

**EAST MELBOURNE**  
**HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
**NEWSLETTER**



**March 2022**

## 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

<b>President:</b>	Tim Holland
<b>Vice-president:</b>	Barbara Paterson
<b>Hon. Secretary:</b>	Sylvia Black
<b>Hon. Treasurer:</b>	Malcolm Howell
<b>Committee:</b>	Diane Clifford
	Jill Fenwick
	Graham Shepherd
	Gay Sussex

## Contact details

1st Floor, East Melbourne Library,  
122 George Street, East Melbourne

PO Box 355, East Melbourne 3002

Telephone: 03 9416 0445

Email: [info@emhs.org.au](mailto:info@emhs.org.au)

Web: <https://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

Email: [membership@emhs.org.au](mailto:membership@emhs.org.au)

Annual subscription: **\$30.00**

Guests are welcome: **\$5.00** per meeting

**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.*

## **President's Letter**

*By Tim Holland*

2022 has begun and in preparing this first newsletter for the year it is hoped that the East Melbourne Historical Society (EMHS) can resume a full range of our normal activities putting the pandemic in the rear vision mirror. The shape of the COVID-19 pandemic has altered across the past two years and it can only be hoped that like the Spanish Flu of 1919-1921, the current pandemic will simply fade away. In this hope a full calendar of meetings and events has been organised for the year ahead with these events hopefully to be held once more at the East Melbourne Library.

With this optimism in mind the first open event of this year was successfully held at Bishops court on Wednesday 16 February 2022 thanks once again to the generosity of Archbishop Philip Freier and Joy Freier who opened up their home and garden for the enjoyment of so many. Thanks also to all those who assisted in making this late afternoon event so enjoyable.



*Bishops court Garden Party, February 2022 - Photo, Diane Clifford*

In publishing our first newsletter for this year you will notice a changed format. Rod Goodwin who has been such an indefatigable force in the production of the EMHS newsletter over the past twenty years is relinquishing his role. EMHS sincerely thanks Rod for all his dedicated assistance and contribution to this publication over time and wishes him well in the future.

The Yarra Park School project continues. So far a great deal of material has been sourced in relation to this project in particular through the endeavours of Ian Hind. Thought is now being given as to how this material can be collated in both an interesting and useable way. No doubt areas of this research will make for a very interesting presentation later this year.

As part of his research Ian has discovered a photograph of the Honour Roll of pupils who attended Yarra Park School and who enlisted in the AIF during World War 1. As the Honour Roll itself has been lost, this photograph has become the focus of a very interesting project being undertaken by a small group of EMHS members in writing biographies of those pupils who appear on the Honour Roll. Again some of these biographies will no doubt appear in coming newsletters.

So with the hope of us all we look forward to a year where we can get back to our full range of in-person activities. ■

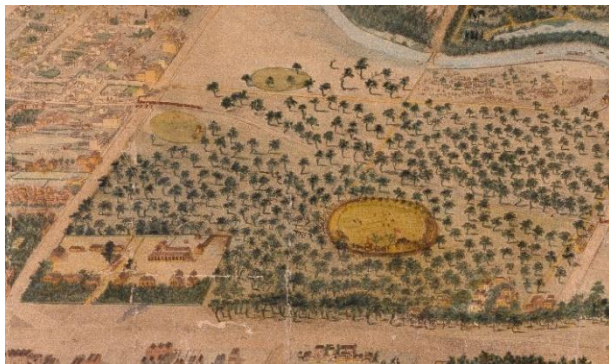
## We Welcome New Members

Ruth Richardson • Kate Vander Sluys • Bill Gillies • Chris Ley • Richard Wearne • Declan Holland • Matthew Faubel • Lorraine Holtschke • Christopher Priest • Sandy Mayo • Michael Noonan ■

## Prince Alfred Visits East Melbourne

By Sylvia Black

The arrival of Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, in Adelaide on 31 October 1867 was the start of the first Royal Visit to Australia. The tour was an occasion that in the words of the Museum Australia website was ‘marred by rioting, farce, tragedy and Australia’s first political assassination attempt’. It is a story worth reading and can be found at <https://www.nma.gov.au/definingmoments/resources/first-royal-visit> However here we are going to concentrate on one of the quieter moments in the prince’s busy schedule. First because it took place in East Melbourne, and second because newspaper reports describe a part of East Melbourne that has been long forgotten.



