

LOCAL HISTORY NEWS

Malvern Historical Society Inc.

Keeping Stonnington's History Alive!

October 2021 - Newsletter No. 91

Message from the President

Just when I thought we were getting back to having some face-to-face activities we were in lock-down again!!!! The Committee has had a face-to-face meeting and discussed some future activities for the members. We did manage to have a Local History Walk at the end of May even though the numbers were limited to ten. The members who attended were very pleased to be back having a face-to-face activity. Everyone really enjoyed the walk on a bright sunny winter's morning. We did have plans for another Walk but unfortunately this had to be put on hold.

Thank you to all the members who have renewed their membership. It is very encouraging for the Committee to see that so many members are still concerned and interested in the history of the area even though we cannot plan face-to-face activities. As you will be aware our Facebook page continues to be updated regularly giving people history information. Thank you to Nikki Cooper for her great work in keeping the Malvern Historical Society Facebook page going.

Keep safe, take care and I look forward to seeing some of you at the various events we hope to plan when the restrictions are lifted.

Lorraine Sage - President Tel: 9885 9082

Email: ljsage123@gmail.com

Stonnington History Centre - Family History Club

The Family History Club currently meets through Zoom. Reserve your ticket for Family History Club, telephone 82911360 or follow the link on the Stonnington History Centre website. Whether you're a beginner or experienced family history researcher, join the friendly group to meet fellow enthusiasts and explore the many genealogy resources available. Spaces are limited and bookings are required.

Please note, depending on restrictions around indoor public gatherings, the following events may be rescheduled or moved to Zoom.

Wednesday, 01 December 2021 2 PM - 3 PM

Tuesday 16 November 2pm 'History of Stonnington mansion' Zoom meeting

Join members of the Malvern Historical Society for a virtual talk on the history of Stonnington mansion.

Stonnington, originally spelt Stonington, as built as a private residence for John Wagner, a partner in Cobb and Co coaches. It has had a colourful history including time as Victoria's Government House.

Join Steve Stefanopoulos, former Mayor of the City of Stonnington and local architectural historian, for an informative, illustrated talk. You'll hear about the people and institutions associated with the property, the architecture of the mansion, and the events that took place on the estate.

You are most welcome to participate in the meeting, but please RSVP by email to malvernhistorical@yahoo.com for the link



Above: Gatehouse at Stonnington 2007 (Image: John Maidment) Stonnington History Collection SHC61803

Below: Ebbott Family c1890
Stonnington History Collection MP14160



New members

The Society would like to welcome our latest new members Penny Runge, Bill Barlow, Antony Spry, Katrina Allen, Ed Lagzdin and Philippe Batters.

City of Stonnington Community Grant 2021 - 2022

We were delighted to hear about our successful application for a community grant from the City of Stonnington. The grant will be used for the printing of our newsletters, updating of the website, displaying photos, and the printing of pamphlets and puzzles. Council also agreed to our request for in-kind use of council meeting rooms. Lorraine Sage - President

Taking Local History to the Community

Thanks Bernadette, Francesca and Ann for transcribing early hand written notes and Heather for organising the Malvern Historical Society QR code. Historical Societies across Victoria must use a QR code whenever they gather whether for volunteer work, meetings or events to record who is present. Thanks also to Di Foster who continues to discover items of interest on eBay including the Sacre Coeur postcard, the Plisch biscuit tin and an aerial photo of the Yarra River in South Yarra. We've received many requests from local residents who are keen to find out more about their local area during the COVID lockdowns. The Glenvale Road and Valency Road Glen Iris area walk, led by Pat Brincat and Lorraine Sage, went well. Thanks to John Maidment for adding so many interest stories and memories. Alan Gregory recently donated papers relating to Dorothy Deighton and Jill Blackwell. Lorraine recently represented the Society at the meeting of the South Metro History Group, hosted on Zoom by the Port Melbourne Historical and Preservation Society.

Early organs in Glen Iris

John Maidment OAM, Founder Chairman, Organ Historical Trust of Australia (OHTA), Editor OHTA News and Malvern Historical Society member, recently shared information relating to early organs in Glen Iris.

The first, an early organ in St Roch's Catholic Church, Burke Road, Glen Iris, was built by Gray & Davison, London, circa 1870 and marketed as a standard drawing room model by the English firm of musical retailers Chappell & Company. The instrument has an attractive case with carved cresting, filigree fretwork panels and two three-pipe towers.

