

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



**September 2022**

---

NEWSLETTER VOLUME TWENTY-THREE • NUMBER THREE • ABN 61 280 547 708

---

## 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.

## Committee

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

## 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.

## 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>

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



**CITY OF  
MELBOURNE**

## 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**

Cover image: *Spotted pardalote, Agnes Street, 16 Aug 2022. Photo by Graham Shepherd*

*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**

It's customary at this time of year to be looking for the first magnolia bloom as harbinger of spring, and as I write this I can see a tree full of magnolia buds outside my window. The longer sunnier days are also playing their part in readying us for the warmer weather ahead.

The EMHS has been busy with a full round of activities, and there has been quite an artistic theme of late. Former East Melbourne resident Dr Graeme Williams gave us a talk in June about the Victorian Artists Society and this was followed up in August by Dr Sue Barker giving us a comprehensive talk on her ancestor, the noted artist John Glover, including his move from England to Tasmania with his family late in his life in the early 1830s.

Continuing the theme at the August meeting Kayla Flett, a student doing research on what types of artworks people keep in their homes, made an appeal for anyone interested to contact her to take part in such a survey, as anonymously as they wish to make it. See further details elsewhere in the newsletter.

As I mentioned at the August meeting, we do have some vacancies on our committee. EMHS relies on volunteers to keep us functioning at the high level at which we operate, so we would welcome members thinking about whether they can help out, even in a small way. Many hands make light work, as the saying goes!

Our final talk of the year, at the October AGM meeting, will feature Ian Hind talking about his research on the old Yarra Park State School. Ian has done a truly remarkable job driving this project which chronicles the history of a very significant institution in our area which is no longer operating. It is a very interesting story and I can recommend to members that it will be a very worthwhile presentation to see either in person at the library or online via Zoom.

Tim Holland  
August 2022

## **We Welcome New Members**

Sue Paynter

## **NOTICE OF AGM**

Notice of Annual General Meeting, nomination form and proxy form are enclosed with this newsletter. Also enclosed are our annual report, treasurer's report and minutes of the previous meeting in preparation for this year's AGM.

All financial members of the EMHS are eligible to nominate for the committee. With one long serving member retiring we are anxious to find new recruits.

## THE HANDFIELD-ANDERSON FAMILY

*By Tim Holland*

The house at 32 Jolimont Terrace (now number 20) was for a long time the home of an interesting family, the Andersons. Their extended family, which included the Handfield family, had a long-standing and significant connection with East Melbourne.

Edward Anderson arrived as a child from England in 1856, and was one of the original pupils of Melbourne Grammar on its opening in 1858. Edward took up his father's profession of surveyor, his father having been the first government surveyor appointed to Victoria. Edward's father returned to England after 10 years, taking his two youngest children. In time, all the children ended up back in Melbourne, with all the boys seeming to have gone into the surveying business.

Edward Anderson married Frances Handfield at St Peter's Eastern Hill in 1885. The celebrant was Frances's uncle, the Reverend Henry Hewett Paulet Handfield.

Rev. Handfield was the vicar of St Peter's for 46 years till his death in 1900, and he had a very interesting life.

The son of a naval commander, Handfield was orphaned at the age of 10 and became the ward of Charles Perry, later to be the Anglican bishop of Melbourne. On Perry's appointment to Melbourne Handfield accompanied the Perry family to Melbourne, eventually taking Holy Orders himself and being appointed to St Peter's.

In his role at St Peter's Rev Handfield had a complicated relationship with the evangelical Bishop Perry. Perry apparently had to field criticisms from parishioners about Handfield's "liturgical extravagances" including his strong commitment to choral and chanting aspects of services. Handfield continued his style unabated, with Perry apparently unwilling to sanction his former foster child. It is a liturgical tradition that has continued down the years at St Peter's.

Handfield's long tenure at St Peter's also saw him drive a strong commitment to social welfare activities in the parish and beyond, and that too has been a long-standing feature in the life of the St Peter's community.

Getting back to the Anderson family, three boys and one girl came from the union of Edward Anderson and Florence Handfield.

The eldest was Edward Handfield Anderson, known as "Sport" for his extensive participation in a range of sports. Like his father he attended Melbourne Grammar and later became the first secretary of the Old Melburnians football club. "Sport" had musical abilities as well as his sporting talents and was a soloist in the St Paul's boys choir.

