

East Melbourne Historical Society President's Report 2023

I hereby present the 2023 Annual Report of the East Melbourne Historical Society, representing the period from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023.

The Society held a number of events during the year and those events are an important part of our activities. Not only do they give the opportunity to hear about research on interesting aspects of our local history, but they also provide regular social meetings for members of our local community.

In February 2023 at an event at the Melbourne Town Hall, the East Melbourne Group launched Jill Fenwick's work "Heritage Matters", a history of the first 50 years of the East Melbourne Group.

A significant project that has been underway for some time is the research into the history of the old Yarra Park State School that once occupied the corner of Punt Road and Wellington Parade. Ian Hind has driven this extensive research, and we look forward to being able to have this material available in printed form.

Committee

I would like to acknowledge once again the enthusiasm and hard work of the Committee over the year. There are many tasks involved in successfully running an organisation such as ours and thankfully we have many capable and willing contributors on the Committee.

Jill Fenwick is a long-standing Committee member and former President who continues to be a great contributor to the East Melbourne Historical Society.

Sylvia Black as Secretary has continued to do great work in keeping the workings of EMHS ticking over smoothly. Sylvia is a doyenne of the organisation and deals with a wide range of administrative and research tasks, including replying to a regular stream of research queries generated by our website. Sylvia is also an outstanding contributor of very interesting articles written for our newsletter and local newspapers.

Malcolm Howell has continued in the role of Treasurer providing a steady hand with the finances and excellent guidance in legal aspects of our activities.

Barbara Paterson has kept a close eye on developments in the heritage protection area. She has kept the Committee aware of proposed changes to buildings and advised on what involvement the EMHS might take in any review of such proposals.

Diane Clifford has been our membership secretary for a number of years and has overseen a growth in member numbers over that time while keeping members informed of events and maintaining membership records; it's a great credit to her that our numbers have continued to trend upwards.

Gay Sussex has been a strong contributor of articles to our newsletter.

Ian Hind has re-joined the Committee this year with his trademark work ethic, particularly in relation to the Yarra Park State School project.

Dr Susan Hodson was a welcome addition to the Committee this year.

Membership

We currently have 222 financial members, including a number of new members. We welcome our new members and hope we can continue to maintain our healthy membership position.

Website

We have an active website that is currently being upgraded. The site has 2308 catalogue items, including 802 WW1 personnel records, 271 building histories, 585 gallery images and 52 maps. The website generates significant regular traffic and provides researchers with a valuable resource tool.

Activities July 2022 - June 2023

Our first event for the year was presented in August 2022 by Committee member Dr Susan Hodson. Sue has a family connection to the celebrated colonial artist John Glover, and she presented a very informative talk on his life and art from a personal perspective.

At the AGM in October 2022 another Committee member, Ian Hind, gave a fascinating talk on the progress of his work on the establishment and early days of Yarra Park State School.

Our event in February 2023 was at the National Gallery of Victoria and focussed on Women Artists over 400 years. This was generously hosted by Krystyna Campbell-Pretty, including a lovely afternoon tea. Krystyna has been a significant benefactor to the National Gallery of Victoria, and we were able to see several of the items that she has gifted to the National Gallery of Victoria.

For our April 2023 event, Mike O'Brien hosted speakers who each presented the story of a local man who had volunteered to serve in the First World War. The speakers were Grant Edgcumbe, Darian Warne, Tim Holland, Ian Hind and Malcolm Howell. This evening held in commemoration of Anzac Day was a great success.

Maree Coote gave a talk at our June 2023 meeting on the "The Art of Being Melbourne." This was based on her book of the same name and showed how artists had captured images of the changing landscape and built environment of Melbourne since European settlement of the area.

The EMHS Christmas party was generously hosted by Gary and Genevieve Morgan at their home, and we thank them for their generosity and for contributing to such a successful evening.

I would also like to thank all those who contributed to our events with platters of goodies, which always add to the allure of these events. Thanks also to those members who have assisted with the setting-up and clearing away of chairs before and after meetings in the library.

Newsletter

Our newsletter is published three times a year and goes to every member. It is available electronically, and a printed version is hand delivered by Committee members to street addresses or posted to those with a PO box or living outside the East Melbourne area. The newsletter aims to provide a range of items of local historical interest, and I believe it has achieved that to a high level over the last year.

Sylvia does a wonderful job collating material for the newsletter, as well as contributing articles.

Lisette Malatesta has been a great help in providing her expertise with the formatting and final editing of the newsletter.

In addition to our newsletter, we have regularly supplied articles relating to East Melbourne history to the Inner-City News newspaper which as the name suggests circulates in the inner suburbs of Melbourne.

Heritage At Risk

EMHS as a group has continued to monitor proposed planning developments within our area. This is part of EMHS's role in seeking to maintain the heritage status of East Melbourne.

In conclusion, I would like to thank our members for their continued involvement, interest and support.