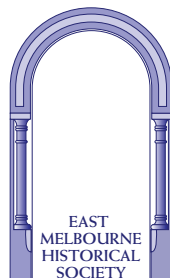


EAST MELBOURNE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



June 2017

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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**CITY OF
MELBOURNE**

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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: Diane Clifford

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Annual subscription: \$25.00

Guests are welcome
at individual meetings \$5.00

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

President's Letter

One of our biggest tasks in May was to scrutinise and respond to the proposed Amendment C258 of the Melbourne Planning Scheme, which will apply to all areas within the Heritage Overlay Area, excluding the Capital City Zone and Docklands precinct. The old identification of heritage buildings as A, B, C or D level, will now be replaced by the terms Significant, encompassing most presently listed A and B buildings, Contributory and Non-Contributory.

We began by walking the streets of East Melbourne and Jolimont, checking that the inventory of houses provided by the City of Melbourne was correct. Sylvia did most of the work on this area and, inevitably, found mistakes. Some A listed houses were missing; some houses had the wrong grade. Sylvia presented the Council with our list and sought that corrections be made.

In addition, her submission noted that the Aboriginal presence in East Melbourne had not been included in the new Statement of Significance and suggested also that the 'scar trees' of Yarra Park and the Fitzroy Gardens be listed, as reminders of the presence of the Wurundjeri people of the area. The site of the old Mounted Police Barracks, a substantial group of buildings where Berry Street now stands, should also be noted.

Next we looked over the Heritage Policies and made a submission focussed on four major areas, urging the committee to strengthen the language of heritage protection from words like 'may' and 'should' to stronger language like 'must' and 'mandatory; to consider not only the height of proposed buildings

in granting permits but also the depth, especially as it impinges on the water table and land contour, with potential harm to adjoining and down-slope houses. We suggested that buildings should not cover more than 75% of the block, in order to allow permeability of rainwater. As part of this, protection should be afforded to large trees, in order to protect historic streetscapes, maintain the microclimate and afford protection to native wildlife.

In addition, Graham Shepherd made an individual submission asking that wind effects be assessed and mitigation action should be required for all planning applications where the three dimensional profile of a building, especially those over two stories, would be changed. Pointing to the wind tunnels created on the corner of Wellington Parade and Powlett street and around 150 Clarendon Street, he recommended setbacks from the street and tree planting as possible ways to mitigate the effects.

On 3 May, the EMHS and the EMG had a meeting with City of Melbourne representatives to hear more about C258. Arranged by John Stone, we met at the Hut and had a productive discussion, attended also by Councillor Rohan Leppert. He was able to tell us that some progress had already been made, with the Council determining the issue of permeability needed to be addressed. As a result, it will now be part of the regulations that blocks over 300 sq.m. will have to leave 25% of the land un-built on to address the issue of permeability.

Jill Fenwick. May 2017

Cliveden

In 1967 Allan Willingham was a 4th Year Architecture student, investigating the demolition of multi-storey buildings in Melbourne for his Technical Research Essay. Among the buildings he visited was Cliveden, the old mansion about to be replaced with the high rise Hilton Hotel:

At Cliveden in August/September 1967, I was interested to learn of the manner in which valuable architectural elements such as chimneypieces and fire-grates were to be extracted, protected and transported to Whelan's Yard at 602 Sydney Road, Coburg, before demolition of the building was commenced. Removal of the interior fittings and fixtures, and all other building elements which could be salvaged and resold, took many months and demolition of the building itself did not take place until well into 1968.

Cliveden had been built in 1887 for William Clarke and was the largest house in Melbourne. It was a palatial mansion in the Italian Renaissance style, with a ballroom measuring 100 by 50 feet, 28 bedrooms, 5 bathrooms and 17 individual servants' rooms. Internally, it was highly decorative, with oak panelling from England, Carrara marble mantelpieces – three in the dining room – stained and leaded glass windows, originally thought to be Italian in origin, but today recognised as English, the work of John William Brown (1842-1929).

In October 1888, Table Talk magazine described the finished mansion:

On entering the great hall, one steps into a richly appointed chamber ... with Elizabethan furniture of carved oak and embellished with a collection of bronzes that would be the cynosure of any art gallery in the world.

