

KEW HISTORICAL SOCIETY **Inc.**

P.O. BOX 175, KEW 3101

President:

Mrs. Sue Leong

Hon. Secretary:

Miss Lex Allen

NEWSLETTER NO.35

March/April 1987

Dear Members,

I hope you are well and we'll continue to see many of you at our meetings. We have purchased some of our own cups to use at supper time and intend to alter the seating arrangements to avoid the draught felt by those in the back row- so we're trying to make the setting as comfortable as possible!

So far this year, we have heard Mr. Noel Goss speaking about "Mulberry Hill" and Kew District Scout Commissioner John Pennington speak of the scouting movement in Kew. We are sure to be equally entertained on April 8th. by Prue Sanderson who will talk about her involvement in the Kew Heritage Survey.

I would like to remind you of the Villa Alba Restoration Fair on the weekend of the 4th. and 5th. April, in conjunction with Heritage Week. It will be a unique display of craftsmen at work. The Historical Society will have representatives there and I urge you all to support them.

Onto other matters- the sun shone on our Port of Melbourne launch trip that was thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended. The annual cake stall was again run successfully by hard-working members and raised \$254.00. The Kew Festival saw us represented in the parade by three delightful young ladies dressed in clothing of yesteryear and travelling in vintage cars, taking a walking tour around Kew on a Sunday afternoon to share with people places of historical interest, and guiding a group of thirty people in a bus throughout central Kew and Studley Park on another Sunday afternoon. My grateful thanks go to everyone who contributed towards making these occasions so pleasurable.

We plan to have a tour of the M.C.G. on Thursday June 18th. at 10.00a.m. under the expert guidance of one of our members, Mr. Bill Reeve. The tour will be free and members are asked to make their own transport arrangements.

We are also planning an outing on Melbourne Cup Day which will include tours of Briar and Macrae Cottages, and lunch at Thea Sartori's Macrae beach house. There will be more details later on in the year.

Since I last wrote to you, we have begun investigating the age of the Jubilee Fountain. I cannot as yet tell you the exact date, but it certainly appears to have been constructed after 1887. I am writing to the Mayor to tell him that we will need to postpone a centenary celebration until the appropriate time.

That is all for now. I hope you enjoy reading extracts from Mr. Alva Allen's "Memories of Kew" which we are fortunate enough to store in our archives.

Regards,

Suzanne Leong
Sue Leong

Extracts from "Memories of Kew" by Mr. Alva Allen, member of Kew Historical Society.

Kew had some very highly educated people - or academics, they call them now - living in Kew. We have had more Prime Ministers than any other city in Australia..

There was Billy Hughes. He lived in Cotham Road, Kew, between Belmont Avenue and Uvadale Grove. The house is still there. Billy Hughes used to ride round Kew on a horse with four white socks, and I can see him now sitting up on his horse, down through Parkhill Road, down through Adeney Avenue, and he used to go up through East Kew there, round the park - it was all rural in those days, not like it is now - and he would be riding up and down; no worries at all.

This is hard to believe - you have to use a bit of imagination - there used to be a golf green on the corner of Belford Road and High Street, Kew. The Kew Golf Links was a very big golf course, it was tremendous, and the clubhouse used to be up there in Earl Street near Willsmere Road. The old clubhouse is still there, as a matter of fact. Billy Hughes was playing golf there one day and he finished up on the green and he had to go down to the tee, which was round about where the Elderly Citizens' Club is now. ^{Kew} Down the back there's a creek and we used to go down there. We used to call it the soup because there was a bit of a big tunnel coming through there and that's where the water used to drain out and down the creek. Anyway, old Billy hit off and hit down the creek 13 consecutive times. He was certainly a persistent old boy. He used to give you a penny if you retrieved the ball. My brother got 12 pennies and the other boy got one, and he said to my brother, "I'm sick of looking at you." He paid up and he eventually got across the creek. I reckon that he would be the worst golfer that I've ever seen, but no doubt he used to enjoy it.

