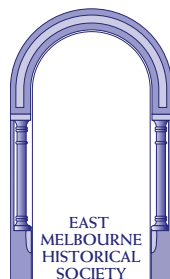


EAST MELBOURNE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



March 2021

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: \$30.00

Guests are welcome
at individual meetings \$5.00

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

The Members and Committee of the East Melbourne Historical Society respectfully acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land, the Wurundjeri/Woiwurrung people of the Kulin nation and pay respect to their elders past, present and to come.

In spite of one hundred and eighty-six years of white settlement, East Melbourne still has remnants of the past, the places where the local Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation lived, reminding us of that this was a very different land. Where we have houses, the Wurundjeri had open plains, which teemed with local wildlife. They fished from their canoes and left as a mark of their industry the three scarred trees which can still be seen, one in the Fitzroy Gardens and two at Yarra Park.

Over twenty years ago an elderly resident told me that as a child she used to visit her grandparents in a house on Darling Square. They had constant problems with damp, coming from underground springs or streams that, prior to white settlement, ran into the billabong that preceded the construction of the Square and told stories of Aboriginal people gathering there. Other corroboree and camp sites in East Melbourne have been identified at Yarra Falls, Parliament Hill, the Treasury Gardens, Yarra Park and at the Domain.

Above the falls near Queens Street, the Yarra waters pooled, providing a safe crossing to the southern side. Upstream of the falls, too, the water was fresh, and would have provided the local Aborigines with plenty of drinking water. The wetlands on either side of the Yarra provided ample food,

a steady supply of eels, fish and game for the Wurundjeri people. The land supported many indigenous trees, providing fuel for fires and the means of making tools, food bowls and weapons. Yams and various lilies gave the diet starch and carbohydrates.

East Melbourne was subdivided in 1840, though land generally was not sold to the public until 1852, following the increase of population due to the 1851 gold rush. However, some land was released earlier: Governor La Trobe built his home on 12.5 acres alongside the 'Government paddock' and named the area Jolimont. In 1848, Anglican Archbishop Perry selected a large piece of land, running along the proposed Clarendon Street, from Gipps Street to George Street for the building of Bishops Court and the proposed Anglican Cathedral. All this impinged on the land formerly belonging to the Wurundjeri and as colonial Melbourne expanded, the Wurundjeri people lost not only their land, but its resources. Today, some of the area in Yarra Park, described by Hoddle as an 'open forest', still has indigenous trees that pre-date white settlement, but otherwise is now identified as the MCG Car Park.

Each increase in the white population adversely affected the Wurundjeri people. Reduced in number by the loss of food and water resources, by alcohol, disease and

violence, the government acted, not to restrict the growing settlement, but to 'protect' the native people. In 1837, Governor La Trobe set aside 895 acres of land, bounded by the Yarra River, Williams Road, Punt Road, and High Street for an Aboriginal mission to be run by Reverend George Langhorne, but after protests from the white community, the amount of land was reduced. The original land grant was subdivided and the Mission was moved to the west side of Punt Road, close to the river and opposite Yarra Park. The mission closed after two years. In 1863 Wurundjeri elder, Simon Wonga (1824-1874), along with his cousin, William Barak (1824-1903), led the remaining Wurundjeri people east along the Black Spur to the Upper Yarra valley, where they

first camped at Acheron, but after petitioning the Victorian government were given land to establish the Corranderrk Mission.

Both men were exceptional leaders, *Ngurugaeta*, demanding justice for the Aboriginal people and passing on the lore and culture of their forefathers. William Barak is remembered in the Barak Bridge, which links East Melbourne to Birrarung Marr. A soundtrack plays a welcome song sung in the Woiwurrung language by Wurundjeri elder, Joy Murphy Wandin. In 2015 an 85 metre building was constructed; its façade has an image of Barak, formed by white balconies against a black wall.

Jill Fenwick

Don Dunstan

Following on from the item in an earlier East Melbourne Historical Society newsletter we now have some more details about Don Dunstan, an East Melbourne resident although just for a short time.

