



# Balwyn Historical Society Newsletter

October 2018

## Meetings

**Thursday 11 October 2018 – Annual General Meeting 8 pm**

**Speaker: Gerry Robinson**

**Topic: Banjo Paterson and Henry Lawson**

Gerry Robinson will discuss the lives of Paterson and Lawson bringing to life some of their much loved poetry and prose. Gerry Robinson is the convener of the Heathmont History Group which has produced a large number of local history publications.

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**Thursday 8 November 2018**

**Speaker: Irene Kearsey**

**Topic: LaTrobe's First Immigrants: the Voyage of the *David Clark***

Irene Kearsey, a keen member of the C. J. LaTrobe Society, will speak about the voyage and arrival in 1836 of the *David Clark* which brought the very first assisted migrants direct to Melbourne. La Trobe, later Lieutenant Governor, developed and maintained contact with many of these passengers.



**Please stay and join us for a special Christmas supper at the  
end of this meeting**

**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)

## **Balwyn Historical Society – President’s Report September 2018**

2018 is an important milestone for the Balwyn Historical Society as we celebrate 10 years since our inauguration in 2008. The small dedicated group led by Bill Pritchard formed a local committee and our society began with high hopes. Initially, we had a large membership which has now dwindled as our membership tends to belong to an older demographic. However, we have a small hard-working committee involved in many activities as well as the organisation of meetings and publication of our newsletter. Our meetings are well attended with interesting speakers on a variety of topics. We initiated an informal talk prior to our regular meeting with our oldest member, Peter Binks, and hope to continue this on an informal basis in the future. Our newsletter is well known for its interesting research articles which have gained it a wider audience.

We have established ourselves as a source to be consulted not only in Balwyn but also the wider community. We are regularly contacted by Boroondara Council on a variety of topics such as consultations with regard to the development of a Canterbury Hub, on submissions regarding heritage overlays on various buildings, on providing historical photos for the development of Yerrin Street and advising Council on historical photos for the new Greythorn Hub. In June, we provided a display table at the re-opening of the Balwyn Library. Both Pat O’Dwyer and I are regularly contacted by members of the public usually on matters relating to family history.

In addition to this our committee members are involved in attending meetings with other organisations such as the Association of Eastern Historical Societies and the Boroondara Historical Societies Association. It is anticipated that we will be involved in some joint projects in the future. We liaise informally with committee members from other historical societies so that we can promote the importance of history and heritage more effectively.

Our major problem is the dwindling membership and our small committee. I would urge our members to consider joining our committee so that we can extend our activities. This would not necessarily be onerous – many hands make light work!

I would like to thank Ken McQualter, CEO of the Balwyn Evergreen Centre, for his continued support and help in setting up for our meetings. Our thanks also to the Evergreen Centre for the use of a new portable PA system which is a great asset for our meetings.

My very special thanks go to our many volunteers who provide valuable and essential help at our meetings, the administration of BHS and publication of the newsletter. Thank you Heather Alford, Merrick Beesley, Peter Binks, Joyce Cheetham, Val Goldsworthy, Eleanor Newton, June Stockman, Jan and Tony Watkins, Matthew ETTY-Leal, Deirdre and Lynette Woolley. We cannot do without your help.

Finally, I would also like to thank a very hard-working and dedicated committee who are doing a great job. Thank you Pat O’Dwyer, Barbara Russell, Pam Herrington, Judi Cleary and Sharon Bondy. The year has been a challenge but we have done well.

Associate Professor Marilyn Poole

President Balwyn Historical Society – September 2018

## German Speaking Immigrants – part 4 The Fankhauser family.

By Marilyn Poole

This article is the fourth in the series on German speaking migrants to Boroondara who arrived in Port Phillip in February, 1850. The focus will be on a few members of the extensive Fankhauser family.

### The Saga of the Zillertalers

A major expulsion of Protestants from Salzburg, Austria took place in 1731. Over 20,000 people left Salzburg following a series of religious persecutions and emigrated to Prussia.



Source <http://www.exulanten.com/SALZBURGEXILES.html>

The last expulsion took place over a hundred years later in the Zillertal, Tyrol. The trouble in the Zillertal region began on St Stephen's Day 1829 when men came to their priest and declared they wanted to be Lutheran. This declaration was reaffirmed by fist blows on a table. The persecutions of the Lutherans were many and varied in that they were not allowed to inherit land and their marriages were regarded as invalid. There were reports of forced deathbed conversions to the Catholic faith. Austria passed an Edict of Toleration in 1781 which guaranteed non-Catholics religious freedom. Nevertheless, the Catholic church tired of insubordination decided to force people who declared themselves to be Lutheran to leave the country.

