

# LOCAL HISTORY NEWS

Malvern Historical Society Inc. *Keeping Stonnington's History Alive!* December - January 2009/10 Newsletter No. 22

## 21 January Twilight Local Neighbourhood Walk

Join the Malvern Historical Society for a walk around the area bounded by Shaftesbury Ave, Malvern Road, Glenview Ave and Ascot Street on Thurs 21 January at 7pm. Meet at the corner of Glenview Avenue and Ascot Street, Malvern

Cost: Non-Members \$5

Members: Gold Coin **BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL!!**

Please call Lorraine 9885 9082

12 year old bridesmaid, Phyllis Docking,  
11 Shaftesbury Ave Malvern. 1933 Reg No 8893



## 2010 Diary Dates - Local History Walks

February	Moorakynne and Stonnington Estate, Malvern	Sunday 14 February
March	Ardrie and Repton Estates, East Malvern	Sunday 14 March

(More details February – March issue of the newsletter)

## Malvern Historical Society Inc

The Society is happy to report that the membership has again passed 150 during 2009. Members will receive their subscription form with this newsletter and we look forward to your continuing support. We also have over 350 Supporters who receive the newsletter by email. All Supporters are encouraged to become financial members in 2010! We hope you all enjoy reading this bumper issue of Local History News. On behalf of the Committee I would like to wish Members and Supporters all the best for Christmas and 2010.

Lorraine Sage - President



## Hawksburn State School No. 1467 135th Birthday Reunion

Hawksburn State School was first opened to students in January 1875. Leonard Joel Auction House has graciously offered to host the reunion in the original building.

**Reunion: Hawksburn State School No. 1467** - all ex-students and teachers

**Where:** Leonard Joel Auction House (the old school building)  
Meet at the front gate of **333 Malvern Road, South Yarra**

**When:** Sunday 17th January 2010 1pm sharp

**Bring:** Old class photographs and any memorabilia

**RSVP:** Kathie: [hawksburnreunion@y7mail.com](mailto:hawksburnreunion@y7mail.com) Mobile: 0413 724 757

Hawksburn State School 1955  
Reg No 8698



## Can you help?

We have been contacted by L. Barnes who has in her possession a spoon presented to her grandfather, Walter Robert Fulton. It is engraved with the words Presented by S.M.A.N.A.M.R.C. to Malvern's highest scorer 3-5-15 W.R.FULTON

If you have any ideas on what S.M.A.N.A.M.R.C may refer to, please contact the Stonnington History Centre, Phone: 8290 1360 [history@stonnington.vic.gov.au](mailto:history@stonnington.vic.gov.au)



## 'Slum' clearance and the Horace Petty Estate

In the late 1950s the **Housing Commission of Victoria** conducted surveys to redefine the extent of 'slum' housing in Melbourne. The Commission's goal was to attack what it described as 'the enemy within' slums. Their report, released in 1960, claimed at least 1,000 acres of slum housing existed within the metropolitan region. However, the authors of the report were careful to point out that the term 'slum' could not be applied to the majority of properties within the identified areas.

Many local residents were opposed to the Housing Commission's activities, whose additional funding came from councils, often against the wishes of those affected by the reclamation. However, confident in council support, the Commission proclaimed areas, acquired sites, demolished buildings and erected low and high rise flats, which it then managed. Municipal residents often discovered their homes were to be reclaimed when reading the morning newspaper.

**Horace Rostell Petty**, a Toorak newsagent, **Prahran Councillor** and **MLA for Toorak**, was appointed **State Minister for Housing** in 1955. Petty was a strong supporter of the Housing Commission high-rise projects. He proclaimed the need to halt the urban sprawl and felt that inner suburban areas required replanning and rebuilding 'to carry a reasonably increased population living in comfortable and up-to-date houses and flats.'



Browning Street c 1955. It became part of the Housing Estate in the early 1960s. Reg No 10683

The Commission's sweep of the inner suburbs identified two large areas of Prahran for redevelopment. Fifty acres were declared close to **High Street** and **Malvern Road**, involving **Simmons Street**, **Surrey Road** and **Essex Street**.

In late 1957 Prahran residents held a protest meeting against the declaration of houses around **Essex** and **Bella Streets**; stating there was 'not one condemned house in the lot'. Residents formed the **Essex Street Residents' Protection Association**. Local businesses and shopkeepers united with residents in their opposition to redevelopment, fearing loss of business from a perceived population 'too poor to support the range of business in local shopping centres'.

