



JUNE
2002

**EAST
MELBOURNE
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER**

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.

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. Contact Sylvia either by post at P.O. Box 355, East Melbourne, phone: 9417 2037 or e-mail: sylvia.black@bigpond.com.

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.

**The EMHS
acknowledges
financial
support from
Melbourne City
Council.**



Committee

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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.

Annual subscription: \$25.00

Guests are welcome
at individual meetings \$5.00

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

President's Column

In our third year we are starting to work on research projects, in particular a booklet recording historical information about the lanes of East Melbourne and an oral history project. Nina Stanton also has developed an acquisitions policy with a view to the Society building up a collection of materials relating to our area, such as taking copies of old photographs and collecting memorabilia.

We are playing a greater role in current East Melbourne affairs, like making submissions based upon historical information as to the names to be given to two laneways. A website also is proposed so that we can make accurate historical information available to our members in particular and the public in general. The Society is developing closer ties with the Royal Historical Society of Victoria and neighbouring historical

societies, and recently joined in the formation of the Melbourne Metropolitan Region of the Royal Historical Society for that purpose.

Non-members are welcome at any of our meetings, so if you want to hear one of our speakers please just come along. Unless otherwise stated, meetings are held at Clarendon Terrace 210 Clarendon Street East Melbourne at 8pm. And if you are thinking of becoming a member, please direct your enquiries to our secretary Mrs. Sylvia Black on 9417 2037 or to our postal address P.O. Box 355 East Melbourne 3002. Our membership fees are \$25 per year, and \$5 per meeting for non-members.

I am also looking for suggestions for speakers for next year.

Kind regards to you all,
Malcolm Howell 9419 4636

April Meeting - Art Deco in East Melbourne

East Melbourne has an abundance of Art Deco buildings, as was made clear by Robin Grow the President of the Art Deco Society and the speaker at our April meeting.

Robin pointed out that Art Deco came to prominence between the world wars, and stemmed from a desire to move away from 19th century architecture. The transport of the times, ocean liners and fast trains,

influenced Art Deco design, with large ship deck balconies and an increased use of steel, particularly in windows, balustrades and railings. Art Deco also influenced interior design and the shape and colour of once boring household items.

An interesting night. More information, and booklets, can be obtained from the Art Deco Society of Victoria, telephone 9813 4365.

An 'Italian' Villa in East Melbourne

By Ruth Dwyer

East Melbourne is a microcosm of Melbourne's building styles over the last 150 years and has many beautiful and idiosyncratic houses gracing its streets. One is a lovely Italianate house in Grey Street. Its history and that of its architect is worth recording in our annals.

In the 1880s the house, now No. 33 at the south-west corner of Simpson Street, overlooked what was then the Collingwood Drill Ground, now Darling Square. An extension to this building was to be erected to the design of the Italian-born architect, Paolo Dattari'.

Paolo Dattari was a talented gentleman of many parts. He was born in Leghorn, near Florence, c1850 and was the son of Luigi and Enrichetta Dattari. He emigrated from London to Australia in 1877 as an unassisted passenger aboard the *Somersetshire*. In 1881 he married in Melbourne Margaret Victoria Yeomans, born in London. In June 1880 Dattari was elected to The Field Naturalists Club of Victoria and in 1881 he designed a handsome and costly gold and silver presentation casket for Captain Standish, Chief Commissioner of Police in Victoria. The Italian Consul and Commissioner General for Italy, C.A. de Goyzueta, appointed Dattari as one of the Italian jurors at the Melbourne International Exhibition of 1880-1881, together with Carlo

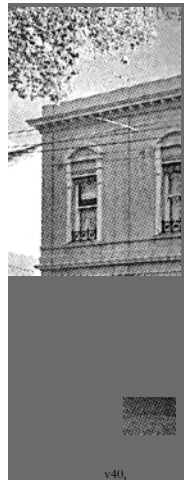
Catani, Ettore Checchi and Pietro Baracchi.

In 1884 he was employed as a draftsman in the engineering section of the Victorian Railways.

The application to build, dated December 2 1884 and naming Paolo Dattari (sic) as the architect, was for a two-storey extension to the dwelling at 33 Grey Street. This involved the demolition of the wooden section of the existing building. Christopher Fry of Coppin Street, Richmond, was named as the builder. The applicant for alterations to the property, Louis Jean Suhard, was at this time a confectioner. He had

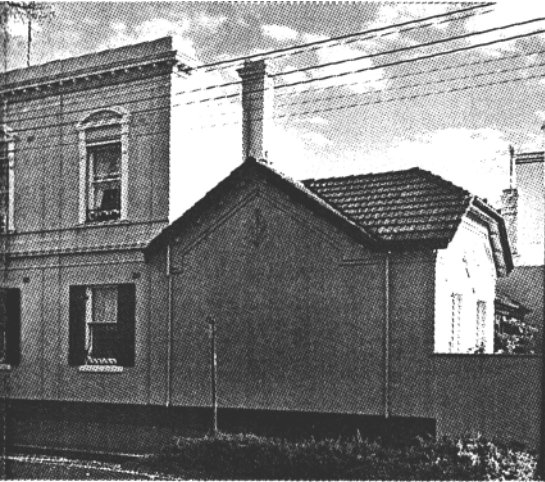
previously been a licensed victualler in Melbourne, but became insolvent in 1862.