<http://www.exulanten.com/schloss.html>

A Fankhauser descendant wrote:

*I gathered that most of the Zillertal Protestants were closely related, third cousin being about the most distant relationship. The religious persecution which prevented them having their own churches, priests and forms of worship, extended to their marriage as they were not allowed to marry except in Catholic Churches, a condition they would not accept and in any case the priest would not marry them unless they attended the Catholic church regularly, which they would not. They no doubt held their own ceremonies in their own homes but these ceremonies had no legal standing. As the cemeteries were also in the church yards, they were also denied burial there and many were buried on their own properties, in their gardens and even under the floors of their homes. As all this meant there were no official records made of their lives, it is probable tracing individual history of many would be difficult, if not impossible. It is said that the first act of many*

of the exiled Zillertal Protestants, on reaching Prussia, was to go to church and have a 'legal' marriage solemnised.

The reception of many of the descendants of these Zillertal Protestant exiles who have been able to visit the Zillertal, has been less than warm, any enquiries as to their forebears being met with a wall of silence and non-co-operation by the people, church and authorities. (Edmund Samuel Fankhauser 1983)



Source Wikitree. The expelled Protestants leaving the Tyrolian Zillertal from a painting by Mathias Schmid

In 1837, 437 people called 'inclinants' left their homes in the mountains. Neighbours and fellow villagers lined the road and watched the exodus. Those leaving clung together and sang Joseph Schaitberger's *Exulantenlied* for comfort. From that time on they have been referred to as the *Zillertaler exulanten*. Almost all of these emigrants went to Silesia in Prussia at the invitation of King Wilhelm III to establish a 'colony of faith'. Few returned to Austria.

<http://www.exulanten.com/schloss.html>

Among those who left were Johann Gotthard Fankhauser (1799 -1882) of Lanersdorf who married Elizabeth Geisler (1807-1894) of Finkenberg in 1828. They left with their children, not all of whom survived: Maria Teresé (b.1831), Michael (1833 -1837), George Heinrich (b. 1836) and Felix (1837 -1849). Four more children were born in Prussia: William Heinrich (b.1838), Theresa Rosina (b.1840), Johann Gottlieb (b.1844) and Frederick Traugott (b.1848).

The Lutheran Zillertaler group were provided with new homes and land in Erdmannsdorf in Prussia (now Myslakowice in Poland). Apparently, the migration to Silesia was not altogether successful as farming techniques and crops in Silesia were rather different than in the Zillertal. Unfortunately, religious persecution caught up with the family again and their respite in Silesia was short-lived. Johann and his family left Europe via Hamburg on 24 August 1849 via Rio de Janeiro arriving in Port Phillip on 2 February, 1850 on the barque *Pribislaw* as reported in *The Argus* (Monday 4 February 1850 p 2).

### **Significant events when the Fankhauser family arrived from Europe.**

Johann and Elizabeth Fankhauser and their surviving children arrived in the Port Phillip District at one of the most exciting times in its colonial history. It must have seemed very different from the political situation in Europe where they had suffered so much persecution. Here was a colony seeking an independent future where migrants could start afresh and forge new lives for themselves and their families.

The Port Phillip District was settled in 1835 as part of the colony of New South Wales. Port Phillip settlers felt that they were not adequately represented by the Legislative Council of New South Wales and that revenue was being channelled towards that area. A public meeting on 5 May 1840 appointed a committee to petition the Queen requesting separation from New South Wales, and an independent government. The initial petition failed but there was momentum for change. The British Parliament passed *An Act for the Better Government of Her Majesty's Australian Colonies* which received Royal Assent on 5 August 1850. News of partition reached Edmund Finn (pseudonym Garryowen), an Irish journalist, who published the famous headline **Glorious News! Separation at Last!** in a poster on 11 November 1850. The new colony of Victoria came into being on 1 July 1851. The celebrations coincided with the opening of the new Princes Bridge over the Yarra River. Such was the joy at being separated from New South Wales there was a four-day public holiday (National Museum).



