



# *Balwyn Historical Society*

DECEMBER 2023

## **Newsletter – December 2023**



**As 2023 comes to a close, the committee of our society would like to wish all our members, and friends in other societies, a joyous and merry Festive Season, safe travels for those on the move and best wishes for good health and happiness in the approaching year of 2024. A heartfelt thankyou to all our wonderful speakers over this year, who have delivered an amazing array of topics.**

This newsletter includes the presentations of our guest speakers of the past months:

Isabel Simpson- Women Achievers of Melbourne

Helen Penrose- "Torchbearers"- A Century History of Carey Grammar School.

We look forward to seeing you all at our first meeting in February 2024

## September Guest Speaker - Isabel Simpson Topic: Women Achievers of Melbourne

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These women were born in quiet country towns, noisy cities or even overseas. There are so many extraordinary women in Isabel's repertoire, she only mentioned a small number who were high- or low-profile women leaving great imprints on Melbourne and Victoria. Isabel's talk is inspired by a walking tour she designed within the city which connects to structures along the way.

Women such as:

**Cynthia Teague** – attended Ruyton, became a pioneer architect and later a public servant, working on Commonwealth offices, for e.g., Spring Street, as well as the restoration of Customs House and immigrant hostels and hotels.

**Vida Goldstein** – attended PLC, was a social reformer and suffragist, with an international reputation, standing for Federal Parliament in 1903 and on other occasions.

**Dame Nellie Melba** – attended PLC, opera singer and philanthropist who settled in Combe Cottage Coldstream when not performing, entertaining international celebrities such as Charlie Chaplin.

**Dr Zelda D'Aprano** – a self-funded liberationist and equal pay activist presented a submission to the Arbitration Court in support of the equal pay case in 1972, which was successful.

**Anne Fraser Bonn** – activist and philanthropist, lived in Charles St Kew, was a friend of Barak.

**Helen McPherson Smith** – philanthropist, from a wealthy Scottish family, she contributed regularly to several Victorian charities.

**Dr Constance Stone** - medical practitioner who had to study in London as Melbourne University didn't take female students at the time.

**Alice Anderson** - motor mechanic in Kew who ran her own all female business in Cotham Rd Kew, clients including Robert and Pattie Menzies and members of the Lyceum Club

**Jessie Webb** – the first female history lecturer at Melbourne University, a friend of Alice Anderson.

**Mary Gilbert** – pioneer, the first European woman to live in Melbourne in 1835, arriving from Launceston with James Gilbert, her husband, later given 500 acres of land and a town allotment.

**Caroline Chisholm** – philanthropist, English born, known mostly for her support of immigrant females and family welfare in Australia.

**Caroline Lohman/Hodgson/Pol** – a Melbourne brothel madam in Lonsdale St, Madame Brussels was a very well-connected highly successful businesswoman.

**Joan Kirner** - Premier, social justice, education & women's rights advocate  
Ola Cohn – pioneer modernist sculptor

**Mirka Mora** – artist who nearly died in Auschwitz with her mother, came out to Australia with her husband Georges establishing Balzac, Tolarno and art galleries.

**Hyllus Maris** – campaigner, community worker and educator

Louise Hanson-Dyer – publicist

**Margaret Tucker** – aboriginal rights advocate, a friend of Harold Blair

**Dame Beryl Beaurepaire** – women's rights activist and community worker

**Lillian Whiteman** – innovative haute couture fashionista who ran a very successful clothing shop in Collins Street.

**Tilley Aston** – writer and advocate for the blind, who is remembered at the Vision Australia Head office in Kooyong.

*Matthew Etty -Leal*

There is so much more to discover about these women, in books or simply finding them on the internet sources. Enjoy your own research! ED.

## **October Guest Speaker- Helen Penrose**

### **Topic: “Torchbearers” – A Century History of Education at Carey Grammar School**

While Helen was researching and writing the book, “Torchbearers”, over 3 years, she kept a journal of her recollections. Helen was in a unique situation during the Pandemic and the various lock down periods. Special permits were required to collect archival material, interviews with families and others with past and present connections to the school were often heard as muffled voices through the face masks. She also spent time at the school and at sporting events to gain a ‘feel’ of the current school atmosphere.

‘In the beginning.....’why did the Baptists choose Kew as the site for a school?

There were already many schools that had been established by private educators or the various churches: Ruyton 1877, MLC 1882, Camberwell Boys Grammar, 1886, Trinity Grammar 1902, Camberwell Girls Grammar 1920 and the long-established Scotch College had moved from East Melbourne to Hawthorn in 1926. Sectarianism between the Protestant churches and the Roman Catholic Church was abundantly clear with Catholic power centred on Archbishop Mannix at Raheen in Kew and Xavier and Genazzano, the established schools. It also needs to be noted that there were few state-run High schools at the time in the eastern corridor.