He lived at 59 Gipps Street. He came to Melbourne in 1982, stayed in Carlton for a while and then moved to Gipps Street in 1982 - 83. He returned to South Australia in 1987.

During his time in Victoria he was active in Meals on Wheels, tourism and theatre. He even gave a talk at the East Melbourne Library in March 1984. Some locals may remember this talk and who can forget those pink shorts.

While he was in East Melbourne he challenged himself to learn the piano and neighbours said they could often hear him practicing. Don Dunstan died in 1999.

A new book has been published about Don Dunstan. Titled *Don Dunstan : a Visionary Politician who changed Australia* and written by Angela Woollacott it is an excellent coverage of his life and times. East Melbourne Library has a copy.

Gay Sussex

President's Letter

As COVID continues to inhabit the world I am aware that our own newsletter will provide something of a slice of life for future generations of how the pandemic has impacted us. It is only fitting that a local historical society sheds light on the way our local area is negotiating the effects of the pandemic.

At the time of writing this we are in the middle of the third lockdown, which came out of the blue, and which was instantly disruptive to our lives. Hopefully we will be out of this latest lockdown soon, but there is ongoing uncertainty about what we have regarded as normal life.

In that context EMHS is endeavouring to continue member engagement even though planned in-person events have had to be vacated in keeping with government rules about the size of gatherings.

Our February social gathering has had to be cancelled, but we are aiming to go forward with our bi-monthly events by zoom and with limited numbers in person, depending on where government regulations are by that time. These will lack the much appreciated social interaction that have accompanied those meetings, but will at least allow members to be engaged and informed by some excellent and interesting speakers.

Ian Hind and his team are moving forward with the Yarra Park School history project, with some very interesting material being unearthed

Another pending activity is an instructional session to be conducted by Di Clifford on researching family history on 5 March in the library, subject to regulations of course.

We will keep members informed about what is happening, and we will necessarily have to act with short notice at times.

Finally, I note that I saw a story the other day of a nun in France who was having her 117th birthday, making her apparently the second oldest person on the planet. She was a teenager when surviving the great pandemic known as the Spanish Flu, and has recovered from getting COVID last year. An extraordinary story, and one of the few in the world who could give first hand experience of dealing with such a deadly pandemic.

*Keep well,
Tim Holland
February 2021*

We Welcome New Members

Isabel Simpson
Simon Phillipson
Rob Lange
Charlotte Spencer-Roy,
Sean McNicholl
Graham Riches

Vera Hails, Butcher

In 1942 the shops at 78-82 Wellington Parade had recently been completed, replacing the earlier 19th century buildings. One of the first to move in was Alice Vera Hails who established her butcher's shop at No. 78, now Queen Caterina's pizzeria. The neighbouring businesses were a coffee lounge, a cake-shop and a fruit and flower seller.

It was demanding life and Vera was constantly looking for ways to make it more accommodating, usually without success. Two mornings a week she had to be up at 4.30 to prepare orders for delivery to her 100 customers. In 1946 she suggested co-operative deliveries for house-hold goods, saying that the housewife should provide a box in which her goods could be carried and pay a fee of 1/- (10c) a week toward cost of delivery. The Meat and Allied Trades Federation and the Meat Industry Employees' Union were in favor of it, but the Housewives Association opposed it. It could only operate where shops were grouped close together and in many suburbs this was not the case. Plus the cost of living was already high and the housewife should not be expected to pay extra for delivery.

In November 1947 a prices inspector bought from her 4½ lb (about 2 kgs) of boned brisket and paid 3/8 (38 cents) for it. This was 8d over the pegged price. She was fined £50 (\$100). This was her second conviction.

A year later she was arguing that the sale of meat by unlicensed butchers'

shops should be prevented. She said 'delicatessen, grocery and confectionery shops were able to sell all kinds of meat by just taking it from the same refrigerator that contained soft drinks and milk, but a butcher had to have a shop full of special equipment'. She added, 'delicatessens during rationing were allowed to sell crumbed cutlets and cooked roasts, but the question had never been answered: "How did they get the meat without coupons?"'