Source State Library of Victoria *Glorious News! Separation at Last! Melbourne Morning Herald 1850*

Another reason to celebrate was the onset of the gold rush in Victoria. Early discoveries were made in 1850 at Clunes, Warrandyte and Ballarat which in 1851 was considered the largest alluvial goldfield in the world. The rush continued with the Mt Alexander goldfield which by December 1851 had attracted 20,000 diggers (Earth Resources). The gold rush had a major impact on the population and the economy. Thousands of migrants from all over the world as well as the other Australian colonies poured into the goldfields (e Gold a Nation's Heritage). The population of Victoria increased from 77,000 in 1851 to 237,000 in 1854. During 1854, the peak of the gold rush era, 90,000 people arrived in Melbourne.

### **Settlement in Hawthorn and later Balwyn.**

The lure of a fortune to be made on the goldfields did not attract the Fankhauser family. Their interest was to continue doing what they knew best – farming and market gardening. Together with others, the Kobelke, Aurisch, Finger and Kaiser families, who had travelled on the 'Pribislaw' the Fankhauser family settled in the yet to be named Hawthorn. Eduard Kobelke bought about 20 acres of land from an English speculator and apportioned it to the other German-speaking families. They planted orchards and vineyards and raised livestock on it. The area became known as German Paddock (later Weinberg Road). Weinberg Road became Wattle Road, Hawthorn during anti-German sentiment during World War I. Both Johann Gotthard Fankhauser and Christian Finger bought land from Kobelke in Hawthorn adjoining German Paddock. Very wisely both men obtained naturalisation as soon as possible as non-British migrants were not allowed to buy land.

Johann Gotthard Fankhauser was naturalised on 30 December 1850 giving his address as South Yarra.

However, settlement was a challenge and the timbered bush had to be cleared before farming could commence as this account from a family member reveals.

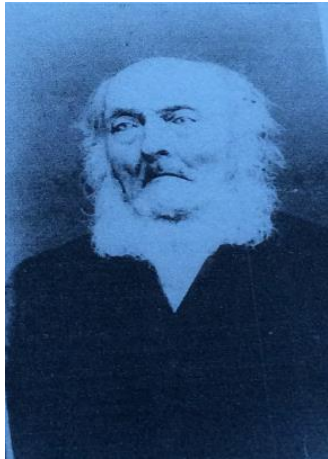
*When the Fankhauser family first came to Australia the colony was very new and rough. Life was hard and my father told me his grandfather Johannes was the first man in Hawthorn to use a horse to plough his land. There were probably many horses in the colony at that time, but they were too valuable to be used for ploughing, being used to ride, to pull carriages or drays. Father said people came from miles around to see the man ploughing with a horse. This would be about 1850, and ploughing was done with bullocks or harnessing up milk cows for a few hours a day. (E.S. Fankhauser 1983).*

The rapidly increasing population in the 1850s saw a huge demand and a rise in prices for all foodstuffs. The Fankhauser family saw these opportunities and sold their market garden and farm products locally. The 1856 *Electoral Roll* included men who were aged over 21, able to read and write, resident one year with freehold estate value £50, or leasehold/household £10, salary £100. This *Electoral Roll* listed Christian Finger and John Frankhauser (*sic*) (McWilliam p. 58). In 1856 the Fankhauser family were still located in a house and land in 'Upper Hawthorn'.

In 1858 the Fankhausers had moved to Elgar's Special Survey and by 1859 were property owners on Ewart's Road (now Belmore Road) Portion 18B of the Survey. By May 1861 'Mr Fankhauser needed an extension of time 'to clear stumps and trees in Ewart's Road' before clearing the land and farming (McWilliam p. 80). The Camberwell and Waverley Rate Books first mention John (*sic*) and George Fankhauser in 1862. Both George and his father Johann each owned a house and land on adjacent plots of 10 acres on the south side of Ewart's Road. George was also a tenant for many years on 39 acres of uncleared land owned by the Hon. James Henty. In 1871 sons John junior (*sic*) and Frederick tenanted a shop and land on Whitehorse Road (the owner being Christian Volkmann). The Rate Books are not particularly informative in that they record both Johann and son George as farmers and owners of house and land on 11 acres each in 1875 south of what is now Belmore Road. By 1887, after the death of Johann, George had a house and farmed 22 acres on Portion 18 of Elgar's Survey, until his death in 1897.

On 4 January 1853 at the German Lutheran Church in East Melbourne, Maria Teresé Fankhauser, the eldest child of Johann and Elizabeth, married Gottfried Friedrich Schuhkraft who came from Mutenberg (DTHS 1976). The couple moved to Waldau, Doncaster. Later they occupied 19 acres owned by her father in Bulleen.