However, local councils were persuaded by the Commission that redevelopment would mean increased population, prosperity and higher rates. Prahran became one of the largest financial contributors to the Commission's redevelopment program, embarking on a building boom in an attempt to meet **Horace Petty's** aim to rebuild the inner suburbs at a higher population density. Regardless of resident opposition and the fact that many ratepayers were indirectly paying for the demolition of their own homes, by 1962, work had begun on the area within **Malvern Road** and **Simmons Street**, with a smaller redevelopment on **De Murska Street** to the south-west.



Construction of 'walk-up' flats on the Horace Petty Estate, April 1965, looking east along Malvern Road. 1965 Reg No 6067

The redevelopment, named the **Horace Petty Estate** was completed in 1967. It consisted of three high rise blocks with 396 flats divided between four and twelve stories, with 21 walk-up blocks containing 218 units. In all there were a total of 614 units, designed for family residences. The blocks were progressively handed over to the MHC from 1966 to 1968.

**Ellen Porter, Local History Librarian, Stonnington History Centre.**

### References

Howe, Renate (ed), 1988. *New Houses for Old fifty years of public housing in Victoria 1938-1988*. Melbourne. Ministry of Housing and Construction.

*Prahran City Council Annual Reports 1936-1937, 1953-1954.*

*Housing Investigation and Slum Abolition Board 1936-37. First (Progress) Report. Victoria. Presented to both Houses of Parliament.*

Wilde, Sally. 1993. *The History of Prahran Volume II 1925-1990*. Carlton. Melbourne University Press.

*The High Rise a paper profiling Ministry of Housing and Construction High Rise Accommodation. 1990. Melbourne. Ministry of Housing and Construction Victoria.*

## A Visit to Malvern U.K.

In August this year six cuttings taken from **Northbrook's Mulberry Tree** arrived in the town of **Great Malvern** in **England**. Six weeks later I took the opportunity to visit this beautiful old spa town at the foothills of the **Malvern Hills**. I was met by **Friends of Malvern Springs and Wells**, **Cora Weaver** and **Dr Bruce Osborne**, and **Denise Preston** from **Malvern Civic Society**. Of particular interest to Cora and Bruce are Malvern's springs, wells and former water-cure establishments. In perfect weather, we enjoyed the climb to the **Worcester Beacon** and a visit to **St Ann's Well** followed by a guided tour of the town by Denise, including a visit to the **Priory** and many of the grand buildings previously used as water-cure establishments. The tour of **Malvern Museum** was particularly memorable. Publications written by Cora and Bruce, along with other books and brochures on Malvern, are now part of the **Stonnington History Collection**.

In 1992 serious research was started to catalogue and promote the springs and wells heritage of the **Malvern Hills**. There are now about 130 recorded, celebrated **Springs, Spouts, Fountains** and **Holy Wells** sites. Visitors and locals collect the refreshing spring water and opinions vary as to which is supposedly the most likeable. In 1781 Malvern water was sold in London for one shilling a bottle and now almost a million bottles are sold annually throughout the world. Further information can be found on these excellent web sites:

[www.malvernspa.com](http://www.malvernspa.com) [www.BritishNationalParks.com](http://www.BritishNationalParks.com)

In Australia, the name **Malvern** first appeared in 1853 when English barrister **Charles Bruce Graeme Skinner** built a hotel at the corner of two tracks, now known as **Malvern** and **Glenferrie** Roads. Skinner named the hotel "**Malvern Hill Hotel**" after the **Malvern Hills** in England. **Charles Skinner** had purchased 84 acres of land bounded by present day **Toorak**, **Malvern**, and **Glenferrie** Roads and lot 26. On lot 25 Skinner planned a village to be named '**Ledbury**' after the quaint market town on the slopes of the **Malvern Hills** in England, where his forebears had lived. In the **Malvern Hill Estate** streets were named after **Skinner's** family - **Gertrude (Denham Pl)**, **Russell** and **Bruce (Benson Ave)**. In 1856 the **Malvern Hill Estate** was advertised as '**Freehold properties in the Township of Ledbury , Malvern Hill Estate**'. In 1878 **Shire President, James Lorimer** was responsible for the **Shire of Gardiner** being renamed **Malvern**.

The relationship between the two **Malverns** has been spasmodic since 1853. **Stonnington's History Collection** holds a number of items sent from England over the years. The most significant item is our cricket bat signed by members of the **Worcestershire County Cricket Club**, including the signatures of the **Worcestershire** team which met the **Australian XI** in the opening match of their 1948 tour. The bat was sent to the **City of Malvern** in appreciation of food parcels sent from Australia during the War years.

