

LOCAL HISTORY NEWS

Malvern Historical Society Inc.

Keeping Stonnington's History Alive!

April 2021 - Newsletter No. 89

Message from the President

A belated happy new year to everyone. You may be surprised to learn the good news that COVID has not dented the strength of our wonderful society. We have received many new members over the past year. It is greatly appreciated that so many of our members have renewed their subscriptions. Thank you to all those who have renewed. We have successfully adapted to COVID restrictions in the way we work on research and enquiries and the administration of the society.

Research enquiries which arrive via email, phone, Facebook page and Twitter are skilfully coordinated by Jane Nigro. Jane has dutifully answered the enquiry or forwarded it to the Stonnington History Centre. Even in lockdown Simone and Janet continued working from home, so the enquiries continue to be answered. Di Foster has also continued searching on eBay for items of historical interest to Malvern and has been able to purchase a number of items for the Society. Our thanks is extended to Di for all her work in this area which is greatly appreciated by the Committee. The grateful thanks of the Committee is also extended to Nicki Cooper for the great work that she has done during the lock-down of keeping our Facebook page up to date with historical images of Stonnington.

Now that most of the restrictions have been lifted and we are adjusting to a new normal the Committee will be planning for some face-to-face activities for our members. It will be good to get back to doing some activities like walks and speakers etc. and being able to meet some of our members once again.

Keep safe and I hope to see some of you sometime shortly.

Lorraine Sage ljsage123@gmail.com

19 May Malvern Historical Society - Annual General Meeting 7.30pm

Join members of the Society for the Malvern Historical Society 2019 and 2020 Annual General Meetings.

Venue: Phoenix Park Conference Room,

Lower Level Phoenix Park Community Centre, 22 Rob Roy Road, Malvern East (Mel. Ref. 69 D2)

RSVP: Lorraine 9885 9082.

Due to the COVID 19 restrictions it is essential that all members and visitors register their attendance with Lorraine

19 May Stonnington History Centre - History Matters 5.30pm

You can take the boy out of Malvern, but you can't take Malvern out of the boy!

Des Tobin, a life-long resident of Malvern, has been a youth worker, sportsman, business executive in the funeral industry, and a writer. Des will reflect on life in Malvern in the 1940s and 1950s.

More details: 8290 1360

<https://www.stonnington.vic.gov.au/Library/Visit-us/Stonnington-History-Centre>

29 May Glenvale Road and Valency Road Glen Iris Area Walk

Saturday 29 May 10am

Join members of the Malvern Historical Society for our first local history walk for 2021. Hear about the early homes, St Roch's Church and the development of the area.

Bookings: Lorraine Sage 9885 9082 or ljsage123@gmail.com

Members: Gold coin. Non members \$5.

All welcome!

Highfield Burke Road Glen Iris 2000
Stonnington History Collection MP13853



Taking local history to the Community

Members of the Committee recently attended the March meeting of the South Metro history group hosted by Helen Gobbi and Ann Nield, History Monash (incorporating the former Oakleigh & District Historical Society). The meeting was held at the Monash Federation Centre in 3 Atherton Road, Oakleigh. It was good to hear how so many local historical societies are actively planning for a time after COVID-19. Thanks to Linda Tassone, Jeffreys Books, 140 Glenferrie Road Malvern, for her continuing support and for recently publicising our Walk into History walk books, on Instagram. For the last couple of months Caffè La Via 252 Glenferrie Road has provided the Society with an excellent venue for our Committee meetings.

Thank you to Richard Stuart-Smith who recently donated a copy of the 1976 Malvern Community Guide. Richard's mother has a lifelong association with the Malvern area and has regaled the family with stories for as long as he can remember. Di Foster recently purchased a gold City of Malvern 1919 Peace badge on eBay – well spotted Di! Thanks



City of Malvern 1919 Peace badge

to John Isbel for donating a copy of the talk former Parliamentarian Barry Jones gave to the Prahran and Malvern Historical Societies in 2014, and also an old first aid kit.