"Sport" Anderson was a parishioner at Holy Trinity Church in East Melbourne, and in his career with National Bank in Hamilton and Geelong was active in community, sporting and musical activities. From the outset of the First World War he made continued unsuccessful attempts to enlist but was rejected because of a serious knee injury incurred playing football. As recruiting demands grew, minimum medical requirements were dropped and he was permitted to enlist in July 1915.

As a lieutenant in the 57th Battalion he found himself at Fromelles in July 1916. He was tasked with assisting the handover to the 59th Battalion, which had replaced the 57th in the line, and was about to be involved in the single bloodiest day of the war for the AIF. As reported later “for whatever reason either in error or excitement of the attack Anderson went over the top with the 59th Battalion and nothing has been heard of him since”. He became one of the 5,500 Australian casualties on the night of 19/20 July, and his body was not found.

There were subsequent reports of him being seen making repeated sallies into No Man’s Land to bring wounded soldiers back to the trenches despite being wounded himself. In October 1917 a gold cross at Holy Trinity Church was dedicated to the memory of Edward Anderson.

A younger brother of Edward was William Hopton Anderson. He achieved outstanding academic results at Melbourne Grammar and became a professional soldier in 1910, seeing service in Rabaul and German New Guinea in 1915. He joined the Australian Flying Corps and had a

storied career as a reconnaissance pilot in France. Despite the precarious nature of his role he had a much luckier war than his older brother and was awarded the Military Cross, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Belgian Croix de Guerre and was Mentioned in Despatches. Stories of many of his dogfights and close escapes have been set out in a number of accounts.

Between the wars and through the Second World War Anderson attained very senior rank, retiring in 1946 as an air vice marshal.

William Anderson lived in Jolimont Terrace with his sister, Isabelle Josephine Handfield Anderson, till his death on his birthday in December 1975. On his death his sister endowed a stained glass window to his memory at Holy Trinity Church where he had been a long-time parishioner.

Isabelle continued to live at 20 Jolimont Terrace till her death in 1984, just short of her 90th birthday. She was the subject of a reminiscence in a 2006 issue of the EMHS Newsletter,



*WH Anderson*

*Source: Australian War Memorial*



*Miss Anderson's Studebaker seen at  
Winton Classic races 2018.  
Source: curbsideclassic.com*

where it was said that she was “quite an identity” in East Melbourne. The article referred to her “unique dress sense” and her car, a 1938 primrose/yellow Studebaker Commander convertible with white-walled tyres. It was also mentioned that she was thought to sleep with a derringer pistol under her pillow.

The fourth child of this family, Arthur Charles Anderson, lived in England from 1918 as a metallurgist and died in 1956. They were a very interesting family, none of whom married and all died without issue.

## **SMOKE, BUTTONS AND MIRRORS**

*By Sylvia Black*

At the end of a wonky brick lane leading off the south side of George Street is a small vacant block of land. Until recently it had a large ‘for sale’ sign on it which sent local imaginations into overdrive wondering what a purchaser might do with it. The sale has now been completed and development has started. To the sheer delight of those watching on it has been revealed that the new purchaser is creating a garden. So far, an attractive plan of raised beds has appeared, the construction built entirely of bricks excavated on site. This leads to the obvious question: what was there before?

The land now has the address 99 George Street but once it was known as 94½ lending it a rather Harry Potterish air. From East Melbourne’s earliest days there had been a brick and timber cottage on the land. About 1871 a tailor by the name of George Milton bought the cottage and one of the houses in front of it, a brick and iron cottage later numbered 101.

He and his growing family lived in the front house but a number of short ads in the papers give a confusing message about how the back cottage was used. Some offer the cottage for lease, others seek ‘several GIRLS, handy at the needle’; ‘SITUATION as IMPROVER in cutting’; ‘MILLINER and Dressmaker OPEN to ENGAGEMENT’ and ‘LADY’s - Fancy DRESSES on HIRE’. Perhaps Mrs Milton was running a separate business while George was in the city fulfilling his dreams, ‘WANTED, 1000 CUSTOMERS Trousers to measure for cash, 15s. George Milton, No 9 Royal Arcade’.

