

KEW HISTORICAL SOCIETY Inc.

P.O. BOX 175, KEW 3101

President:

Mrs. Thea Sartori

Hon. Secretary:

Miss Lex Allen

September 1995

NEWSLETTER No. 56

Dear Members,

1995 has flown past and it is again time for our **Annual General Meeting**. The meeting will be held at 8 p.m. on **Wednesday, 11th. October** in the Phyllis Hore Room in the Library Complex.

Under the Rules of Incorporation the present Committee will vacate office and a new Committee will be elected, consisting of a **President**, two **Vice-Presidents**, a **Secretary**, an **Assistant Secretary**, a **Treasurer**, an **Archivist** and two **general members**. The retiring Committee are eligible for re-election. However, Mrs. Thea Sartori does not wish to re-nominate.

NOMINATIONS: All nominations for the Committee 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** prior to the meeting. (See Notice of AGM, page 4).

Thea Sartori, President.

THE GUEST SPEAKER at the Annual General Meeting will be a representative of the City of Boroondara.

OUR END OF YEAR PARTY

Our end of year party will be held at 7 p.m. on **Wednesday, 13th. December** in our usual meeting place, the **Phyllis Hore Room**. It will take the form of a **Shared Evening Meal**, to which everyone is welcome.

Members are asked to indicate, on lists at the **October** and **November** meetings, what items of food they propose to contribute. or to ring this information to

or

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.

COME ON! THIS IS YOUR LIFE!

Earlier in 1995 we asked members to write short accounts of their associations with Kew. Only four came to the fore.

Please come out from under that bushel and give us some highlights of yourself. Remember, tomorrow, if not already, you will be historical, so give posterity a glimpse of history.

FOND PARENTS PRESERVE HISTORY IN NAMES!

Johann Sebastian Jones was sure to have a brilliant future in keyboard. But which keyboard? His career counsellor, a part time dog trainer, assessed him and advised him to be a computer operator because, "His Bach is worse than his bytes".

A RE-RUN OF KEW HISTORY

Kew history can be many things. You can collect the names of illustrious people who lived here - M.P's, doctors, scientists, teachers, authors, high ranking clergy, business men and women, artists, singers, musicians, and people concerned with the law and banking (other than Ned Kelly, who preferred a rural retreat), and many others.

You can record the histories of Kew's many noteworthy buildings, public and residential, or of its past and present industries. Still another angle is to study its past and present transport and its main routes. And so the list goes on.

But, to throw a Tiger among the Hawks and Eagles, it can be asked, "Are these the real history, or are they just bits around the fringes?" Do they answer the questions, "Why did Kew develop the way it did?" "How did Kew Junction come about?" "Why did one shopping centre grow while another declined?" "How did VicRoads come by that long driveway from Barkers Road?", and many more.

Can we have a re-run of Kew history to let us understand the answers to such questions?

A good way to do this is to do a lot of walking around Kew, asking such questions, and to combine it with reading what we can of recorded history. The walking should be done not only around the streets, but also along the excellent walking and cycling tracks, especially those along the Yarra.

The first key to our re-run is water, of which there was both too little and too much. The Yarra, our northern and western boundary, was a barrier to early settlement. The easiest crossing place was just below Dight's Falls, where it was possible to ford the river. That's where John Gardiner and Joseph Hawdon brought their cattle across, to take up leasehold runs which included parts of Kew, Hawthorn and Camberwell.

Other farmers soon followed, taking up land along the river as far east as Bulleen. They were influenced not only by the soil of the river flats but also by the need for water throughout the year for livestock and domestic use. But there was sometimes too much water when the river flooded, so their holdings had to include some higher ground for housing and for stock.

Two alternatives to the Dight's Falls ford set the initial road pattern. The first was a punt near the present Hawthorn Bridge, from which the "Bulleen Road" took the route of the present Church Street, High Street South, High Street and Doncaster Road. The preferred place for an unmade road was the crest of a ridge, which offered the best drainage, so the road led to and followed the high ground of Kew.

When John Hodgson's Melbourne business became less profitable than he had hoped, he diversified into farming, taking up a leasehold run at Studley Park, and set up a second punt to cross from Collingwood near the present Johnston Street bridge. It was logical that a road should lead from the punt to join the Bulleen road at the present Kew Junction.

Three more roads added to the complex pattern. Branching off the Bulleen road was one which followed the crest of the ridge, known first as the Gippsland Road but then re-named Cotham

Road. Princess Street and Willsmere Road were the link to the first Kew land sold as freehold and bought by the two brothers Wills, who gave their name to that locality. Denmark Street, continuing south as Power Street, became another important route when the Burnley railway was extended to Hawthorn. Thus was set the pattern of the Kew Junction area.

