

# KEW HISTORICAL SOCIETY Inc.

P.O. BOX 175, KEW, VIC., 3101

*President:*

Dr. Laszlo Benyei, A.M.

*Hon. Secretary:*

Miss Lex Allen

October 1993

## NEWSLETTER No. 52.

Dear Members,

Our Annual Meeting will be held at 8 p.m. on Wednesday, 13th. October in the No.3 Hall behind the Library.

After the office bearers have given their reports, there will be the election of the committee for 1993/1994. This will be conducted by our Guest Speaker, the Mayor of Kew, Cr. Tom Indovino.

Our Rules of Incorporation specify that the positions of President, Secretary and Treasurer, filled by annual elections, shall not be held by any incumbent for more than three successive years.

The Committee consists of a President, two Vice-Presidents a Secretary, an Assistant Secretary, a Treasurer, an Archivist, and two other members.

The retiring President and Treasurer, having completed their three years, are not eligible for re-election to those positions, and one of the Committee members, Miss Mary Macdowell, has indicated that she does not wish to re-nominate.

### NOMINATIONS:

All nominations for office bearers and Committee members should be made in writing, on forms available from the Secretary. They should be signed by the proposer, the seconder and the nominee, and should be in the hands of the Secretary at least 15 minutes before the commencement of the Annual Meeting.

### COMING EVENTS:

**Tuesday, 2nd. November: Cup Day** outing to the Garden of St. Erth at Blackwood. The coach will leave from outside the Library at 9.30 a.m. Bookings should be made with our Hon. Secretary, Miss Lex Allen (Phone: . The cost of the trip is \$12 per person. Bring your own picnic lunch.

**Wednesday, 10th. November: Members' Night.** Final meeting for 1993. Show and tell your piece of history.

**Friday, 10th December, 7.30 p.m: Christmas Party** at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Sartori, 15 Belmont Avenue, Kew.

Those whose family names begin with A to L are asked to bring cakes etc., and those whose family names begin with M to Z are asked to bring a savoury supper plate.

Santa Claus asks that we all bring a small wrapped and labelled gift (not over \$2), men to bring one for a man and ladies to bring one for a lady.

**Wednesday, 9th. February 1994:** First meeting for 1994. The year's program will be sent to you before that meeting. Any suggestions you have for speakers, outings etc. for the year will be gladly received by the new Committee.

**REMINDER:** Our Kew Festival Stall will be on **Saturday, 19th. March**, so don't forget to make your gourmet pickles and jams.

Laszlo Benyei  
**President**

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**IMPORTANT LOCAL HISTORY LAUNCHED**  
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On 16th. August 1993 a large gathering at Methodist Ladies' College joined the Rt. Hon. Sir Zelman Cowen in celebrating the publication of the book, "Journeyings: The Biography of a Middle-Class Generation 1920-1990" by Janet McCalman, published by Melbourne University Press.

The book is an account of the lives of many of those who travelled to and from their schools on tram route number 69 during the 1930's, notably those who went to Scotch College, M.L.C., Genazzano and Trinity Grammar School. Although not all of them lived in Kew, the families in this City are well represented in the book.

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**REMINISCENCES OF TRINITY GRAMMAR SCHOOL - further excerpts.**  
(Continued from Newsletter No.51)

Trinity catered for primary and secondary education at all levels. The Preparatory School consisted of Forms Ia, I, II and III. In "Big School" the first four forms, IVb, IVa, IV and Vb corresponded to State School Grades 5 to 8. These were followed by the secondary forms Va, V, Pass VI and Honour VI. The Intermediate Certificate, gained in Form V, was the entrance standard for many positions in the working world, and the School Leaving Certificate, gained in Form Pass VI, was the standard required for Matriculation and entrance to the University of Melbourne. Most went on to study at the higher standard of Leaving Honours for one or two years before going on to University. At that level it was possible to compete for scholarships and Free Places offered by the University and by its associated Colleges.

The average size of form, both in 1925 and 1928, was about 26 pupils. This was also about the average size of the English classes, since that subject was compulsory in all forms except Honour VI. In other subjects the class sizes could be much lower, especially in the higher forms where there was progressively less overlapping in subjects between the Science, Humanities and Commercial streams. At all levels it was possible for teachers to know each of their pupils well and to be aware of the capabilities of each of them.

Eight subjects were usually taken in Form V, of which six passes were required to gain the Intermediate Certificate. In Pass VI, six subjects were taken, and passes in four were required for the School Leaving Certificate. In Honour VI, where the individual usually took only four subjects, the classes became even smaller and were like tutorials.

