



Balwyn Historical Society Newsletter

November 2013

Meetings

Thursday 14 November 2013 – 8pm

Guest Speaker: Dr Ross McMullin

Topic: Farewell, Dear People - Biographies of Australia's Lost Generation

Dr Ross McMullin will speak about exceptional Australians who died in WW1. His book recently won the 2013 Prime Minister's Award for non-fiction.

Thursday 12 December – 7pm

Christmas function

Come and help us celebrate Christmas in Balwyn

(Details attached. Bookings can be made at the November meeting or by mail)



Balwyn Church of Christ

**All meetings are held at the Balwyn Evergreen Centre,
45 Talbot Avenue, Balwyn
Please note our new email address which is below.**

Email: bhs@balwynevergreen.org.au

website: www.vicnet.net.au/~balwynhs

Recent Speaker Chris Long

Once again Chris Long presented a rigorously researched and wonderfully diverse program of clips from art-deco films.

Chris briefly explained the term art-deco and the importance of the exhibition of decorative industries held in Paris in 1925. This exhibition influenced art, architecture, ceramics and films of the late 1920s and 1930s, particularly those emanating from the studios of Hollywood and Berlin.

Among the fascinating film clips he then showed us were extracts featuring Josephine Baker, *Camille* an early Rudolf Valentino film, and *Salome*. Fritz Lang's science-fiction film *Metropolis* set in a 21st century city of art-deco sky-scrapers was shown all over the world, including Melbourne and was

surprisingly prescient in terms of Lang's vision of the future.

These film clips were followed by some from American studios showing how art-deco ideas influenced set designs and costuming. These included *The Kiss*, the last silent film made by Greta Garbo, and *Our Blushing Bride* starring Joan Crawford. In *Broadway*, a glamourised fantasy of the speak-easies of the 1920s, dancers wore head dresses resembling New York art-deco sky-scrapers.

Chris concluded his presentation by showing us examples of art-deco buildings which can still be seen in Melbourne. BHS members and the many visitors who attended the meeting were left wanting to see more of these tantalizing film clips.

Banner

Balwyn Historical Society was delighted to receive a mobile banner from the Royal Historical Society of Victoria through a grant from the Vera Moore Trust. It will be used at meetings and for History Week events.

The History of the Canterbury Football Club. Berries to Cobras

This recently published book is available from the CFC president, James Nicolas.
Ph.0407511057 or cobrasfc@gmail.com.

The cost is \$30.00

Election of Office Bearers and Committee Members

At our recent AGM, Martin Barrett was nominated and duly elected to the position of President of Balwyn Historical Society. Other office bearers and committee members nominated and duly elected are listed below.

Balwyn Historical Society - Contact details

Balwyn Historical Society is sponsored by the Balwyn Evergreen Centre.

Phone – 9836 9681

President	Martin Barrett	
Secretary	Pat O'Dwyer	9817 3758
Treasurer/	Marilyn Poole	9857 7565
Membership		
Speakers/	Robin Kelly	9836 6589
Publicity		
Archivist	Pam Herrington	

Newsletter	Barbara Russell
	Pat O'Dwyer 9817 3758
Webmaster	Neil Swansson

Non-Committee Assistants	
Newsletter mailout	Lynette Woolley, Deidre Woolley
Resources	Heather Alford

The Balwyn Church of Christ – the early years

The ministries of the Churches of Christ in Victoria had their beginnings around 1852, however, it was 70 years before the Balwyn Church of Christ had its foundation meeting.

At 11am on July 2nd 1922, a special service took place and that night the Mission opened in a tent in Whitehorse Road near Weir Street. The Mission continued until August 13th with meetings each Thursday night and Sundays. A church was subsequently erected on the corner of Cherry Road. Construction was supervised by Tom Dovey, a builder and member of the congregation. He was ably assisted by volunteers who responded to an advertisement in *The Australian Christian* calling for carpenters, painters and general helpers.