William and Janet Clarke moved into the house in 1888. He died of a heart attack in 1897. Janet Clarke continued to live there for another ten years, before selling it to the Baillieu family in 1909. Cliveden was then converted into 48 luxury apartments, with a communal dining hall, still one of the best addresses in east Melbourne. In 1968, the house was sold again for \$440,000. Its furnishings and interior fittings were auctioned, and the building itself demolished.

The new owners of the site bought some of the fittings and used them to create the Cliveden room, a small reminder of the glories of the original mansion. These included the 'Welcome' window, formerly on the first floor landing; the 19th century Carrara marble fireplace, with its fireplace surround of carved cherubs and foliage, designed and sculpted by Florentine craftsmen; the grand entrance doors to the original vestibule, featuring stained and leaded glass with a rose medallion in each panel; and in the dining



Dining Room. Photo from 'Cliveden', an advertising prospectus by Baillieu Allard, Real Estate Agents, no date but c.1920s.]

room, the stained oak beams which embellished the ceiling.

Sadly, the Pullman decided to sell the fittings at auction, leading to fears that they would be dispersed to individual owners, some overseas, and thus, part of Marvellous Melbourne's past would be irrevocably lost.

Long term East Melbourne resident Krystyna Campbell Pretty was determined that this should not happen, that Melbourne should not lose forever this reminder of its past and of the grand houses which characterised the new wealth of the late nineteenth century. At the Ainger's auction on Sunday March 5, she successfully bid on every piece of the Cliveden collection, immediately donating it to the National Gallery of

Victoria. In the near future, the room will form part of an exhibition on Marvellous Melbourne, reconstructed so that the thousands of visitors to the NGV will be able to appreciate the grand vision of William Clarke.

Jill Fenwick

Cover Image:

Staircase window ex Cliveden.
Designed by John William Brown (1842-1928) and made by James Powell & Sons, Whitefriars, London.

Photo courtesy E J Ainger Pty Ltd.

Madam Opportunity, or Not?

Recently we received an enquiry from Colleen Lawson who asked for information about 167 Wellington Parade South. A family member had owned the house, but Colleen had also found out that a groom was living there and she wanted to know if it was a large house that might have had staff. A look at the MMBW map rather discounted that theory. It was a small house with very little land around it and certainly no stable. A search of the rate books revealed the owner's name as Minnie Costain. Putting Minnie's name into Trove's digitised newspapers brought up several articles about her, one describing her as a boarding house keeper which answered Colleen's question about why the groom was there. (As it turned out the groom was one of our WW1 soldiers, but that is another story.) But the newspapers brought up so much more about Minnie.

It may be that the real Madam Opportunity had surfaced. Last year we had been trying to name a lane that ran off Grey Street opposite Darling Square and had had numerous suggestions knocked back by the Council because they were too similar to the names of other lanes or roads, or they were two words which is now not allowed, and then I remembered the story of Madam Opportunity and thought at last we had a name that would have no competition: Opportunity Lane. Our knowledge of Madam Opportunity came from Tom Hazel who at the time lived a few doors down. His story was that there was,

'a brothel at number 54 Grey Street and it was exclusively for the American officers, and it was run by a lady called Madam Opportunity, and the officers waited in the little square opposite and she'd come out the front and ring a little bell when it was time for next client, because the officers would leave by the rear and enter by the front.'

This was during the years of the Second World War when American forces were barracked at the MCG, calling it Camp Murphy, and officers were billeted around East Melbourne. Needless to say the name was deemed unsuitable for a lane and something much more prosaic was eventually chosen. But in the process Madam Opportunity has become an East Melbourne identity about whom we would like to know a whole lot more

Now back to Minnie. Perth's Truth was the first newspaper to make much of her escapades with the headline, **'MINNIE COSTAIN AND HER CONSORT. He Flits With Her Diamonds. Jolly Jinks at Jolimont—Minnie Goes to Law—And Recovers Her Gee Gaws.'**

The article describes her as 'a big, stylishly-dressed, dark young woman'. Onslow Mayhew, her 'consort', was described as 'a strong, muscular, well-set-up man of gentlemanly appearance, and report has it that he belongs to a WELL-TO-DO FAMILY IN OMARU'. Mayhew was eventually brought to trial for stealing three rings and sentenced to three months imprisonment.

