



SEPTEMBER 2007

**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.

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.

Please contact any member of our committee.

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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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

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the death of Nina Crone on 14 July. Nina is remembered in this newsletter by her great friend, Dr. Merrilyn Murnane, but I would also like to pay tribute to Nina's work on our EMHS committee. I remember her in March, energetically engaged in preparing the photographic display for the Festa, setting up display stands and pinning up the photographs to see how they should be placed. We will miss her friendship and commitment.

Maps are always of interest to historians. Lois and Nick Iljin have recently donated some copies of maps to our collection, while Graham Shepherd has downloaded a sequence of maps of early Melbourne onto our website, demonstrating the changes that have taken place in Melbourne's landscape over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. If you haven't

accessed the website yet or only looked at it in its very early stages, just enter emhs.org.au and see how it is growing. We welcome both suggestions and contributions from our members.

Finally, a reminder for all about October's meeting. Due to the joint celebration with the Menzies Foundation of Clarendon Terrace and the lecture by Dr. Miles Lewis on inner city Melbourne in the 1850s, our Annual General Meeting will take place at the earlier time of 7.15pm on 17 October and will be followed by the lecture at 8 pm. We will be sending out a flyer within the next two weeks with a reply slip for those who would like to attend the lecture and supper to follow

*Jill Fenwick
President*

Von Guerrard Talk

A record number of members and guests attended Ruth Pullin's talk on Eugene Von Guerard in August. Von Guerard lived at "Little Parndon" in Gipps Street for twenty years and Ruth took his places of residence as the theme for her talk. In this way we followed his travels through Europe

in his early years and witnessed his developing style through the many illustrations from his sketch books which Ruth had tracked down. Altogether it was a most enlightening and enjoyable evening.

VALE: Nina Allison Crone OAM (1934-2007)

I have known Nina from our school days at PLC East Melbourne. Nina left in 1953 to study Arts at Melbourne University and graduated BA. Dip Ed. in 1956. She had a distinguished career in education culminating as Principal of Melbourne Church of England Girls Grammar School (Merton Hall) from 1975-1994. During her career she taught in various private schools and also was radio and TV producer and Director of School Broadcasting in the ABC 1965-1974. She worked and taught overseas in France having majored in French at the University.

She was an energetic and talented woman involved in many societies including the Australian Garden History Society, was a guide at The Johnston Collection since 2004 and recently elected a committee member of the East Melbourne Historical Society.

Nina was writer and editor of both magazines and books and a member of the Lyceum Club involved with the Writers' Circle.

She will be remembered for her compassionate nature, her innovative ideas and her vibrant personality.

We extend our sympathy to her sister Eleanor and her brothers Graeme and John.

Merrilyn Murnane



Nina at work in the garden of Bishops Court]

A Note on Dr. Howitt's Palm

In her informative lecture to the East Melbourne Historical Society in June, Caroline Clemente told us that when Dr. Godfrey Howitt's house was demolished in the late 1870s, the magnificent palm tree in his garden was saved. The house was replaced by the Victorian boom style building at No 1. Collins St, but the palm was replanted on the Prince's Lawn in the Botanic Gardens, where it still flourishes. If you'd like to see it, check the visitors' map in the Information Centre.



An Episode from Life in Clarendon Terrace

by Nan Hutton

From *The Age*, 19 May 1977

Beyond its beautiful façade, Clarendon Terrace may be a mouldering wreck today. But it was a sound and gracious building when my grandmother lived in it.

In the comparatively short history of our city, this was a long time ago. It was 1909 when my grandmother moved to town, and it was drought which drove her from the country life to which she was born.

The terrible drought which began in 1902 went on too long for my grandfather to hold out.

First he had to let Colantet, south of Cobden, go, and this was a family tragedy which I know about only from the stories of uncles and aunts.

Colantet was a place of wide paddocks and a house with honey-suckle and wistaria growing on the pillars of its long verandahs with a rose garden beyond and an orchard beside it.