Balwyn Church of Christ - Tent Mission 1922

They clearly had a great response as the church was ready for the dedication service on October 8th at 11am. A male quartet sang "O love that wilt not let me go" and the preacher was Gilbert Chandler who left for America soon after. A new minister was advertised for – the salary offered £6 per week. Mr J. E. Thomas was appointed and officially commenced duties in March 1923 while Mr Theo Edwards from South Australia filled in the interim.



Balwyn Church of Christ opened 1922

A modest 36 members and 19 Bible scholars began the congregation in July 1922 and

amazingly by May 1925 membership had grown to 230 with 300 in the Bible School!

Names among the foundation members may resonate with present and former Balwyn residents: Parsons, Chandler, Carter, Whittington, McDowell, Harrison, Burnham, Winter, Purton, Sharp and Smart.

The burgeoning population of Balwyn and surrounding areas also called for activities that catered for youth. A Sunday school, Kindergarten, Endeavour Societies, Boys' Club, Junior and Senior Girls' Clubs were quickly established. There was never a shortage of willing volunteer leaders.

A junior and senior cricket club was established in 1923 and played in Kalimna Street, then just a track. A football club began in the 1930s and a senior girls' gymnasium took place in the church. A tennis club played on a court next to the church. These sports were a boost to the fellowship and morale in the community especially during WW2. While many players enlisted, their places were filled by those too young to enlist and those in essential occupations. News of the sporting teams always provided some light chat in letters to their family members in the war zones.

It was soon evident that more space was needed so the ladies of the church started fund raising. They spent many hours sewing and making items of clothing both to assist widows as well as to create items for sale. In 1924 a new kindergarten hall was built, again by voluntary labour supervised by Tom Dovey.

A Sunshine Circle was another group primarily for young women and their young children. This activity often included a speaker, a musical program and afternoon tea. It would seem that the ladies of this time were ahead of their time; they saw the need for a Sunday morning crèche and undertook 20 – 30 sick visitations a month. They even found time to have a ladies' choir led by Mrs Rene Hare.

Each Sunday four different services took place. Sunday school anniversaries and picnics were popular and Sunday school concerts were later held in the Balwyn Hall in Balwyn Road. A sizable orchestra also took part. During the mid 1920s, many British migrant families were welcomed into the

congregation. Two of these new settlers were organists who readily became part of the church's musical offerings.

In 1930 Mr Thomas notably led the Australian contingent to the first World Convention of Churches of Christ in Washington USA. He also travelled extensively to India, Europe, the Middle East, the UK and the USA as a church delegate. During the Great Depression which had a financial effect on the church, Mr Thomas offered to accept a salary of only £1 per week. By July 1936 his mission with the Balwyn Church concluded so that he could be available for permanent field work.

A Mr H. Paterson commenced a month later on a salary of £5-10-0 per week. Any other expenses such as accommodation, travelling, telephone etc were met by the minister. In 1938 Mr Paterson was elected as Conference President for Victoria but still managed to carry out his ministry for Balwyn. He stayed on until 1943 when he took a position as Principal of Woolwich Bible College in NSW. His legacy was a strong teaching and preaching ministry accompanied with thoughtful pastoral care for all age groups.

Mr A. E. Hurren served the church for the next three years. In his last year the sporting and

social clubs fully resumed following the end of WW2. By 1948 all auxiliaries were as active as ever. While membership was strong it never reached the highs of the 1930s.

One of the main considerations now was to establish a suitably permanent manse for the ministers. An old timber residence at 9 Cherry Road had been a home for ministers since 1948. In 1958 it was decided to replace this with a new cream brick veneer which was finished about 1962.

Over the years other innovative groups formed for the community were a Friday Shoppers' Club, a Calisthenics Club, Youth teas, Special Cabaret Services and a Drama group.

The Balwyn Church of Christ established a firm foundation of Christian worship and pastoral care. It rapidly became a stable and supportive community to all who walked through its tents and doors. The optimism and faith shown by its ministers, elders and congregation have certainly stood the test of time. The church celebrated its 90th year in 2012.

Barbara Russell

Source of information & photos: Thomas, Don, *Balwyn Church of Christ - Seventy Not Out, 1992*



Balwyn Church of Christ - Bible School Staff 1926