



# What's in a Name? The Lanes of East Melbourne

East Melbourne Historical Society

1. Albert Lane
2. Bionic Ear Lane
3. Brahe Place
4. Burchett Lane
5. Contractors Lane
6. Evelyn Place
7. Gatch Lane
8. Green Place
9. Hayes Lane
10. Hotham Place
11. Lady Hastings Lane
12. Lalor Place
13. Magnolia Place
14. Maxwell Lane
15. Mena Place
16. Menzies Lane
17. Mozart Place
18. Nancy Adams Place
19. Nunn Lane
20. Ola Cohn Place
21. Powlett Mews
22. Providence Lane
23. Robert Russell Lane
24. St Helens Place
25. Singleton Lane
26. Sophie Lane
27. Trinity Place
28. Von Guenard Place
29. Webb Lane
30. William Crook Place

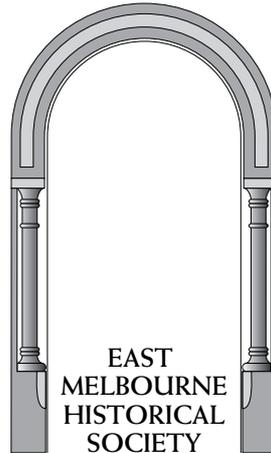


East Melbourne Lanes Map, drawn by Marion Shepherd

# What's in a Name?

## The Lanes of East Melbourne

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## Introduction

East Melbourne's lanes are an integral part of its historic character. Their bluestone cobbles lead us back to the nineteenth century in a way smoothly tarmacked roads cannot.

The lanes were never part of Robert Hoddle's original plan for East Melbourne. This, like that of the city, was a grid of rectangular blocks each divided into twenty quarter acre allotments. It was only when the allotments were sold, subdivided and developed that the lanes came into being according to the requirements of individual owners.

As a consequence no lane is the same: some run the whole length of their block; others are short cul-de-sacs; some have side branches; others narrow down to pedestrian width only. Some lanes have taken on a life of their own providing a street frontage for modern units hidden behind old houses; yet other lanes hold gallantly to the past sheltering old dunnies and reminders of the night-man.

Over the last thirty years many of the lanes have been given names: some because of the need to provide a street address for new buildings; others at the request of local residents; but generally as an aid to emergency services in locating a destination. The names are suggested by the

Land and Survey Department of the City of Melbourne, and after consultation with immediate neighbours, and, more recently, the East Melbourne Historical Society, are then sent to Council for ratification. The team responsible for naming the lanes, on their own admission, are not historians and often the names chosen have been a random selection from the Rate Books, often simply the name of a person who has lived near a particular lane for a long time; or the name of a house which borders a lane.

It is now the purpose of this little book to tell in more detail of the people and places that have given their names to our lanes. The stories encapsulate the rich diversity of East Melbourne's heritage and highlight the abundance of history around us still awaiting discovery.

## Albert Lane

There are eighty two separate thoroughfares in Melbourne named after Queen Victoria's beloved husband, Prince Albert of Saxe Coburg Gotha. According to historian Mary Clark, Albert was 'more important to her than anything else in the world' and she was 'totally and utterly devoted to him.' They were to have nine children who married into the royal houses of Europe. Prince Albert was an active and energetic man, a lover of the arts and of science. He ran the royal household and modernized the royal finances. He became President of the Society for the Extinction of Slavery and Chancellor of Cambridge University, where he was responsible for reforms in university education. It was due to his initiative that the Great Exhibition of 1851 was organized to celebrate the achievements of the industrial age. The exhibition, greeted at first with some suspicion, was an outstanding success, raising £186,000. This money was used to found the Victoria and Albert Museum in South Kensington. Prince Albert died of typhoid in 1861. The lane runs off Albert Street on the north side, just east of Powlett Street.



## Bionic Ear Lane

The name Bionic Ear Lane celebrates the pioneering research and development work of Australian medical scientist, Professor Graeme Clark, whose multi-channel cochlear implant or bionic ear was the first hearing device to give real speech understanding to severely to profoundly deaf people. It has also enabled children born deaf to access spoken language. By December 2007 over 100,000 people worldwide had received the bionic ear, 50% adults and 50% children.

The bionic ear, unlike earlier hearing aids, does not amplify sounds, but uses a multi-channelling system to stimulate auditory nerves. The research to develop the device, then test and record clinical studies took place from 1967-1985. The American Food and Drug Administration (FDA) gave approval for the device to be used with adults in 1985. Clinical studies of the device on severely to profoundly deaf children were then undertaken, and the bionic ear received approval for children in 1990.

The lane runs through and behind Burlington Terrace, on the corner of Albert and Lansdowne Streets, which houses the Bionic Ear Institute.



## Brahe Lane

Mary (May) Hannah Brahe (née Dickson) was born in George Street, East Melbourne on 6 November 1884. Her father, Robert Dickson, was a Melbourne-born cordial manufacturer whose business collapsed in the 1890s recession. May was taught to play the piano by her mother and continued her studies at Stratherne Girls School in Hawthorn. She left school in 1899 to earn her living as an accompanist and singer.

On 12 November 1903, May married Frederick Charles Brahe and bore him two sons. In 1912, encouraged by her publishers G.L. Allen and Co., she left her children in the care of their father to go to London, where she supported herself playing the piano in cinemas until she established herself as a song writer. Her first success 'It's Quiet Down Here' earned her 2d. in royalties per copy and enabled her to bring her family to



England. Her compositions were mainly sentimental ballads which achieved popular appeal through the performances of Dame Nellie Melba and Peter Dawson. Her best known work was 'Bless This House' (1927)

with words by Helen Taylor and made famous by John McCormack.

May returned to Australia in 1939 and settled in Bellevue Hill, where she died on 14 August 1956.

## Burchett Lane

Winston Burchett was the only person to have a lane named after him while still alive.

Burchett's obituary in 2002 described him as a 'thinker, builder, bookman, music lover, family man, realist', but he was more than this. Locally, he was first and foremost, an historian. He wrote the definitive local history *East Melbourne 1837-1937: people, places and problems* (1978) and a subsidiary book *East Melbourne Walkabout* (1975). He also wrote the *East Melbourne Conservation Study* (1979) for the Melbourne City Council, which not only played an important part in local planning decisions, but has remained a useful reference work for all later conservation studies.

