

LOCAL HISTORY NEWS

Malvern Historical Society Inc. Keeping Stonnington's History Alive! October - November 2008 Newsletter No. 15

23 November Launch of Our Two New Publications "i Spy Glenferrie Road" and "Back when"

Back when...

Sunday 23 November 2.30pm Living Room, Claremont Avenue, cnr Soudan Street, Malvern (just a short walk from Malvern Train Station).

The Committee of the Malvern Historical Society is delighted to announce the completion of our latest local history publications.

"i Spy Glenferrie Road" is the first in a series of brochures for children (but able to be enjoyed by all age groups!) It has been funded through a City of Stonnington Community Grant.

"Back when" is a colourful picture book for young children. Funded by a Bendigo, East Malvern Community Bank Grant, it includes photographs from the Stonnington Local History Collection.

Everyone is invited to the Launch and to enjoy the

display highlighting the restoration work undertaken on **The Living Room**. At the conclusion of the **Launch** take the time to explore Glenferrie Road with the "i Spy Glenferrie Road" brochure.



Kid's spotlight on Stonnington's history!

i spy

Glenferrie Rd, Malvern



Stonnington History Centre



Detail of Northbrook ceiling
c1980 Reg No17345

The opening of the **Stonnington History Centre** on the 22 September was cause for much celebration. The main rooms at **Northbrook** glowed and a few precious items were finally able to be displayed. The excellent storage rooms, with new archival facilities, impressed the many visitors who braved the rainy night to attend the celebration. Although the plan room was still a 'work in progress' on the night, the new plan cabinets have since been installed and the enormous task of reloading many thousands of building plans into new archival bags is now underway. With extra help from library staff and the return of the volunteers, we look forward to this major project being completed.



Removal of the Northbrook false ceiling
c1980 Reg No17341



Photograph Display, Stonnington
History Centre 2008

With the current interest in **Northbrook**, it was timely to be shown photographs of the restoration works undertaken in the 1980s. One photograph showed the removal of the false ceiling in the hall, revealing the original ornate gilded coved ceiling decorated with urns, fruit and foliage. Two of these richly coloured ceilings were restored at the time and remain a feature of the house. The photos belong to **Philip Leahy**, who was responsible for **Northbrook's** 1980s renovation. We appreciate the opportunity to copy these photographs as well as the donation of a collection of slides of the development of a number Malvern parks in the 1970s.



Stonnington History Centre
Staff, Ellen Porter, Di Foster and
David Tuck, with the Mayor, Cr
Claude Ullin 2008

Di Foster, Stonnington Local Historian

Harold Holt Sculpture

The bust of former **Prime Minister of Australia Harold Holt**, currently held in the **Stonnington History Centre**, was made by artist **Geoffrey Jones** in 1969. Mr. Holt's represented the **Higgins** electorate. Geoffrey, a resident of East Malvern, was the Art Master at **Elwood High School**. Local resident, **Alan Gregory**, was **President of the Stonnington Branch of the Liberal Party** when the idea of a sculpture was mooted. Money was raised and Geoffrey used cement and bronze dust for the bust and created the likeness from photos. **Dame Zara Holt** gave the sculpture to **Malvern Council** when the **Harold Holt Swimming Centre** was opened in 1969.



Harold Holt, 1969
Reg No. 12395

An Unusual Donation!

Soon after the beginning of the First World War, the lawn beside **St George's Church** in Glenferrie Road Malvern was converted into a vegetable patch. One of the parishioners, **Christopher Bailey**, who lived close by in the family home at 1 Sorrett Avenue, was digging in the vegetable garden when he dug up a muzzle-loading pistol. The gun was donated to the **Malvern Historical Society** some years ago, and is now part of the **Stonnington History Collection**. The Metal pistol, with the maker's name Smith London, clearly visible, is similar to the single shot percussion pistols made around 1830-1840. The pistol is no longer in working order! In 2007 the curator of the **Police Museum** viewed the pistol and confirmed that the pistol was the exact type that **Peter Lalor** had used in the **Eureka Stockade**. **Peter Lalor** lived in Armadale in the 1860s. His name is recorded as occupying **Leaton House** (on the north side of Wattletree Road, between Kooyong Road and Glenferrie Road) from 1863 to 1867 and some sources indicate that he lived at **Cold Blo** which stood on the site of the **Malvern Tram Depot** in Glenferrie Road.



Looking east along Toorak Road,
from the corner of Milton Parade
c1970 Reg No. 2730

Glenferrie Road Malvern Mural



The new mural on the wall of **Coles** in **Glenferrie Road**, cnr **Winter Street**, was commissioned in 2007 by the **Glenferrie Road Malvern Business Association**, in partnership with **City of Stonnington**.
Mosaic artist

Amanda Neville, worked with **Alex Hume**, Project Manager, and **Jane Nigro** from the **Malvern Historical Society** to visualize the history of the Glenferrie Road area.

