



FEBRUARY
2005

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.

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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 Jennifer Stanisich: 9417 6110

Annual subscription: \$25.00

Guests are welcome
at individual meetings \$5.00

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

President's Column

Most of our members have snippets of information about East Melbourne, even if it is information about their own houses or adjoining properties and former residents. Our Society is keen to collect this kind of information, as it enables a detailed picture to be seen when everything is put together.

I thank those members and residents who have contributed to our collection, especially Jack McNally who handed to the Society a large bundle of documents concerning the construction of his house in Gipps Street in 1920. These documents will enable an interesting story to be told, even if it is not a long story.

Old photographs are being made available to the Society on a regular basis, and we are happy to take copies and return the originals. Many of these photographs will end up being displayed as part of the Society's permanent display in the new East Melbourne library. Similarly, an extensive video or DVD showing the present state of East Melbourne is high on our agenda.

I am confident that we can continue to arrange interesting speakers and presentations during 2005, and I thank you all for your continuing support.

Kind regards,
MALCOLM HOWELL
President

A Picture of Diversity: Photographic Exhibition

Our exhibition of photos last October was a great success. The photos admirably illustrated the work of the East Melbourne Group, in honour of whose fiftieth anniversary the exhibition was staged. The Menzies Foundation proved to be an excellent venue, providing a very warm and relaxed atmosphere in which to enjoy the various aspects of the exhibition. Many people have asked what has happened to the photos and will they ever be shown again. We have been able to retain all the photos for our collection. They have been removed from their frames and are currently stored in archival sleeves.

Once the new library is completed we hope that we will have sufficient wall space to hang small but changing displays. The exhibition has given us a wonderful kick-start to our collection which we can now build on.

Jolimont 1879

The following is an edited extract from an article entitled, "Typhoid fever connected with milk-supply", by H.B. Allen, M.D., Professor of Anatomy and Pathology in the University of Melbourne.

Jolimont is a small suburb situated on a gentle slope, between the Fitzroy Gardens on the north, and the low-lying paddocks by the Yarra on the south; east and west, it is bounded by the Richmond Park and the East Melbourne Cricket Ground respectively. The suburban railway line separates it from the flat grounds by the river, which are used as pasturage for cows. A short distance to the south-west, on the bank of the Yarra, was the old Corporation tip; and between Jolimont and the Fitzroy Gardens is a strip of open ground, which was used as a tip during 1878-9. These rubbish depositories were both extremely offensive during the latter part of 1878, and the early months of 1879. The new tip, though the smaller, was especially obnoxious, on account of its nearness to the houses. Decaying animal and vegetable matters were freely deposited there; the ground and the houses adjacent swarmed with flies; while the stench arising in the summer weather (when the temperature of the surface soil was exceptionally high) was almost unbearable.

Drainage – The highest ground in Jolimont is at the north-east corner, while the opposite corner is low-lying, with a very slight fall towards the river. All the drainage of the suburb gathers into Jolimont Road, which also receives the water from the gully or open drain running through the Fitzroy Gardens. Many complaints have from time to time been published in the daily papers, concerning the offensive state of this gully.

Sewage – So far as I am aware, there was not a single cesspool in Jolimont; the dry-pan system was universal.



TYPHOID IN THE MILKMAN'S FAMILY

In the middle of March 1879 a new-case of typhoid occurred in Jolimont Place*, in the house occupied by a milkman named M. I was informed, by a resident in Jolimont, that the very worst rubbish was deposited on the tip just opposite this house.

M.'s elder son fell sick on the 16th of March; the disease rapidly developed, and on the 21st, was diagnosed beyond a doubt to be severe typhoid fever. *During this period of five days, no disinfectants whatever were employed.* Subsequently there was diarrhoea from time to time, and disinfectants were freely used in the bed-pan, and with the excreta after removal. On the pathway of the lane, behind the house, a barrow was kept, containing stable manure and earth. Into this the bed-pan was emptied directly after use, the dejecta being covered with earth. Finally, the barrow was wheeled away, and its contents buried in the tip. The disease ended fatally on the 2nd of April. The father always took a large share in the nursing.

The house itself stands on an allotment 90 feet deep, with a frontage of 20 feet to Jolimont Place. In front is a strip of garden 5 feet deep; then the main buildings 33 feet deep, and occupying the whole width of the allotment. Behind them, on one side is the kitchen and a bedroom, together 26 feet deep by 10 feet wide, succeeded by a shed for fodder &c., cattle stalls and stables, reaching to the boundary fence at the rear. On the