He was born in 1908 and spent his early years at Poowong in the foothills of the Strezlecki Ranges. His parents ran a small dairy farm on land originally selected by his grandparents in 1876. They moved to Ballarat where Winston attended school, leaving at the age of thirteen to get work. His father at this time had a small factory making plaster sheeting. With the advent of the 1930s Depression, the decision was made to dismantle and sell the factory and return to Poowong. The money raised allowed his father to start a small circulating library; it was then that Winston's love of books and learning was born.

He was a man totally involved in life in all its aspects. He thought deeply about politics and religion, but always respected the rights of others to think differently. He was a member of the ALP and served as ministerial secretary in the Chifley government (1945-1949). He loved the arts and contributed to a wide variety of community based groups with interests spanning theatre, books, music and history. He was interested in education and was a member of several school councils.

Winston Burchett lived for many years at 179 Gipps Street, where he wrote his two *East Melbourne* books. He later moved to an apartment on the corner of Powlett and Grey Streets. Ironically, neither of these addresses is anywhere near Burchett Lane. On leaving *East Melbourne*, he retired to the Mornington Peninsula.



## Contractors Lane

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the land on either side of this lane was the domain of two contractors, Thomas Murray and Thomas Wright. Wright owned the land to the west of the lane, from number 462 to 476 Victoria Parade. Murray owned the neighbouring land to the east, from number 478 to 482. Both holdings ran through to Albert Street at the back.

Thomas Murray occupied his land first. He built a workshop in its centre in 1864, from where he conducted a business in partnership with John Hill, under the name of Murray & Hill (later Murray & Crow), Contractors. Over the next fifteen years Murray and Wright built houses along both frontages. Two neighboring houses in Albert Street were their own homes. The rest were rented out. Wright, too, built a workshop in the middle of his land, behind the houses.



Murray and Crow's workshop, 117a Victoria Parade, circa 1902. State Library of Victoria.

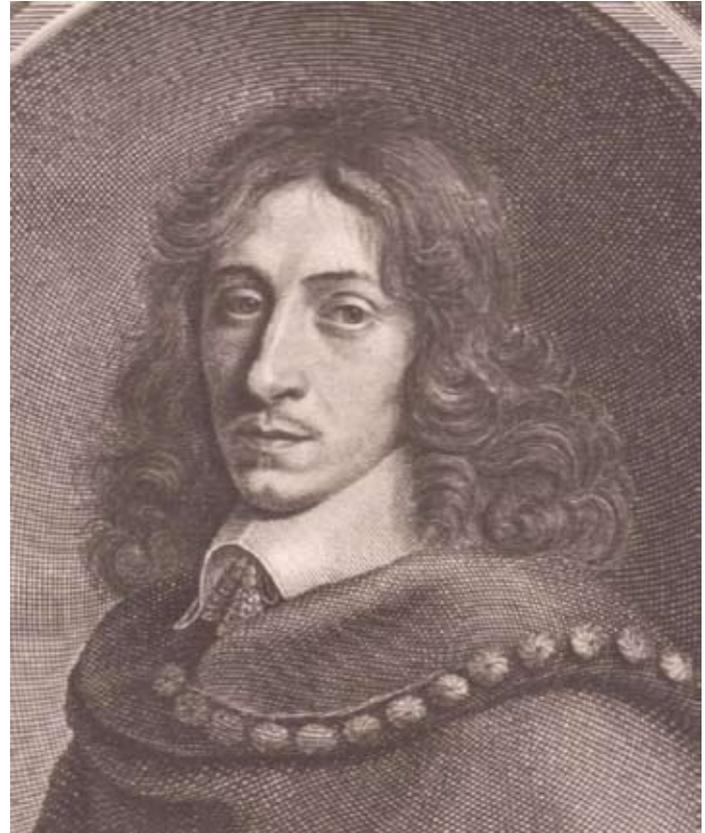
Of the fifteen buildings constructed by the two contractors, only Murray's two cottages at 480–482 Victoria Parade and Wright's terrace pair at 108 and 100 Albert Street remain. The two men were responsible for the construction of many houses

around East Melbourne, but Murray's work was generally thought to be of superior quality. His firm built some of Melbourne's finest buildings, including the Customs House and the Mint.

## Evelyn Place

Evelyn Place was named after the English diarist, John Evelyn (1620–1706). He was one of the founders of the Royal Society, kept a life-long diary and was an expert on tree species. The painter and publican, Wilbraham Frederick Evelyn Liardet (1799–1878), whose charming sketches of early East Melbourne are kept in the State Library collection, claimed to be one of his descendants through the maternal line.

Liardet was present in 1840 at the auction of the first blocks of land in Jolimont, when Governor La Trobe bid unopposed for the twelve acres on which he built his cottage. Thirty years later, Liardet would draw the event from memory, helped by the early newspaper files. Governor Sir George Gipps is said to have named a Port Phillip County, Evelyn, as a compliment to Liardet, who is also recognized as the founder of Port Melbourne. Nicholson Street, Fitzroy was originally called Evelyn Street, perhaps in deference to Liardet's hotel, established in 1860 on the corner of Albert and Gisborne Streets. When Nicholson Street was re-named, the name Evelyn was transferred to Evelyn Place.



John Evelyn 1651.  
Public Domain from Wikimedia Commons

## Gotch Lane

John Speechly Gotch (1829-1901) was a dentist by training, but in 1853 at the age of 24 he sailed from New York to Australia in search of gold. His ship, the clipper *Peytona*, foundered near the island of Mauritius and Gotch lost all his possessions, including his dental instruments. He reached Melbourne at the height of the gold rush and immediately made his way to Mount Alexander diggings (Castlemaine).

Mining was too physically exhausting for him and with his provisions and money used up, he returned to Melbourne half starving and with his foot injured by his own pick. Penniless and eager for news of England, he was attracted to the stall leased by the Scot, Alexander Gordon. Gordon, who was an advertising agent for the *Argus*, befriended Gotch, gave him a job selling papers and allowed him to sleep under cover of the stall.