On the same occasion she complained about having to open on Saturdays when she had no customers. Yet in May 1950 she was again in the papers promising to open her shop on a Saturday morning, in spite of threats by the Meat Industry Employees' Union. She was promised police protection. She said, 'It's only a waste of time for anyone to threaten me, I come from a family in which there have been 13 butchers in the past three generations, and I am the third woman of these who has had a butcher's shop. I know I am within the law so far as it has gone, and the union can do nothing.' The incident arose when members of the AMIEU decided the previous week not to work on Saturday mornings during the cooler months.

In 1952 the building was sold and Vera ceased life as a butcher. She had lived a life of twists and turns before finally giving in to her family heritage. She was born in Castlemaine in 1900, the daughter of William Speedie Dunstan and his wife Alice

Sabina Minniken. She grew up in Bendigo where her father had his butcher's shop and where he became a local shire councillor. Nothing is known of her academic abilities but she consistently won prizes for elocution. Later she performed at local concerts giving recitations. In 1919 she was travelling in a train with her father and sister when the train ran off the rails.



The Age, 20 May 1950

The jolt caused Vera's head to smash through the window but her hat reportedly saved her from any damage. Nevertheless she sued the Victorian Railways for £500 (\$1000) and was awarded £350 (\$700).

In 1926 she married Ernest Stanley Varcoe, a car salesman. They had met as children in Bendigo but had gone their separate ways before meeting again in later life. By the time they re-met Vera had moved to Melbourne and was working as a florist. The marriage was short-lived. He accused her of having a drinking problem which led to constant rows. She left him in 1929, later citing cruelty. Their divorce was finalized in 1931 on the grounds of her desertion. For the next three years according to the electoral rolls Vera lived in St Kilda and worked as a nurse.

In 1936 she married Edward Foster Hails, twenty-seven years her senior. He had been an engineer working on

coastal ships but had retired and was no doubt looking for a more settled life. It was four or five years before the pair turned up in East Melbourne and Vera finally reverted to family tradition.

Reminder

There are still a few members who have not renewed for this year. Take advantage of our special price for 2021 – only \$20.00.

Contact Di Clifford on 0437 221 249 or dianeclifford1@gmail.com

Life at Normanville

This is a brief sketch of the history of the residence at 148 Simpson Street, which is a single-fronted, single-storey terrace opposite Powlett Reserve. In a row of 11 houses between Albert Street and Grey Street, it was built in 1875 as one of two adjoining and matching terraces that together were named Normanville.

The earliest public reference to the house was in the *Age* of 25 July 1889 where "Normanville, 148 Simpson St...private board, residence, single rooms, bath, piano; moderate" suggests that it was a boarding house, and the advertised features are an interesting aspect of what would seem to have been attractive at that time. In 1892 it was advertised as a 6 room house to rent, evidently as a deceased estate. By 1893 the Gilliman family was there, as there is recorded then the death of 30yo David Dunne, a Dublin born nephew of the head of the family.

George and Florence Gilliman and family lived there from the early 1890s till the mid 1900s. They moved to 169 Gipps St just before the war, then to a substantial address in Prahran. Boarders may still have been part of the scene, as there was a young woman, Isabella Cameron, of that address mentioned in a death notice for her mother in 1898.

Joseph Gilliman's first home was at 148 Simpson, after his birth on 22 May 1898. Joseph joined the AIF as a 16yo in early 1915, as detailed in Sue Larkin's entry in our WW1 online database. Serving in the field

ambulance he died in the Ypres sector in October 1917, aged 19.

There was a strong WW2 connection to the house also, as Robert Geoffrey Farnsworth was a resident of 148 Simpson Street when he enlisted in the AIF in 1941 at age 30. Robert was English born but had emigrated and had been a farmer. Sadly he became a prisoner of the Japanese with the fall of Singapore in February 1942 and died on 1 August 1945 at Kanchanaburi in Thailand on the Burma Railway, only days before the end of the war.

At various times until the 1950s the house was advertised as either 6 or 7 rooms. In its original condition it would have had 3 bedrooms and a lounge room, with a lean-to kitchen and bathroom (as previously mentioned, a bath was featured in the 1889 ad). The 1899 Board of Works maps shows a row of sheds out the back, and they were probably used as sleep-outs; I know that a similar house in the same row in the 1960s had accommodation for 7 children, 2 parents and an uncle.