Louis Suhard passed away in 1891 aged 58. He was not the owner of the dwelling. His widow, Georgiana, died in the August of 1892, leaving her affairs in the hands of her administrator. Her elder son, Louis Henri Lambert Suhard, jeweller of Adelaide, assented to matters being handled by a daughter, Emilie Georgiana Cox. It was revealed that the dwelling with the two-storey extension, completed, was in the ownership of the deceased, Georgiana



33 Grey

Suhard. Her husband, Louis Suhard, had taken advantage of the Married Women's Property Act as did many men of business in the late nineteenth century. The probate papers of September 1892 gave the valuation for the eight-roomed brick property, of which six were to Dattari's design, as one thousand, three hundred pounds⁴. The property had a frontage of thirty-



ey Street, showing Dattari's two storey extension.

two feet to Grey Street, and bordering Simpson Street, was seventy-two feet deep. The dwelling still stands today. It shows Dattari's influence in the external Italianate appearance.

Meredith Gould, in the assessment of buildings within the City of Melbourne for the Conservation Study of 1983 gives a citation as follows:

...The two-storey section is classical in style with restrained cornice string courses and segmental pedimented window surrounds...

The property was listed for auction on 7 November 1998 — *Rarely offered for sale... gracious light filled rooms of warmth*

*and character... a cedar staircase...*⁵ The exterior is of rendered brick, with double-hung sash windows, at present with shutters to those on the ground floor, and decorative ironwork to the upper. Internally the two-storey section contains little of the original. Walls have been replastered, the decorative cornices, ceiling roses and light fittings are no longer there. Nor are there Victorian fireplaces and mantelpieces, architraves or the high skirting boards. The polished cedar staircase, rather narrow, is all that remains.

This is the only building designed by Paolo Dattari located in Melbourne records up to the present time.

For Dattari see Ruth Dwyer, *To Honour a Noted Botanist*, Italian Historical Society Journal, July — December I 1996, Volume 4, No. 2, reprinted from *The Victorian Naturalist*, Volume I 13(4) August 1996. See also Ruth Dwyer, *Paolo Dattari, Jewellery and the Italian Court at the Melbourne International Exhibition of 1880-1881*, Italian Historical Society Journal, uly — December I 1997, Volume 5, No. 2.

• **PROVPRS 9462/P3 Unit 4 Reg. No. 1226, Melbourne City Council, Index of Architects named in Notices of Intention to Build.**

PROVPRS 28/P2 Unit 319 46/636 Louis Jean Suhard

• **PROVPRS 28/P2 Unit 346 50/21 Georgiana Suhard.**

• ***The Age* 31 October 1998 p.G17.**

This article first appeared in the Italian Historical Society Journal Vol. 8, No. 1. It is reprinted here, with minor alterations by Lotte Mulligan, with the kind permission of the author.

Coming Events

All meetings take place at 8.00pm. at Clarendon Terrace, 210 Clarendon Street, East Melbourne, unless otherwise specified.

Wednesday, 19 June at 5.30-7.30pm

We will visit the Frank Forster Library & Museum of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the Royal Australian College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists, 254-260 Albert Street, East Melbourne.

Frank Forster was eminent in his field and respected internationally. Over his lifetime he built up a collection of books and memorabilia reflecting social and cultural changes in women's medicine. It is regarded as one of the finest collections of its type in the world.

The evening will start with light refreshments. Then the College's librarian, Faye Bower, will talk to us about Frank Forster and his collection. Following this we will be taken on a tour of the building and the collection.

This is a chance to experience an unusual aspect of history in East Melbourne and the evening is sure to hold some surprises.

Please note the starting time of 5.30pm. Bookings are required as numbers are limited — please ring Sylvia on 9417 2037 or Elizabeth on 9416 2187.

Wednesday, 2 I August

Journalist John Lahey will speak on the topic "The 19th Century Melbourne

Police Force". His topic appears to have something in common with his entertaining book ***Damn You John Christie***. John will be known to many of you for his ***Lahey at Large*** column that ran in ***The Age*** for 14 years up to 1996 and for his recent book ***Faces of Federation*** which contains fascinating biographies of the delegates to the conventions that led to Federation.