Earlier Baptist plans were hampered by lack of finance, however in 1920 things changed. Factors that then contributed to their choice of area were; Melbourne’s Baptist community was stronger in the North East and East and one of the early churches in the area was established in 1856 in Highbury Grove Kew and the area was the only designated alcohol free zone- “dry suburbs” and thus this provided impetus and support to establish a school.

The school was named after William Carey, an English born missionary in India. Harold Steele was the first Headmaster whose long leadership concluded in 1944. The founders were adamant that the fees would be low. Another important feature of the school, right from the beginning, was the emphasis on science. A science laboratory was established in 1928. Ten years later, in 1938, a purpose-built laboratory was added, a first for any school.

The WW2 years were difficult times and schools kept their fires burning under challenging circumstances; many fine teachers went off to war and families coped as best they could to pay fees.

Post WW2, the New Educational Fellowship moved toward child centred education with a greater student focus. Parental involvement was welcomed. Robert Wilkinson (1948) was hailed as an inspirational teacher and a new science laboratory in 1956 was regarded as the most modern in design with a meteorological station on the roof. Ken Lyall, the Junior school head promoted science projects for his young students.

New subjects were included in the curriculum; Biology came into the science mix in 1954, Art was added in 1958 and German Language in 1962. Open teaching areas for team teaching became another innovation. English lessons for grades 4-7 were conducted in ability groups rather than age levels. In 1963 scholarships were offered to staff for study and teaching opportunities overseas with the understanding that they would return to teach at Carey for 3 years as well as publishing ideas gained from their experiences.

Gerald Cramer was another long serving Headmaster from 1965-1989. Under his watch academic results improved. From 1966, staff were able to attend fully funded residential conferences. Whilst academic success was important, the Chaplain. Alan Wright, (1958-72) espoused a strong belief in outdoor education and camping which was especially appealing to the non-academic boys. The first camps took place at Daylesford in 1966 and at Kinglake in 1969. Carey's own camp site was built by parents at Paynesville in 1969.

A film society was formed in 1972 for film making which greatly appealed to two very enthusiastic young film makers who decided to hire a helicopter for the 50-year celebrations. This highly unusual idea was fully supported by the school council, and the Headmaster!

1971 saw the introduction of computers even though they were quite large pieces of equipment. In 1977, an alternative to the higher school certificate was a Business Studies course which ran until 1986.'

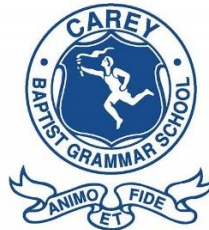
During this time the winds of change gathering momentum- co-education. Molly McDonald the librarian suggested it be discussed (1975). There were various considerations; a separate site or to stay on the current site or to merge with a girl's school. Strathcona, the Baptist Girls school which had been established in 1924, was not amenable to amalgamation as their fees were lower thus expecting the girls' parents to pay Carey's higher fees.

Staff had working parties, they visited other schools (especially former boy's schools) which had gone down the co-ed path such as Geelong's Grammar and College and Wesley. The staff took a vote, and the result was 74/69 in favour of co-education.

Initially, girls were enrolled in years 11 and 12. There was also discussion on what subjects were needed for girls however the status quo prevailed, and science courses were an important attraction. In 1984 there was an intake of girls at year 7 and by 1986 it was co-education at all levels in the senior school.

Also, by 1984 a quarter of the staff were women. The Equal Opportunity Act of 1986 highlighted the need to employ female teachers' science and maths disciplines.

Gerald Cramer retired in 1989. His successor, Ross Millikan steered the school through the change from the Higher School Certificate (HSC) to the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) and lead the school from 1990-2002.



*This year of 2023 has celebrated the foresight of those Baptist founders. What would they have thought of the school's amazing buildings today and the sports grounds and facilities at Bulleen? ED*

### **IMPORTANT NOTE: Interesting connections**

An archival item written by the school's archivist, Paul Mishura, for Scotch College's Great Scot magazine titled, "The Scotch Family's Role in Carey Baptist Grammar school's Creation and First Century", provides further understanding of those early years. You will see that the first Headmaster Harold Steele was also a student at Scotch from 1900-1902.

This item and diagram plans of the early buildings can be found at [www.scotch.vic.edu.au](http://www.scotch.vic.edu.au) Great Scot September edition Pages 96 & 97.