The mural is made from Italian glass, Bisazza tiles, which have all been hand cut and laid into position. Elements relate to the **Congregational Church** which was originally on the site of the supermarket; **Malvern News Sheet**; a light plane that crashed landed next to St George's Church; Stonnington City Centre; **D.W. Lucas**, Mecwa Pioneer; a Religious Sister representing **St Benedict's Hospital** (now Cabrini); **Hubert Opperman**, of Malvern Star fame; **Chandler's** world famous cauliflower and an early tram.

Never Turn Right at Burke Road Malvern Greg Champion [1986]

If you have ever listened to **ABC radio's The Coodabeen Champions**, you'll be familiar with the songs of **Greg Champion**. The Society recently approached Greg for the words of his song, **Never Turn Right at Burke Road Malvern** so we could include a section of the song in our next **"i spy"** brochure, **"i Spy Central Park"**. Greg sent the words through immediately replying that he had never typed out the lyrics before!

NEVER TURN RIGHT AT BURKE RD MALVERN Greg Champion [1986]

You can drive me down to Carlton to pick up some stuff
you can hang around in Oakleigh just waiting for a bus
to take you down to Moorabbin watch them old Saintboys play
but don't you ever turn right at Burke Rd Malvern
cos you'll be there all day

I knew a man called Stanley – tough kinda guy
He'd fought in both the wars you know – I'd never seen
him cry
Last I saw of old Stanley, he'd gone to cut his hair
He was turning right at Burke Rd Malvern
And he's probably still there

Old Jean lived at Ashwood with old Uncle Ern
He went out to do the shopping one day – never returned
Many long years later when they'd given him up for dead
They found his body in the car at Burke Rd Malvern
And the lights were still red

Beating the Baby Farmers

Wife desertion is an old Australian tradition. It gained great popularity during the Gold Rush era when men mad with the gold fever forgot all about the families they left in town and never returned. Then there were the men who, as soon as the going got tough and yet another child was on the way, simply disappeared. In the 19th century Prahran had more than its fair share of these deserted wives left with no means of support. However, the ladies of the **Benevolent Society** were very sympathetic and, as long as they did not drink and kept a clean house, they were considered deserving and were given aid.

Things were far worse for the poor girl who had produced an illegitimate child. She was, by definition a bad girl with loose morals and was therefore undeserving. So, what was the poor girl to do? It was almost impossible for her to find a job. Domestic service was out of the question. That usually required living in and no respectable lady wanted a fallen woman with her baby in tow. If she worked in a factory, what would become of the baby while she was at work? She could take in washing if she was strong enough, but laundry was very heavy work. It involved heaving wet washing from boiling coppers, putting it through the hand operated mangle, and then ironing with flat irons heated on the stove. And all the while there was a good chance that the child would get mixed up in the process and be scalded. If she was skilled, she could do needlework at home for a pittance. Or she could sneak out at night and earn some money on the streets, but this was not to everybody's taste.



The new Creche 1914
Reg No. 9193

For some girls the baby farmer offered a solution to the problem. This was a practice that grew up in Victorian times. The mother handed over her baby with a sum of money for the upkeep of the child, thus allowing the mother to find a job.

Unfortunately, not all baby farmers were kind-hearted, baby-loving women. They were in business and the business was most profitable if the baby died. In Melbourne some cases came to light of women with a collection of neglected underfed babies. Occasionally the baby was deliberately killed and years later tiny bodies might turn up in back yard vegetable patches.



Prahran Creche 1913 Black and White
photograph of infants in cots at Prahran
Creche Reg No. 8686

Mothers paid 4d. per child per day, or 6d. for two children. The children were bathed, given three meals and "provided with the means of amusement". In their annual report for 1892/93, the ladies reported that the crèche had cared for 2,351 children. They also expressed their delight at the improved appearance of the children.

In 1913, the crèche was rebuilt at a cost of £1,417, donated by the public with a generous contribution from the Government. By 1946 the Committee was having difficulty financing and managing the crèche. They asked the **Prahran Council** to take it over, including the building, as a going concern. The following year, all was signed and sealed and the deeds were handed over to the Mayor. It was renamed the **Prahran Municipal Day Nursery** and it is still going strong.



