



MARCH
2006

EAST
MELBOURNE
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

Contributions and Suggestions

We invite contributions relating to the history of East Melbourne from our members. Articles of up to 1500 words will be considered for publication. Small articles and items of interest are also welcome.

Contact Sylvia either by post at: P.O. Box 355, East Melbourne, telephone: 9417 2037 e-mail: sylvia.black@bigpond.com.

We would be pleased to receive your suggestions and ideas for activities, guest speakers, excursions or anything else you might like us to organize on your behalf.

Aims

A full Statement of Purposes appears in our Documents of Incorporation but briefly the aims of the Society are as follows:

- To foster an interest in the history of East Melbourne.
- To build an archive of material relevant to the history of East Melbourne.
- To promote interchange of information through lectures and tours.
- To promote heritage preservation.

Published by EMHS with funds provided by the City of Melbourne through a Community Information and Support Grant.



Committee

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Membership

Membership of the East Melbourne Historical Society is open to all who are interested in the history of East Melbourne.

Enquiries: Merrilyn Murnane: 9419 2560

Annual subscription: \$25.00

Guests are welcome at individual meetings \$5.00

**Affiliated with
The Royal Historical Society of Victoria**

President's Column

Our Society often receives enquiries about our marvellous buildings and the people who resided in them. Sometimes it is an enquiry from a descendent trying to establish exactly where a forbear lived. Sometimes it is an enquiry as to the location of a building long since demolished. Changes in street numbers have not helped. Many proposals for development also bring forth requests for information, probably in the hope that the information can be used to support or oppose a development.

Many East Melbourne buildings are well documented, but the history of many fine buildings is not recorded. Connections claimed to exist between persons and buildings sometimes are at best anecdotal, perhaps varied with each re-telling, and perhaps improved by estate agents anxious to make a sale.

Our Society is building up these records, and endeavouring to verify as much information as possible. Many East Melbourne residents, particularly those who have resided here for many years, appear to be an excellent source of information and verification. We will do our best to engage them in the process. On a slightly different note, Bridget Basham is filming East Melbourne to provide a permanent record of East Melbourne as it stands at the present time.

It is therefore pleasing to report that our members continue to improve our data base, an important part of the work of any historical society.

Malcolm Howell
President

AGM

Our sixth annual general meeting in October was well attended. After business was concluded Meredith Gould talked to us on the various sources that could help in building up the history of an individual house. The talk was comprehensively illustrated which was helpful in gaining a greater understanding of what could be learnt from the documents and from architectural evidence. Meredith provided a very clear outline of the process of research, and her own enthusiasm for the subject was

infectious. Some members commented afterwards that they wished they had taken notes, so for future reference the sources mentioned are listed below.

- Early parish map showing names of purchasers at first Crown Land sales. At Map Room, State Library by appointment, or Public Records Office.
- Cox map of 1866 shows buildings existing at that date. At Map Room, State Library by appointment.

Continued

- Kearney map of 1855. At Map Room, State Library by appointment.
- MMBW maps c. 1896 -1900. Prepared prior to laying of sewerage pipes. Give outlines of buildings and many details e.g. verandahs, closets, stables, paths, cellars etc. Diagonal hatching indicates brick; longitudinal hatching indicates timber. At Map Room, State Library by appointment. [These have now been digitised and are available on line through SLV's Main Catalogue: www.slv.vic.gov.au/catalogues/index.html]
- Field books. The hand drawn maps and notes taken by field officers in preparation for MMBW plans. Often have more detail. Available at PRO. Difficult to access but worth the effort. A number in the corner of the relevant MMBW map will refer you to the corresponding Field Book.
- Data sheets prepared by Graeme Butler and Winston Burchett for the Historic Buildings Preservation Council (now Heritage Victoria). Available as part of conservation guide in East Melbourne Library.
- Building permits issued by City of Melbourne. Available from City of Melbourne's building department. Difficult to access and payment necessary. Properties listed by street. Winston Burchett prepared a version of these as part of research for his book. It is called Intents to Build and is available on microfiche in the genealogical section of the State Library. Properties are listed in chronological order. For c.1916 to c.1946, many plans and files available at PRO. [Ask for the Description List on microfiche for Series Nos. 11200 and 11201]
- Title search on-line. Payment necessary.
- Rate Books are available at North Melbourne Library and the genealogical section of the State Library. In early years there were no street numbers. It is necessary to trace back to first listing from a time when the property is clearly identifiable; neighbours should be noted to help place the property in the street.
- Photos – think laterally. If your property is near a public building it will often be included in a photo of that building. Or a broad view may show your house. www.pictureaustralia.org is a useful website.
- Look at the house itself. Often signs of change can be seen in brickwork etc.
- State Heritage Register- Heritage Victoria Online www.heritage.vic.gov.au
- Sands and McDougall Directories show who was living in properties – maybe with some errors. – available on microfiche at genealogical section of the State Library and Richmond Library, or the real thing at the Royal Historical Society.

