. Although he returned, GJ didn't buy back the store. In 1921, G.J. Coles & Coy. was incorporated as a proprietary company.

In 1924, G.J. Coles & Co opened a store in Bourke Street, in the heart of Melbourne's CBD. Opposite the Myer Emporium, it boasted Australia's first self-service cafeteria. In the following year it purchased the former Cole's Book Arcade, also in Bourke Street and opened a store there. Cole's Book Arcade and Cole's Funny Picture Books were established by E.W. Cole, no relation.

By 1927 there were nine Coles branches in Victoria. Brothers Edgar, Frank, and Norman had all joined the company. In October that year, they offered shares to the public. GJ's brothers all became directors.



**HIGH STREET LOOKING TOWARDS KEW JUNCTION**

[Coles Variety Store at right]  
J.E. Rogers, photographer, 1961-69  
Rogers Collection, KHS

GJ was managing director of G.J. Coles & Co from 1923 to 1931. Suffering poor health GJ handed the managing directorship to Arthur in 1931 but remained as chairman. GJ remained as chairman until 1956 and retained his directorship until he retired in 1976. Arthur was a businessman, politician and philanthropist. He became managing director in 1931, a post he held until 1944. In 1934 he was elected to the Melbourne City Council. He was elected Lord Mayor of Melbourne in 1938, and re-elected unopposed in 1939 and 1940. In 1940 he was elected to the House of Representatives as the independent member for the seat of *Henty* (resigning as Lord Mayor while remaining a councillor). Known as a 'human dynamo', Arthur held many leading roles on government entities and statutory authorities.

Frank, called Kenneth following his knighthood, was deemed unfit for military service during the Great War and joined the company in 1919 as a storeman. He was appointed a director in 1921 and through the early 1920s was a store manager. He became deputy-chairman in 1946 and chairman of the company from 1956 to 1963. He was known for his integrity both in business and socially. He described the family as ordinary shopkeepers and said, he 'grew up behind the counter' in his parent's shops. Frank held a wide range of corporate appointments. He retired from the board in 1976.

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## BRANCHING OUT (from page 10)

Norman, commonly called 'the youngster' by his family, was educated at Trinity Grammar School, Kew. He joined G.J. Coles & Co in 1924 as a storeman at Smith Street and transferred to head office in 1926. He became company secretary in 1934 and joined the board in 1949. He became deputy-chairman in 1961, managing director in 1967 and added the role of chairman in 1968 when he succeeded Edgar. Norman's major contribution to the empire was Coles' introduction of K-Mart discount stores in a joint venture with its American owner. The first store opened in East Burwood in 1969, and by 1978 K-Mart (Australia) Ltd had become a wholly owned subsidiary of Coles. His retirement in 1979 saw the end of the Coles brothers' leadership of the company.

The relationships of the Coles brothers were sometimes fractious. In 1935, the autocratic leadership style of GJ led to an abortive attempt by Arthur to oust him from the role of chairman. Petitions by staff saw GJ returned to the chairmanship and Arthur continued as managing director. Following the resolution of the so-called 'big trouble', GJ made notes about Frank whom he called a 'man of high ideals' and 'addicted to compromise', and Arthur who he declared was a 'good organiser, hard worker, quick thinker and speaker and honest, but also conceited, over ambitious, dictatorial, difficult to work with and bears a grudge'.

The Coles brothers were each involved in philanthropy and corporate affairs and served on various boards. G.J. and Frank were knighted in 1957, Edgar in 1959, Arthur in 1960 and Norman in 1977. Of the 'five knights', Edgar's influence on the company was significant. He became its secretary in 1921, director in 1929, joint managing director in 1940 and sole managing director in 1944. In the post-war years, Edgar steered the company through a period of expansion that earned him the title of 'the takeover king'. He acquired numerous Australian companies including Selfridges in 1950, Foy & Gibson's in 1951, Manton's in 1955 and Penney's in 1956.

Throughout his career, Edgar took on civic and charitable work becoming a Kew city councillor between 1936 and 1938. At this time, he was living in Coleman Avenue, East Kew. In 1963, he added the role of chairman to his responsibilities. Edgar retired as managing director in 1967 but remained as chairman of the company until 1968. Under Edgar's direction the company had grown from 86 to 570 stores, and turnover had increased from \$10 million to \$250 million a year. By 1973, there was a Coles store in every Australian capital city. By 1976, the company was the largest retail group in Australia, employing more than 36,000 people.

Coles had been a variety store until 1958 when it moved into groceries. It acquired the S.E. Dickins chain, rebranding some stores as Coles Dickins.

Coles first supermarket, opened in 1960 on the corner of Burke and Doncaster Roads in North Balwyn, traded under the Dickins name and the intersection became known as Dickins corner. In 1962, Edgar named the supermarkets, 'New World' capturing the popular enthusiasm for the space race and decorating them with model rockets.

Traditionally, Australians in town and country bought their food from small grocery shops in their local neighbourhood. Shop owners would often live above their small shops and usually offered a delivery service provided by a boy on a bicycle. With strong links to Kew, the company was in no hurry to open a branch here.



**COLES IN HIGH STREET, KEW**  
Stewart West, photographer, circa 1985  
KHS

Two stores in Burke Road, Camberwell and another in Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn opened in the 1930s preceding the opening of the High Street, Kew store in 1954. To create the Kew Coles branch, three Victorian era shops east of the Greyhound Hotel, (now the Skinny Dog Hotel), were amalgamated. The branches were numbered in opening date order; the Kew store was number 192.

In 2007, Coles Group was acquired by Wesfarmers for \$19.3 billion. However, they demerged in 2018 when Coles was spun off, with it once again listed as an independent company on the Australian Stock Exchange. The current owners are Coles Group Ltd and there are no Coles family members on the board.

The Coles archive has been donated to the State Library Victoria and some parts have been digitised. I found an interesting pencil drawing of Kew High Street in 1954 when the Kew Coles branch was opened. It shows the layout of the shops and the tenants. Also, a wonderful badge worn by staff, offering service.

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