*Police Barracks: Detail from 1866 Isometrical plan of Melbourne & suburbs by De Gruchy & Leigh - SLV*

On Monday, 30 December 1867 Prince Alfred made an inspection of the Richmond Depot, the police barracks on the corner of Punt Road and Wellington Parade. Dressed in ‘ordinary morning costume’ he drove ‘a small phaeton, with a pair of greys’ through the entrance in Wellington Parade and down the central driveway (now Berry Street). His experience was reported in *The Herald* the

following day. Here are some excerpts:



Captains Standish and Mair received His Royal Highness in front of the officers' quarters, and the party at once proceeded to the parade-ground, where the men were drawn up in open order, the mounted men wearing swords, but the foot not under arms...

[T]he Prince was next conducted round the depot, visiting the men's quarters, the stables (where thirty horses are always ready for duty), and the hospital, ... The present depot hospital, which has only been recently built—after the most urgent representations from Captain Standish and Dr. Ford, medical officer of the police for the last sixteen years—contains five lofty well-ventilated wards, and excellent lavatory, bathing, and cooking accommodation. ...

After going through this tour of inspection, the Prince went on to the riding-school— one of the best we have seen—and witnessed the roping of one of a small mob of horses yarded for the purpose. The animal in question afforded considerable amusement by the excellent use he made of his hind legs, and when released from his temporary captivity made a bolt through the open door, which fairly astonished the distinguished visitors. ...

The roughriders were then ordered to saddle two well-known buck-jumpers likely to show sport, and in the interval the Prince and his party were conducted to the mess-room, where a first-rate lunch was provided for them and done every justice to. Thus refreshed, an adjournment was made to the riding-school, where the buck-jumpers being saddled and bridled did their best to get rid of riders and all, but in vain. The "roughs," Stewart and Snowden, stuck to them in too close order to be shifted, and after about ten minutes' mild gyration both animals gave in, and were ridden out temporarily subdued.



Grosse, Frederick (1868). Horse breaking in Richmond Barracks in the presence of H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh. - NLA

The inspection thus finished, His Royal Highness got into his phaeton and drove away, having more than once expressed his admiration of the smart appearance of the men, the good order in which everything about the depot was arranged, and the satisfactory manner in which the officers had performed their duty while in especial attendance upon himself.

Most of these buildings, nearly all of which were of timber or iron, were demolished in 1881 in preparation for the subdivision and sale of the land for housing. The only buildings to remain were the hospital which became the Berry Street Foundling Home, and another brick

building facing Punt Road which may have been the mess, and which became a private home. Not only did the buildings go but also the fences that surrounded the complex, leaving it open to marauding cows and goats which successfully ringbarked the elm trees lining the driveway. ■

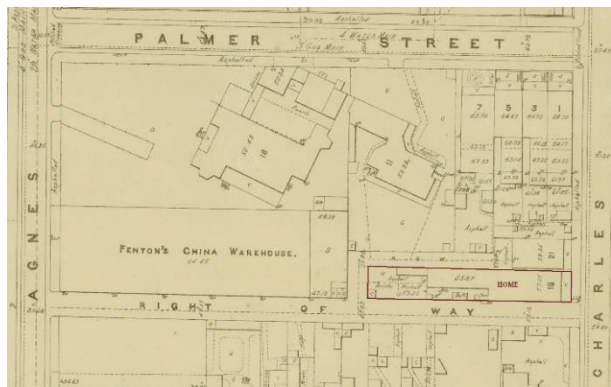
## HOME

By Jill Fenwick

There's a sad little house on the corner of a lane in Charles Street, Jolimont. The paint is falling away from the façade, cracks are rife in the concrete of the walls and the back section of the building is being overtaken by invasive ivy, which, in the end will turn the rooms into ruins.

The house was built in 1870, with the land originally part of Governor Charles La Trobe's estate. When he left Australia in 1854, he entrusted his friend, Dr. James Palmer, with the subdivision and sale of the land.

Palmer himself bought the area known as Jolimont Square, but the land now bounded by Agnes Street, Palmer Street, Charles Street and Sophie Lane, remained intact. In 1865, it was put up for sale and bought by John Lupton, a wealthy Riverina grazier.