About ten years later, the Milton family had grown stimulating a move to larger premises in Albert Park. George retained ownership of both the East Melbourne houses. But only a few years later, about 1890, 105 George Street came up for sale and George jumped at the chance to buy it. The house wasn't ideal but it was on a relatively large block of land, and by buying it he owned a U-shaped compound around 103. 105 was let to tenants until about 1900 when the decision was made to knock it down and start again. The little house up the lane was also demolished. In 1900 George Milton notified the council of his intention to build a new house. The family, in due course, moved back to East Melbourne bringing with them the name of the Albert Park house and 105 duly became known as Mozart.

Meanwhile the land behind 101 and 103 remained vacant. It was not until 1918 that there were signs of new life. The Argus published an ad seeking 'GIRL, smart learn trade, good wages, hours. Australian Button Co, 99 George st, East Melbourne'. The rate books confirm that the land was now occupied by a brick and wood factory. An ad a few years later offered 'Mirrors made for bag trade, special prices'. It appears that the company was not limited to buttons. Another company shared the premises, the Novelty Manufacturing Co. No information has been found on what sort of novelties were produced. These two companies were the businesses of Reginald George Milton, George's son.

Reginald died in 1963 and it seems that the factory was converted to residential accommodation. First a house appeared alongside it, then the factory itself was converted into two, sometimes recorded as three, flats. The complex was owned at this time by Leonard and Isabel Austin. Leonard died in 1970 and the building was then owned, apparently, by Isabel McFinley. Were the two Isabels one and the same? There was no trace of Isabel Austin after Leonard's death, and Isabel McFinley seemed never to have existed other than in the rate books. It was therefore pleasing to find her in the electoral rolls as Isabel McGinley. The building was demolished in 1987. Later, the then owner of Mozart bought part of the vacant land to increase his outdoor space.

A possible spin-off to this story is the Button Man. Rod Goodwin, who worked in the offices behind the vacant land in the now demolished office building known as 106 Wellington Parade, remembers an eccentric character who rented a shack in the carpark where he dyed buttons for a living. Rod doesn't believe the button man was connected to the button factory but it is tempting to believe that he was perhaps an old employee who took on a small part of the business when the factory closed.

The transition of No 94½ to secret garden still has many gaps. If you can help with more information about the button factory or the button man please let us know on [info@emhs.org.au](mailto:info@emhs.org.au)

## SPOTTED: A SPOTTED PARDALOTE IN JOLIMONT

by *Graham Shepherd*

This tiny Spotted Pardalote [see cover] was recorded in a cottage garden in Agnes Street, just up the road from a huge demolition taking place on Jolimont Street. It was nervously flitting between a branch and a small verandah ledge. The noise from the jack-hammers and diggers was too great to hear or record its call. We were quite concerned that its habitat had been destroyed, but a couple of days later we saw it again in the same garden before it flew next door into a much more protected bushy garden. We can only hope that it lives and thrives with its family without further disturbance.

See a video at : [https://emhs.org.au/article/spotted\\_a\\_spotted\\_pardalote\\_in\\_jolimont](https://emhs.org.au/article/spotted_a_spotted_pardalote_in_jolimont)

## MANNERISM IN EAST MELBOURNE

By *Sylvia Black*

In a roundabout way, starting with our project on the history of Yarra Park School, I have become curious about Mannerism as a feature of late Victorian, or Boom style, architecture. Mannerism, according to the Penguin Dictionary of Architecture, 'is characterised by the use of motifs in deliberate opposition to their original significance or context, but it can also express itself in an equally deliberate cold and rigid classicism'.

It so happens that two brothers who briefly attended Yarra Park School and who later both earned prestigious scholarships, had as their father, William Lucas, an architect. William Lucas had married Agnes Arnot, the daughter of Andrew Arnot of 42 George Street, East Melbourne, and sister of Margaret McLean, she of Margaret Lane, near the corner of Vale Street and Wellington Parade South. Margaret and her husband, William McLean, lived in the large house on that corner, then known as Torloisk.

McLean had started a hardware business in 1870 which became a large and prosperous firm of ironmongers and general merchants known as McLean Bros. & Rigg and by the time of William and Agnes' marriage in 1888 he was a wealthy man. Presumably to help his new brother-in-law get ahead he commissioned him to design four two-storey terrace houses in Berry Street, just behind his own house. They are numbered 51-57 Berry Street.

