

KEW HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 175, KEW 3101

President:
Sue Leong
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Hon. Secretary:
Lex Allen
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Newsletter No. 32

July/August, 1986

Dear Members,

Now that we are fully into the woes of winter weather, we can only look forward to the warmer months whilst making the best of the present. Please bear up and come along to our next meeting when Bill and Helen Reeve will tell us about their lives in Kew.

The Historical Society has been as busy as ever. We held a working bee at the archives on Saturday, 7th June, and were able to sort through the whole of Dorothy Rogers' newspaper collection. Some extracts from this collection have been included in the current newsletter. My grateful thanks go to all those who gave up their spare time and helped with this sometimes tedious, but often fascinating task.

There have been some issues that have arisen on which the Society has had to offer an opinion. The Royal Historical Society of Victoria has proposed that the historical societies regroup into regions in order to better represent the whole of Victoria. The Kew Historical Society was advised to leave the Eastern region and join a new South-Eastern region. Your committee decided that Kew had more in common with the Eastern region, to which we presently belong, and advised the Royal Historical Society of Victoria of our opinion.

The other issue has been the move by the Local Government Commission to make Kew Council amalgamate with Hawthorn, or Hawthorn and Camberwell. After a great deal of discussion, your committee decided that it was not in Kew's best interests for the Council to join another, as there did not seem to be any great advantage in such a move.

At the June meeting, I read out to members a letter which I wrote on your behalf to the Kew Council and the Local Government Commission, in which I said that we believed that a bigger municipality did not necessarily mean a better one. I pointed out that Kew was in fact originally joined with Hawthorn and Camberwell under the auspices of the Boroondara Road Board. Early in 1860, some leading citizens in Hawthorn decided that the Road Board was too large to meet their needs and broke away to form their own municipality. The Road Board moved its office from Hawthorn to Camberwell, which prompted Kew residents to argue that their needs could not be met from such a distant location. By the end of 1860, Kew was given permission to form its own municipality. I argued that the very reasons which tore apart Kew, Hawthorn and Camberwell in 1860 were present today.

My letter mentioned that Kew had a unique historical context manifested by its origins. Kew was also geographically singular with its Billabong and river at Studley Park. Modern day Kew's abundance of kindergartens, schools, hospitals and shops, along with its quiet,

gracious setting are the characteristics that have attracted its residents and set Kew apart from its neighbours.

I concluded with the comment that Kew's present residents have a responsibility to the vision of their forefathers of 1860 to see that the needs of their present, and future, community are met by their own local Council.

The letter was unanimously endorsed by the meeting and duly posted. I am not sure that it will have a great deal of influence on the outcome of council amalgamation, but at least we have taken a stand.

This seems to be a rather long President's letter, so I think I had better close. I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting.

Regards,

Sue Leong
President

PERSONAL NOTES:

Mary Macdowell has fully recovered from her argument with the Kew City pavement. We are pleased to see you up and about!

Our Vice President, Phillip Barnes, will be one of the candidates for College Ward in the Council elections to be held on 2nd August. Best of luck, Phillip!

Irene Stones is returning to Perth, after a short visit home, to be with her ailing sister and will miss the next meeting.

Barbara Giles was featured in an article "Poetry in Motion" in the Progress Press of 9th July. The article gave details of Barbara's involvement in Pariah Press. Hope you all read it!

Mrs. Blanche Barbour wrote us a note on her return from three weeks in St. Vincent's owing to a bad fall. Hope you will soon be your normal self and able to go on the launch trip in October.

TOUR NOTES:

Please note: the Committee of Eastern Historical Societies 1986 tour will be based at Maryborough in central Victoria. It will take in Dunolly and other nearby goldfield areas, aboriginal occupation, and other local interest points.

Dates: Friday, October 24th to Sunday, October 26th, 1986.

Cost: \$107 (all-inclusive but B.Y.O. Friday travelling meal) on twin share basis.
\$123 if you require a single room.

Registration: by 26th September, 1986, to Miss L. Gray,
, Lilydale, 3140. Phone ()

14th October (Tuesday) 1.30 - 3.30 p.m. The Kew Historical Society has organised a Port of Melbourne Launch Trip. Cost and bus departure time to be advised.

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The Jubilee
History of Kew
F.G.A. Barnard

As we have seen, the Parish of Boroondara comprised 14,250 acres, or 23 1/2 square miles of country. The main roads had been defined, and in some places made passable, a bridge over a creek built here and there by a paternal government. Such matters were attended to by the Central Road Board, presided over by Dr. Murphy, afterwards Sir F. Murphy, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, which received its funds direct from Government and from tolls. But the growing settlement was crying out for better roads, and about 1856 it was proposed to follow the example of other districts in the young Colony, and, under the forms of the existing act, establish a municipality to be called the Boroondara Road Board.

During the first two years the Board spent some £7,000 on roads, bridges, &c., then there were loud cries for more roads, &c., so the expenditure was increased to £18,000 during the next two years. But the district was progressing, and some of the leading spirits of Hawthorn thought that Boroondara was too big and unwieldy, and their portion of the district would be better looked after as a separate municipality. A requisition to the Government was signed and presented, and a public meeting held for 18th June, 1860, at the Red Lion Hotel, Lower Hawthorn, which was then in the centre of population, to receive the report of the progress made for the erection of a municipality under the existing Municipal Institutions Act. Mr. Michael O'Grady, afterwards member for the district, and a good friend to Hawthorn in later years, explained the position of affairs, and resolutions were passed expressing the desirability of establishing the municipality. Meetings were subsequently held at the Hawthorn Hotel, Fletcher's Hotel, and the Governor Hotham Hotel, when the resolutions were confirmed. A memorial was prepared and presented to the Governor, Sir Henry Barkly, K.C.B., and on the 26th June, 1860, a notice was published in the "Government Gazette" granting the petition, and ordering an election of councillors to take place.