Wednesday, 16 October - A.G.M.

At our third Annual General Meeting we will launch our Collections Policy. From this date the Society will be actively seeking donations of historical material from the public with which to start an archive.

Wednesday, 4 December — Christmas Function

Our Christmas function this year will take place at Chrysalis Galleries, 179 Gipps Street, East Melbourne. It is hoped that there will be an exhibition of sketches by artist, Bill Walls, commissioned by local residents. Delwyn Freestone, director of the gallery, will talk on the history of the property, which has had a fascinating series of owners.

RESEARCH QUERY

Ron Grainger is researching the East Melbourne Rugby Union Football Club. During the 1880s the Club's ground was in Jolimont. Ron is trying to identify the exact site. If any one can help him he can be contacted on 9877 3348.

What's on at the RHSV

Friday, 14 June, 10.am-12.30pm.

Seminar: Tomorrow's History is Made Today: How to take better photographs for historic collections.
Cost \$22.00

Tuesday, 18 June, 5.30pm.

Lecture, David Dunstan: Twists and Turns; the newspaper press as a force in Port Phillip and early Victorian history.

Monday, 8 July to Wednesday, 10 July

Winter School of Historical Research.

An exhibition entitled *Traveller's Tales — Photography & the Proliferation of the Postcard* is showing until 16 August.

For details about events contact the Royal Historical Society of Victoria on 9326 9288

Bishopscourt

The Victorian Branch of the Australia Garden History Society has assumed responsibility for the restoration of the extensive gardens at Bishopscourt, the home of the Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne. Working bees are being conducted on the third Wednesday of each second month, and open days are proposed for 12 & 13 October 2002. Members of our Society may wish to assist with the working bees, or on the open days. Please contact Sylvia Black 9417 2037 for more information.

Project - Can You Help?

We have decided that our project for this year should be a booklet outlining the stories behind the names of our local lanes. We feel that this booklet would be of interest not only to local residents but also to tourists, and could form the basis of an informal history walk.

Some of the lanes are named after people who are well known throughout Australia, such as Peter Lalor and Eugene von Guerard, but some of the names are obscure. Sometimes the lanes are named after abutting buildings and in these cases we would want to find out the sources of these names and why they were used.

The amount of research required will vary from lane to lane, but even in the case of a well known name, such as Lalor, it will be necessary to emphasize the East Melbourne aspects of his life, for instance he was appointed Speaker during the time he lived here. In the case of the obscure names, sometimes used just because they had lived beside the lane for a long time, it may be very hard to find out anything at all.

Our research will probably focus on Rate Books and/or P.O. directories (to find out how long a person was in the area — in some cases this is already known); Council voting lists (to find out an occupation — for the obscure); probate indexes (for a date of death); newspapers (for an obituary);

Continued

Have your house sketched

We hope to have at our Christmas function an exhibition of sketches by artist, Bill Walls. However we do need your help. Bill is an experienced artist who specialises in sketching houses and other buildings. Our Society has entered into an arrangement with Bill whereby the Society seeks to find residents who are prepared to pay Bill for a sketch of their home, with the residents retaining the original sketch but with the Society having reproduction rights, possibly in a sketchbook.

Any money the Society receives will go towards the acquisition of historical material and library equipment in the future.

The works can be in black and white or coloured as you choose. Size is also flexible. Prices start at \$500 for a 30cm x 45cm. black and white sketch

If you would like to arrange for Bill to do a sketch for you and to help the Society at the same time please telephone Malcolm Howell on 9419 4636.

Australian Dictionary of Biography and other earlier biographical sources such as Victoria and its Metropolis. Most of this research will need to take place at the State Library, The Royal Historical Society of Victoria or the Public Records Office at 1 Casselden Place Melbourne.

When we have collected what information we can it will then need to be written up for publication. Each story would be in the vicinity of 20 to 100 words.

For anyone who is interested in helping with this project (either research, or writing, or both) there will be a meeting on Tuesday, 2nd July at 5.30pm. at the East Melbourne library. At the meeting we will decide on a course of action and divide up the work. If you can come please ring Sylvia Black on ph: 9417 2037 or e-mail: sylvia.black@bigpond.com

No experience necessary.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS 2002

Membership to the East Melbourne Historical Society Inc. is open to all interested in the history of East Melbourne.

Complete the details below and return with your payment of \$25 to:

Hon. Secretary, PO Box 355, East Melbourne, Victoria 3002.

Receipts will be issued only on request. All members are issued with an annual membership card.

Enclosed is my cheque/cash for the amount of \$25.

TITLE: [Mr/Mrs/Ms/Prof/Dr etc.] _____

SURNAME: _____

FIRST NAME: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NO: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