MMBW 1896 Plan of Jolimont - State Library of Victoria

At that stage, the land had two dwellings on it, Governor La Trobe's cottage, known as Jolimont House, and a smaller dwelling, named The Hermitage. In 1872, Lupton notified the Melbourne City Council that he intended to build a house in Palmer Street. By 1874, it was listed in the rate books as a five roomed house 'off Jolimont St'. Lupton died in 1874 and his wife Mary-Anne subsequently rented out Jolimont House and subdivided the rest of the land into four lots and sold them in 1877. Of the three lots, two were vacant land, and the other, containing The Hermitage, were given a Palmer Street address, while the fourth was described as having on it 'A brick cottage, containing six rooms, erected on land having (a frontage) of 19ft. 6 in. to Charles Street by depth of 125ft. along a right of way.' This has to be Lupton's original cottage, 19 Charles Street.

William Henry Wills or Wells was the next owner of the house. He then sold to Richard Kissane, a sergeant of police about 1883-4. Kissane lived there until 1895, when he moved on

and the house became tenanted. In 1911, it was sold again, to William Ernest Lloyd, a carpenter, who moved in with his wife Adele and their two small children.

In 1926, Lloyd made an application to erect a verandah, changing the original appearance of the house entirely. The verandah had a central arch between two square openings, with four masonry pillars separating the openings. The end verandah wall contains a small stained-glass window, depicting an idyllic rural scene: a house sits among rolling hills, over which the sun is just rising. The main door, too, has a stained-glass window above it, with a kookaburra and gum leaves.



*Home, 19 Charles Street, Jolimont - Photo, Graham Shepherd*

Above the arch is the house's name 'HOME', with all its connotations of family, security and domestic happiness. Alas, it was not to be. The very next year, the Lloyds' twenty-year old son William was killed in a motorcycle accident. Then, in 1928, their son-in-law, Charles Douglas Redfearn, who had married their daughter Alice in 1918, died suddenly, apparently by suicide. Alice returned home to live with her parents and remained there until her own death in 1968.

The house was sold again and bought by Kathleen Richman, known in East Melbourne lore as 'the pram lady', because she wandered the suburb with her dogs and a wicker pram filled with bottles she'd collected from rubbish tins. Born in 1905 as Kathleen Romelli, she met and married James Henry Richman, a former seaman and waterside worker, but by then a labourer and truck driver. After inheriting some money after the death of her parents in the 1950s, she invested in property, 102 Jolimont Road and 96 Jolimont Street and moved into one of them after the death of her husband.

Richman rented out 19 Charles Street until her death in 1987, when the house was put on the market and sold for \$264,000. It was one of four valuable parcels of land she owned at her death. In total, her estate was valued for probate at \$1,636,374, but was worth far more. Along with real estate, she had cash amounts, term deposits and mortgage loans.

In 1989, the new owner applied for a building permit to make alterations, probably the infill addition which runs from the back of the original house alongside Sophie Lane. It was let to

tenants for some time. Now the house once so loved by the Lloyd family that they called it 'Home' stands neglected and decaying, and its name seems almost mocking. ■

## Plus ça change - Compulsory Vaccination

By Sylvia Black



*Vaccination against smallpox - From TROVE*

Mr William Edgerton, a special correspondent of the New York Herald, and who resides in Simpson-street, East Melbourne, was summoned to the district court on Thursday last to answer a charge of neglecting to comply with the provisions of the compulsory vaccination clauses of the Health Act in getting his child vaccinated.

Mr Frank Stephen prosecuted on behalf of the Board of Health.

**Inspector Ellis:** Do you plead guilty or not guilty?

**Defendant:** Why am I asked to plead like a criminal? If natural affection for my child constitutes a crime, then I plead most decidedly guilty. I have received the notice instructing me to have the child vaccinated, but I decline to comply with it on conscientious scruples, as I consider vaccination injurious and detrimental to health.

**Mr Rappiport, JP:** Are you a medical man?

**Defendant:** No, but I have undergone a medical training and that is pretty much the same thing. I rely too on the scientific knowledge I possess.

He characterised the act as wicked and immoral, and stated that if he were fined daily he would still object to the vaccination.

**Mr Stephen:** But the law requires you to vaccinate and to register the vaccination.

**Defendant:** Then the law is grossly immoral in that respect.

**Mr Stephen:** There is only one alternative if you don't comply with the law.

**Mr Shuter, PM:** Do you intend to vaccinate the child?

**Defendant:** Most decidedly I do not.

**Mr McDonald, JP:** You will be summoned here again.



**Defendant:** I can't help that! I do not wish to break the law, and my objections are purely conscientious

**Mr Shuter:** That is all right, but I don't know about the "conscientious objections."

**Defendant (reading):** The Act provides that you can fine in the smallest current coin of the realm, or dismiss the case altogether if you see fit. Mr Service, who framed the Act, interprets it in that way.

