

# Kew Historical Society Inc

Founded 1958



Incorporated 1987

Still serving the community, families, schools,  
students, historians and other researchers.

P.O. Box 175, Kew Vic 3101

**President:**

Mr. Raymond Vaughan-Smith

**Hon. Secretary:**

Miss Lex Allen

September 1998

NEWSLETTER NO. 62.

## President's Letter

Dear friends,

Just how quickly the year seems to be passing — we are rapidly approaching the Annual General Meeting on 14th. October, at which the Guest Speaker will be the Mayor of Boroondara, Councillor Loreto Davey — something we can look forward to with much pleasure.

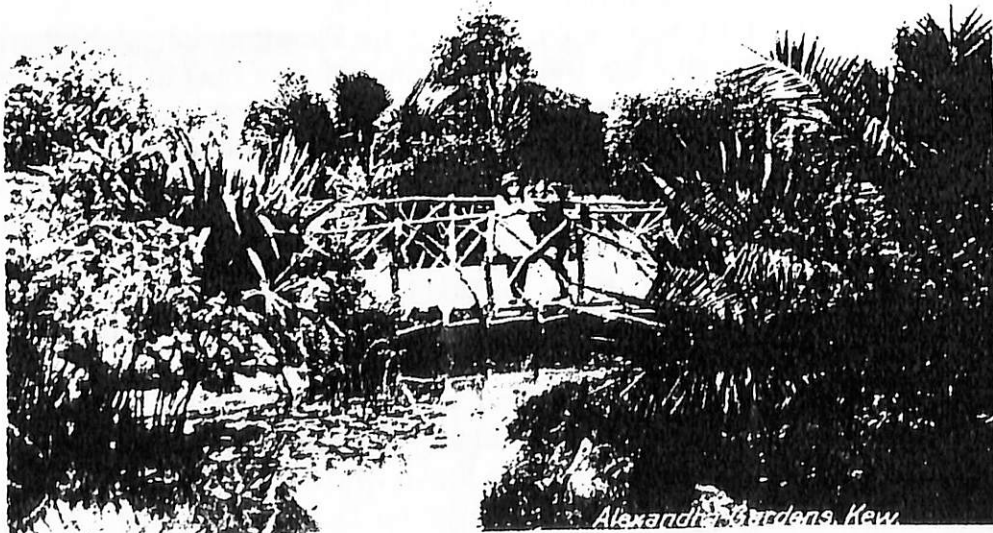
Also at the A.G.M. the positions of all office bearers in the Society fall vacant, and I hope there will be a good response at the meeting

by way of nominations, either renominating some of those members who already hold office and are willing to continue or, for those not seeking re-nomination, that new nominations will be sub-

mitted. At the last Committee meeting on 17th. September we considered the matter of office bearers for 1998 -1999 and made a number of suggestions as to possible nominations for the various positions.

This year so far has been a happy and successful one with various activities such as the KEW FESTIVAL. Dorothy and Dione did a marvellous job in putting together the Kew Historical Society's exhibit, and it is a pity more people were not able to see this wonderful

exhibition. For the KEW HISTORICAL SOCIETY DISPLAY WINDOW in the Kew Library, again Dorothy and Dione are to be congratulated on their display. We thank also



Part of the Alexandra Gardens: still a place of shade and beauty.

Graeme for the work he carried out in constructing shelving in the K.H.S. Archive Room, and a number of interesting guest Speakers, including Leo Blake, the Manager of Leo's Fine Foods and Wines Supermarket (formerly Tuckerbag), Ken Sillcock on Boarding School Life at Trinity Grammar School in the 1920's, our Student Member Lisa D'Accri on "Writing Kew History". Then more recently, Mrs Jill O'Brien gave us a most interesting talk, "Forty Years On" on the history of the Kew Historical Society, of which we are now celebrating the 40th. Anniversary.

Coming events to look forward to are the Members' Night on 11th. November with two interesting themes, "Something I'll Never Forget", and 'Years of the Great Depression"., and then, on December 9th. the Christmas Party, details of which are given on Page 3 of this Newsletter.

In the early part of they year we were all saddened by the passing of Alison May Fotheringham, a long time member of the Society.

As your President, I would like to express my special thanks to Lex, our Secretary, whose tireless work in recording the minutes and producing a clear agenda for each of the meetings makes the position of President so much easier. Also I thank all of the other office bearers for their work and help.

With best wishes,

## THE ALEXANDRA GARDENS

**We owe our heritage of these gardens - still a place of shade — to the foresight of the Kew Council of 1905.**

In 1874 Arthur Septimus King, grandson of the 3rd Governor of NSW of which Victoria was then part, bought the property "Elm Lodge", which extended along Cotham Road and Gellibrand Street to Wellington Street. They renamed their property "Madford", after Mrs King's home in Cornwall, England. The elegant house was surrounded by magnificent gardens.

Mrs King, after her husband's death, sold the "lower paddocks" to the Kew Council in 1905 for the very low price of £2,500, hoping that in time the Council would buy the remaining property for a Town Hall. Council constraints did not allow this. In 1920, part was sold privately, and the remainder bought by the Catholic Church to become St. Anthony's Home for Children. Later, a new Archbishop's residence was built on part of the land. The remainder of the property was sold to a developer for the building of Town Houses. There are memorials in Holy Trinity Church, Kew, commemorating the lives of both Mr. and Mrs. Septimus King.

The Gardens, named after the popular Queen Alexandra, were opened to the public on 8th April 1908 by His Excellency the Governor Sir Reginald Talbot. They became a show place, much used by Kew's citizens. An ornamental lake was stocked with goldfish and water lilies.

The Council initiated moonlight concerts between November and March, held as near as possible to full moon. The Kew City Band played selections, and moving pictures were screened. For a time, cyclone wire fences surrounded the park.

