



September 2014

**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.

Published by EMHS and supported by City of Melbourne Community Services Grants Program.



Committee

President:

Jill Fenwick 9419 0437

Vice President:

Rosie Smith 0431 707 405

Hon. Secretary:

Sylvia Black 9417 2037

Treasurer:

Malcolm Howell 0417 337 519

Committee:

Diane Clifford 9486 0793

Liz Rushen 9650 0525

Jacinta Ryan 9415 8288

Graham Shepherd 9486 9039

CONTACT DETAILS

**1st Floor, East Melbourne Library,
122 George Street, East Melbourne
PO Box 355, East Melbourne 8002**

Telephone: 9416 0445.

Email: info@emhs.org.au

Web: www.emhs.org.au

Membership

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

Enquiries: Diane Clifford 9486 0793

Annual subscription: \$25.00

Guests are welcome
at individual meetings \$5.00

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

President's Letter

It's mid-August now and gardens are beginning to put their best feet forward for a splendid September show. Magnolia trees have been in bloom for at least three weeks if not longer, and now all the smaller flowers – primulas and polyanthus, violas and pansies are showing their colours. Freesias and bluebells are just coming into flower, while the paper-white jonquils and the hellebores are also in bloom. The roses, having been pruned in mid-July, are putting on new growth and everything in the garden, as they say, should be rosy.

And it is, or would be, except for the possums. It's not unusual to go to bed one night with a nice display of growth on a rose, only to find it stripped bare the next morning, sometimes with branches broken as well. This year, for the first time ever, the same thing happened to a young hydrangea I'd been nurturing, and there's even evidence of them having a good go at a lemon tree.

I try to fight back: a concrete owl on the roofline (ignored); Poss-Off (wears off too quickly and you have to keep spraying it every couple of

days); blood and bone at the base (yes, but they actually come across the roof, sounding as if they're wearing a pair of boots). My latest attempt involves tying supermarket plastic bags on to the rose, so that it impedes the possum's progress and flaps in his eager face, combined with strategically placed plastic containers of mothballs. This seems to be reasonably successful, though the mothballs last only a week.

People of firmer spirit advocate trapping the possum and releasing it into a nearby park, but this seems too cruel. Possums are territorial and shifting them is a death sentence because they will be attacked by other possums defending their habitat and by dogs on the ground. Others say that the answer is to feed them – a nice apple or pear left outside apparently suits the possum palate more than a rose bush, but doesn't it mean that they'll settle in to have good, productive possum lives and lots of children?

If someone's got the answer, please let me know.

Jill Fenwick, August 2014

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.

Two Houses, Many Stories

Many of us will have noticed the alterations that have recently befallen The Crib at 18 Jolimont Terrace. The shingle balustrade, which was a feature of the façade, has been removed and replaced with something quite incongruous, and the lead light windows downstairs have been replaced with plate glass, as has the glazing in the front door. The Crib was built as one of a matching pair in 1859, but while its twin remains faithful to its origins, it was given a makeover around 1912-13. The new façade is now 100 years old and of heritage value in its own right. The council has given it a B grading. Thankfully, we believe the shingles are to be restored but the window and door remain in doubt.

The two houses, 18 and 20 Jolimont Terrace, were built for Charles Hotson Ebdon. The Australian Dictionary of Biography has an extensive entry on him. He was born at the Cape of Good Hope to a prominent merchant, banker and politician father. He was educated in England and Carlsruhe, Germany. In 1832 he settled in Sydney to make his own way as a merchant, but by 1835 he had joined the group of overlanders, the explorer pastoralists who were beginning to make their way south. His stock, in the care of his stockmen, were the first to cross the Murray. In 1837 he settled on the Campaspe in an area he named Carlsruhe, and so became the first pastoralist to settle north of the dividing range (John Gardiner had already made it to Melbourne).



William Hopton Anderson in 1912

He attended the first land sales in Melbourne where he bought three blocks of land for £136. He sold them two years later for £10,000.