In an attempt to find out more about William Lucas I came across a thesis, Boom Mannerism: The Architectural Practice of Gerard Wight and William Lucas from 1885 to 1894, by Jennifer Fowler (2020). From her thesis I learnt that the firm designed a large number of banks. Gerard Wight's father was chairman of trustees of the Melbourne Savings Bank. The Berry Street terraces are among the few residential developments identified as the work of this firm.

Fowler refers to the 'playfulness, distortions and creativity inherent in Italian Mannerism that subverted the laws of the classical orders' and which inspired Wight and Lucas' work. She describes the Berry Street houses in light of these characteristics. The houses appear unremarkable at first, with rendered facades and cast-iron balconies. But some of the details are unusual. For instance, one might normally expect a row of terraces to have a pediment in



*51-57 Berry Street. Photo Graham Shepherd*

the middle of the building, or perhaps a pediment over each individual house, but here the architects have placed a broken pediment over the two end houses with the two middle houses left unadorned. The terrace retains its symmetry but changes the rules. Another subversive detail appears on the face of the dividing walls, where the ground floor meets the

first floor. Typically, this spot might bear a scroll with an acanthus leaf below, pointing downwards, here, however, it is as if the leaf has been turned upwards and it sits within the curve of the scroll. A small but significant rebellion. There are other details, too, but perhaps it would be tedious to list them all. For those interested I recommend Jennifer Fowler's thesis which can be found at <http://hdl.handle.net/11343/241383>



*Mannerist detail, reversed acanthus leaf. Photo Graham Shepherd*

In future I will be looking far more carefully at the details that make up the big picture. I would love to know if others have spotted any unusual adornments, Mannerist or otherwise, on the buildings around us.

## BOOK REVIEW

By *Gay Sussex*

The Vetting of Wisdom: Joan Montgomery and the fight for PLC

by Kim Rubenstein

Published 2021

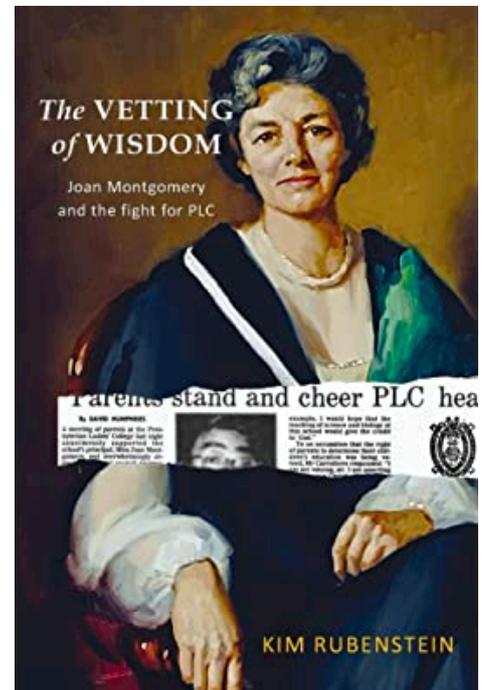
This column's aim is to discuss books with a strong connection to East Melbourne. One example would be *The Vetting of Wisdom: Joan Montgomery and the Fight for PLC* based around the Presbyterian Ladies' College which opened in East Melbourne in 1875 and became one of the most prestigious girls' schools in Melbourne. Alert readers will note the connection between 'Vetting' and 'Getting' a pun on the title of Henry Handel Richardson's original book.

Today there is a plaque at the original site of the school, in Albert Street opposite the Fitzroy Gardens. It is now the luxury apartment development, Eastbourne, and the PLC marker is hidden by dense foliage. The school moved to Burwood in 1939. The strong demand for girls' education had caused overcrowding and the new site promised much more space and better, more modern facilities.

Professor Kim Rubenstein's book focusses on the factional feud in the 1980's between the highly thought of Principal, Joan Montgomery, and members of the school board. It was the biggest dispute in the history of education in Australia and followed from the formation of the Uniting Church in 1977. Presbyterian members of the Board were determined to retain control over prestigious boys' school, Scotch College, and PLC. Members of the school body in the PLC Council, parents of past and present students and supporters of Joan Montgomery were opposed to the narrow, religion based education that the Presbyterian members of the School Council favoured.

Looking back, it all seems hard to justify or even understand. Was it just about the boys wanting more power and more bibles or was there more to it? Joan Montgomery was a strong woman of high intelligence, integrity and experience, and the men who opposed her little more than minor religious enthusiasts who were willing to risk the reputation of a proud school. Yet she was dismissed from her post and was replaced by PLC's first male headmaster.