Then we had the other Prime Ministers. Sir Robert Menzies - he lived at No. 10 Howard Street. He used to knock around Kew. His father and mother lived in Wellington Street in a house called "Lowan", and I can tell you a story about Sir Robert Menzies.

I was helping to do a job for Mr. and Mrs. Menzies, his father and mother, and old Mr. Menzies was painting the bathroom, or doing up the bathroom, and I was an electrician and I had to go and do a bit of work down there. Mrs. Menzies said to me, "Would you be very quiet? My son, Robert, has just come down from Canberra and he hasn't had much sleep." I said, "Yes, I'll be as quiet as I possibly can"; which I was. Anyway, I was talking to his father about different things and who should appear in a big blue tartan dressing gown but Robert Menzies. He said, "How do you do, young man", and all this sort of business. He was quite pleasant, quite good to talk to. Mrs. Menzies made morning tea, and I can honestly say that I'm one of the few men in the world who has had morning tea with Sir Robert Menzies in the bathroom. He sat on the edge of the bath, I sat on one end of the bath and old man Mr. Menzies sat down by the door, and there we had morning tea. That happened in Wellington Street, Kew. I knew Sir Robert Menzies very well. Every time I saw him - I used to meet him sometimes on the tram going to the football - he would say, "How do you do, young man. Do you think you'll win today?" I can remember one day when I was in town and a big Rolls Royce pulled up, No. 200, a big black car with Commonwealth numbers on it, and I was walking up Little Collins Street there and Sir Robert got out and he said, "How do you do, young man. What are you doing around this part of town?" I said, "I'm just going back to work now, getting on the way to knock off, it's half past four", and my workmate said to me, "Do you know who that was?" I said, "Yes, why?" He said, "That was Menzies." But that was the Kew link. You see, you lived in Kew, you knew these people.

Of course, Gough Whitlam, he was in Kew. He lived down Stevenson Street way. So that was three. . . .

MEMBERS' NOTES

Obituary

We have extended our sincere sympathy to Mrs. Rosemary Smart and her family following the death of Mr. Smart. We remember their gracious hospitality at "Turinville" over several years.

Personal Notes

Rae Brunette is heading an historical tour of Tasmania in her role as a National Trust tour guide. We wish her and her entourage an enjoyable time.

Joy Stewart will be coming from Queensland to Kew in May to complete her drawings for our Bicentennial tapestry. We look forward to her visit.

Mr. and Mrs. Alva Allen are heading off to Point Lensdale for a holiday. We hope Alva enjoys reading his contribution to this newsletter in a restful moment.

Diary Dates

(Note - all general meetings are held at Kew City Hall No.3 and commence at 8.00p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month, February to November.)
Sat. & Sun. April 4-5 Villa Alba Restoration Fair

- April 8 Prue Sanderson will speak about the Kew Heritage Survey.
- May 13 A representative of the Royal Guide Dogs will show us a film and dog!
- June 10 A nostalgic evening of old films presented by Cr. Phillip Barnes.
- Thurs. June 18 10.00 a.m. Bill Reeve guides a tour of the M.C.G.
- July 8 A speaker from Genazzano will talk about the history of the school in Kew.
- Aug. 12 Speaker to be confirmed.
- Sept. 9 Rev. Andrew St. John will speak about the history of Holy Trinity Church, Kew
- Tues. Nov. 3 Melbourne Cup Day trip to Macrae
- Nov. 11 Remembrance Day. Members break-up evening.

Committee Phone Numbers

- Sue Leong (President)
- Cr. Phillip Barnes (Vice-President)
- Thea Sartori (Vice-President)
- Lex Allen (Hon. Secretary)
- Irene Stones (Ass. Secretary)
- Dr. Laszlo Benyei (Treasurer)
- Dorothy Benyei (Archivist)
- Clancy Crowe (Committee)
- Mary Macdowell (Committee)
- Lori Dean (Supper Committee)
- Rhona Jenkins (Supper Committee)