**Mr Stephen:** That was merely a speech in the House.

**Defendant:** I am not quoting a speech but the Act itself.

**Mr Shuter:** If I did my duty I should fine myself over and over again.

**Mr J. Newnham:** Parliamentary Agent of the Melbourne Anti-Compulsory Vaccination Society, here rose and asked if he could address the bench.

**Mr Stephen:** No, you can't talk here.

**Mr Newnham:** In England your Worships, they frequently fine as low an amount as one penny.

The defendant here handed in a portrait of a chubby little child whose right arm had been rendered lifeless through vaccination, and Mr. Shuter told him that if that child were his, he should not like to have another harmed in a similar manner.

**Mr Newnham:** Well, your Worships, that child has been ruined for life by vaccination, and the doctors have certified to the fact.

**Mr Shuter:** We must do our duty nevertheless, the defendant is fined £1 with £1 costs.

[Mercury and Weekly Courier, 29 Jan 1891, p.2] ■

## George Page Cooper – Art Collector

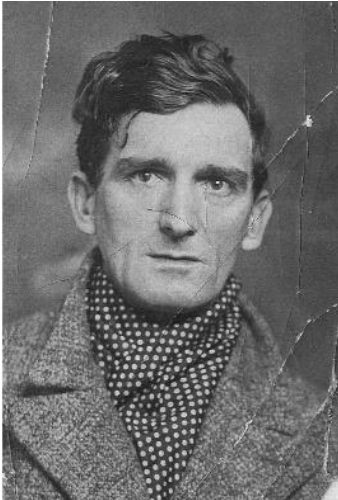
*By Tim Holland*

A group of EMHS members led by Ian Hind is researching the lives of the names that were on the World War 1 Honour Roll of the old Yarra Park State School that was situated on the corner of Wellington Parade and Punt Road between 1874 and 1987. There are many interesting stories that have come out of this research, and one such story is that of George Page Cooper.

Cooper was born at Prahran on 5 June 1893 to Henrietta O'Brien and George Taylor Patrick Cooper, a butcher. He attended Yarra Park School and when he enlisted on 6 July 1915 he gave his occupation as "clerk" although the Electoral Rolls for 1914 show his occupation as "musician". His address on enlistment was his parents' home at 2 Lyndurst Street, Richmond. He was just short of 5' 7" and weighed 11 stone.

He embarked on the *Wiltshire* for Egypt on 15 October 1915 with the 21<sup>st</sup> Battalion. During his service he transferred to the 60<sup>th</sup> Battalion, then to the 57<sup>th</sup> Battalion. On going to France he

moved up through the ranks and finished the war as a Lieutenant in the 60<sup>th</sup> Battalion, having attended officer school at Cambridge - indicative of a very good service record. At the end of the war he embarked for Australia on the *Main* on 23 July 1919.



George Page Cooper - From  
*Ancestry.com*

After the war George Cooper seems to have done quite well for himself. He appears to have styled himself as George Page-Cooper, and ran a business Page-Cooper Mercantile Agency from his beautiful home “The Elms” at 6 Waltham St, Richmond, which is still standing. In newspaper articles written after his death in 1967 it was said that his “Mercantile Agency” was in fact a debt collection business. He was also a Labor councillor on the Richmond City Council.

It's not clear when but early in his life George became an avid collector of art. Throughout the 1920s, he collected a large number of European artworks which he apparently disposed of at a number of auctions in 1926 and commenced collecting Australian artworks and historical artefacts.

Shiraheen Huda writes about him in the 2008 book - *Pedigree and Panache: A History of the Art Auction in Australia*. A particular aspect of interest is the auction of his estate items by Leonard Joel on 21-22 November 1967 at Malvern Town Hall. This auction has been referred to down the years as a significant event in the history and development of the art market in Australia.

At the time Leonard Joel said that: “the auction was unprecedented in Australian history, both in importance and prices paid.” Works by Buvelot, Streeton, Conder and S.T. Gill were among the items in the extensive catalogue, and the event is said to have helped in developing interest in the collecting of works by Australian artists and showing the potential for art to be seen as an investment. An example cited is an 1853 painting of a Hobart scene by Knut Bull which sold for \$90 in the 1967 sale but was subsequently resold in 1991 by Leonard Joel for \$77,000. The 1967 auction was of 404 items, but he had also disposed of a lot of other paintings earlier in the 1960s.