A surprising but possible link between the two towns is the record of our own water-cure establishment. At a similar time as the rise and fall of the establishments at **Great Malvern**, **La Moile's Hydropathic Establishment**, was offering the same facility in **Toorak**. In 1858 a syndicate including Frenchman, **Armand Auguste Fortune La Moile** and his wife **Caroline**, purchased block two of **Skinner's** subdivision. A brick and 'pisa' (mud) house of seven rooms was erected on the site and in 1861 **M. La Moile** opened the **Malvern Hill Water-cure establishment**. **LaMoile's Hydropathic Establishment** offered board, including residence, treatment and bath attendance, at five guineas per week and an omnibus ran daily from **South Yarra** railway station. The Frenchman advertised his business extensively, shrewdly choosing the namesake of **England's Malvern Hills**, the popular health resort where spring water was used commercially. **La Moile's** business closed four years later.

Today in **Great Malvern** the **Mulberry** saplings are flourishing and a site has been reserved in **Priory Park** close to the site of the original tree planted by **George Bernard Shaw** in 1936.



Dr Bruce Osborne with the Mulberry cutting, Malvern, England 2009



Di Foster (far right) with members of the Friends of Malvern Springs and Wells 2009



View of the Priory, Great Malvern, England 2009

## ***Who made the bassinet for the Mayor and Mayoress of Prahran?***

For a good many years now it has been the custom to mark an auspicious occasion with a presentation of some kind. In many countries the arrival of an infant or infants was, and still may be marked with gifts of various kinds, often of a private nature, but occasionally given by an institution to welcome the new family member.

Where this custom pertained to public bodies in English-speaking countries at least, a more formal ceremony to acknowledge the birth was often held. This may have begun in medieval times. From mid-nineteenth century England artifacts survive showing the interesting custom whereby the Mayor and Mayoress of a municipality may be acknowledged should the birth of their child, or children, take place during the Mayoral year. The birth of this new child, or children, was celebrated by their fellow councillors, and perhaps council officers, by the presentation of a miniature cradle or bassinet often fashioned partly of silver and usually mounted on a polished wooden stand. Usually a fellow councillor officiated as master of ceremonies, his remarks perhaps accompanied by jocular phrases such as 'fulfill[ed] her duty by increasing the population,' one of the earliest such comments appearing in the press in Victoria in November 1870.

In the municipality of **Prahran** in 1912, it was decided to honour the **Mayoress, Agnes Mary Embling**, formerly **Agnes Stewart** of North Adelaide, spouse of **His Worship, Cr. H. A. Austin Embling, Doctor of Medicine** and a man with a social concern for his community. A child was born to them during that Mayoral year, a daughter, **Mary Lillian Austin Embling**, who was baptized on 7 July 1912 at **Toorak Presbyterian Church** by **Rev John F Macrae**.

The **Prahran Chronicle** of 11 May 1912 reported the meeting of the Prahran Council on the Monday evening previously -

the **Mayor (Cr Embling)** thanked the Councillors for the presentation of a silver bassinet ... made to him, for the Mayoress, in honor of the birth of a daughter during their Mayoral term of office ... the Mayoress was highly pleased with the beautiful design chosen.'

This bassinet is now in the **Stonnington Local History Collection**. It stands upon a polished wooden pedestal and contains a baby doll. There are three plaques below the body of the piece, one supposedly identifying the manufacturer, the second appropriately showing the arms of the **City of Prahran** and the third, a larger one, bearing an inscription - **Presented to the Mayor of Prahran and Mrs H.A. Austin Embling by the Councillors and Executive Officers of the City, 10 April 1912.**

A close examination of this bassinet and of the plaque identifying the manufacturer suggests that the maker was not **James McBean and Son**. As suggested **James McBean**, was a silversmith from Inverness who retired in 1890 and died in 1916. His son **William** then assumed control of the business. This firm of jewellers in 1912 at **96 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne**, had premises on the corner of the **Block Arcade**. In 1912 they are not listed as manufacturing jewellers in the main reference books on this subject, so one is forced to search elsewhere for the actual manufacturer. In 1912 **McBean & Son** were retailers. It was not unusual for retailers to punch mark pieces as of their own manufacture prior to sale, even if silversmiths were employed from a workshop elsewhere. This bassinet bears no sterling mark or appropriate maker's mark. Also, although not marked so, an examination of the piece suggests that it is indeed of sterling silver. There was and is no legislation governing marking of precious metals in Australia. Who then made it? Can it be attributed stylistically?