Gotch quickly realized the possibilities of selling on the goldfields. Gordon agreed and, according to legend, promised that if Gotch could sell as many copies on the goldfields as he was selling in the city, he would make him a partner. Gotch met the challenge and so the firm of Gordon and Gotch was established in Sydney in 1861. This was followed by an office in London when publishers saw the benefits of appointing Gordon and Gotch as their sole distributors in the other Australian colonies and in New Zealand. Today, Gordon and Gotch, now a fully owned

Home of John Gotch  
Burnell  
109 Albert Street, 1962.  
State Library of Victoria,  
Photograph: John Collins



subsidiary of PMP Ltd., distributes in excess of 190 million magazines into the Australian market each year.

In 1856, John Gotch married Elizabeth Miller Jones in England. They returned to Australia and acquired pastoral interests, mainly in the Western District of Victoria. He is, however, mainly remembered for his firm. For years he was President of the Authorised Newsagents Association of Victoria. His name is also associated with the East Melbourne Congregational Church, and charities such as the Austin Hospital, the Collingwood crèche and the Society of the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. He died on 23 September 1901 at his home Burnell, 109 Albert Street, East Melbourne.

## Green Place

Green Place runs from Victoria Parade to the rear of 92 Albert Street and was named for John Hurst Green, who was thought to have lived at that address from 1900 to 1964. It turns out that there were, in fact, two John Hurst Greens. Both were known as Jack. Jack senior lived there from 1900 until about 1920, when he retired; his youngest son then lived there until his death in 1964.

Jack senior was born in Leigh, Lancashire, around 1855. He arrived in Melbourne in 1876 and spent ten years farming with an uncle at Monegeeta. On returning to Melbourne, he went into partnership with another uncle, James Hurst, in a produce business known as Hurst and Green. From their premises at 92-94 Exhibition Street they sold stock and poultry feed such as barley, oats, pollard, chaff and bran, but also potatoes, onions and carrots. The business also operated as a 'service station', where people could buy just enough feed to put into a horse's nose bag, then leave the horse tethered while its owner did business in the city.

James Hurst's retirement from the business in 1900 seems to have been the trigger for Jack's move into East Melbourne. James lived in Hawthorn, where the horses that drew the firm's lorries were stabled. Jack's home in Collingwood, however, lacked the space for this aspect of the business, so he moved into larger premises in East



Green family at Coniston, 92 Albert Street, c. 1913  
Photograph provided by Robert Green

Melbourne. The house, known as Coniston, had a big back yard paved in bluestone, with stabling for ten horses and sheds for three to four lorries. Horses meant manure and there were many neighbours who complained about the smell. Happily for these, the last horse-drawn lorry was sold in 1949.

Jack senior's two sons, Ernest and Jack junior, both followed him into the business and remained in it all their lives.

## Hayes Lane

Geoffrey Hayes was one of two Ministers for Housing in the Hamer Liberal Government at the time of the land scandals of the 1970s. In 1973, the Hamer government announced that its development plans for public housing would be based on the concept of 'satellite towns'. This policy led to the purchase of large areas of land in Pakenham, Sunbury and Melton. By the end of 1974, the government had spent large amounts of money buying often unsuitable land at high prices from speculators and land developers. Over the next eight years, two inquiries into the scandals, the Crowley Inquiry (1974) and the Gowans Commission (1977) exonerated the government from wrongdoing. However, public concern led to a Royal Commission, which concluded that the Ministers for Housing, first Geoffrey Hayes and then Brian Dixon, had failed to exercise control over their

department. Two former Housing Commission officers were convicted of bribery, conspiracy and fraud and the Housing Ministry and Housing Commission were restructured.

Whatever his failings as Minister for Housing, Geoffrey Hayes left a great legacy to East Melbourne. He supported conservation of the historic fabric of the suburb over development and was instrumental in saving Clarendon Terrace, at 210 Clarendon Street, from demolition. Both Crathre House, on the corner of Powlett and Gipps Streets, and Braemar, in George Street were preserved intact as a result of Hayes' negotiations with the owner.



Old door, Hayes Lane

## Hotham Place

Hotham Place is a dog leg lane running off Hotham Street on the north side, between Clarendon and Powlett Streets. It was named for Sir Charles Hotham, Governor of Victoria from 1854-1855. Hotham was born in Suffolk, England, and joined the Royal Navy as a young man. He was a competent and highly regarded officer, rising to the rank of Commodore and was awarded a KGB for his service. His appointment came just as mass agitation on the Victorian goldfields erupted into open rebellion against the high price of gold licences. Hotham himself admitted in a dispatch that only men of capital could afford to become miners. The murder of Ballarat miner, James Scobie, fanned the flames of rebellion and Hotham's action in sending troops to quell the riots resulted in the Eureka rebellion of December 2, 1854, where thirty miners and six soldiers were killed. In spite of popular sympathy for the rebels, Hotham refused to give them an amnesty. Thirteen of the rebels were subsequently brought to trial and all but one were acquitted. Peter Lalor, the leader of the rebellion, later entered parliament as MLA for North Grenville, a Ballarat seat, and was to become Speaker of the House. Sir Charles Hotham's popularity waned and in November 1855, he sent his resignation to London. However, in December, he caught a chill while opening the Melbourne Gasworks and died of the infection.

## Lady Hastings Lane

Lady Hastings Lane was given its name by the Department of Land and Survey because her name appeared in the 1889-90 Rate books as the occupier of 61 Grey Street, which backs onto the lane. This, sadly, is the beginning and end of the story. There appears to be no other evidence of a Lady Hastings being in Melbourne over those years.

Evidence given by the Rate Books in terms of time is slightly flexible. If, for instance, Lady Hastings had taken up residence in late 1888, she would have missed the 1888 Rate Books.

One real possibility for our Lady Hastings is the Hon. Elizabeth Harboard (1860-1957), who married George Manners Astley, the 20<sup>th</sup> Lord (Baron) Hastings in 1880. She was the sister of Lord Carrington, who was governor of New South Wales. It is known that Lord Hastings visited the Carringtons in Sydney and that he came with them to the Melbourne Cup in 1888. Unfortunately, while he gets good coverage in the social pages, there is not a whisper about his wife, nor is there any reference to the couple's residence, if they were here.