In 1840 he sold Carlsruhe and moved to Melbourne, eventually building a mansion at the east end of Collins Street opposite the Melbourne Club. He also built a holiday house which he called Black Rock House, after which the suburb is named. It still stands and is now a museum. He was an on-again off-again politician who was active in separation and the anti-transportation league. He assisted William Westgarth to bring

in German immigrants [see our June 2014 newsletter], was a founder of the Melbourne Hospital and the Benevolent Asylum, and at different times, president and secretary of the Melbourne Club. At one stage he controlled nearly 500,000 acres (202,345 ha) in the Kerang region. He was, in his own words, 'disgustingly rich'. He died at the Melbourne Club in 1867 leaving over £100,000 to his three children. Curiously the inventory of assets at his death does not include any real estate, yet his son, Charles John Ebdon, was listed in the Rate Books as the owner of 18 Jolimont Terrace up until 1912, when Harry S Rickards became the new owner.

Harry S Rickards presumably was responsible for the conversion of 18 Jolimont Terrace but unfortunately his identity is most confusing. In 1917 the Rate Books list the owner of the house as Exors Harry S Rickards. The next owner is Harry Selby Rickards who is listed as the owner from 1929. One would think one was the father of the other, but no record of the death of the supposed father has been found, nor of the birth of the supposed son. It seems likely that the two were, in fact, one and the same but how the red herring of the death came into being is hard to imagine. We do know that Harry Selby Rickards was a warehouseman and that he married Margaret Janet Walker in 1912 and lived at The Crib from at least 1924. He died in 1958, while still living there. Margaret continued to live there until her own death in 1970. They had two sons, Field Grosvenor

Rickards, a lawyer, and Winston Selby Rickards, a pioneer in the field of child psychiatry. One of the grandsons, Winston Selby Rickards lived at The Crib for a short time after the death of his grandmother but then it was sold. It was for a time owned by the Melbourne Cricket Club.

Meanwhile, in 1899 the Anderson family moved into No 20. Two sons of the family, Edward Handfield and William Hopton, served in the First World War. Edward was killed at Fromelles, while William served with distinction, continuing to serve after the war. On retirement in 1946 he was given the honorary rank of air vice marshal. William's story will be one of those featured in our exhibition, For King and Country, East Melbourne Volunteers and the Great War, to be held in October. For more details about the exhibition see Coming Events on the back page.

Sylvia Black

Thank You

Many thanks to the cooks who responded so generously to our plea for help in catering for our meetings. All those who have attended our recent meetings have enjoyed their splendid and abundant contributions. It appears our history society is a hot bed of culinary talent. We do hope these cooks will continue to volunteer their services, and that others might also offer an occasional item.

Sharing 3002's History

The day dawned bright and fine, thankfully a bit warmer than the two degrees of the morning before! Today I was leading a walk around 3002 for a group of 15 ladies from the East Malvern area. These ladies meet once a month to take historical walks in and around Melbourne, having recently been to St Kilda and the Botanic Gardens at Cranbourne. My brief suggested that the walk needed to take about two and a half hours prior to the group's luncheon booking in the Fitzroy Gardens.

We met in the sunshine on the railway bridge at the foot of Powlett Street. After a brief introduction to the first settlements in Jolimont in the 1830s and the first land sales in East Melbourne in the 1850s we started off by walking up to Simpson Street. As the ladies admired the cast iron lacework of Eastbourne House, I told them about Mary Davies and Doctor Peacock, perhaps East Melbourne's most famous murder mystery.

The large cream mansion next to Andrew Pyman's which in 1926 was Lauriston Hall, a fashionable guest house for the well to do, was our next stop. One of the resident guests, the rowing coach of Melbourne Grammar, met an untimely death there following a party to celebrate the Melbourne Grammar crew's success in the heats of the Head of the River. The coach was shot in his bed in the early hours of the morning, but the murderer was never identified. The motive was never

established although it was thought an ill-judged dalliance may have had something to do with it.

We then walked down Wellington Parade to the corner of Clarendon Street where Cliveden once stood, having been built in 1886, for Sir William J Clarke, for the sum of £91,117. The mansion, according to the 1887 Illustrated Australian News was, "One of the largest private residences erected in the Colony". It was however sold for demolition in 1968. Around the corner we discussed the history of Mosspenoch, built in 1882 for the distinguished barrister, James Liddell Purves, K.C.

Turning into George Street, I was able to talk about the proposed site of the Anglican Cathedral in Melbourne and the story behind the original Trinity Church and its Vicarage. Continuing up George Street, I shared the stories behind the designers and the original owners of such magnificent buildings as Hepburn Terrace, Sunnyside, Amberley, Braemar and Canally, on the corner of George and Powlett Streets.

