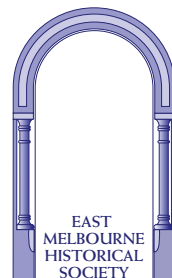


# EAST MELBOURNE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



## March 2019

## 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

As I write, Melbourne is somnolent, made lethargic by the seemingly endless days of summer. Holiday makers are returning reluctantly to the city. It's the last day before the children go back to school. The pressure of Christmas celebrations is over. The cricket and the tennis are finished for this summer and the cheerful crowds walking to the MCG and Tennis Centre have dispersed. The gardens look tired, with burnt leaves and dry soil, in need of a good dose of rain.

And so it's time to begin again, to focus on the rich history of our suburb and the challenges it faces. While the Melbourne Football Club's plan to alienate a large section of Yarra Park for a practice oval and build a six storey clubhouse over the Jolimont rail line has been rejected by Planning Minister Richard Wynne, we need to be alert to any re-emergence of it. Valetta, a constant concern, is now being used by the Freemasons' Hospital for administrative purposes, though sadly this has not involved re-painting the exterior. 204-208 Albert Street, originally built as three terrace houses in 1859-60, and later altered into a single building is to be partially demolished and a nine storey building constructed on the site. We have put in an objection on the grounds of excessive height and bulk, affecting neighbouring classified buildings and streetscapes.

On the positive side, we began our year on 20 February with a walk in the Fitzroy Gardens conducted by Dr Monique Webber, exploring the story of the statues that once graced its paths and their removal. We follow this with

a special lecture at the East Melbourne library, 8pm on 13 March, with the erudite Dr. Barry Jones – a treat for all those who have admired his knowledge and perspicacity over the years.

*Jill Fenwick  
February 2019*

## We Welcome New Members

Monique Depierre	Joe Ferwerda
Cameron Oxley	Bruce Armour
Marie Fels	Stephen Meek
Christine Meek	Kirsten Mitchell
Zipporah Szalay	Dominic Clarke
Gregory Bisinella	Liz Jonson
Daniel Gluer	Robert Paterson
Laxmi Weldon	

## Vale Bishop Ian George

It is with sadness that we record the death on the 29th of January of Bishop Ian George. Ian was, in recent years, acting Vicar of Holy Trinity and a regular participant at Bishops court functions and activities. Upon his arrival in East Melbourne he quickly came to know many in our community by name, both within the church and without. His smiling face and thoughtful manner will be missed.

## Houses with History – 85 Powlett Street

The terrace house at 85 Powlett Street is one of two matching houses built by George Black, who also built 121 and 125 Hotham St and 173 Gipps St. It was erected sometime between 1857 and 1859, an elegant two storey building with iron lacework over its front veranda. It stands on the corner of a lane, appropriately named Lalor Place, the one time home of Eureka Stockade hero, Peter Lalor (1827-1889).

Peter Lalor was born in Tinakill, Queen's County, Ireland on 5 February 1827, one of twelve children of Pat and Ann Lalor. His father was a landowner and a strong supporter of Home Rule. Lalor was educated at Carlow College, and then studied civil engineering at Trinity College, Dublin. In 1852 Peter and his older brother Richard, decided to seek their fortunes in Australia, landing in Victoria in October that year. He first worked on the construction of the Melbourne-Geelong railway, resigning to take part in the gold rush, first in Ovens, then on the Eureka Lead at Ballarat.

In 1853, a miners' rebellion broke out in Bendigo against the high price of gold licences, the 'digger hunts' by police, and led to demands for universal manhood suffrage, political representation and the abolition of property qualification to become an

M.P. The murder of a miner, James Scobie, at Bentley's Hotel, sparked the rebellion at Eureka, with miners electing Peter Lalor to lead an armed uprising at Bakery Hill, Ballarat.

During the fight, Lalor was wounded in the left arm, and subsequently had to face two operations, the second amputating the arm at the shoulder. Declared an outlaw by the government, he was quickly re-instated as a hero, with many of the miners' demands met. In November 1855, he was elected to the Legislative Assembly as member for Ballarat West, later North Grenville. After eleven years as member, he lost his seat by twenty votes in 1871, but in 1874, was re-elected to the electorate of South Grant. However, he was seen as representing landowners, rather than miners and workers. He became Speaker of the Legislative Assembly from 1880-1887.

He married Alicia Dunn at Geelong in 1855. They had two children, Anne, born at Prahran in 1856 and Joseph, born at Sandridge in 1857. The family moved to 85 Powlett Street in 1876 and when the children were nearly adult, with Joseph becoming a doctor.

Peter Lalor retired from Parliament in 1877. His wife, Alicia, had died on 17 May 1887 and his daughter the



same year. By then they were living at Morrison Place, on Eastern Hill. Lalor died in 1889 at Lalor House, 293 Church Street, Richmond, the medical rooms and home built for his son Joseph. He was 62.

Peter Lalor's funeral was a grand one, conducted by Archbishop Carr. The Geelong Advertiser wrote of 'a four horse hearse. Four mourning coaches and some seventy or eighty private carriages and vehicles...' but added '... a noticeable feature was the absence of the representatives of mining districts.'