## Lalor Place

Named for Peter Lalor (1827–1889), Eureka rebel and politician, who lived at 85 Powlett Street, on the corner of Lalor Place, from 1876 to 1883.

Peter Lalor is best remembered as the leader of the Eureka Stockade rebellion of 1854. This uprising, instigated by the imposition of licence fees on gold mining rights, is one of the defining moments of Australian history in terms of establishing the country's future as a democracy. The rebels achieved not only the abolition of gold licences, but also an enlarged Legislative Council, that allowed the miners on the goldfields to elect their own representatives. Previously only landholders had been qualified to vote. In 1855, Peter Lalor was elected to represent Ballarat. In 1856, he was returned as a member of the Legislative Assembly and remained in parliament until 1871. He was re-elected in 1874 and during this second term, was appointed Commissioner for Customs and, in 1877, Post-Master General. In 1880, he was appointed Speaker of the House. He resigned in 1887 and died at his home at 16 Morrison Place, East Melbourne, on 9 February, 1889.

Peter Lalor 1856  
Lithograph by Ludwig Becker  
National Library of Australia



## Magnolia Place

Magnolia Place is named after Magnolia Court Boutique Hotel, which abuts the lane. The building was erected in 1861 for Charles Smith, owner, with his brother, John, of a saw mill and timber yard in Albert Street. Until 1869 it was the home of Mrs. Ainslie's School for Young Ladies which then moved around the corner to 179 Gipps Street and became known as Ormiston College.

Then known as St. Helen's the house remained in the hands of the Smith family until 1882 when it became the property of Mrs. Olivia Gertrude Keenan. Mrs. Keenan appears to have run it as a lodging house or private hotel, and legend has it that it was a popular home away from home for cast members of J.C. Williamson's theatre troupes.

Mrs. Keenan's daughter, also Olivia Gertrude, married Richard Byrne, a manufacturer's agent and importer, and in 1894 they moved in and the house reverted to a family home. Richard died in 1908 but Mrs. Byrne and her children continued to live there until 1914. Her eldest son, Herbert Richard Byrne, was a major in the army and distinguished himself during World War I, receiving a DSO and being twice mentioned in despatches. It may have been he that gave

rise to the second legend that during both world wars the house provided accommodation for army officers attending nearby training grounds.

After the Byrnes' departure the house again became a lodging house and later apartments known as Kelvin Mansions.

In 1951 the property was re-named Magnolia Court after the impressive magnolia tree that once graced the front garden. In 1956 it was acquired by the Presbyterian Church and the motel annex was added. In 1985 it was sold and the new owners refurbished it and upgraded the hotel.

## Maxwell Lane

May Maxwell lived at 157 Wellington Parade, Jolimont, for sixty years. She died there, aged 100, in 1977. In her early days, she had been an actress, but it is as a journalist that she is best remembered.

She was born in Bendigo in 1876, the eldest child of David Moorhead, an Irish-born stockbroker. Christened Mary, she was known as Maisie to her family. She left Bendigo in 1895, aged nineteen, to embark on a career on stage. To earn money, she worked as a governess and a lady's companion. As Maisie Maxwell, she had some success as an actress, appearing at the Theatre Royal in Melbourne and the Lyceum in Sydney. In 1907, while touring in Perth, she began writing for that city's Sunday Times and came to the realization that journalism would give more security than her acting career. Back in Melbourne, she changed her name to May Maxwell and took a job with Table Talk.

In 1910, she was poached by The Herald and asked to edit its weekly page for women. Ten years later, her page was published daily, the first time a women's page had appeared in a newspaper on a daily basis. In 1911, four months after its foundation, she joined the Australian Journalists' Association as its second only female member. She served on the A.J.A.'s Victorian

committee from 1925-1927 and was made an honorary life member in 1960. In the 1969 Queen's Birthday Honours, she was awarded the British Empire Medal for her services to journalism.

May Maxwell retired from The Herald in 1934, at the age of 58, but continued as a freelance writer and broadcaster on radio stations 3XY, 3UZ and 3KZ. She wrote her last article on the eve of her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday; it was published in The Herald the next day. In it, she noted the present day's 'absence of smiles and laughter'.

## Mena Place

Mena (Menes/Narmer) was the first pharaoh to rule over a united Egypt, c.3000 BC. The lane leads into the property at 86 Wellington Parade, formerly called the Mena House Convalescent Home, owned and operated by the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus from the mid 1930s to the mid 1950s. The sisters also owned and operated Mena House Private Hospital (now Cliveden Hill Private Hospital) around the corner at 29 Simpson Street. The hospital had been known as Mena House since it opened in 1900 under the management of Miss Elizabeth Glover.

Miss Glover was an English trained nurse who arrived in Melbourne in 1890. She became a leader in the movement calling for nursing reform and was the inaugural honorary secretary of the Victorian Trained Nurses Association. Although she only opened Mena House in 1900, the following year Elizabeth left it and opened another hospital in Vale Street, East Melbourne. This may have been because the Simpson Street property was leased, while the Vale Street property was available for purchase.

In spite of Elizabeth Glover's short tenure, the hospital appears to have been her idea and it can be assumed she had some say in naming it. The original Mena House is a grand old hotel in Cairo, looking out on the pyramids of Giza. The connection is only tenuous, but perhaps Elizabeth simply wanted to reflect the standard of exceptional comfort

and care at her new facility. Ironically, Mena House, Cairo, became a hospital during World War 1 and was staffed by ANZAC nurses.



Miss Hannah Elizabeth Glover, 1855-1946  
Picture provided by Cliveden Private Hospital.