"Why such a mixture of mansions and more humble homes?" one might ask when walking some streets.

The higher ground of Kew and Hawthorn appealed to some of the wealthy people of Melbourne, in contrast to the more level terrain to the north and west. Some built week-end retreats, reminiscent of the English "landed gentry" who had a country seat and a city apartment. The early luxurious, two storey mansions had to be near the river, the only water supply. One business man, it is recorded, had to walk a mile each day to fetch two pails of water from the river before he walked to work in the City. A lady who, when young, was a domestic help to a well to do family, was taken to the river each week to do the family wash.

The wealthy bought spacious blocks of land on which to set their homes. When several such adjoining blocks came on the market, they were likely to be bought as sites for schools. Some of the historic homes have been preserved, with a little alteration, by inclusion in the design of the school buildings; hence the mixture of new and old at some schools of Kew.

"How did new bridges over the river affect the pattern of Kew?" you might ask. They tended to reinforce it, rather than change it. First came foot bridges, such as the "Penny Toll Bridge" not far from Hodgson's punt, which gave a "short cut" to Melbourne through Collingwood. The original Hawthorn Bridge was the first to carry vehicles, giving access to Kew Hawthorn and Bulleen, and to Camberwell by Riversdale and Burwood Roads. The next was the Johnston Street Bridge, reinforcing the importance of Studley Park Road. Victoria Bridge came later to supplement the Walmer Street foot bridge.

"The river hindered development of Kew. What later pushed it on?" the walking explorer might ask. Reading reveals the Gold Rush as the stimulant. The big influx of people in Victoria, and into Melbourne, started a clamour for land. New buyers arose, not for land to live upon or to farm, but for tracts they intended to subdivide into home sites and sell at a handsome profit. The first such subdivision was in the area between Princess Street and Derby Street. Walking about such an area, you might ask, **"Why such narrow blocks? Why did they all have rear lanes?"** People were then less conscious of fire danger, so built houses closer together than would now be allowed, and they had no need for a side driveway. Horse vehicles, and the stable for the horse, were at the back of the block, where entry was by the lane. It also served as the delivery route for bulky goods such as firewood and horse feed, and, as there was no sewerage, as the collection route for the sanitary contractor ("nightman") to the toilets, which all backed onto the lane,

K.M.S.

To be continued in a later issue.

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1995 CALENDAR

Meetings

All meetings to be in the Phyllis Hore Room, commencing at 8.00 p.m.

Wed. 11th. Oct.. Annual General Meeting. Guest speaker: a representative of the City of Boroondara.

Wed. 8th. Nov. Rotary Club

Wed. 14th. Feb. First meeting for 1996. Details later. Suggestions for program welcome.

Other activities:

Tue. 7th. Nov. Melbourne Cup Day outing to Healesville and the Sir Colin Mackenzie Fauna Park (Sanctuary)

Wed. 13th. Dec. 7.00 p.m. End of year party in Phyllis Hore Room. Shared evening meal. Details page 1.

Monday following each meeting: Working Bee at Archives, 10 a.m. to 12 noon.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

The Annual General Meeting of the Kew Historical Society Inc. will be held on Wednesday, 11th. October 1995 at 8 p.m. in the Phyllis Hore Room, Kew Library, Cotham Road, Kew.

The business to be transacted at this meeting will be:

(1) Reports of office bearers for the year ending 30th. September 1995.

(2) Election of office bearers for the year 1995/96.

According to the Rules of the Associations Incorporation Act 1981, all positions become vacant and any member wishing to nominate for any position on the Committee should obtain a nomination form from the Secretary:

"20(1). Nominations of candidates for election as officers of the Society or as ordinary members of the Committee:

(a) shall be made in writing, signed by two members of the Society (as proposer and seconder), by the written consent of the candidate (which may be endorsed on the nomination form and:
(b) shall be delivered to the Secretary of the Society at least 15 minutes prior to the start of the Annual General Meeting."

(3) Subscriptions for the year 1995/96 became due on 1st. July 1995 and are payable prior to the Annual General Meeting.

(4) Any other business of which prior notice has been given.

OUR MYTHICAL MEMBER

Ferdinand could not get to our meetings on the second Wednesday of each month, but decided to make amends by going to every Working Bee on the Monday following each meeting. So, in his new diary, he wrote, "Working Bee" for the third Monday of each month. But sometimes he didn't turn up. When asked why, he said, "I did go, but when nobody else came I thought the Working Bee must have been cancelled."

Can you work out what went wrong?