History Campaign

One of our members has suggested that we provide each household in our area with a pro forma set of questions covering the history of their property. Some houses are already well documented and it would not take much work at all to fill in the form; of others there is very little known, but if owners could find out even some of the basics it would provide us with a store of knowledge to build on. It is not only Victorian and Edwardian houses that we are interested in. Every block of land has a history. Apartments, too, have dates of construction, developers or architects, controversies surrounding their construction, and a pre-history – what was there before.

This idea seemed to fit very neatly with Meredith's talk so we are taking this opportunity to enclose a form for you to fill in. If we get a good response we will letter drop the entire community. So please help if you can.

Christmas at Mozart

Our Christmas function proved to be a great success. The private garden at the back of Mozart was a perfect venue, and the weather was kind, once the wind settled down.

Malcolm, our president, gave an introductory talk outlining the history of the house, and then Roger Freeman, entertained us with tales of its renovation, which was overseen by his late wife, Julie Skewes. Roger also provided lots of photos for us to browse through which added extra colour to his stories.

Memories of Miss Anderson

by Kevin Norbury

She's a yellowy-blonde, lithe in body, a 1930s original and, with the top down, purrs like a kitten Oh, yes, her name's Primrose, and she has a not-so-secret admirer by the name of Graham White, a near-50-something graphics production director.

Graham keeps her behind his home in one of Melbourne's southern suburbs, "There's Primrose," he says, casually waving his hands towards this amazingly original 1938 primrose-yellow Studebaker Commander convertible backed into his garage.

Graham and Primrose go back a long way. He's owned the car for about 15 years, but his association with it goes back more than 30. Graham grew up in Bacchus Marsh and in the 1970s rented a house in Jolimont Terrace, East Melbourne [sic], to go to art school.

"That's where I met Primrose," he says. "I saw this yellow whitewalled-tyred Studebaker convertible parked in the street." It was, by all accounts, love at first sight, and it didn't take him long to discover Primrose was owned by the woman next door.

Now Isabelle J. H. Anderson – Jo to her friends – was in her late 70s, and quite an identity in East Melbourne. Graham found "Miss Anderson", as he knew her at first, to be as fascinating as the car she owned. "She was an unbelievably unique woman and had

Continued

a unique style," he says. "She wore three-piece pin-striped men's suits and a beaded beret, and carried an ivory cane. Always had a cane. A real class act." (He also claims she slept with a derringer under her pillow.)

Later, says Graham, he did the maintenance on Primrose and every Sunday, Jo would drive the car to Scots' Church in the city and, in times of drought, to the Yarra Valley loaded with bales of hay to feed the farm animals.

Yes, Graham admits, he fell in love with Primrose. "And her, too," he volunteers, referring to Jo. "I was an impressionable young bloke. She was fascinating to talk to. And she was interested in art and cars and design, and so was I."

When Jo became too old to drive, Graham chauffeured her to church, "then I'd head to Carlton for coffee". After he graduated "and headed off into graphics land", as he puts it, he kept in touch with Jo, as did his parents, who had got to know her.

The car is original inside and out and Graham describes Primrose as "an absolute pleasure" to drive.