Visit to Prahran Creche by
Mayoress, Mrs Rae Smith
1947 Reg No. 13045



Father Christmas visits
Prahran Municipal
Day Nursery 12
December 1950 Reg
No. 22713

To deal with this problem, in 1890, a public meeting was held in the **Prahran Town Hall** to consider establishing a crèche to provide day care for the children of working women. Seventy people attended the meeting and they began a subscribers' list in order to establish a crèche, and so, the **Prahran, South Yarra and Toorak Crèche Society** was formed. **Sir James MacBain** gave the largest donation of £5, and Lady MacBain was made patroness. Most of the committee consisted of Councillors' wives – **Mrs Osment, Mrs Fuller, Mrs Murray Smith**, and one daughter – **Miss Ellis**. They immediately rented a house in **Osborne Street, South Yarra**, appointed a matron and opened the crèche. A few weeks later, the crèche moved to a house in **Princes Street**, where it has remained ever since. **The Prahran Crèche** was only the second in Melbourne. (The first was opened in Collingwood in 1886.)

Taking Local History to the Community

Our seven **Stonnington Landmark brochures** were launched by **President, Lorraine Sage**, at the August meeting. **Stonnington Local Historian, Di Foster**, gave a fascinating talk and slide show on each of the landmarks. Our visit to **Boroondara (Kew) Cemetery**, led by the **Friends of Boroondara (Kew) Cemetery**, proved to be very interesting. Members of the **Malvern Historical Society Committee** were delighted to be present at the official opening of the **Stonnington History Centre**. The Society congratulates **Stonnington Council** on developing such an excellent facility to house **Stonnington's Local History Collection**. The **Malvern Historical Society Archives** have been part of this collection since 1989. **Roxanne Dennis** represented the Society at a recent meeting of the **Stonnington History Committee**. The Committee received an update on security at the **Stonnington History Centre**, the heritage markers project and the renovations at the **Prahran Town Hall**. **Tom Moloney** was welcomed on to the Committee. Tom will act as the new Community representative specializing in representing Indigenous issues relating to Stonnington.

Roxanne Dennis and **Jane Nigro** attended the October meeting of South Metro History, hosted by the Brighton Historical Society. Lorraine Sage represented the Society at Roosters and Feather Dusters and the recent Stonnington Committee of Management workshop. Jane Nigro spoke about the history of Gardiner and Glen Iris at a recent **Neighbourhood Watch meeting**. Our stall and display created great interest at **Spring into Gardening**. **Roxanne Dennis, Steve Stefanopoulos, Lorraine Sage, Margaret McBean, and Jane and Peter Nigro** made a great team and were busy all day with the visitors to the stall. Our hard copy of a 1964 Sands and McDougall Directory was of interest to all age groups.

Prahran and Malvern Tramways Trust 1908-2008

The **Prahran & Malvern Tramways Trust** was formed in 1908 to construct and operate municipal electric tramways. Cable trams had been running in Prahran since 1888. The Trust's first lines - along High Street from Charles Street Prahran to Tooronga Road Malvern, and via Glenferrie Road and Wattletree Road to Burke Road East Malvern - opened on 30th May 1910.

Bendigo Tramways is proud to announce that 30th October 2008 marks the official launch of the re-entry to service as a member of the famous **Bendigo Vintage "Talking" Tram** fleet, of **Prahran & Malvern Tramway Trust tram #44**. (Builder: Duncan & Fraser, Adelaide, South Australia (1914) for the P & MTT. Technical Information: Trucks - Brush 22E. Motors - 2 X 65 hp GE 201. Controllers - GE B23E. Braking - hand brakes and air operated manual-lapping valves. Weight - 16.0 tonnes. Length - 13.56 metres.)

www.bendigotramways.com



Bendigo Tramways trial run, 31st July 2008

Additions to the Stonnington Local History Collection

A chance enquiry has brought our attention to the church building formerly located at **4 Burke Road East Malvern**. The brick church was designed by local architect **Arthur Plaisted** in 1920 for use by the **Plymouth Brethren Church**. This group used the building until the 1970s. The **Greek Church** used the building prior to it being demolished in 1989. The History Centre is looking for any photos of the building when it was in use by either of the churches. The original c1920 plan held in our collection indicates the layout of the building but our only photos are of the demolition in 1989. Please call Di if you can help with any information or photos. (8290 1360)



4 Burke Road, 1989

Welcome New Members!

We would like to welcome our latest new member Diane Nicholas.

Have you enjoyed viewing the photos in this issue?

Material for the articles has been researched from the **Stonnington Local History Collection**. The database contains over 38,000 records. To view enlargements of photographs and to read more, just go to the website below.

www.stonnington.vic.gov.au/history

SPONSORED BY:

East Malvern
Community Bank Branch **Bendigo Bank**



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The Malvern Historical Society Inc is a member of the Stonnington History Committee, an affiliated member of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, a member of the South Metro History Group and has been appointed by the Public Record Office of Victoria as a Place of Deposit for non-permanent public records.

OTHER STONNINGTON HISTORY CONTACTS:

Stonnington Local History Service www.stonnington.vic.gov.au/history • Tel: 8290 1360

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