Andrew Hennell recently donated a copy of the presentation his father P H Hennell (Hal) gave to the first Malvern Historical Society meeting in 1959. Andrew's father, a resident of the city of Malvern for many years, was living in Karma Avenue Malvern East at the time. Andrew also donated undated newspaper cuttings, one relating to John Gardiner and three newspaper clippings about the formation of the Malvern Branch of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria in September 1959. There were three speakers at the September meeting, Miss P C Gould (Places of Historic Interest), Mr P H Hennell (John Gardiner) and Mr M Purser (Civic Growth). This early Malvern Historical Society appears to have only been in existence until the mid 1960s. Sadly no archival material collected by this first group was discovered when the current Malvern Historical Society was formed in 1973.

Me and UooUoo!

UooUoos took to the streets of Stonnington, leaving a trail of colourful sculptures. Me and UooUoo was presented by the Royal Children's Hospital to mark the hospital's 150th anniversary. Each sculpture is uniquely decorated by an Australian artist. At the close of the exhibition, each UooUoo is to be auctioned with funds to be donated to the RCH, supporting ongoing paediatric healthcare. Artist Lauren Bester decorated the UooUoo in Victoria Gardens, High Street Prahran and her sister Nicole decorated the one in the Malvern Gardens, High Street Malvern.



'Sunflowers' Lauren Bester 2021

New members

The Society would like to welcome our latest new members Merran Samuel, Heather Monger, Paul Barker, Jenny Pata and Helen Wodak.

Memories of Nash Street Glen Iris

Susie Gamble recently shared her memories of Nash Street Glen Iris. 'My Grandma (Mrs. Edith Austin) and her two spinster daughters (Margaret and Connie) lived at 3 Nash Street Glen Iris from about 1949 - 1960. Grandma was friends with Miss Carrie Whistler who lived in the mansion 'Belmont' which was on the eastern end of Nash Street (next to Gardiner Central). Miss Whistler's property ran right through to the corner of Kent Street and Belmont Avenue. You can see the early house in the background of the photo of the school playground.

I remember the Chadwicks lived in the adjoining maisonette to my Gran at No 1A. A Mr. McKenzie lived at No 3 (across the laneway).

I've included some photos taken in the early 1950's. One shows my brother's 8th Birthday at Gardiner Central. In the photo you can see L-R Vicki Neville (our neighbour from Irymple Avenue), Graham Fettleing, Bill Proud, Susie Gamble, unknown (at the back), John Waldie, Michael Proud (just see him), Philip Cassell, Peter Gamble (at the back) and Errol Olney.

I've included a 'baby' snap of me taken on the front lawn of No 3 - you can see my future school (Gardiner Central) in the background.

At the time we lived at 27 Irymple Avenue Glen Iris. My brother Peter started school at Malvern Grammar and my first school was Korowa.

We transferred to Gardiner Central after two years. With Gran right across the road it was easier for my working parents who didn't have to worry about the two of us when school finished for the day. Both Peter and I completed our Primary education at Gardiner - up to Form 2 (Year 8), with Peter going on to Caulfield Technical College and myself to MacRobertson Girls' High. (Sadly Peter passed away in 2005)

The 1950s and very early 1960s were fun in Nash Street as Gran was one of the first to have a television, a big old cumbersome Rank-Arena, and many of our school chums would come by each afternoon to watch shows like "The Mickey Mouse Club" and "Sergeant Preston of the Yukon". I loved Gran's house. It was a classic Art Deco maisonette and the street itself was home to many possums and bird life. Happy Memories!

Susie Gamble (Mansfield, Victoria)



Above: Peter's 8th birthday

Above left: Gardiner Central School c1956
Belmont in background

Below left: Baby snap of Susie

Right: 'Off to school', Peter and Susie Gamble 1955



Mayor John 'Jack' Ellis and his family

John (Jack) Ellis was born in Daylesford in 1864. He was the first son and second child of Cornish born William John Ellis (1820-1891) and Irish born Margaret Delaney (1828-1905). The family arrived in Victoria sometime prior to 1861. That year William and Margaret married in Daylesford, where their eight children (Mary, John, Elizabeth, William, Ann, Thomas, Annie and James) were born between 1862 and 1873.