From Forms I to V the numbers of pupils did not vary in

any discernible pattern; for instance, Form I was the largest (34) in 1925 and Form V (38) the largest in 1928. But those who stayed on to Sixth Form were much in the minority then, compared with the proportion of students going on to Matriculation now (i.e. in 1983, when this was written). There were 28 in Va in 1925, 28 in Form V in 1926, only 10 in Pass VI in 1927 and 7 in Honour VI in 1928, of whom at least four of us were in that form for a second year. Numbers entering Victoria's only degree awarding institution, the University of Melbourne, were correspondingly small in those days. I was one of only eleven who commenced a course in Agricultural Science in 1929, whereas there were 30 in the Fourth Year of the course in 1947, when I completed the course after interruptions due to financial depression and war service.

#### THE BOARDING HOUSES:

The school bell on its tower was close to the Memorial Library. To its west was Henty House, a mansion which had been known as "Roxeth" under previous ownership. From its southern aspect, facing the Oval, this building looks much as it did in 1925. Of the downstairs rooms facing south, that on the west side was the Headmaster's study, and that on the east was the masters' common room. Between these two was the office of Miss Dahle, the Bursar and Secretary to the Headmaster. Boys drawing supplies from the Bursar's room entered it by the south windows, which opened to floor level.

The main entrance from Charles Street was on the west side and led into a hallway from which the Headmaster's study opened.

Extending northward from the main entrance was a series of three rooms, the junior, middle and senior common rooms for the boarders. These opened onto a verandah giving access to a large area of lawn and garden, and they also had doors to a passageway on their east side. Beyond the passage, with its longer dimension north and south, was the (still existing in 1983) dining room. If this was a single room in the privately owned "Roxeth" it must have been an unusually large banquet room or ballroom. To the north of this dining hall were the kitchens and some accommodation for maids who lived in.

In 1925 the upstairs rooms on the south end of Henty House were used for accommodation for some Prep. School boarders and their Matron, Mrs. Ballantyne, and for one or two masters.

The remaining building east of Charles Street was the small storage room for a miniature rifle range located out of sight below the southern edge of the Oval, which at that time stopped some distance short of the boundary fence. Shooting at this range with .22 rifles was an inter-house sport in which it was possible to earn colours.

West of Charles Street was Merritt House, the main accommodation for boarders, a master in charge, and the Matron, Miss Lockhart, who was also in charge of the school sickroom in that house. Most of the Merritt House boarders slept in a large sleepout which had only low walls to the north and east but was equipped with blinds which could be lowered in times of tempest.

During 1924 the school bought "Elsinore". In 1925 this was re-named Roberts House, which accommodated eleven boarders (of whom I was one), a House Master and a Matron and also served as the residence of the Headmaster and his family.

**EDUCATIONAL METHODS:**

In 1976, when I took the course for Diploma of Education, I had cause to think back to my days at Trinity. I wrote this as part of a course essay on "The Paths - and By-paths of Development of Education in Three Nations":

"When I entered Trinity Grammar School in 1925, some weeks after the school year had begun, the Dalton Plan was in use. The time table included some classroom teaching in each subject, but for a large part of each day the classrooms became subject rooms - not laboratories as some of the literature suggests (there were separate chemistry and physics laboratories). The subject teachers set us written assignments. We were free to work on these in whatever order we might choose, and to spend more time on one subject than another. If, for instance, I wished to have a completed English assignment marked off or I needed help with an English assignment, I would go to the classroom occupied by the English master, add my name to a list on the blackboard, and go on with other work until my turn came to be called up to him.

"The Plan worked greatly to my advantage in the first two years, as State School had placed me well ahead in some subjects, but I had done no French and was behind my form contemporaries in others. Its flexibility allowed me to establish my true position quickly and, as a result, I was able to move from the Sub-Intermediate to the Intermediate form at the beginning of the second term and still make up the ground I had missed in that form.

"I often wondered, however, how it felt to be one of the students who had many long gaps in the bar graphs on which the masters marked off the completed assignments. The principle was that each student should be allowed to work at his own pace, but to have a long outstanding assignment made one feel uncomfortable. Perhaps a system of 'core' and 'optional' assignments might have eased the feelings of guilt!"

(To be continued)

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**ARE YOU FINANCIAL?**.....

Should your copy of this Newsletter bear a yellow sticker, this means that your subscription is outstanding for the 1992/93 year. Please let us know whether you wish to continue your membership. Annual membership fees are: Individuals, \$5, Family, \$8. The Life Membership fee is \$50.

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**KINKS IN OUR PATH INTO HISTORY**.....

Every day, it seems, some sporting team gets decimated, which means it loses 1/10 of its men (not 9/10). Does this mean that a AFL team has to battle on after losing 1.8 players? No. It can still field 18 players, but has to do without any on the exchange bench to relieve the softies when they feel tired. Well, we've put that straight for future archaeologists. But how barbarous will they think us, making all those innocent animals fight, when they read, "Crows knocked out bombers", "Cats too much for demons", "Bulldogs took tigers apart", "Two magpies, three lions in Sin Bin", and all the rest of the jargon? It might be concluded that we have made the animals ferocious (and catty!) by implanting human genes into them!