## Menzies Lane

Menzies Lane recognizes both Australia's longest-serving Prime Minister, Sir Robert Gordon Menzies and the Menzies Foundation which has its home in Clarendon Terrace, on the north side of the lane. Robert Gordon Menzies was born on 28 December 1894 at Jeparit, Victoria. He was a brilliant student, winning scholarships to his primary school, Grenville College, Ballarat, and his secondary school, Wesley College, Melbourne. He studied Law at the University of Melbourne, graduating in 1916 with first class honours. He was admitted to the bar in 1918 and was a KC by 1929. From the Law, he moved into politics as a member of the Nationalist Party, the United Australia Party. He first became Prime Minister in 1939, four months before the beginning of World War II. His party split and gave way to the Curtin Labor government. Menzies led the opposition for eight years before coming back into government as the head of a Liberal/Country Party coalition. He was to remain Prime Minister for sixteen years, retiring in January 1966, aged 71 years.

The Menzies Foundation honours the memory of Sir Robert Gordon Menzies. It was established through donations in 1979 and is a non-profit, non-political organisation established to promote excellence in health



Protesters at Clarendon Terrace c1975.  
Photograph provided by The Menzies Foundation

research, education and post-graduate scholarships by Australians. In 2007, the Menzies Foundation celebrated the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the building of Clarendon Terrace and twenty years of occupancy by the Foundation. An approach to the Melbourne City Council resulted in the naming of the adjacent lane.

## Mozart Place

Mozart Place takes its name from the house to its west at 105 George Street. The house was built in 1885 for George Milton, a tailor by trade, who already owned a number of smaller investment properties around East Melbourne, including two bordering the lane. One was on the land now occupied by Knightsbridge Apartments and the other was behind it.

Mozart, too, was initially rented out, but in 1900 George, his wife and several of their adult children moved in, having previously lived in South Melbourne. One of these children, Fanny, in an early electoral roll, described herself as a musician, and it was perhaps at her suggestion that the house was given its name. So far, no record has been found to expand our knowledge of Fanny's musical career, but one can imagine that the music of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was heard within the house on many an occasion. Fanny lived at Mozart until her death in 1953 at the age of 84.

## Powlett Mews

Powlett Street was named after Frederick Armand Powlett (1811–1865) a public servant, who became Commissioner of Crown Lands for the Port Phillip District from 1840–1860. It was Powlett who, in 1855, granted permission to the Melbourne City Council to take over the area of Fitz Roy Square (now the Fitzroy Gardens) and the block which later became the Treasury Gardens.

At the time, both were swampy areas, largely used as rubbish dumps, with a stream running north–south between them. Powlett placed firm conditions on the grant, including that there should be no roads for wheeled vehicles made through the gardens. Powlett Mews runs west from Powlett Street, but is a dead-end lane, giving access to the rear of 17 Powlett St. The name 'Mews' seems to have been attached to the lane some time later than the original sub-division, but no stable ever appears to have been on the site.

## Nunn Lane

Philip Henry Nunn was a partner in the old department store, Buckley & Nunn (now David Jones). In 1851, Mars Buckley and Crumpton John Nunn, Philip's elder brother, joined forces to start the firm. Crumpton soon left for London in order to manage to overseas end of the business. He returned in 1857, staying for about four years before leaving for good. Buckley thought of retiring, while Nunn was keen to keep the business going. This may have been part of the reason why Philip Nunn joined the partnership at this time. He was to remain a partner until eighteen months before his death in 1907, and was on the board of directors to the end of his life.

Philip Nunn was born in Exeter, England in 1832 and came to Australia in 1853. He moved into East Melbourne after he married Martha Mary Bennett in 1861, renting a bluestone cottage at 125 Hotham Street. By 1867, his own house, Claverings at 120 Powlett Street was completed to the design of John Barry. The National Trust describes it as 'A charming villa with an elaborate verandah valence and brackets, all in timber, and two arcaded chimneys complete with their original pots.' The house was to stay in family hands until 1968, 101 years after it was built.

Philip Nunn's main interest outside his business was East Melbourne's new Holy Trinity Church, completed in 1864. He served on the first committee to administer the



Buckley and Nunn Limited, 1983  
State Library of Victoria, Photograph: John T. Collins

church and when the new parish was constituted, he served as guardian vestryman and church warden right up to the time of his death. His obituary described him as 'quiet and unobtrusive.'

## Nancy Adams Place

Nancy Adams (Agnes Eliza Fraser Mitchell) is best remembered in East Melbourne for her memoir, *Family Fresco* (1966). Its cameo portraits of local identities and of domestic life make the book a valuable addition to local social history.

Nancy was born at Scotch College, East Melbourne, in 1890. Her maternal grandfather, Dr. Alexander Morrison, was headmaster there from 1857 until his death in 1903. Morrison Place is named after him. Later the family moved to their own home, Fanecourt, 144 Gipps Street. Her father, Sir Edward Mitchell, K.C., was a brilliant barrister and an expert in constitutional matters. He was also Chancellor of the Melbourne Archdiocese, advising the Archbishop, his neighbor across the road. Nancy's mother, Elizabeth, was a founding member and President of many organisations, including the Victoria League, the Country Women's Association and the Bush Nursing Association. Her cousin was Lady Maie Casey, author of *Early Melbourne Architecture*, a book which did much to raise awareness of the value of Melbourne's Victorian architecture at a time when demolition of old buildings was rife.

Nancy's early life was typical of her era and social class: servants and dressmakers; balls and tennis parties; country holidays and occasional trips abroad. In 1921, she married George Adams at St. Paul's Cathedral. He attained the rank



Nancy Adams, 1961  
From her book, 'Family Fresco'

of colonel in World War I and was awarded an MC. After the war, he returned to the family business, G.H. Adams & Co., wine merchants. They had no children.

Fanecourt, the Mitchell family home, was sold in 1913 and later divided into flats. It was demolished in 1970 to make way for the Mercy Hospital car park. Nancy Adams died at her South Yarra home in 1968.

## Ola Cohn Place

In 1934 sculptor Ola Cohn completed her most loved work, the Fairies' Tree in the Fitzroy Gardens. So began her long association with East Melbourne.

Ola (originally Carola) was born in Bendigo in 1892. Her father, Julius Cohn, was a brewer of Danish origin. From the time when she was a small child modeling sand on the beach, Ola only ever wanted to be a sculptor. She took her first steps by enrolling in art and sculpture classes at the Bendigo School of Mines, then studied from 1920-25 at Swinburne Technical College, at the same time attending life drawing classes at the Victorian Artists' Society in East Melbourne. In 1926, she went to London to study at the Royal College of Art, where one of her lecturers was Henry Moore, before returning to Melbourne in 1933.

Her work, in stone, wood, terracotta and bronze, is represented in most state and provincial galleries in Australia. Major commissions were the large stone figures of Science and Humanity for the Hobart General Hospital (1934) and the Pioneer Women's Memorial in Adelaide. In East Melbourne, the timber cover of the font at Holy Trinity Church is her work.

In 1938, she bought the old livery stables at 41-43 Gipps Street, a slightly misleading address as the property



Fairy Tree



Lane picture

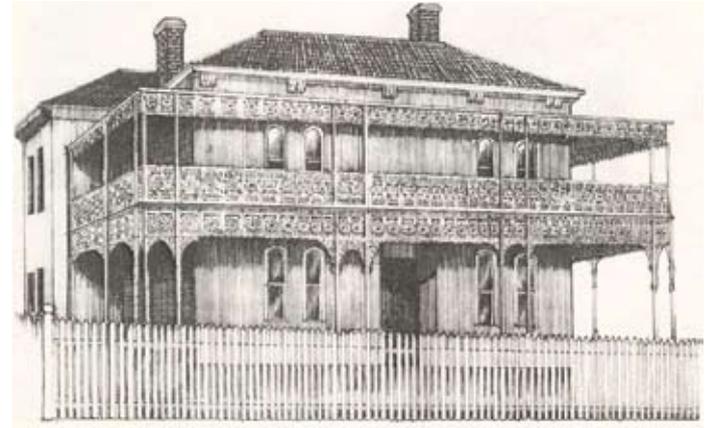
really fronts Ola Cohn Place, with the rear entrance to Gipps Street. Her studio there became a meeting place for artists and, in particular, the permanent home of the Melbourne Society of Women Painters and Sculptors, of which she had been a member since its inception in 1922 and president from 1948-1960. Ola lived and worked there until her death in 1965. She bequeathed the property to the Council of Adult Education and it is now known as the Ola Cohn Centre.

## Providence Lane

Providence Lane, off Albert Street just east of Lansdowne Street, runs beside the old House of Providence built in 1902 by Mary MacKillop, to accommodate the homeless and destitute. It has recently been restored and is now the home of the Mary MacKillop Heritage Centre and Museum. Mary MacKillop is Australia's only saint – she has been beatified but still awaits canonization which will give her international recognition. She was the founder of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

Mary of the Cross, as she is often referred to, was born nearby in Brunswick Street, Fitzroy in 1842. The eldest of eight children she grew up in a battling family but was well educated by her father who had spent some years studying for the priesthood before ill-health forced him to withdraw.

In Penola, S.A., acting as governess to her uncle's children she met the local priest, Father Julian Tenison Woods, whose parish stretched for 56,000 square kilometres. She quickly understood the enormous task of delivering education, particularly religious education, to the children of the outback. In 1866, inspired and encouraged by Father Woods, she opened the first Saint Joseph's School in a disused stable in Penola. Young



House of Providence, 1902  
Image provided by: Mary MacKillop Heritage Centre

women came to work with her and the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph was born. Gradually the Order spread throughout Australia, opening not only schools, but orphanages, providences and refuges too. It now reaches into developing countries all over the world.

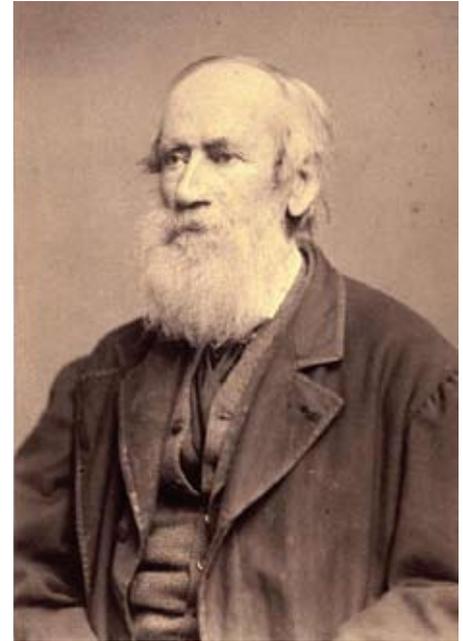
Suffering ill-health all her life Mary died in Sydney in 1909.

## Robert Russell Lane

Robert Russell (1808-1900) came to Sydney in 1832, having trained as an architect and surveyor in London and Edinburgh. He obtained a position in the survey office and in 1836 was sent to the Port Phillip District to survey Port Phillip Bay and its surroundings. At this time, he made the first topographical survey of Melbourne. According to architectural historian, Miles Lewis, it has 'lightly overlaid upon it a grid of the main city streets... though whether this grid is really his work has long been a matter for debate.' It is possible that Robert Hoddle, his successor, drew the grid over Russell's survey, basing it on the format drawn up by the Sydney survey office. However it is certain that early in March 1837, Governor Bourke and Robert Hoddle visited Melbourne and Hoddle then drew up a detailed plan for Melbourne, still relying on the information contained in Russell's initial survey.

Most of his professional life was spent as a surveyor in private practice. Of his architectural work the only remaining building of note is St. James Old Cathedral (1839-42), even so its unusual pepper pot tower was designed at a later date by another architect, Charles Laing.

He is perhaps best remembered for his non-professional output. He was a prolific artist across many media and his early sketches of Melbourne are a valuable part of the State Library Collection.



Robert Russell. Picture taken c.1876  
State Library of Victoria.  
Photograph: John William Lindt 1845-1926

His professional and private addresses changed many times but in 1880 he lived at 49 George Street and Robert Russell Lane leads off Simpson Street into the back of that property.

## St Helen's Place

St. Helen's Place takes its name from the block of flats it runs behind, St. Helen's Flats. This gives rise to the question, 'Why were the flats given that name?' Unfortunately there seems to be no answer. Normally the prerogative of naming a building would go to its owner. In this case the owner, and builder, of the flats was Stephen William Gwillam, master builder of 34 Motherwell Street, Hawksburn. He was born in Townsville, Queensland but moved to Melbourne, married, and settled there. He built St. Helen's Flats to the design of architect, A.E. Pretty, in 1939, replacing four small cottages on Hoddle Street. There is no known connection between him and the name St. Helen's, although it is possible that earlier generations of his family may provide the link.



## Singleton Lane

Dr. John Singleton was one of early Melbourne's shining stars. A doctor, evangelist, philanthropist and powerful social reformer, he was also a prolific writer on health matters, and wrote a memoir of his experiences entitled *A Narrative of Incidents in the Eventful Life of a Physician in the year before his death*.

Born in Dublin in 1808, he was the son of a prosperous merchant. At the age of nine, he decided to become a doctor, having witnessed a dreadful accident where a balustrade collapsed under a crowd watching a public flogging. Many were injured and some died. He was apprenticed in 1823, first to an apothecary, then to an army surgeon. He quickly saw the damage done by excessive alcohol and became a lifelong crusader against the demon drink. He also experienced religious conversion and spreading enlightenment to others became central to his medical work.

He qualified as a doctor in 1832 and arrived in Melbourne in 1851, with his wife Isabella and their seven children.

Singleton and his family moved into a timber terrace house in Collins Street. Here he lived and worked for five years, his practice stretching as far as Mt. Macedon and Brighton. He was soon visiting the prisons, where he attempted to bring the inmates to Christendom and sobriety with bundles of religious tracts and a book of pledges ready for signing. He then moved to the country, continuing his good works, among them the establishment of an Aboriginal mission near Warrnambool.

In 1867 Singleton returned to Melbourne where, in addition to running a busy medical practice, he founded a variety of philanthropic and charitable institutions for all manner of needy people. Possibly his most innovative enterprise was

the establishment in 1869, of a free medical dispensary, the first of its type in Victoria. In 1888, Singleton built a newer and bigger dispensary at 162 Wellington Street, Collingwood. This was the first medical practice in Victoria to employ a female doctor, the American trained Laura Morgan. The building is now on the register of Heritage Victoria.

His connection with East Melbourne began when he moved into 173 Gipps Street in the early 1870s. Next door was the first girls' school in Victoria, Ormiston, operated by Miss Nimmo, which Singleton's two youngest daughters already attended. In 1871, it moved to Clarendon Street and a year later, Miss Nimmo decided to sell the school. She suggested that her two former students take it over. They persuaded their father to buy it for them and the family, and the medical practice, moved into the school

premises. Three years later, the whole enterprise was moved to 129 Grey Street, where his daughters continued to run the school until the end of the century when they moved it to Mont Albert. Ormiston finally merged with Camberwell Girls' Grammar in 1965.

Singleton was actively involved in the local community, becoming a member of the vestry committee of the local Anglican Church, Holy Trinity. He remained on the committee for many years.

John Singleton died at Ormiston in 1891.

His obituary read that... 'His life has been devoted to one unbroken effort to assuage the lot of the homeless, the friendless, the miserable or the vicious, and in every department of benevolent endeavor he labored untiringly.'



Wood cut engraving by Heiner Egersdorfer  
7 November 1891  
State Library of Victoria

Next Page:  
La Trobe's Cottage,  
shows Mrs. La Trobe and her two  
daughters in the garden.  
Painted by George Alexander Gilbert  
State Library of Victoria

## Sophie Lane

Sophie de Montmollin, of aristocratic birth, was born in 1810 in Neuchâtel, a small town in Switzerland close to the French border. It was here that she met Charles Joseph La Trobe, who came to Neuchâtel as tutor to Sophie's cousin Albert de Pourtalès in 1824. They married in 1835 and spent their honeymoon at Jolimont, a manor owned by the Portalès family not far from Neuchâtel.

In 1839, La Trobe was appointed Superintendent of the Port Phillip District and in September of that year, Charles, Sophie and their young daughter, Agnes Louisa, finally reached Melbourne.

Melbourne was, at that time, only four years old and not much more than a shanty town. The La Trobes erected their prefabricated cottage just east of the town and named it Jolimont, after the house in which they had spent their honeymoon. If the house were still on its original site it would front, slightly askew, onto Sophie Lane.

Sophie was not the leader of society the locals may have hoped for. She devoted herself to their four children, with entertaining limited to small, private dinners. Besides, La Trobe's salary was a modest £800 and Jolimont, in spite of later additions, was only a small house. Sophie was also often unwell, suffering from neuralgic headaches. In 1850, when Princes Bridge was to be opened, Sophie persuaded her friend Georgiana McCrae to wear her clothes and stand in for her. Apparently, no-one noticed. She did what she could



to involve herself in charitable works, accompanying Isabella Singleton, wife of Dr. John Singleton, and Mrs. Perry, the wife of Bishop Perry, on visits to female prisons. Here they taught needlework, a skill in demand in the colony, to prepare the women for life outside.

Sophie and her children returned to Switzerland in 1852. Her daughter Agnes had already been sent back in 1845 for her education; now it was the turn of her brother, Charley. Charles La Trobe made the decision to resign, but had to wait for eighteen months while his successor, Governor Hotham, was appointed. A week before he sailed, he learned of Sophie's death in Switzerland three months earlier.

## Trinity Place

Trinity Place runs between George and Hotham Streets and forms part of the original land grant made to the Anglican Archdiocese. The grant assigned to the Anglican Church two acres bounded by Hotham, Clarendon, and George Streets for the future Anglican Cathedral. The land came to be known as the Cathedral Reserve. In 1857, the Church had built a schoolhouse on the corner of Hoddle Street and Victoria Parade and early church services were held there.

This was the start of Holy Trinity Parish. However the congregation wished to build a church and saw the Cathedral Reserve as the logical site. Initially the bishop refused to allow a parish church to be built on the block, but eventually agreed if it were to become the chapter house to the new cathedral. This church was built in George Street, just east of Trinity Lane. When eventually it was decided to build the cathedral in Swanston Street this cleared the way for the church to become a parish church. However, on New Year's Day, 1905, a fire destroyed much of the church, leaving only the bluestone walls and a single pillar and one door. When the new church was built in 1906 on the present corner site, the pillar and the door were incorporated into the design and can be seen today.



Holy Trinity Church, East Melbourne  
State Library of Victoria  
Photograph: John Henry Harvey

## Von Guerard Lane

Johann Joseph Eugene von Guerard was born in Vienna in 1812. His father, Bernhard von Guerard was court painter to Francis I of Austria. He took his son to Italy to study the Old Masters and they spent six years in Naples. Eugene then moved to Dusseldorf in Germany and then to Australia, landing in Geelong on Christmas Eve, 1852. His sketches from this period are historically significant, portraying life in the goldfields prior to the Eureka uprising. They are housed in the State Library of Victoria.

Von Guerard spent the next sixteen years travelling through Australia and New Zealand, often accompanying scientific expeditions. In the 1850s, he had studios in Bourke and Collins Streets, Melbourne. In 1854, he sold his first 'undeniably Australian' landscapes in Melbourne. In 1856, he was an active founder of the Victorian Society of Fine Arts. In 1862, he built his house, Little Parndon, at 159 Gipps

Street East Melbourne, where he lived and worked for almost twenty years. In 1867, he produced an album of tinted lithographs, *Australian Landscapes*. In 1873, he sent paintings to London for the International Exhibition and in 1876, was one of the first Australian artists represented in the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia.

He was a charter member of the Victorian Academy of Artists; was appointed first master of painting at the National School of Art, Melbourne, and became curator of the National Gallery of Victoria. He was active in the Royal Society of Victoria, serving on its council from 1866-67. In 1870, the Emperor of Austria awarded the Cross of Franz Joseph.

He returned to Europe in 1882 after almost thirty years in Australia. In 1891, Von Guerard and his wife moved to London to live with their daughter and her family. He died on 17 April, 1901.



Eugene von Guerard, c.1880  
State Library of Victoria  
Photograph: John Botterill 1817-1881

## William Crook Place

William Joseph Crook was an architect. He lived at 121 Simpson Street for fifty years until his death in 1935. He was born in Prahran in 1857, the son of Joseph Thomas Crook, also an architect. William joined his father's practice, but the only work he is known to have participated in was in the design of many of the cottages that are part of the Old Colonists' Homes in Rushall Crescent, North Fitzroy, and which are on the Register of Heritage Victoria.

After his father's death in 1905, William set up his own office at 142 Russell Street, Melbourne, but it appears that he was not particularly active as an architect. Locally he is known to have built a second storey extension to his own 1870s cottage, and in 1909 he designed the nearby house at 77 Gipps Street.

Crook's office was in the same building as Stanford and Co., merchants. Thomas Welton Stanford was also a resident of East Melbourne, living in a large house on Clarendon Street. He had married Wilhelmina (Minnie) Watt in 1869. She, sadly, died in childbirth the following year. Stricken by grief, he turned to spiritualism in an effort to make contact with her. William Crook's sister, Ellen, had also died in 1870 and his mother, Eliza in 1880. Spiritualism may have been the catalyst for what became a long association between Crook and Stanford.



William Crook Place  
and house

William Crook married in 1885 and had two children, Welton, born 1886 and Minnie, born 1890. The choice of names reflects a close friendship between the two men. The connection went further: Welton Crook, after early training in Melbourne, went to Stanford University (founded by Welton's brother, Leland), gaining degrees in mining and metallurgy. In 1921, he joined the teaching staff, where he remained for thirty years. On his death in 1976, he left his whole estate to the university, part of which was to endow a chair of Applied Earth Sciences, known as the Crook Professorship.

## Webb Lane

Charles Webb was an architect who designed many important Melbourne buildings, both private and public. One of the latter was Yarra Park State School, No. 1406, on the corner of Punt Road and Wellington Parade, East Melbourne. This was a prize winning design, serving as a model for many future government designs; hence its listing on the Historic Buildings Register. The school opened in 1874, became redundant and closed in 1985. It was bought by the Urban Land Authority and converted to apartments subsequent to 1998.

Charles Webb, the youngest of nine children, was born in 1821 in Suffolk, England. He was apprenticed to a London architect and in June 1849 he decided to join his brother, James, who was a builder in Brighton, Melbourne. In August they decided to go into partnership as architects and surveyors. Their most important early commission was in 1850, for St. Paul's Church, Swanston Street. In November 1853 Charles married Emma Bridges, who had migrated to Australia after the death of her father, chief cashier at the Bank of England. They lived at Chilton, Brighton. Charles and James built many homes and warehouses in Brighton.

After James returned to England Charles, in partnership with Thomas Taylor, received an important

commission for Melbourne Church of England Grammar School. Other important commissions were for Wesley College in 1864, the Alfred Hospital and Royal Arcade in 1869, the Orphan Asylum in 1878 and the Grand Hotel (Windsor) in 1884. In East Melbourne he was the architect for 193 George Street (1864), and Mosspennock, 36 Clarendon Street (1881)

Charles was a founding member of the Victorian Institute of Architects in 1856. He was a member of many clubs including the Melbourne Club and the Melbourne Cricket Club. He lived in Brighton all his life and died at Farleigh on 23 January, 1898.

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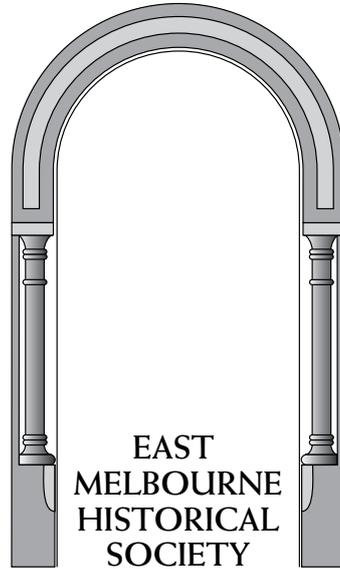
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View of Jolimont 1844,

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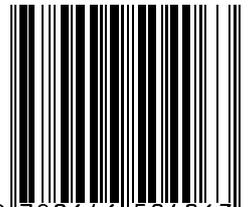
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