By 1887 John (Jnr), aged 23, had left Daylesford and moved to Malvern where he married Rose Randall (1865-1943). John initially established a cartage business, then went on to become a Master plumber and contractor.

A supporter of Temperance, John Ellis was an active member of the Armadale Methodist Church and also a member of the Malvern Lodge. He was a member of Malvern Council from 1903-09, representing the North Ward. John was elected Mayor in 1907-08.

John and Rose Ellis had five children born between 1888 and 1899 (Matt, John, Doris, Ethel and Lucy). As a contractor, Ellis owned and built houses including a pair of brick houses (now numbered 23-25) in Stuart Street Malvern, in 1904-05.

From around 1890, John ran his plumbing business from a shop in Glenferrie Road Malvern, which was initially numbered 33. John Ellis died in 1909 at the age of 45. His son, John Leslie Ellis (1890-1974) also a plumber, continued to run the business after the death of his father. John (Jnr) was also a first-class cricketer playing 101 matches for Victoria between 1918 and 1930.

From 1918 to 1940, Ethel O'Mullane conducted her dress-making business from Ellis's shop at 198 Glenferrie Road. Ethel lived above the shop on the first floor. However, the building was owned by the Ellis family until the death of Doris Ellis in 1975. It is thought that the kangaroo decoration on the parapet was made and erected by John Randall, the brother of Rose Ellis (John's wife).



John and Rose Ellis (undated)

Sources:

Ancestry.com

Stonnington History Collection

Visionary Lives, Five Hundred Biographies from the Brighton Cemetery, Jane Mayo Carolan (2013).

Malvern Standard, the late Cr. J. Ellis, of Malvern, Obituary 4 September 1909, p.3.

Di Foster 2021



Mayor of Malvern (1907-08)



Ethel O.'Mullane, 198 Glenferrie Road, Malvern 1918 Stonnington History Collection MP58



John Leslie 'Jack' Ellis, first class cricketer

Toys for Xmas

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1969 Melbourne Transportation Plan

The 1969 Melbourne Transportation Plan sought to cover the whole of the Melbourne metropolitan area in a freeway grid that would have resembled aspects of the Los Angeles network. The plan ignored public transport options and the potentially devastating impact on local communities, proposing freeways that would cut through the suburbs. Follow the link and discover what could have been, and how organised community resistance forced the government into backing down. Provenance Journal (PROV) 2020 <http://ow.ly/Ybl950CVTI6>

A World of Memories

Founded in December 2000, and conducted under the auspices of the Australian National Commission for UNESCO, the Australian Memory of the World Program is one of more than 60 Memory of the World programs worldwide. The UNESCO Australian Memory of the World Program honours documentary heritage of significance for Australia and the world, and advocates for its preservation. Victorian items already on the register include the Port Phillip Association Records, the Donald Thomson Ethnology Collection, the 1862 Land Act Map and the Australian Children's Folklore Collection.

<https://www.amw.org.au/>

Malvern Fine Art Gallery invitation and catalogue July 1965

Barb Hiley recently donated an invitation and catalogue relating to the Louis Buvelot and S T Gill exhibition at the Malvern Fine Art Gallery 1268 High Street Malvern.

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Howard Lawson - architect

Howard Ratcliff Lawson (1886-1946) was born in Prahran, the son of hatter and mercer, Ernest Henry Lawson and his wife, Emily Ratcliff. Lawson married Alice Parker in 1908 and they had three sons, Ernest Henry (1909-1982), Howard Dudley (1911-(1934), and Godfrey Leith (1918-?).

Howard Lawson died in 1946 at Dromana, where he was living at the time. He was buried in the Brighton Cemetery.