From about the mid 1950s till 1998 the house was owned by Herman and Olga Rosen and family. In 1979 the house was renovated into a 2 bedroom, bathroom, kitchen and lounge/dining configuration, and this was modified in 2012 with a bedroom being built into the roof space.

It is interesting to note that at the turn of the century at least 9 of the 11 houses in the row had not changed

ownership for at least 40 years, and several were owned by post-war European migrants, including the Rosens.

The most notable resident that I have found is Len Thompson, Brownlow Medallist for Collingwood, who lived there in the 1970s. Since then it has also been the home of MFC footballers Jesse Hogan, James Jordon and Maia Westrupp. The house did feature in the *Sporting Globe* in July 1939, as one A. Foster was trying to sell a greyhound for the reason that "shift work forces sale". In 1936 the house was home to a chimney sweep who advertised with the claim of "prices right".



148 Simpson Street. Photo Tim Holland

Agnes Trickett: A Local

On 10 August 1857 the ship 'Planet' arrived in Hobson's Bay. Amongst the 84 passengers on board were Evelyn Agnes Trickett aged 1, her father Edward aged 40, her mother Henrietta 37 and her two siblings Oliver 9 and Ellen 7. Luckily the family had remained healthy during the 100 plus days at sea. On landing the ship's captain had been taken to court for not providing hospital accommodation. Prior to leaving London the provision of medical services had been deemed sufficient but soon after the captain had ordered the equipment removed in order to provide more cabin space. He was fined the minimum amount - £5.10.0.

Three weeks after disembarking the Tricketts had settled into their new home at 50 Condell Street, Collingwood. And here another child, Edward Arthur, to be known as Arthur, was born in 1859.

On 28 September 1857 Edward advertised that he had taken over the business of Thomas Crook, a saddler and harness maker in the city. Given that back home in Bridlington, Yorkshire Edward had been a Baptist minister this has to be seen as a brave move. But he stuck at it and this was to be his business for the rest of his life.

By 1860 the Tricketts had moved into their permanent home on the corner of Lansdowne and Albert

Streets, East Melbourne, originally given as 1 Lansdowne Street, but later it became No 2. Maie Casey in her book *Early Melbourne Architecture* described the house as showing 'a successful combination of sneaked bluestone banded with great blocks of granite in a spirit of strength and zest.'

Perhaps the completion of the new Albert Street Baptist Church was influential in their choice of address. Here Henrietta established herself as a teacher of pianoforte, giving lessons from home, and from 1862-1884 also at Scotch College. Scotch was two blocks down Lansdowne Street. Nothing could have been more convenient. To add to their income the Trickett's also took in a lodger who occupied the front bedroom.

Of the children, Oliver matriculated from Scotch College in 1864, joined the Mining Department and passed his exams to become a mining surveyor. He also became a champion rower. He eventually moved to Sydney where he became Australia's leading cave surveyor and is remembered in a biography entitled *Oliver Trickett, Doyen of Australia's Cave Surveyors* by Gregory J Middleton (1991). Edward too was educated at Scotch College matriculating in 1875. He became a clerk, married and moved into a house further down Albert Street which his new wife had inherited from her father. The two girls never married and remained at the

Lansdowne Street house for the rest of their lives. Ellen became an artist and art teacher and taught both from home and at a number of schools including such well known schools as Penleigh and Fintona

The first we hear about Agnes is when The Age newspaper reported on the Central Common Schools Annual Distribution of Prizes in April 1868. Agnes, in IV Class of the Girls' School, was awarded third prize. This school was part of the Model School on Spring Street and eventually became MacRobertson Girls' High School. State schools at this time did not prepare students for the matriculation exams so to continue her education Agnes attended I. Warren Ball's Atheneum Classes and passed her Matriculation and Civil Service examinations at the end of 1875, as did her sister Ellen. They both gained a credit in geography, being two of only three students to do so.

Women were first allowed to sit the matriculation exams in 1871 however it was not until 1880 that women were allowed to formally matriculate by signing the matriculation roll and thereby qualifying for university entrance.