This is an edited extract of an article which first appeared under the title "The Beauty of Primrose" in the Drive section of *The Age* on 31 August, 2005.

In a letter to the editor in response to the article Bruce McBrien added the following:

"I had a great deal to do with Miss Anderson and her brother Air Commodore Bill.

This car was an icon around East Melbourne and was serviced at a small garage in Wellington Parade. I got my

petrol there, as did Miss Anderson, who was a legend in the area and at times would be seen driving the car with her head encased in her brother's leather flying helmet."

A further snippet comes from the transcript of our *Converzazione* night in April 2003. John Lee revealed that she was a vet and that his wife, Joan, had told him "that in the early days, if you found a cat and brought it to her, she gave you a penny."

Cliveden Information

– can you help?

We are currently trying to gather information on Cliveden, or Cliveden Mansions as it was known in its later incarnation as apartments. Does anyone have any anecdotes, memories, photos, ephemera, names of residents or indeed anything which may help us build up a detailed picture of life in this lost icon.

Walks and Talks

Melbourne City Council's self-guided walk starts at Federation Square and meanders through East Melbourne. Pick up a brochure at the Visitors' Centre at Federation Square, Cook's Cottage, or the East Melbourne Library.

The Jewish Museum of Australia will conduct a walk entitled Mansions of East Melbourne on 30 April. Enquiries: 9534 0083.

On 8 April the Hawthorn Historical Society has John Patrick talking on the history of the Fitzroy Gardens, at the Gardens. Enquiries: 9278 4666



Great Escape

A £10 million group of skyscraper flats will rise over the Jolimont rail tracks and station along Wellington Parade.

Work will begin early next year on the 2000-flat project.

American capital only will finance the project, it was stated last night.

The flats will accommodate 5000 people and will stretch for half a mile along Wellington-pde. [from Lansdowne St. to Simpson St., over the railway line and station]

State Cabinet yesterday approved the plan, which was advanced by a Melbourne company, Collings-Power Pty Ltd.

Company representatives said last

night that the project would be the biggest of its kind in the world, and that it would take about three years to complete the 15-storey building scheme.

Other features of the scheme are:-

- Average rents will be about £6 a week for bachelor flats but no more than £8/10/- a week for two or three bedroom units.
- Covered parking space will be provided for 700 vehicles.
- Space will be preserved for shops at ground level.
- Jolimont Station will be remodelled and incorporated in the project.
- Specially welded underground railway tracks will cut down train noise.

The Sun, 18 June 1958.

Coming Events

Wednesday, 12 April at 8.00 p.m.

At Clarendon Terrace, 210 Clarendon Street, East Melbourne

Berres Hoddle Colville is a descendant of Robert Hoddle and has written about his life in *Robert Hoddle: Pioneer Surveyor 1794-1881*, an extensive biography, based on his own diary and other writings. She will talk about him and his significance to the early history and development of East Melbourne.

An invitation to become a supporter of the...

BRIGHTON CEMETORIANS

...a new not-for-profit community group involved with the Brighton Cemetery.

Did you know that the cemetery is the final resting place of East Melbourne identities Sir Alexander Stewart, Frederick Hagelthorn, William Guilfoyle, and 'Gun Alley' victim Alma Tirtschke?

Becoming a supporter is free!

To find out more, visit our website www.brightoncemetorians.org and download a copy of our inaugural newsletter *The Cemeterian*, ring (03) 9558 4248 or write to us at:

PO Box 8054
North Road LPO
EAST BRIGHTON VIC 3187

Be part of an exciting new group!



Membership Subscriptions 2006

Membership to the East Melbourne Historical Society Inc. is open to all interested in the history of East Melbourne.

Complete the details below and return with your payment of \$25 to:
Membership Secretary, PO Box 355, East Melbourne, Victoria 8002.

Receipts will be issued only on request. All members are issued with an annual membership card.

Enclosed is my cheque/cash for the amount of \$25.

TITLE: [Mr/Mrs/Ms/Prof/Dr etc]

SURNAME:

FIRST NAME:

MAILING ADDRESS:

PHONE NO:

EMAIL ADDRESS:

