



# Balwyn Historical Society Newsletter

January-February 2019

## Meetings

**Thursday 14 February 2019**

**Speaker: Bill Mackie**

**Topic: Robert Reid and his Family at Belmont 1870-1955**

Bill Mackie, great-grandson of Robert Reid, will give an illustrated presentation about the career of the Hon. Robert Reid, MLC, and the Reid family homes in the area now known as the Reid estate. These properties included *Belmont*, *Larino*, *Maleela*, and *Myambert* in Balwyn, and the Balwyn Veterinary Surgery. Only *Myambert* and the Balwyn Veterinary Surgery remain today.

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**Thursday 14 March 2019**

**Speaker: Bob Kerr**

**Topic: The Mysterious Henry Elgar**

Bob Kerr has recently been researching this very early Boroondara land-owner and has come up some surprising information about his life.

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**Thursday 11 April 2019**

**Speaker: John Haward**

**Topic: Wartime Experiences in Vietnam**

John Haward, a Vietnam Vet and member of Box Hill RSL, will share with us some of his recollections of the Vietnam War.

**Meetings are held at the Balwyn Evergreen Centre,  
45 Talbot Avenue, Balwyn  
Email: [balwynhistory@gmail.com](mailto:balwynhistory@gmail.com) website: [www.vicnet.net.au/~balwynhs](http://www.vicnet.net.au/~balwynhs)**

## Recent Speaker: Irene Kearsy

Irene Kearsy, a keen member of the (Charles Joseph) La Trobe Society, spoke about the voyage and arrival in Victoria of the **David Clark**, a 3 masted sailing ship, built in 1816 in Calcutta. In 1839, the David Clark brought the first assisted immigrants (free passage) from Scotland to Melbourne. She left Greenock (near Glasgow) on 13th June 1839 to the tune of *Lochaber No More* piped by John Arthur. 229 passengers (chiefly agriculturalists) made the trip and only one died, reflecting the skill of the surgeon, Archibald Gilchrist, who vaccinated them all. The Ship Master was William Bruce Mills, the crew mainly Norwegian with some Irish.

The David Clark arrived in Rio de Janeiro 15th August 1839, stayed approximately 10 days for repairs, then sailed direct for Port Phillip arriving 27th October 1839 off Williamstown. La Trobe, who had only just commenced working in Victoria, visited them before they travelled to South Melbourne where 50 tents were set up. Victoria then had a population of 4,000, and within a week, La Trobe reported '*most David Clark immigrants have found positions*'. One passenger, John Arthur, became the first superintendent of the (Melbourne) Botanic Gardens (before Baron von Muller!).

For more information: <http://www.latrobesociety.org.au/LaTrobeana/LaTrobeanaV17n2Kearsy.pdf>

## THE INDEFATIGABLE FRANCES BARKMAN – PHILANTHROPIST AND TEACHER (1885-1946)

*By Rose Raymen*

I first came across the name of the late Frances Barkman in 2009 while researching the family history of a former resident of the Frances Barkman House in Balwyn, Victoria. Frances was a Jewish child refugee, born in Kiev, Russia (now Ukraine) in 1885. Joseph, Anna and daughter Frances, had fled the Russian pogroms and arrived in Melbourne in 1891, where Joseph Barkman taught Hebrew at Ormond College, Melbourne.

Frances (aka Fanny) was educated at the Rathdowne Street State and Secondary School, Carlton and later trained as a teacher, graduating with a BA from the University of Melbourne. Her major areas of interest were French and drama, receiving two awards in the 1930s from the government of France for her "outstanding interest and promulgation of French literature, art and teaching". During this time, Frances was also an examiner in French at the University Public Examinations. Throughout her life, she was a member of both Alliance Française, an international organisation that aims to promote French language and culture, and the Lyceum Club, which is open to women graduates and those who have distinguished themselves in the arts, education, science and philanthropy.



MISS F. BARKMAN, B.A., Dip. of Ed.

*Punch* (Melbourne) Thursday 13 May 1915

In 1936, the Australian Jewish Welfare Society (now Jewish Care) was established in Sydney and soon after a Victorian branch was founded. Frances served as the Melbourne branch honorary secretary ensuring that refugees arriving from Europe were guaranteed a safe haven. She was instrumental in establishing Larino Children's Home, Balwyn, giving up many hours of leisure time to teach them English.



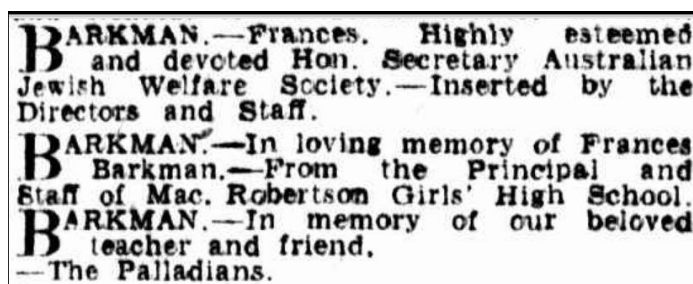
Frances Barkman House, 23 Maleela Avenue, Balwyn, Victoria  
Photo by Laurie Richards October 1959  
(Courtesy of Museums Victoria)



Frances Barkman House activity room, 23 Maleela Avenue, Balwyn, Victoria  
Photo by Laurie Richards October 1959  
(Courtesy of Museums Victoria)

In 1939, Mary Hutton, the headmistress at Mac.Robertson Girls' School in Melbourne, appointed Frances, a member of the teaching staff, in charge of the war relief. In 1942, the students and teachers were evicted from the school after the institution was requisitioned by the Australian government as the temporary headquarters of the American army. Frances was also the president of the Women's Committee of the Free French Movement and a leading advocate of its cause during the German occupation of France. A high-ranking officer of the Australian Military Forces wrote that, "nobody was more welcome at the internment camps than Miss Barkman, and that nobody commanded the respect of commanding officers more than this earnest and indefatigable Jewish lady."

Frances Barkman never married. She died in St. Vincent's Hospital, Fitzroy, Melbourne, on 28 September 1946, aged 61 years and was buried in the Hebrew section of Fawkner Memorial Park, Melbourne. In 1948, the name of Larino Children's Home was changed to the Frances Barkman House, acknowledging her services as honorary secretary. Her will named the University of Melbourne and the Australian Jewish Welfare Society as her chief beneficiaries, with the AJWS providing bursaries for students in the Jewish Refugee Children's Homes. Professor Chisholm, Professor of French at the University of Melbourne wrote, "She was one of the most stimulating teachers of French in Victoria and turned out some of the best students we have had in French at the University".



*The Age* (Melbourne) Tuesday 1 October 1946

### Acknowledgements:

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 Australian Dictionary of Biography  
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 Trove – National Library of Australia

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