Notes from Heritage Assessment relating to Howard Lawson

'Lawson began property development in late 1910, becoming known as the 'architect who builds'. He constructed a significant number of flats and bungalows in Melbourne's inner and southern suburbs between 1910 and 1920. He also undertook residential and commercial work. Lawson was unsuccessful in his application to register with the Architects Registration Board of Victoria, due to their objection to him both designing and constructing buildings, which they regarded as not 'bona fide practice of the profession of an architect'. During the 1930s and 1940s Lawson was also involved in his elder son's business; building and maintaining flats. Henry Lawson was declared bankrupt in 1930 and his company 'Howard R. Lawson Architects and Building Constructors Proprietary Limited' was dissolved. Lawson continued to be involved with his son's business through the 1930s. The diversity of his interests are reflected in his various enterprises, as architect, builder and entrepreneur. He is also known for his design of 'flat blocks', which were included in much of his work. Lawson later became involved in dance hall and theatre development and management.' (Allom Lovell & Associates 2005)

61-63 Darling Street South Yarra

The Beverley Hills blocks of flats at 61-63 Darling Street is one of Howard Lawson's better known designs. The allotment had been purchased from M. Gibson by Alice Lawson in the 1920s, then later owned by Ernest Lawson, who constructed the flats in 1922. Beverley Hills is of the bungalow style and has undergone several alterations. Beginning as a single dwelling it was first converted into two flats, then accommodated to contain flats on three levels.

63 Alexandra Avenue South Yarra

Stratton Heights flats, 63 Alexandra Avenue, South Yarra were erected c1940 by Howard Lawson. They are contained within an extensive area of residential flats developed by Lawson from the early 1920s to about 1942, with this block occupying a prime site on the Yarra River. The site itself is steep and the four-storey building towers above the street, along which a balustraded retaining wall conceals flights of steps which lead to the entrance. Curved bays dominate the building. Balconies also have curved corners and feature balustraded sections, but the building is otherwise unadorned. The building itself is interesting in conception and form, with an extensive use of curved, unadorned forms'.

Prahran Conservation Study. Nigel Lewis and Associates Architects and Conservation Planners 1983

Additional reading:

'Howard R Lawson: the architect who built' *Provenance: The Journal of Public Record Office Victoria*, issue no. 18, 2020

<https://prov.vic.gov.au/explore-collection/provenance-journal/provenance-2020/howard-r-lawson>



**Beverley Hills Apartments 61 Darling Street South Yarra (Architect Howard Lawson, builder Ernest Lawson 1922)
Image: Peter King 2006 Stonnington History Collection
PH13256**



**Stratton Heights 63 Alexander Avenue South Yarra. Nigel Lewis and Associates c1983 Stonnington History Collection
SHC61988**

My memories of living at 15 Netherlee Street Glen Iris (Cont)

Keith Thomas, who shared his memories in a previous issue of the newsletter, lived at 15 Netherlee Street Glen Iris. "I remember the Mainon Motors in Burke Road Malvern East. As kids we traded rags for old bearings to use on our billy carts to scream down Netherlee Street. The billy carts were noisy and fast with no brakes, just a broadside to stop at Erica Avenue. There was also a group of shops along Burke Road including a milk bar. I think we got our fish and chips there on Friday night. We used to sell newspapers to the shop to wrap the fish and chips in.

We had a fox terrier who ruled Netherlee Street. He was known as 'Peter Dog'. We had to lock him up when the gas man came to read the meter. Peter Dog eventually had a stroke. The chemist gave us a small bottle of chloroform so we could put him to sleep. I loved him. I can remember sitting on the gully trap crying and hugging him. Dad was a butcher and he did his apprenticeship at the butcher's shop diagonally opposite the Malvern Town Hall. Milk was delivered daily to the front door by horse and cart (cash was left out). The bottle tops were foil. Bread was delivered by Bill who limped and had a gammy hand. Ice was also delivered. We had a fridge, some neighbours had Coolgardie safes. Lemonade was delivered by the Loy's man, spices by the Rawley's man. Doors were never locked, the neighbours kept watch. If one of our neighbours saw mum at the front door with a salesman she would ring our phone so that mum could get away!