There is another very similar bassinet or cradle in the collection of the **Geelong Gallery**. The basic shapes of the bodies of that and the **Embling** piece are almost identical, as are the curved supports. The foliate decoration to both pieces is similar. Neither piece is signed by the maker. Neither is punch marked as sterling silver. However both appear to be so. It is known that the piece in the collection in the **Geelong Gallery** was made by **James Holt**; the suggested date of manufacture is the 1890s, perhaps a little early. **Holt**, born **James Blair**, (1853 – 1921), emigrated from Edinburgh in 1882 and worked at his trade, advertising in 1895 as a 'repousse artist, silversmith, modeller and chaser, **422 Queen-street**, opposite old cemetery; art metal work in all its branches; designs and estimates submitted.' In the commissioning of such as the bassinet it was also customary to patronise one's fellow **Presbyterian** countryman, another snippet of evidence to support the choice of **Holt**, as had **William McBean**.

I believe it is therefore appropriate to attribute to **James Holt** the design and manufacture of the **Embling** bassinet.

**Ruth Dwyer 2009**

(Thank you to Mrs Ruth Blair-Holt for her assistance).



Cr. H. A. Austin Embling,  
J. P. (Mayor) 1917  
Reg No 9200

## Taking Local History to the Community

Member Michael Macgeorge, author of the booklet, **The Lives of Valentines (2004)** arranged an opportunity for members and friends to visit **Valentines**, the old **Davies'** mansion, now the Malvern campus of **Caulfield Grammar**, between **Harold** and **Willoby Avenues, Glen Iris**. Thank you also to Michael for donating over 30 copies of the booklet; they will be a valuable addition to our future sales tables.

A very good crowd enjoyed our stall and large photographic display at **Spring into Gardening** in **Victoria Gardens**. Special thanks to **Roxanne Dennis, Kate Witteveen, Jane Nigro** and **Gerald Davis** for all their enthusiasm on the day.

Leaflets, puzzles and other history material were distributed to children at **St Roch's Primary School** in Glen Iris, when **Stonnington Local History Librarian Ellen Porter** spoke to the children. The Society has also donated a number of copies of our toddler book "**Back When**" to **mecwacare**, for their elderly citizen centres.

**The Royal Historical Society of Victoria** has covered the cost of a large, free standing advertising banner for the **Malvern Historical Society**. It features contact details for the **Malvern Historical Society** and the **Stonnington History Centre** and an enlargement of one of the first trams in **Glenferrie Road Malvern** in 1910.

**Pam Enting, Heritage Victoria's Outreach Co-ordinator**, circulated copies of **Malvern Historical Society** publications including the "**i Spy**" brochures and "**Back When**" to an appreciative audience at a recent conference at **Warrnambool**.

**Lorraine Sage** and **Roxanne Dennis** represented the Society at the recent meeting of the **Stonnington History Committee**. Matters discussed included the draft of the **Stonnington History Committee Charter**, the **Stonnington Local History** website and the History of the **Prahran Library** currently being written by **Historian Stella Barber**.

On Wednesday 30 September a large group enjoyed a presentation by the **Port Phillip Pioneers Group**. **President Barbara Hawkins** gave an overview of European settlement of Port Phillip (now known as the state of Victoria) which included interesting insights into the tenuous situation of land ownership and the might of the government over the pioneers in the years 1803-1851. These dates mark the initial claim on the land and subsequent official independence as a state. Barbara also explained that one of the main aims of the **Port Phillip Pioneers Group** is to share knowledge and appreciation of the pioneers to this region. Membership is open to anyone who can show proof of ancestry to pioneers of this period in the Port Phillip region. A discussion about research and validity of sources followed the presentation which again proved informative. Anyone who can provide information about their family heritage from this time and region is warmly invited to share it with PPP, as this information may just provide the missing link to someone else's months of research. **(Kate Witteveen)**

The **Malvern Historical Society Committee** was invited by the **Brighton Historical Society** to be part of a guided tour of the **West Brighton Club**. The original building, a simple wooden structure, was built in 1881. The building has been the home of the West Brighton Club continuously since that time. The Club has a membership of 130 members. One notable member was **Sir Robert Menzies**. **(Lorraine Sage)**

The **Valentines and Ranfurlie Estates, Glen Iris**, walk was enthusiastically led by **Steve Stefanopoulos**. A special thank you to **John Fox, Principal of Sacre Coeur**, who allowed our group to walk through the grounds and to see the original home, **Brynmawr**.