In about 1940, Cooper became involved in the management of an art gallery, the Velasquez Gallery, later known as Tye's Art Gallery, located at the rear and in the basement of Tye's Art Furniture Building at 100 Bourke St in the city. When he moved to 24 Studley Ave, Kew late in his life it is recorded that he personally moved all his artwork from one house to the other in 200 car trips. He died 18 May 1967, apparently unmarried, and there is an endearing *In*

*Memoriam* notice to him by a niece on the 7<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death. He also seems to have published a 300 page scrapbook of his wartime experiences.

In 1932 there were reports in newspapers around the country of Cooper having brought a painting for 9 pounds at a jumble sale, and subsequently proclaiming that it was in fact a Gainsborough valued at 10,000 pounds. Contemporary reports said he was about to travel with the painting to England, presumably to sell, but there were no further reports as to the outcome of this alleged “find”.

Huda in her book says that contemporary news reports commented that he was “a familiar figure in the city’s auction rooms, generally wearing a battered hat and open necked shirt.”

Shortly after his death, there were a number of stories reported in the *Sun* and *Herald* newspapers by Tom Prior and a young Scot Palmer. Scot remembered him from seeing him walking around Richmond with his dogs: “he always had dogs”. His love of dogs received extensive press attention when his will provided a then very generous \$20 a week for maintenance of his ten year old black labrador, Darkie. His substantial estate gave life interests to his three siblings, these interests reverting to the Lort Smith Home and other charities upon their deaths. Unfortunately there seems to have been litigation over these provisions, which would have reduced the size of the pie.

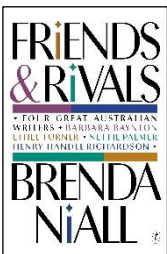
One of his Tye’s Gallery colleagues had written a poem which started with: “And what about our George Page Cooper?”, and ended with:

*When he gets home, his pups, acquiver  
Sit begging, for their beef and liver!  
He’s erudite. He’s read each book  
From Shakespeare down to Rupert Brooke,  
And that’s not all, there’s still some more  
‘E’s an hero of the First World War!*

An interesting life, indeed! ■

## **Book Review – *Friends & Rivals*, by Brenda Niall**

*By Gay Sussex*



This recently published book by renowned biographer Brenda Niall features two literary identities both of whom attended the Presbyterian Ladies’ College when it was located in Albert Street East Melbourne. They were Henry Handel Richardson who started at PLC in 1882 and Nettie Palmer in 1900.

Henry Handel Richardson was her preferred public name as she felt that if she presented as a female writer her work would be denigrated. Her

original name was Florence Lindesay Richardson. Nettie Palmer was well known for her promotion of Australian literature, especially works by her husband Vance Palmer, through lectures and reviews but she did not promote her own writings.

Richardson is the better known today, especially for *The Getting of Wisdom* and *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony*. She was born at Blanche Terrace 169 – 179 Victoria Parade Fitzroy (179 was originally 139, the street numbers changed). The family moved around Victoria and Henry was sent to board at PLC from Maldon where her mother was the post mistress. (Details from Women’s Melbourne.)

Her time in East Melbourne was just for her school years and she spent more of her life in Leipzig and London, but *The Getting of Wisdom* is especially important as it gives the reader an understanding of her formative years and today it is one of the main books of Australian literature. It is a vivid description of her boarding school days at PLC and was written through the eyes of the fictional character Laura Tweedle Ramsbotham.

Some maintain that her descriptions of PLC were unfair. Niall writes “Former teachers and pupils were angry and disgusted” but that it was “not a happy time” for Richardson. However, in defence of PLC, the school did foster two leading Australian literary figures, although some argue that this was in spite of rather than because of the PLC ethos of the time.

Readers with good memories will recall that the East Melbourne Historical Society is interested in tracking down the historical marker of PLC’s original location. We still have not found it although there have been some interesting suggestions but so far with no success. ■

## Coming Events

### 7:30pm Wednesday 20 April 2022 the East Melbourne Library

Robyn Oswald-Jacobs will speak to us about the life and work of Frances Burke (1904-94). Burke, a resident of East Melbourne, was the leading textile designer in Melbourne from the 1940s to the 1960s.

### 7:30pm Wednesday 15 June 2022 at the East Melbourne Library

Graeme Williams will speak to us about the history of the Victorian Artists Society, established in 1870 by early impressionist painters and still a pre-eminent art institution in Australia.

Members free, non-members: \$5.00. ■

---

Cover image: HOME, 19 Charles Street, Jolimont: Verandah window backlit by early morning summer sun. - Photo, Graham Shepherd