And when you were cantering home, my uncle Frank said the horses' hooves sang "Colantet, Colantet" and it was a happy song.

After Colantet went, grandfather moved to Bournefield Park at Epping. But as time and the drought went on, there was not much hope of an inheritance for the boys from there, and no hope of sending the children away for schooling.

My mother, fourth in the family, was the only one safe for learning, training in Geelong to become a teacher.

The hard decision my grandparents made was that since Epping was not too far from Melbourne, grandfather would stay on the property with Ivy, the eldest daughter, to look after him.

Grandmother with the other children would set up house in Melbourne, not too far out for grandpa and Ivy to visit easily.

East Melbourne was the choice, and the central house of Clarendon Terrace was the place they found.

None of the children wanted to go. They were country bred. City lights had no fascination for them. Pavements were hard on the feet, and the streets looked like narrow lanes lined with trim little houses huddled close with hardly a place to keep a dog, much less to stable horses.

There was no alternative. So with eight of her 10 children, three horses, two Shetland ponies, and one dog, my grandmother arrived in Clarendon Street, and a great deal of paraphernalia arrived with her.

The piano, a butter churn, the sewing machine and most of the china. A hoard of preserves and jams, a wooden box of horseshoes, and horse liniment. Harnesses and bridles, cast iron cooking pots and pans, the family Bible and pictures to hang on the wall to remind them of picnic races.

Stretcher beds and extra blankets came as well because my grandfather, accustomed to putting up the stock and

station agent or any visitor for the night, felt they were essential. As it turned out, the narrow two-storied house in Clarendon Terrace was spacious enough to put up visitors and its kitchen was almost as big as a farm-house kitchen.

At that time, even so close to the city centre, there was plenty of stabling space for the horses nearby. Another lucky chance was that the Fitzroy Gardens were so close.

Kitty and Jack, the twins who were the youngest, took advantage of that green space at once. Before they unpacked their belongings, they took their

Shetlands into the gardens for exercise.

They rode there on the first day, the next, and then on the third they were in disgrace. They were apprehended by a policeman.

Their sin was to ride ponies in a public park.

My grandmother was aghast.

Kit, who was frail, wept. Jack said he would rather become a convict than send his pony back to Epping.

Gran came to her senses and went to see the police sergeant. Nobody knows what conversation went on between them, but later, the twins were allowed to ride the trails in Fitzroy Gardens, if they kept off the grass.

Much later in her life, Aunt Kitty said it was really good at school in the city.

Entertainment was different from the country. For instance, from Clarendon Street you could walk into town and visit Coles Arcade, and see the old gentleman himself.

There were theatres. They could all go together in the cheap seats at the Princess and Theatre Royal.

There were concerts, and a highlight was when grandmother went to hear Melba sing.

The Clarendon Terrace episode was a good introduction to the city, but its story became chaotic in 1914, when the three boys who were old enough enlisted.

After that, for some years the family history most carefully kept was a collection of letters from Gallipoli and Flanders.

But all the time after, Clarendon Terraces has been a beautiful landmark, a place to point out to our children and say "that's where your great grandmother lived."

It is not merely sentiment or nostalgia which moves people to insist that good old buildings should be preserved. The sense of security and continuity confirmed by old buildings which remain as they are in European cities is important to young people.

They are not merely brick and mortar, bluestone and a grand façade.

They are outward and visible reminders of our forebears – evidence that we spring from some plan or other, that we are not alone.

If a building as good as Clarendon Terrace can be destroyed for profit, what will we leave our grandchildren? Only immense, inhuman towers with draughty corridors between and no place to remember anyone or anything.

Hugh Junor Browne (1829-1905)

Hugh Junor Browne was a Distiller and Spiritualist with extensive mercantile interests. He was born and educated in Edinburgh and after giving up university studies at 21 became an unsuccessful cattle farmer in Natal. In 1852 he arrived in Melbourne where he took up a gold mining claim at Fryer's Creek. After some success as a gold digger Browne established a brick factory at Brunswick for six months, then kept a store at Forest Creek.