On Tuesday 10 November in 37 degree heat, 25 members visited **Umina** home of the **Country Women's Association** in **Lansell Road Toorak**, and listened to **Mrs Doreen Napier, Club Chairperson of the CWA**, detail the history of Umina and outline the activities of the association. We were then given a walk around the extensive gardens, and even in their drought ravaged state, it was evident when viewing the pond, pergolas, stonework and steps that this garden had something special about it. Later research confirmed that the garden was indeed special. The designer was none other than **Edna Walling**. She designed this garden for **Mr. Ian Bayles, c 1928**. Unfortunately plans for the garden no longer exist. We then all retreated to the dining room where we were treated to something else which is very special – a **CWA Devonshire Tea!!** The afternoon was enjoyed by all who attended. **(John Isbel)**

Bookings for walks have now become compulsory following the amazing response to our November Walk! On Monday the 30th November, the Society hosted a heritage Walk in the Toorak area which was very well attended - about 150 keen walkers turned up! We were given a generous advertisement in the "**Melbourne Weekly**", including a photo of an early home, **Grosvenor**.



Roxanne Dennis, Kate Witteveen and Jane Nigro, Spring into Gardening 2009  
Thanks to photographer,  
George Georgandas

(Cont)

Following over eighty phone calls we were well prepared. The large group was divided into four, with **Steve Stefanopoulos, Lorraine Sage, Jane Nigro** and **John Isbel** each leading a group around the picturesque streets. Thanks to the members who helped out at the start including **Bronwyn Worrall, Faye Pattinson, Francesca Dimattina, Roxanne Dennis** and **Peter Nigro** (and to the understanding home owners whose houses we gathered in front of and gazed at!)

**Waiora**, 321 Glenferrie Road, Malvern, now the home of **Very Special Kids**, was originally owned by **Charles Washington Umphelby** and his wife, **Lydia**. In December 2009, **Hugh Forster** a descendent of the original owners, handed over a copy of a portrait of **Lydia Umphelby** to **David Agnew**, CEO, **Very Special Kids**. **Roxanne Dennis** represented the Society the small ceremony at **Waiora**.



Waiora c1900 Reg No 10560

## Additions to the Stonnington Local History Collection



Nareeb 1964

Photos of **Nareeb, Kooyong Road, Toorak**, donated by **Colin Cook**. Scanned photographs of **James Murphy, Leura**, donated by **Phillippa Butler**. New **history display cabinets** purchased for the **Stonnington libraries**. Digital images and information relating to the **Officer family**, from **Hugh Forster**. DVDs **City of Malvern Minute** books to 1994. Information on **Lowe Kong Meng** from **Olwen Fenton**. Collection of material including photos of **Nurse Blamire**, with connections to the **Simon Fraser family**, from **Grant Wallace**. Information regarding the **Prahran Independent Church (Chapel off Chapel)** and the **Malvern Congregational Church**, from **Clive Jackson**.



Visit to Stonnington Brass 2009

## Welcome New Members!

The Society would like to welcome the following new members **Pat and Charles Brincat, Carol Tobin, Janne and Bill Morrison, P.A. Anthony, Jill Segan, Geoff Noonan, Janet and Alan Bell, Neil Shepherd and Susan Johns**.

## Can You Help?

The **Cope Collection**, part of the **Stonnington History Centre Collection**, includes a sketch by **Architect Arthur Plaisted**.

**Do you recognize this property?**

If you can help please contact the **Stonnington History Centre**,

Phone: 8290 1360 [history@stonnington.vic.gov.au](mailto:history@stonnington.vic.gov.au)



**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. [www.stonnington.vic.gov.au/history](http://www.stonnington.vic.gov.au/history)

East Malvern  
**Community Bank® Branch Bendigo Bank**

300 Waverley Road, East Malvern. Phone 9563 6044



**Malvern Historical Society Inc. (A7682)**

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[www.vicnet.net.au/~malvern](http://www.vicnet.net.au/~malvern)**

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 History Centre [www.stonnington.vic.gov.au/history](http://www.stonnington.vic.gov.au/history) • Tel 8290 1360

Prahran Historical and Arts Society P.O.Box 8649, Armadale Vic 3143 Tel: 9509 9978 [www.vicnet.net.au/~phas](http://www.vicnet.net.au/~phas)