A brief pause ensued in Powlett Street (how convenient are those wide median strips!) to consider the stories behind Eastcourt and Foynes, before heading back to George Street to explore East Melbourne's connection to Napoleon! A lot of history is covered in those words and if you would like to refresh your memories of the Napoleon connection, Jill Fenwick's excellent

article can be found on the website newsletter archive of June 2012.

We then admired the Art Deco apartments Kalingra built in 1934 and designed by Edith Constance Ingpen, the first woman to graduate in architecture from the University of Melbourne in 1933.

Back into Simpson Street we stopped to admire the two lovely terraces named Elizabeth and Victoria. Built for Benjamin Lee an ironmonger, he named the first terrace after his wife. Then on to visit Ola Cohn's house (prior to the lunchtime visit to the Fairies Tree in the Fitzroy Gardens), before admiring Queen Bess Row and exploring its history.

Onwards we went up Hotham Street, discovering the stories behind Sydenham House, Janet Terrace, Halloween, Dorset Terrace and of course the Cairns Memorial Church. Turning right along the bluestone laneway we looked at the backs of the houses in Powlett Street with their occasional bricked up dunny doors. We carried on up Nunn Lane and turned back into the section of Powlett Street, between Grey and Gipps listed on the Register of the National Estate for its outstanding historical and architectural value.

Having admired The Opera House, Claverings, the Ashes House and Crathre and their interesting occupiers, we turned to explore the upper end of



Gipps Street. I spoke about Nepean Terrace, the former Chrysalis Gallery, Hope Terrace and Little Pardon, the home of the well-known colonial artist and teacher Eugene von Guerard.

Back into Powlett Street, we looked at the home that once belonged to Joan Lindsay author of *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, then across the street at the marvellous Canterbury Terrace. Comprising 16 houses it is recognised as Melbourne's longest terrace. Opposite is the neat house that once belonged to Peter Lalor, the Eureka Stockade leader, during his time as Speaker in the Victorian Parliament.

On the home straight, we turned right into Hotham Street past the Gothic House, Cyprus Terrace and Trinity Church. Then right into Clarendon Street, along the fence line and into Bishopscourt. Joy Freier had kindly left the gate open for us, enabling the story of the house and garden of East Melbourne's oldest house (which is unique for remaining true to its original intention as the

home of the Anglican Archbishops) to be appreciated in situ.

Our final steps across Clarendon street led us into the beautiful Fitzroy Gardens. In 1868, the Illustrated Australian News spoke with rapture of the attractions of the Fitzroy Gardens;

"The Fitzroy Gardens are second only to the Botanic Gardens in extent, beauty and general attractiveness. The ground is tastefully laid out, stocked with all sorts of ornamental trees, reticulated with running water, which keeps the grass ever green and the shrubs umbrageous, and is intersected

in all directions with broad and well-kept paths".

As we made our way towards the Pavilion café, I shared a few anecdotes of the Gardens in days gone by as well as my final snippets of history about the Fairies Tree and the Tudor Village.

And there we were, just over three kilometres and just over two and a half hours later, having covered a goodly part of the fabric of 3002, what a good walk!

My thanks to Sylvia Black for sharing her extensive knowledge of 3002 for the basis of this walk.

Rosemarie Smith

Coming Events

Wednesday, 15 October at 8.00 p.m. – AGM

Ian Shears, Manager, Urban Landscapes, City of Melbourne leads the City's climate change adaptation program for urban landscapes. Over the past three years, Ian and his award winning, multi-disciplinary team have delivered a \$30 million climate adaptation program focused on strategic green infrastructure interventions in the public realm. After our AGM he will talk about projects in our local area.

At Clarendon Terrace, 210 Clarendon Terrace, East Melbourne

Friday, 17 October-Tuesday, 11 November 2014, during library hours – Exhibition

For King and Country: East Melbourne Volunteers and the Great War

This exhibition is timed to coincide with the anniversary of the departure from Victoria of the first troops to serve overseas. HMAS Orvieto, the convoy's flagship, left Port Melbourne on 21 October 1914. Many East Melbourne residents were aboard it and other ships in the convoy. Our exhibition will tell some of their stories, and of others who enlisted later.

At East Melbourne Library, 122 George Street, East Melbourne

Wednesday, 3 December at 6.30 – Christmas Drinks

Put it in your diary now. More details later