For the next few years Miss Trickett is named as a teacher in a number of advertisements for different schools. First, Carlton Ladies College in Drummond Street in 1877, then Melbourne Ladies College, Talbot Lodge, Grey Street, East Melbourne from



2 Lansdowne Street at left. From Early Melbourne Architecture 1840-1888 by Maie Casey

1878 to 1880. A biographical article about Pattie Deakin in *The Mercury* (Hobart) of 11 Dec 1935, mentions Pattie attending Mrs James' Grantown House school in Nicholson Street, Fitzroy where the teacher to whom she was most grateful was Miss Agnes Trickett. This school moved from Fitzroy in 1878. Most important, however, was the advertisement in 1877 under 'LADIES' COLLEGE, In connexion with the Presbyterian Church of Victoria' which lists Miss Trickett as teacher in geography. This school became known as Presbyterian Ladies' College (PLC) and like Scotch was about two minutes' walk from the Trickett home, in Albert Street. Miss Trickett was to hold her position there for the next 42 years. In 1881 the first woman student to gain an Exhibition at Matriculation level was a student taught by Agnes.

In the book, *PLC Melbourne: The First Century 1875-1975* (1975) author Kathleen Fitzpatrick wrote, "A senior old Collegian recalls her as 'a very good woman in a little black apron', a governess of the old style who relied very much on learning by heart but was beloved by many pupils for her kindness, gentleness and patience."

Miss Trickett retired in 1919. She was one of four long serving teachers to retire that year and for the first time PLC granted each of them a pension and a year's leave on full pay. Agnes' pension was £50. After her death in 1926 it was decided to erect a tablet in the school's Wyselaskie Hall to her memory.

Sylvia Black

A New Book on a Pioneer for Voting Rights for Women

Vida Goldstein, suffragette and social reformer, was born in Portland in 1869. She died in 1949 after a lifetime of campaigning for the rights of women.

She was a candidate in the 1903 Federal elections, the first at which women were eligible to stand. She lost this election and four subsequent elections. However, she maintained her dedication and spoke at meetings to enthusiastic crowds around Australia and the US and the UK, published widely and organised many suffrage groups.

A new book *Vida: a woman of our time* has been published. Written by Jaqueline Kent, it is a celebration of her life and achievements. Kent has also written a book on Julia Gillard and when writing about Vida she frequently makes comparisons with the difficulties women in political life have faced, then and now. I am reminded of the saying "Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose".

Vida Goldstein attended the Presbyterian Ladies College in Albert Street East Melbourne. It was on the present site of Eastbourne and readers might like to stand there and reflect on the life of a maker of our history.

Gay Sussex

**Cover image: Collins Street,
looking west (detail).**

**Drawing by Robert Russell, 1838.
State Library of Victoria.
Accession no: H24533**

Coming Events

Wednesday, 21 April, at 7.30 p.m. –
Berry Street

Historian, Alicia Cerreto, will take us on a journey through the history of Berry Street. Initially known as the Victorian Infant Asylum and Foundling Hospital it has had many name changes since. Founded in 1877 in Fitzroy the organization moved into the old police hospital in Vale Street in 1881 and remained in East Melbourne until its move to Richmond in 2007. Its history tells us much about the changing attitudes and social history of Melbourne.

East Melbourne Library, 122
George Street, East Melbourne. Or by
Zoom if necessary.

Open Gardens Victoria - Bishopscourt

120 Clarendon Street, East Melbourne
Saturday 27 March, 2021 to Sunday 28
March, 2021

Open 10.00 a.m. - 4.30 p.m.

One of the oldest properties in East Melbourne – a Gardenesque style with extensive plantings, sweeping lawns and series of serpentine paths.

There will also be Devonshire teas, tours on Sat 2.00pm and Sun 11.00am, propagated plants

and books on Bishopscourt for sale
Entry \$10, Students \$6, Under 18 Free

*Tickets must be booked and pre-paid online via TryBooking www.trybooking.com/BOVOL

For full details go the link: <https://opengardensvictoria.org.au/Bishopscourt-2021>