

East Melbourne Historical Society

President's Report

I hereby present the 2024 Annual Report, representing the period from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024.

2024 marks the 25th Anniversary of the founding of the Society, and we will be marking this occasion at our AGM in October.

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 local history, but they also provide regular social meetings for members of our local community.

An important project under the auspices of the EMHS that has been going for some time is the research into the history of Yarra Park State School that once occupied the corner of Punt Road and Wellington Parade. Ian Hind has driven this extensive research and by June 2024 we were able to publish two books encapsulating that research. One book was *A Recovered History* by Ian Hind, a history of Yarra Park State School. The second book was written by Ian Hind, Sylvia Black and Tim Holland entitled *The Lost Honour Roll of Yarra Park State School*, which summarised the lives of those whose names appeared on the World War One Honour Roll at the school.

The Committee

Once again, I would like to acknowledge 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.

Sylvia Black as Secretary has continued to do great work in keeping the workings of EMHS ticking over smoothly. Sylvia is a tower of strength in 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 a wonderful and prolific contributor of articles written for our local 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 the 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.

Dr Liz Rushen rejoined the Committee after a long absence. Liz is a distinguished author and publisher and brings experience and a strong professional historical insight to the Committee. Liz was a co-founder and the initial Secretary of EMHS. During this year Liz received a commendation in the Victorian Community History Awards for her book, *Garryowen Unmasked: The Life of Edmund Finn*.

Gay Sussex is standing down from the Committee after a number of years during which she has been a strong contributor with historical articles and the general work of the Society. Many thanks, Gay.

Prof Marita McCabe has been a very welcome newcomer to the Committee this year. Marita has been an enthusiastic and active promoter of the EMHS and her work in recording recollections of older long-term residents has been outstanding and important.

Dr Susan Hodson took on the role of catering co-ordinator, an aspect of our activities which has always been highly regarded.

We currently have 200 financial members, and we welcome members who have joined during the year. The strength and vitality of our membership base is a testament to the health of our organisation.

Website

We have an active website that is currently being upgraded. The site has 2340 catalogue items, including 802 WW1 personal records, 282 building histories, 585 gallery images and 52 maps. The website generates significant regular traffic and provides researchers with a valuable resource tool.

Activities July 2023-June 2024

Our events program for the year commenced in August 2023 when Dom Bonadio presented a talk based on the book he had published about the journey of his family from Calabria to Australia. Dom runs Il Duca restaurant in Wellington Parade and has been a restaurateur in East Melbourne since 1981. It was an outstanding talk from Dom.

The AGM in October was followed by a quite striking presentation from Fiona Campbell, our East Melbourne librarian. This was a talk entitled Mysterious Photographs, and was about a stash of old glass negatives that had turned up at a suburban market some years ago. The glass negatives were a collection that had been assembled and used by newspaper photographers in the 1920s and 1930s and had fortuitously survived down the decades in someone's garage.

Our Christmas function was once again generously hosted by Krystyna Campbell-Pretty at her magnificent home, Elizabeth House, and we thank Krystyna for her generosity and for contributing to such a wonderful evening.

Krystyna was also our generous host for our February function. For the second year in a row, Krystyna hosted our members at the NGV with a tour that included items that she had donated to the NGV, and a lovely afternoon tea.

For our April event, the CEO of the Johnston Collection, Dr Louise Voll-Box, gave a talk entitled A Fresh Look at the Johnston Collection. This gave an interesting perspective on a significant historical institution in East Melbourne.

Ian Penrose was our speaker in June 2024. Ian was appointed the first Yarra Riverkeeper in 2006, and in his talk he discussed the history and future of the Yarra River, a significant element of the topography and history of the suburb of East Melbourne.

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 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 electronically available, 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.

We are very grateful for the great editing and formatting skills of Lisette Malatesta who assists in the production of the newsletter.

In addition to our newsletter, we regularly supply 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.