On 8 August 1860 at the German Lutheran Church, George Friedrich Fankhauser, the eldest son, married Louisé Johanné Neumann born in Silesia in 1840, the daughter of Christian Neumann and Johanné Klose. George and Louisé had 13 children. George, who already owned a house land on Ewart's Road in Balwyn, engaged in fruit growing and mixed farming.



Johann Gotthard Fankhauser 1799-1882



Elizabeth Geisler 1807-1884

Johann Gotthard Fankhauser died on 16 November 1882 and is buried in the Boroondara cemetery. The original will, written in 1873 named Christian Finger the elder and son George as executors. However, Christian Finger expressed unwillingness to act in the trusts of the will and a codicil was signed in August 1882 naming the two executors sons George and Frederick Traugott Fankhauser. The codicil noted that the deceased was a German whose name was Johann Fankhauser but he was frequently called John being the English translation of Johann, and had signed his will as John (VPRS).

The will gives us some insights into Johann's life. Upon trust, he left his wife their dwelling house *'with yard and flower garden adjoining the same and containing about quarter acre of land during her life'*. To his son George *'within fourteen days from the time of my death to take to himself in fee simple the farm now occupied by me containing eleven acres more or less in the parish of Boroondara, aforesaid part of Elgar's Special Survey with all improvements therein but as to the said dwellinghouse and yard and flower garden subject to the trust in favor of my wife hereinbefore contained for the sum of two hundred pounds to be deducted from his share of my Estate to which he shall be entitled under the trusts of this my Will'*(VPRS).

The will specified that executors sell the rest of his property by public auction and to convert the money to be divided in equal shares to his wife and children.

Only one other child was mentioned in his will and this was his eldest daughter Maria. *Provided always that my daughter Maria the wife of Frederich Schuhkraft shall for the period of one calendar month after my death have the option to purchase the land which she and her said husband now occupy in the parish of Bulleen for fifty-two pounds* (VPRS). This sum was with interest payable from 1871. Should his daughter Maria not take up the offer of purchase, then her husband was to pay £12 owing to Johann plus interest accumulating from 1871. Johann's will specify that any advances made to his other children should be repaid with interest dating from the time of the loan (VPRS).

According to the will, the sum of £2065 9s. 6d. was distributed in equal parts between his children George, Maria Schuhkraft, William, Theresa Geisler, Frederick and his wife Elizabeth (VPRS). Elizabeth died on 20 July 1884 in Balwyn. She was buried in Boroondara cemetery.

## Sources

An act to establish a Constitution for the Colony of Victoria in 1854

[https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/images/stories/documents/general/1854\\_VicConstitutionAct.pdf](https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/images/stories/documents/general/1854_VicConstitutionAct.pdf)

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Fankhauser, Edmund Samuel 1983 *'Personal Memoir*

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State Archives and Records John Gotthard Fankhauser on 30 December 1850

The Salzburg exiles <http://www.exulanten.com/schloss.html>

VPRS 28/ [P0](#) unit [289](#) item 24/736

VPRS 7591/ [P2](#) unit [76](#), item 24/736

### **BHS Annual General Meeting - Thursday 11 October 2018.**

The President's annual report is in this newsletter. The agenda, financial report and nomination forms for committee members will be sent out before the meeting.

We welcome nominations for all positions and encourage members to consider joining the committee. More committee members would enable us to consider additional activities – a visit to a historical place, a historic walk or even a neighbourhood letter drop to recruit new members. It would be wonderful if you could help.

### **Guest Speaker – Tony Tibballs**

Tony Tibballs began his engaging and informative talk by discussing the early growth of picture theatres and their architectural importance as buildings which defined the twentieth century. The early 1900s saw the construction of theatres in many Melbourne suburbs. In our area, the Rivoli and the Broadway sprang up in Camberwell soon to be followed by the Rialto in Kew. Then Balwyn Theatre opened in 1930 and the Balwyn Hoyts Time Theatre opened in 1941.

The “talkies” of the 1930s provided cheap entertainment and a break from the woes of the Great Depression. Colour, cinemascope and drive-in movies all enticed large audiences until the late 1950s when the introduction of television had a dramatic effect on cinema numbers.

Tony's wonderful collection of photos of our local theatres brought to life many happy memories of attending Saturday matinees and other films at one of our local theatres.

### **Balwyn Historical Society - Contact details**

**Balwyn Historical Society is a program of the Balwyn Evergreen Centre. Phone – 9836 9681**

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<b>Membership</b>	Judith Cleary	
<b>Archivist</b>	Pam Herrington	
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	Lynette Woolley, Deidre Woolley	