On a visit to England he eloped with Elizabeth Alice Turner, the daughter of a Devonshire clergyman. They were married and returned to Victoria where Browne sold his business and took his family to Natal. After two years they returned to Melbourne in a ship he had bought, and sold it and its cargo of sugar very profitably and established his family at an estate at Broadmeadows. In 1858 he was elected chairman of the newly-established Broadmeadows Roads Board, and of the bench of magistrates. For his children's education they later moved to Melbourne where the family lived at **Park House, Wellington Parade** (now the site of the Post Office.)

In the 1870s Browne established the successful Australian Distillery Works on the Yarra Bank downstream from Princes Bridge (where Southbank is now located). It later became the Australian and Barley Bree Distillers and was subsequently sold in 1889 when Browne took his family to Europe via America.

In the 1860s he became influenced by Spiritualism and in 1874 he attended



Park House

a seance held by Charles Henry Foster, a visiting American medium, and communicated with his father who had died in 1843. After this he held regular seances at his home, sometimes hiring a medium. In Melbourne and on his travels in America he communicated with deceased friends and relations. His public lectures were described as sincere and often forceful and iconoclastic. As a prolific writer he published many pamphlets, poems and books.

In 1882 their fifth child, Elizabeth Martha Ann (Pattie), married Alfred Deakin, then a struggling barrister and newly elected to the Victorian Parliament who supplemented his income by writing for 'The Age'. He went on to serve a key role in the delegations to London and served four terms as Prime Minister after Federation.

Andrew Dixon

Reference: A. Proctor, 'Browne, Hugh Junor (1829 - 1905)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, Volume 3, Melbourne University Press, 1969, pp 266-267.

We thank Mr. Roger Brookes for donating a copy of the photo of Park House.

Holy Trinity

In October it will be 100 years since the consecration of the new Holy Trinity Church, the old one, in George Street, having been destroyed by fire in 1905. The community is invited to join parishioners in the celebrations which will include:-

Sunday, 14 October at 2 pm in the Church – a recital by Geoffrey Tozer, followed by afternoon tea

Friday, 19 October at 7.30 p.m. at the Library – the vicar, Canon John Stewart will present a historical talk about Holy Trinity and its links with the wider community. There will be early photos on display and light refreshments will be served.

Sunday, 21st October at 10.00 a.m. at the Church – a Commemorative Thanksgiving Service with Archbishop Philip Freier in attendance, and many past clergy and parishioners.

**Notice of Annual
General Meeting and
nomination form are
enclosed with this
newsletter.**

**All financial members of
the EMHS are eligible
to be nominated for the
committee.**

**The committee needs
new members – please
think about it.**

Coming Events

Wednesday, 17 October at 7.15 p.m.

AGM with talk by Miles Lewis at Clarendon Terrace, 210 Clarendon Street, East Melbourne

At 8.00 p.m. following our AGM Miles Lewis will talk on Inner Melbourne in the 1850s. This will be hosted in conjunction with The Menzies Foundation which is celebrating 150 years since the building of Clarendon Terrace. Due to expected large numbers members will receive an invitation and RSVPs will be necessary. On the night and for the following week we will be holding an exhibition of photos and other illustrations entitled "The Changing Face of Clarendon Street"

On the following Friday and Saturday, Celestina Sagazio from the National Trust will be conducting historical walks. Please ring The Menzies Foundation on 9419 5699 for details and bookings.

**Wednesday, 5 December
Christmas Drinks**

We are most fortunate this year to be able to hold our annual Christmas Drinks at Braemar, 178 George Street. In deference to the polished timber floors we will be asking that people wear flat shoes (or be prepared to take heels off at the door).

Make a note in your diaries now.