In 1910 a Band Stand Rotunda was erected in the gardens. At the same time Kew was gazetted as a "Town". Many celebrations took place during this Jubilee Year - 50 years after separation from the former Boroondara Road Board. The Rotunda was built with money donated by the people of Kew. Eventually it fell into disrepair.

During the Bicentennial celebrations in 1988, a new rotunda was built in the Gardens through Bicentennial funding.

After protracted negotiations, the Council in 1947 bought the "Southesk", property on the corner of Cotham Road and Charles Street, and the first development on the site was officially opened by Hon. Henry Bolte MLA, Premier of Victoria, on 23rd April 1960. This consisted of a main hall to seat 750, two smaller halls, and kitchen facilities. Incorporated in the Cotham Road wall was a memorial to those who served in the Second World War. Designed by George Allen, it was largely financed by a bequest from the late Mrs Annie Anderson of Eglington Street.

On the same wall, largely due to the generosity of Mrs Laurel Abercrombie, was the "Grip of Time" by Peter Schipperhein, a well known artist.

Many public and private ceremonies have taken place in the Gardens since 1908, including Carols by Candlelight, Kew Festival, barbecues, marriages, parties and family gatherings.

The delightful bronze statues continue to give joy to both adults and children. They were sculptured by Mrs Leopoldine Mimovich, a Kew resident, who gave them to the City of Kew as a gesture of thankfulness for her life of freedom in Australia.

The Queen Victoria Jubilee Fountain at the north-west entrance to the Gardens originally stood in front of the then Kew Post Office where it was erected in 1887. It was moved to its present site in 1924 to allow for the erection of the World War 1 Memorial.

When television came and fewer functions were held in the Town Hall, it was converted, in

1986, to the Kew Library, with the former stage area housing the Kew Historical Society material.

The small Hall, now named "The Phyllis Hore Room" in memory of a former Mayor has, since the amalgamation of the cities of Kew, Camberwell and Hawthorn, become the only central **Function Room** in the Kew area. Like the Alexandra Gardens, it is much used.

The Library houses the striking stained glass window "Four Seasons" executed by Alan Sumner. This window was acquired largely owing to the generosity of the then Mayor of Kew, Cr. Jill O'Brien, and her husband, Dr.D. O'Brien. Titled "Four Seasons", it harmonises well with the Mimovich sculpture of the same name in the Library, a free standing work depicting four faces - childhood, youth, middle age and elderly.

A Time Capsule, placed in the wall of the Municipal Offices in the Bicentennial year 1988, was moved to the Alexandra Gardens, near the north-west corner of the Library, when, in 1995 the Boroondara Commissioners sold the building to Trinity Grammar School.

## OUR END OF YEAR PARTY

Our end of year party will be held at 7.00 pm. on Wednesday, 9th. December in our usual meeting place, the Phyllis Hore Room. Again 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 on

. Heating facilities for food are now available.

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.

And who knows what else might happen — Christmas carols, anything. All good fun !

or

## SOME BELIEFS COME FROM ANCIENT HISTORY

In childhood we accept many "beliefs" without question. Some are good guides to happy, healthy living. Others, such as some superstitions, no longer make sense in changed times. Take the story of a remote Indian tribe in South America, as told in the "Trinity Times", newsletter of Holy Trinity church.

Before going to worship in their temple, those people tied every cat to a bed post, and released the cats on their return. Not one of them could give a reason for this custom, but all agreed that it was an important, part of their sacred traditions.

An anthropologist found that, in times long

forgotten, the temple worship had included a sacrifice of fresh fish to the deity. It was decreed that all cats should be tied up during worship; otherwise they made short work of the fish on the altar while the people's eyes were closed in reverent contemplation.

Are we any wiser? We have inherited many false notions about older people going into their "declining years". Modern evidence is that "the human mind is not meant to retire" and that, if it remains active, the body is also likely to keep in better shape. Think about that, even if you missed the United Nations. Day of Older Persons on 1st. October !

## 1998 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

**Monthly meetings** will be held in the Phyllis Hore Room on the second Wednesday of the month, commencing at 8.00 p.m. unless otherwise notified. Members are free to invite guests to the meetings, and members of the public are welcome, especially students.

- Wed Oct 14 **Annual General Meeting. Guest Speaker: The Mayor of Boroondara, Cr. Loreto Davey.**
- Wed Nov 11 **Members' Night: "Something I'll Never Forget", and "Years of the Great Depression".**
- Wed Dec 9 **Christmas Party. Details on Page 3.**

### NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**The Annual General Meeting of the Kew Historical Society Inc.** will be held on Wednesday, 14th. October 1998 at 8 p.m. in the Phyllis Hore Room, Kew Library, Civic Drive, off Cotham Road, Kew. The business to be transacted at the meeting will be:

**(1) Reports** of office bearers for the year ending 30th. September 1998

**(2) Election of office bearers** for the year 1998/99. According to our Rules, approved under the Associations Incorporation Act 1981, **all positions become vacant**, and any member wishing to nominate a member for any position on the Committee should obtain a nomination form from the Secretary.

Rule 20 (1) states that, "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." *Nomination forms are available from the Secretary.*

**(3) Subscriptions** for the year 1998/99 became due on 1st. July 1998 and are payable prior to the Annual General Meeting.

#### CURRENT SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Due now

##### **Annual Subscription:**

Ordinary member	\$10.00
Family membership	\$12.00
Student member	\$ 2.00

##### **Life Subscription:**

\$50.00

**Note:** Some local schools have taken Life Memberships. This enables them to receive our Newsletter, and to send teachers or students to meetings of interest to them.

From time to time we provide special day-time programs for an entire school class, and can do so by special arrangement..