Those who were at PLC during those fraught times and those who merely followed the story from the headlines in *The Age* will perhaps find it hard to see, with hindsight, what the fuss was about. It is debatable if PLC ever fully recovered. Read this book; it's quite a story. Your local library can get it for you.



## GHOSTS

*By Sylvia Black*

One of our members, Marita McCabe, has a tantalising story told to her by a nurse who worked at the Cliveden Hospital in Simpson Street until its recent closure. It seems that there is a ghost that inhabits the hospital. The ghost is said to be a nun, which would fit with the time when the hospital was known as Mena House and was run by the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. She is said to visit at least two rooms in the hospital but in particular Room 27. Glimpses of her have been fleeting, but long enough to identify her clothing as that of a nun.

Sightings of another ghost have been reported at Eastbourne House on the corner of Wellington Parade and Simpson Street. This ghost is reported to be a young woman who appears occasionally at the foot of the stairs. Is she one of Dr Samuel Peacock's patients? Is she perhaps poor Mary Davis who was presumed to have died as a result of an abortion, but whose body was never found.

Does anyone have more information on either of these ghosts? If so please contact [info@emhs.org.au](mailto:info@emhs.org.au)

## HELMUT NEWTON: IN FOCUS



*Diane Masters. Photo Helmut Newton.  
Reproduced in The Age, 8 Aug 2003*

Many of you may already know about this exhibition of Helmut Newton's photography at the Jewish Museum, 26 Alma Road St Kilda. Helmut Newton (1920-2004) was an internationally acclaimed fashion photographer. Born in Berlin he fled Germany at the outbreak of WW2 ending up at an internment camp at Tatura as an enemy alien. He eventually made his way to East Melbourne, living at 17 George Street in the late 1950s before leaving Australia for a life abroad. One of his many subjects was well-known fashion model of the day, Diane Masters, who still calls East Melbourne home. The exhibition is on until 29 January 2023. For more details see: <https://www.jewishmuseum.com.au/helmut-newton/>

## CAN WE HELP KAYLA?

Hello fellow East Melbourne community members,

I am seeking a community of people in East Melbourne who love art, and chose to collect art objects for their homes. My name is Kayla, and I live locally on Gipps Street. I am studying Art History and Curation at Monash University. Currently I am working on a curatorial project that will attempt to survey the works of art in homes in East Melbourne. By doing this I aim to initiate a community discourse surrounding art collecting, and explore an alternative method of creative placemaking. I am interested in learning anecdotal local histories through a person's art collection. This project aims to identify why and how East Melbourne locals collect art. I'm keen to understand my local community's interests when it comes to the art they choose for their homes. I hope to connect with local people with a shared passion for art.

I am seeking people that feel comfortable sharing with me works of art they have. It could be a print, painting, sculpture, or any other art object. It could be one work or more. I am totally respectful of your privacy, and if you prefer, you can remain anonymous throughout the entire process. Participation in this project would involve an informal conversation surrounding your art collections. If you have further questions about my project, you can contact me via:

[kfle0006@student.monash.edu](mailto:kfle0006@student.monash.edu) or 0492 850 053

### THE BISHOP AND THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR : A TALK

The event, which is to be hosted jointly by the La Trobe Society and the Anglican Historical Society, will start at 5.30 with refreshments at Bishopscourt, and then at 6.30 will continue at Holy Trinity Church for a talk by Dr Liz Rushen AM.

Liz's presentation will focus on the enduring friendship between Melbourne's first Anglican bishop, Charles Perry, and Superintendent Charles Joseph La Trobe later first Lieutenant-Governor of Victoria.

Date: Wednesday 19 October,  
5.30-7.30.

Cost: \$25.00

This talk happens to be timed immediately before our AGM meeting (see below). Members might like to make a night of it and go to both events.

### COMING EVENTS

#### AGM

19 October, at 7.30 p.m.

Following our AGM there will be a talk by Ian Hind on Yarra Park State School: its establishment and early days.

Ian has been researching and compiling a history of Yarra Park School for over a year and has uncovered a mass of material.

He will tell us about the whys and wherefores of the school's establishment and regale us with some stories of those who made it happen. Stories, too, of early students and what life was like for them at the school.

#### Christmas Drinks

Wednesday, 7 December at 6.30

Put it in your diary now. More details later.