

# KEW HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 175, KEW 3101

President:  
Mrs. T. Sartori

Hon. Secretary:  
Miss M. Macdowell

JUNE, 1985

NEWSLETTER No. 28.

Dear Members,

The first half of 1985 has been a busy few months for the Society. This year is not only a celebration year for Victoria but also for Kew, as it celebrates 125 years as a City. Many activities have been planned by the City with the Historical Society featuring prominently throughout the year.

The Society participated in the Kew Community Festival with a very comprehensive display of the research into the Henty family's connection with Kew. Memorabilia from our archives and lent by members was also displayed. There was also an opportunity to view some of the many slides that belong to the Society. Four bus tours were also conducted and these proved to be well attended again this year.

Displays in the library and The Junction Male to celebrate Heritage Week also caused great interest. A well attended Mannequin Parade featuring Gowns through the Ages was also run to tie in with the Heritage Week theme.

Unfortunately our annual bus trip had to be cancelled in March due to the lack of interest, but it is hoped that another can be arranged for later in the year.

The monthly meetings are being very well attended, with a wide variety of speakers and member participation. The Manchester Unity Hall may not be quite as comfortable as our last venue, but the warmth and enthusiasm of the members more than makes up for this.

I am sorry to report that two of our long standing members have passed away this year, Miss Eva Grant and Mrs. Grace McDermott. We will miss these members greatly.

The Committee and I look forward to renewing old acquaintances who for one reason or another have not joined us for a while. If the lack of transport is the problem please do not hesitate to let us know and I am sure that something could be arranged.

Kind regards,

PRESIDENT.

Report on Ecumenical Services to celebrate Victoria's 150th Anniversary held in Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Kew, on Pentecost Sunday, 26th May, 1985, by Mary Macdowell:

The church was filled to capacity, many Kew organisations being represented. The address was given by Sir James Gobbo, Justice of the Supreme Court and resident of Kew.

The Historical Tableau represented various peoples and events appertaining to the settlement of Australia - the aborigine, the land boomers, gold seekers, business people, the migrant, the "susso" of 1930-31, the Depression.

Concluding, a group of five children of various migrant backgrounds, both present and past, presented in costume. In their hands the future of our nation lies. The Kew Historical Society loaned one of its period gowns for the tableau.

The music, before, during and at the conclusion of the service was beautifully rendered by the Kew Citizens Band.

This was truly a commemorative occasion ending with the following:

"We accept anew our call to make visible our unity in Christ. We pledge ourselves to serve one another in love not only by words but by deeds. With God's help, we will strengthen our efforts for common action and prayer during this year."

In 1977, Mrs. Betty Mason of Annandale, N.S.W. sent to our then Secretary, Joy Stewart, memories of early Kew written by her mother, Mrs. M. G. Cochrane. Hereunder are extracts which will be of great interest to members.

"I am writing my memories of nearly 100 years ago, hoping they will interest some Kew Residents to hear how some of us lived in those days.

My grandfather, Joseph Thompson, born in Paisley, was brought from England with his wife and family by the Colonial Bank, which no longer exists. My father, John Henning Thompson, was a small boy. They brought with them all the possible household things as well as a tent in which to live until they could procure a house in Australia. Upon arrival about 1854 a carrier demanded £8 to take the tent to South Yarra so my grandfather, being a very strong man, carried it there himself.

My father attended a Presbyterian primary school in South Yarra after which, to his delight, the Church of England opened the Melbourne Grammar School. Dr. Bromby was then the Headmaster. My grandfather, forgetting on a busy day to enroll his son, my father enrolled himself and was among the first pupils. My father did well there, liking Dr. Bromby immensely. Later he went to Melbourne University and returned as a teacher to Melbourne Grammar, where he became head teacher under Dr. Bromby.

When Dr. Bromby retired my father was invited to go to Kew by some of the well-off families there who had sons to be educated. My father purchased a school, the head of which had died, and so he went to Kew where he ran the school successfully for nearly 30 years.

My mother was Louisa Elizabeth Grattan and she and my father were already married when they came to Kew. Housekeeping at Kew High School meant work as there were always boarders, some of them sons of country people. My father called the house "Molina" (I believe Greek for mill) and it was situated on land bounded by Charles Street, Stanley Street (a small blind street) and the fence of St. Francis Xavier College, and the dividing fence of Mr. Sadler's land, on which was his large house where he lived. The boundary of his land was Wellington Street.