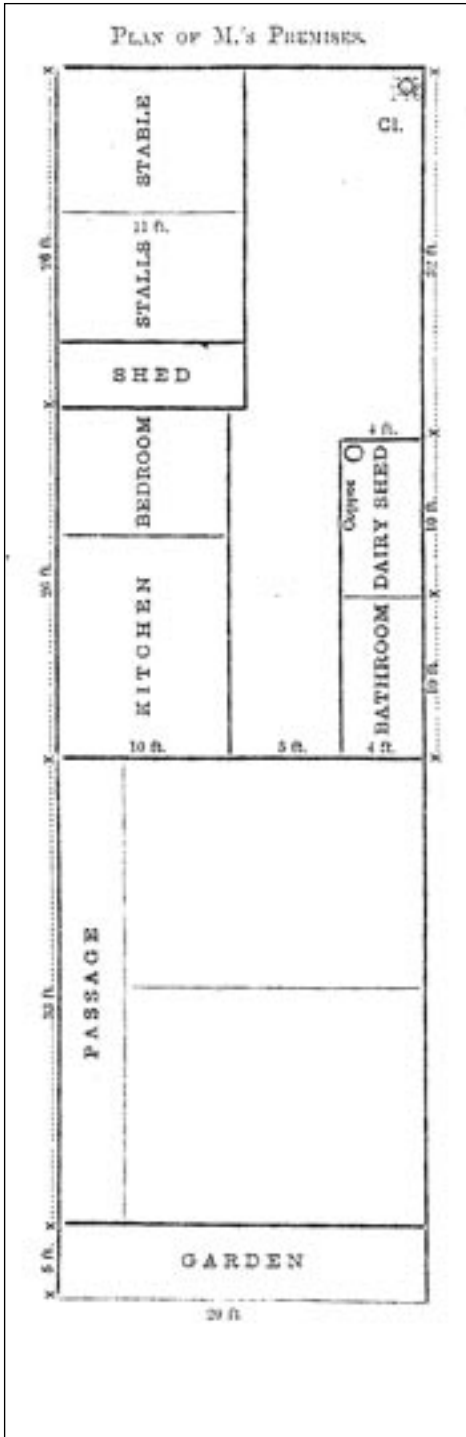
other side, behind the house, was a bathroom, 10 feet by 4 feet, followed by an open dairy shed of about the same size, in which stood a 20-gallon boiler. The yard was thus about 32 feet by 9 feet, with a narrow passage about 20 feet by 5 feet, extending up to the house between the outbuildings; it was paved throughout with square stone pitchers; in the corner was a dry pan closet.

Concerning the cleanliness of the yard, the evidence is conflicting. M. said it was washed out daily, except on Sundays; but several residents in Jolimont informed me that they were forced to discontinue taking milk from M., on account of the filthiness of the yard, and of the lane behind it.

The son, affected with typhoid, lay at first in a back room next to the bath; but when the nature of the disease became manifest, he was moved into the large front room, and the door and windows were kept freely open. The stench from the tip was then "a perfect nuisance," and the sickroom swarmed with flies, which were killed and removed "almost by bucketfuls."

THE MILK SUPPLY

M. had two carts used in the distribution of milk; one stood every night in the yard ready for the early morning start, the other was kept in the lane behind, against the stable wall. He always attended himself to the cleansing of the cans, and there was a general testimony from the customers that the milk kept extremely well. Every night the cans were scoured with a brush, and a scalding solution



of soda, which was allowed to remain some time in the vessels. They were then washed with hot water and dried with a cloth wrung out of the boiling water. The only water used was Yan Yean, which was heated in the boiler that stood in the dairy-shed. The cloths and brushes used to clean the cans were kept on a bench in the dairy-shed. Thus, all the cans were subjected to the same treatment, being manipulated by a person who was taking a large share in nursing a patient suffering from typhoid fever. Thus cleansed, the cans were left during the night, either in the cart within the yard, or in the shed beside the boiler.



THE JOLIMONT MILK SUPPLY AND FEVER CONNECTED WITH IT

At the time of the outbreak of fever, M. kept six cows at Jolimont, which were not, however, in full milking. They depastured in a paddock across the railway, adjacent to the large Corporation tip; here there was then no proper drinking trough, and the cattle used to drink the impure water lying in hollows in the paddock and in the drains. There is also evidence that at night these cows were accustomed to roam over the new tip, and rummage among the garbage there deposited. During the day they came to the yard of M's house, and were there milked at once, the milk being immediately sent to the customers in five and seven-quart serving cans. This milk, according to M.'s statement, was never taken within the house. No settled round was pursued in its distribution – different persons carried it on different days, sometimes M.'s daughter, or the wife, or one of the servants. There was never any surplus.

Mrs. M. supplied thirty-one (31) families in Jolimont; of these eleven (11) were visited by typhoid fever between the 23rd March (one week after the commencement of the case in her own house) and the 5th of May. *During this period, the fever did not attack a single individual in Jolimont who did not drink the milk in question.*

If we compare the different streets in Jolimont with one another, very striking peculiarities present themselves in the prevalence of

typhoid among the customers of Mrs. M. It is seen, that the high and comparatively well-drained parts of Jolimont were visited by the disease, while the two low-lying streets on the south and west [Jolimont Road and Jolimont Street], which receive the drainage from the higher ground, escaped entirely. It is difficult, to explain this immunity; in only one house in these two streets was M.'s milk scalded, and there only on very hot days. But it may be remarked that these two streets are farthest from the new tip, which seems to have been the great sanitary blot of the district.

Thus ten cases occurred in Jolimont Place and Square, and the adjoining corner of the Terrace, which all abut directly on the new tip. Nine were in Agnes Street, which is more or less built in on both sides, comparatively shut in, and which leads southward from the centre of the tip. Another case was a weakly lad in Jolimont Terrace, who drank a pint of the raw milk daily.

**Jolimont Place is now known as Wellington Parade South*

Many thanks to Frances Robertson for donating of a copy of the original article.

Coming Events

Wednesday, 20 April at 8.00 p.m.
Sandie de Wolf, CEO of Berry Street, will talk about the history of that organization, which is one of East Melbourne's oldest, transferring here from Fitzroy in 1880.

Wednesday, 15 June at 8.00 p.m.
Bruce Trethowan, architect, will talk about some of his recent projects in East Melbourne.

Both at Clarendon Terrace, 210 Clarendon Street, East Melbourne

EMHS Catalogue On-Line

Go to the Royal Historical Society of Victoria web-site: www.historyvictoria.org.au and follow the link to the Victorian Local History Database.

Vale

Joan Mercer, well known and widely loved resident of East Melbourne, died in December last year. She was the society's first subject in its program of taping oral histories and it was pleasing to hear Canon John Stewart make good use of the interview in the lively and very personal eulogy he gave at her funeral. Joan was a leader in much of the community life of East Melbourne and again she has led the way in showing us the value of such a program. She will be much missed by her many friends.

Membership Subscriptions 2004

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 3002.

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: _____