*Jill Fenwick*



Peter Lalor 1856. State Library of Victoria]

## A Recent Acquisition

122 Jolimont Road c.1900 (dem)

**B**uilt 1868 for Howard Willoughby, editor of The Argus. Photo shows John Donaldson, donor's great grandfather, at the front gate. Donaldson was a commercial traveller for Stewart and Lloyds, manufacturers of black, galvanised and steam tubes. He occupied the house 1897-1901.

Donor: Caroline Radisch



# Half Way House

The following item appeared in the *Kalgoorlie Western Argus*, 12 Mar 1901:

## A NICE PROSPECT.

During the partial demolition of an antiquated East Melbourne hotel a laborer engaged in removing bricks dropped across a nest of sovereigns, 25 in all, secreted in a wall. When the find became known the men engaged on the buildings immediately set to work to make a vigorous search of the premises in the hope of coming across some treasure trove, but nothing more than a few stray coins rewarded their vigilance. Owing to the great antiquity of the sovereigns they are reported to be worth two guineas apiece. There is likely to be some trouble as to the ownership of the find, as both the landlord of the hotel and the contractor lay claim to the spoil, whilst the workman, who made the discovery also considers himself entitled to some recompense. In the early history of Melbourne the hotel was situate in a heavily timbered stretch of country - now the fashionable suburb of East Melbourne - and passed under the name of the Half-Way House.

The fate of the sovereigns remains unknown but what happened to the Half-Way House? After some diligent digging Trove digitized newspapers

came up with the answer <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/> The Half-Way House was on the corner of Albert and Gisborne Streets and was an earlier incarnation of the Volunteer Arms Hotel which stood on the same site until replaced by the Metropolitan Fire Brigade. It was considered half way between Melbourne and Collingwood. In an even earlier time it had been owned by Hector Liardet and was then known as Liardet's Hotel. Hector was the third son of Wilbraham Frederick Evelyn Liardet, hotel keeper and water-colourist. But during its Half-Way House days (c.1860-1864) it was run by William Tilke.

He was of an entrepreneurial frame of mind and within two years he had established the Vauxhall Gardens on the spare land next door. It offered numerous, irresistible attractions: 'The Monster Fountain ! the Crystal fountain ! the Illuminated fountain ! the Grotto ! the Statuary ! Neptune Rising from the Sea ! the Maizy Walks ! and last, not least, the commodious Pavilion, and best Quadrille Band in the colony', all 'brilliantly illuminated'. Each night the gates opened at half past eight, with dancing starting at nine o'clock. One night stargazers were convinced they had seen a comet or a meteor but, no, William Tilke had organized to send up a 'fire-balloon' for the amusement of his patrons.



View from Half Way House by Frederick Schoenfeld, 1864. State Library of Victoria

But things did not go well financially and it is unlikely the sovereigns ever belonged to William Tilke. On 7 April 1864 *The Age* advertised the sale of 'Household Furniture, Bar Fittings, Beer-Engines, License and Miscellaneous Goods of the Halfway House Hotel, opposite St. Peter's Church, Eastern Hill.' The forced sale was brought on by Mercutt, Terry & Co., wholesale wine and spirit merchants, cordial manufacturers and manufacturers of Tonic Bitters.

*Sylvia Black*

## Herb Garden Flourishes

Thanks to the team from the Men's Shed the herb garden behind the library is now supplying local cooks with a variety of produce. Available to all, but only accessible during library hours.



## Clarendon Terrace Lives Again

Clarendon Terrace, once home to the Menzies Foundation and venue for our lectures, has recently been reinvented as Her Place Women's Museum. Her Place Women's Museum Australia is a not-for-profit organisation that celebrates the social, civic and entrepreneurial achievements of all Australian women and their role in shaping our nation. The lives and experiences of women have traditionally been under-represented in historical narratives, museum collections and the public sphere.

As part of the Australian Heritage Festival, Dr Liz Rushen will give the inaugural lecture at the Museum on 'Clarendon Terrace and HER first neighbours' in which she will talk on some of East Melbourne's pioneering women. This fits very neatly with our own on-going project on our local notable women. Liz is well known to most of us as co-founder of EMHS, she is a professional historian with a special interest in women's history and has written many books on the subject.

EMHS members are invited to attend and will not only have the chance to hear Liz speak but also to see the new incarnation of one of our oldest and finest buildings.

Thursday 9 May at 6.00 pm at Clarendon Terrace, 210 Clarendon Street, East Melbourne. Admittance is by gold coin donation. Bookings online at <https://www.trybooking.com/460931>

## Coming Events

Wednesday, 13 March at 8.00 p.m.

Barry Jones and 'Sleepers, Wake! Revisited'

Sleepers, Wake! Technology and the Future of Work, the thought-provoking and much acclaimed book by Barry Jones, was first published in 1982 and revised in 1995. Now the author has reviewed his ideas on the effect of technological innovation on modern society.

This is a special event, outside our usual schedule. It is sure to be a stimulating evening.

Wednesday, 17 April at 8.00 p.m.

Spencer Street Bridge, a talk by Fiona Campbell

Fiona will be known to most of us as the peerless local history librarian stationed at our East Melbourne Library. She has made a detailed study of the Spencer Street Bridge and discovered a fascinating story. Her infectious enthusiasm for her subject is sure to make this a riveting night.

Both talks at East Melbourne Library, 122 George Street, East Melbourne

## Cover Image

Fitzroy Gardens, Feb 2019.

Photo: Jill Fenwick