As kids we had a great life, we raided district fruit trees that hung over lanes, and went for long bike rides. Mum would say 'make sure you are home before dark and don't go to the creek'. She had no idea where we went. Mostly we stayed out of trouble but one day my cousin fell in the creek and cut his foot. We were in trouble that day. In Netherlee Street we played hop scotch and cricket on the road, I shot off all my marbles with my shanghais and we would collect cicadas.

I went to kinder behind St Andrew Church. As a 4-5 year old I took myself on the Caulfield – Gardiner Bus. I remember going home one day crying because the bus didn't stop for me. Mum said I should walk to the gutter so the bus driver knows to stop. After kinder I went to Gardiner Central School in 1950. My favourite teacher was Miss Chrome in Grade Two. She barracked for Essendon, and that's why I do now.

We walked to school, rain, hail or shine – no mum's taxi then. Sometimes there was ice on the puddles. Some of our games in the shelter shed were hoppo bumpo, British bulldog, dodge ball with a medicine ball, brandy, marbles in the playground, and kick to kick with a football on the gravel yard. There was a huge Morton Bay fig tree in the girls' play yard. I remember the craft class gathered modelling clay from the banks of Gardiners Creek.

Occasionally I was able to go to the Saturday afternoon pictures at the Gardiner theatre. Mum would give me 2 shillings. 1 shilling and 3 pence to get in. The change bought a White Knight and a licorice strap. I lived in Netherlee Street until I got married in 1969.

Keith Thomas 2020



Glenda and Keith Thomas

Former Malvern Dairy 37-39 Clarence Street Malvern East

The Malvern Dairy at 37-39 Clarence Street, Malvern East, was established c1930 on the site of an earlier 1918 dairy. It consists of a single-storey Victorian Italianate style villa and a c1930 single-storey red-brick dairy, both facing the street. Three mature Canary Island palms (*Phoenix canariensis*) stand in the front setback. It is a now rare surviving example of the model suburban dairies established in the 1930s when tighter controls were placed on the processing and supply of milk. Small dairies were once common in residential areas of Melbourne but were made obsolete by improved refrigerated transport and the shift towards industrial scale dairy production. The Victorian villa demonstrates how early dairies operated as independent family-run businesses with the dairyman living on site. This tradition was discontinued in the post war period when larger, centralised dairies became the norm. The former Malvern Dairy is architecturally significant as a good representative example of an interwar suburban dairy with somewhat unusual design characteristics that set it apart from the more common Moderne style interwar dairies. It exhibits some of the principal elements of dairy design including the loading platform at the front and the side servery. The adjacent villa is a fine example of a late-Victorian Italianate style residence demonstrating a high level of integrity. The mature Canary Island palms in the front setback contribute to the early character of the place and provide an attractive setting for the dairy.

<https://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/193557>



**Malvern Dairy 1933 Stonnington
History Collection MP7996**

Malvern Historical Society Inc P O Box 184, Malvern Victoria 3144

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I would like to assist with:

- Committee and administration
- Newsletter
- Walks
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- Afternoon teas & suppers

*Financial year: 1 Jan - 31 Dec

MHS website: www.vicnet.net.au/~malvern Tel: 0438 515 631 malvernhistorical@yahoo.com

Malvern Historical Society Inc. (A7682)

P.O. Box 184, Malvern Vic 3144 Telephone: 0438 515 631 malvernhistorical@yahoo.com

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 and a member of the South Metro History Group.

OTHER STONNINGTON HISTORY CONTACTS

Stonnington History Centre, Email: history@stonnington.vic.gov.au

Tel: 8290 1360 www.stonnington.vic.gov.au/Discover/History

Prahran Mechanics Institute Tel: 9510 3393 www.pmi.net.au

Have you enjoyed viewing the photos in this issue?

Material for the articles has been researched from the **Stonnington History Centre Collection**. The database contains over 65,000 records. To view enlargements of photographs and to read more, just go to the website. www.stonnington.vic.gov.au/Discover/History

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