Two years later, in 1912, Minnie was charged with keeping a disorderly house but the case was dismissed. Did possible leakage of her client list have anything to do with it? On another occasion she was given a heavy fine for trading in sly grog.

In 1924 Minnie became the owner of a two storey house at 132 Wellington Parade which she converted to a garage known as Wellington Motors. It had a flat upstairs. She possibly bought it to give her live-in friend and self-described motor driver, George William Bouchier, something to do. Things went wrong there too, with an employee charged with theft of cash. But Minnie gave him a good character reference and he was only sentenced to one month in prison.

In 1920 an advertisement appeared in the Argus:

**LOST, on Monday, between
Jolimont and Flemington
racecourse. Large Cross,
Cairngorm Stones (keepsake).
Good reward. 167 Wellington
parade, Jolimont.**

This suggests that Minnie was a keen race-goer among her other activities.

Colleen Lawson, has been able to fill in some of Minnie's background and writes that:

She was the youngest of 10 children born to Michael Costain and Ellen Herlihy in Geeveston Tasmania. They were both transported convicts from Ireland arriving in the 1840/1850's. Ellen was convicted of stealing 12 cows (with her brother who was also transported) from her uncle. Michael was charged with stealing clothes

which he discharged for fowls. Both Ellen and Michael received sentences of 7 years. They were granted permission to marry in 1853. Minnie had a son born circa 1916 who grew up with the name Manly Bouchier and it seems likely that George Bouchier was his father. (Registration of the birth has not been found.) Minnie and George eventually married in 1933 and having made an honest woman of her he died only a month later. In the death notice he was described as devoted foster father of Manly.

Minnie sold the garage in 1934 but stayed at the house in Jolimont until 1943 where a young boarder found yet another robber under her bed in 1939. Minnie then moved to a flat in a new Art Deco style building at 52 Grey Street, East Melbourne. This coincidentally is the address of Madam Opportunity's establishment, taking into account that the actual address of the flats is 50-54.

In another coincidence The Argus in 1947 ran a Lost advertisement which has a remarkable similarity to the earlier one:

**EARRING, Marcasite, Drop,
lost Caulfield races Boxing
Day. Reward. 52 Grey st.. East
Melbourne.**

Minnie died in 1957 aged 81 leaving a big question unanswered: is it possible that, in view of her history, she and Madam Opportunity were one and the same? It is all very tantalising.

Sylvia Black

Coming Events

Wednesday, 21 June, at 8.00 p.m.

– Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow: A trip down memory lane, then back to the future 1853, 1953, today and 2053

Our speaker, Phil Ruthven is the Founder of IBISWorld, an international corporation providing online business information, forecasting and strategic services. IBISWorld now operates in Australia, the United States (NY and LA), Canada, China, United Kingdom and Indonesia. He is widely considered the nation's most respected strategist and futurist on business, social and economic matters. He has been a local resident for over 25 years.

In this talk Phil will look back to 1853 (being the first house in East Melbourne), to 1953 (formation of the East Melbourne Group, today (2017), and finally will take a stab at the changes up to 2053, the bicentenary. His talk will cover social, work, industry, economic, political and global changes and developments.

Wednesday, 16 August, at 8.00 – Remembering Melbourne

Richard Broome, emeritus professor Department of History at La Trobe University, is the author of eleven books and thirty papers. His latest project has been the editing of the sumptuous book, Remembering Melbourne, released late last year. The book contains over 700 photos of buildings Melbourne has lost. The Royal Historical Society of Victoria, the publisher of the book, contributed the bulk of the photos, concentrating on the central city; the rest of book relied on the contributions of about twenty historical societies, including EMHS, which provided chapters about their suburbs.

Professor Broome will talk about the work involved in compiling the book.

Both talks at Clarendon Terrace, 210 Clarendon Terrace, East Melbourne

Welcome to New Members

Liz Armstrong	Graeme Black
Krystyna Campbell-Pretty	
Jennifer Cawson	Peter Clark
Robert diMattina.	Shelley Freeman
Peter Hanlon	Donna Macainsh
Wynne McGrath	Fran Nugent
Jenelle O'Callaghan	Jan Oughton

Jeff Oughton	John Punshon
Robert Rattray	Andrew Russell
Marita Russell	Athan Vlahonasios
David Wark	Victoria Warne
Lesley Weymouth-Wilson	