It will be noticed that Hoddle had originally called the government township of Boroondara, the land on the north side of Burwood road from the Yarra to Power Street, "Hawthorne," but the "Gazette" notice came out "Hawthorn," and as such it has remained.

The new municipality appointed the same officers, Messrs. Toon and Rooney, as were conducting the affairs of the Boroondara Road Board, and for a time used the same office in Burwood Road, Hawthorn, but in the course of a few months the Board's office was removed to Camberwell.

The people of Kew now began to think that with the seat of government at Camberwell they

would receive little attention from the Board represented on it by one or two residents, Mark Cranwell and George Lewis, and to self government. A letter from "Q. in the" in the "Richmond Australian" of 6th October advocated the election of all Kew men at approaching election for the Boroondara Road Board.

The Road Board was alarmed at the trouble they were taking, and called a public meeting at the Kew Hotel for the 8th October, 1860, when the President, Mr. Michael O'Grady, occupied the chair and did his best to pacify the ratepayers. Eventually on the motion of Mr. George Wharton, seconded by Mr. Frederick Barton, the following resolution was passed:—"That in the opinion of this meeting it is advisable that Kew should be made a separate road district." An amendment to the effect that the Road Board management of the district should be continued was proposed by Messrs. John T. and John Rigby Norris, but received no support.

A petition to the Governor-in-Council, signed by 172 resident householders, was published in the "Government Gazette" of 9th November, 1860, praying for the establishment of the Municipality of Kew; the term Borough was introduced in the amended act some years later.

The petition of the ratepayers was granted, and the proclamation of Kew as a separate municipality appeared in a supplement to the "Government Gazette" of 18th December, 1860. Kew thus attains its fiftieth year on the 18th December next, when its revenue will have increased as to enable it to claim the dignity of Town.

It was no doubt a plucky action on the part of the small handful of people residing in Kew at the end of 1860 to take upon themselves the responsibilities of municipal government. That portion of Boroondara which became Kew contained 16 1/2 miles of the original government roads, to which must be added half the maintenance of the two bounded roads, Barker's and Burke Roads, equal to about two miles. Private owners, in cutting up the blocks, had added some ten miles, of which Mr. N. Fenwick was responsible for rather more than three.

Kew thus commenced its municipal career with about 30 miles of roads and streets to look after, and as the census of 1861 gave a population of only 1,439 persons, living in 279 houses, the responsibilities of the ratepayers were fairly heavy, but the requirements were not so exacting as those of the present day.

KEW WANTS TO LINK WITH HEIDELBERG

Ivanhoe's Rustic State

The Heidelberg council has decided to support the proposal for a tram line from Kew, across the new Burke road bridge, along the boulevard to Ivanhoe, and on to Heidelberg.

This assurance was given last night to 30 members of the North Camberwell, East Kew and Nunawading Progress League who attended the council meeting.

Mr. Bainbridge, of Ivanhoe, said he lived only six miles from the G.P.O. yet, for want of ample communication, the progress of the district had been severely impeded. Foxes were in his neighborhood, rabbits and hares were numerous, and there was sport for the wild-duck shooter. Occasionally he killed snakes in his garden, and his locality lacked water, electric light and gas. Nowhere else within ten miles of Melbourne were there such rustic conditions.

(Herald 18 April 1910)

In 1910, Crs. Kellett and Woollard represented Kew at a conference convened by the Hawthorn Council to consider a proposed amalgamation of Hawthorn, Camberwell and Kew. In the same year Collingwood invited Kew to appoint two representatives to a conference to consider the formation of a Greater Melbourne Council. Kew refused the invitation because of the consideration being given to the amalgamation of the three local Councils. A special meeting of the Kew Council was held to consider the report of the Hawthorn Council. By eight votes to six the meeting decided that at that time Kew was not in favour of amalgamation.

"As far as I can see it will be some years yet before there will be any substantial relief in the housing position in Melbourne. My estimate is that we are 12,000 houses short, and with the prevailing scarcity of really skilled labor. It is impossible to reduce that leeway as fast as we should like."

Kew continues to be one of Melbourne's most popular residential areas. Including East Kew, there are 150 shops and homes in course of erection, and an average of 30 building permits a month is maintained. These figures show an increase of 20 per cent. on the previous half-year, and of 40 per cent. on the previous two years.

(Herald 19 May '23).

DIARY NOTES: N.B. All meetings commence at 8 p.m. at the Manchester Unity Hall, Union Street, Kew, unless otherwise stated.

13th August Bill and Helen Reeve will talk to us about their lives in Kew.

10th September Mrs. Helen Hoyle (formerly a teacher at P.L.C.) will talk about setting up a school in Mooroolbark.

(Please note that your committee positions automatically become vacant. If you wish to join the 1986/7 committee, advise us soon.)

8th October Annual General Meeting.
Guest speaker: the Mayor of Kew.

12th November Mrs. Margaret Thompson from the National Trust will talk about the National Trust properties and show slides.

12th December Christmas party.
(Friday)

ACQUISITIONS:

Newspaper cuttings from The Herald, 1958, about D'Estaville, kindly donated via Barbara Giles.

Photograph of Woodbury College, kindly donated by Mrs. Muriel Coghlan.

School badge from Woodbury College, kindly donated by Mrs. Lilian McRae (nee Houston).

Early school desk, kindly donated by the Principal of East Kew Primary School, Mr. Lindsay.

SPECIAL PLEA:

Can anyone help on the Society's behalf at the Library on Mondays from 2.30 - 4 p.m.? Please contact Dorothy Benyei on if you can!