I was born in 1881 the youngest of a family of four, two brothers and one sister. We were all born and grew up in Kew.

"We had a large vegetable garden and at one end of it was a pen for two pigs. They ate all the waste and when they were ready the butcher took them. My mother had a pair of ponies and phaeton so there was plenty of work for the gardener who looked after all this. There was also a boy who cleaned knives by rubbing the blades with a large cork damped and dipped in 'Nelson's Knife Powder' and polishing them with a cloth. There was no stainless steel in those days. The boy also kept everyone's boots and shoes shining and did odd jobs. Inside there was a cook (most important) laundress and housemaids.

'Molina' had four dormitories, two small rooms for resident masters, and showers (cold of course) upstairs. The back stairs led down to a tiled square hall with a door into the large boarders' dining room. A second door off the hall led to a small room containing a piano for music lessons. There was nothing else for the school downstairs, the rest of the house was for our family.

In those times I do not think a day passed without people coming in and out. Butcher, baker, grocer etc. called for orders and delivered their goods. There were always people with something to sell from some German men who sang in harmony to a man with a barrel organ on a stick and a money with a red cap on, on top of it. A man with a bakers' basket and a snowy white cloth which he turned back to show piles of muffins and crumpets, to several Chinese who came with fish and other things. We knew the Chinese by the days they came. Our favourite was Saturday John who lived in Little Bourke Street. He carried two containers about four feet high on a pole on his shoulder, one made of basketware and the other wood, with drawers. He sold a variety of things from hairpins to stockings. He had a pigtail about five feet long which was mostly of silk. On a hot day he would push it off his almost bald head, wipe off the perspiration and rewind the plait round his head and put his dirty old felt hat on again.

Bennet and Woolcock were our butchers and sold to my mother at a flat rate of fourpence a pound. On Good Friday mornings the baker delivered hot cross buns.

Professor Irving had a boys' school in Power Street, Hawthorn, and there was great competition in sports between Hawthorn and Kew pupils. Each had a boat on the Yarra and rowing, football and cricket contests were held. My father and the Reverend Johnston, a master at Scotch College, were, many years later, responsible for starting the six Victorian public schools Head of the River annual races.

Sundays were real rest days and Mrs. Hughes (the school laundress for 17 years) went regularly to the Kew Presbyterian Church. Each Christmas the church would have a 'Magic Lantern' evening and Mrs. Hughes would ask my mother's permission to take my sister and me. The evening was held at the church and consisted of music, songs and recitations with large coloured pictures thrown onto a screen to illustrate such things as Tennyson's Brook, etc. We always went and enjoyed the evenings. I am sure they would be considered very dull these days.

In the early days a Mrs. Benn (think her name was) owned the corner of land between Studley Park Road and Princess Street. She was almost as great a worker for the aboriginals as Daisy Bates. I can remember driving up her long front path when I went with my mother to visit her.

The Church of England took over the Kew High School property, added Mr. Sadler's house and one of the Henty brothers' houses and land; this is on the corner of Charles and Wellington Streets. Combined with 'Molina' they are now part of Trinity Grammar School. The trees I used to climb as a child are gone and school buildings replace them.

I was christened, confirmed and married in Trinity Church of England, Pakington Street, which we always attended. I have many memories, some sad, but mostly pleasant and happy ones of Kew. I am glad there is a Kew Historical Society."

DIARY DATES.

- 12th June Parks and gardens of Kew. Speaker Peter Davies,  
Kew City Council.
- 10th July Kew Philaharmonic Society - Mrs. Valda Fouvy.
- 14th August Mr. Ross O'Shanahn, Melbourne & Metropolitan Board  
of Works.
- 11th September Members are invited to talk for two minutes on  
"Something that happened to me on a Monday."
- 0th October Annual General Meeting - Mayor of Kew.
- 26th October Bus tour of Kew in conjunction with Hawthorn Historical  
Society.
- 13th November Slide night.
- 13th December Christmas Party.

We welcome the following new members:

Mrs. G. Steele  
Miss M. Blatchly  
Mrs. B. Williams  
Mr. P. P. and Mrs. D. E. Craven  
Miss A. G. Allen  
Mr. & Mrs. M. Watson

Please note the new telephone number of the President,  
Mrs. T. Sartori - .