Its original location is unknown, presumably a private residence somewhere in Melbourne. It was installed in St Roch's, possibly by C.W. Andrewartha, around 1938 when the church was opened. The Open Diapason was extended at this time to CC through the addition of 12 pipes operated by tubular-pneumatic action, mounted on the side wall of the organ loft. It remained there until 1978 when it was removed to the residence of Ann Blore, first at Ascot Vale and then at Surrey Hills. At this time the facade pipes, previously painted silver, were elegantly diapered in sage green and gold by Marc Nobel, this being his first exercise in this art. The damaged mahogany fretwork panels were expertly restored by Alastair McAllister.

The instrument received a thorough restoration by S. J. Laurie in 1990 involving extensive work on the action, wind system and pipework, together with the insertion of a tenor C metal Piccolo 2ft on a slide originally used for a Dulciana, but later a Viole and more recently a 2-2/3 made from the former string stop. The organ was installed in St John's Anglican Church, Downey Street, Alexandra, late in 1990.

John has also shared information relating to another early local organ. In 1924 Dr Frank Shanassy, a dentist, had the organ installed in his residence, 3 Boyanda Road, Glen Iris, by George Fincham & Sons. In 1938, after Dr Shanassy's death, the organ was sold to the Methodist Sunday School Hall, Summerhill Road, Glen Iris.

<https://www.ohta.org.au/organs/organs/Craigie.html>



Left: Dr Frank Shanassy's Halmshaw organ, Glen Iris Methodist Sunday School, Summerhill Road, Glen Iris (Image: W.G.S. Smith c1970)

Right: Original St Roch's organ. It was placed diagonally at the left hand side of the rear gallery. (Image: W.G.S. Smith c1970)



Plisch's Bakery

Johann Plisch operated a bakery and catering factory, known as "Plisch's Bakery" in Prahran from the 1890s. Johann, the son of Johann Plisch and Marie Miller, was born in Austria in 1864. He married Julia Kate Riley in Victoria in 1892. The main bakery was at 88 Greville Street, while the catering business operated from 44-46 Charles Street, Prahran. Plisch also had three branch shops in the Melbourne CBD, one in Swanston Street, another on the corner of Flinders and Elizabeth Streets and a third in Bourke Street. The bakery specialised in wedding and birthday cakes, along with Vienna, malt and rye breads. The 1914 -18 World War greatly affected Plisch's business, due to the strong anti-German sentiments directed at Germans and Austrians during this period. The bakery windows were often broken.

Johann and Julia had five children: William Joseph born 1893; Kathleen Marie, born 1896, Bertha born 1902, Frances Edward, born 1905 and Freida Irene, born 1908. "Miss Frieda Irene Plisch, youngest daughter of Mr and Mrs Johann Plisch, Greville Street, Prahran, whose marriage with Mr Howard G. Liddell, will take place on Wednesday in St. Mary's Church, Dandenong Road, East St Kilda, at 5.30 p.m. A reception at Northbrook, High Street, Malvern, will follow." The Herald 12 September 1931.

Johann died in 1933. The properties at Greville and Charles Streets were sold in May 1936 to Crundall's Ltd of Commercial Road. Julia died in 1945. Johann and Julia are both buried in the Brighton Cemetery.

City of Prahran jubilee history and illustrated handbook: South Yarra, Toorak, Malvern, etc', Melbourne: Periodicals Publishing Company, 1906 p.130

"The growth of Mr Plisch's business, which is that of pastrycook, confectioner and caterer, is reaching large dimensions. Indeed, it is to be doubted whether any other firm in that business in Melbourne does such an enormous trade. It is not everybody that can cater successfully to the public, and in this respect Mr Plisch has proved one of the happy exceptions. Against competitors the firm has gained vice-regal patronage.

The head office and manufactory is at 88 Greville Street, Prahran ('phone 285 Windsor Exchange), and from there a steady stream of the firm's conveyances daily emerge loaded with orders and the requirements of the branch shops, three of which are in the city, two in Prahran and one in Windsor. Afternoon tea is served at all these points. The manufacturer of wedding and birthday cakes of all designs is made a specialty, as also Vienna bread, malt bread and Rye bread. At all the branches the best English and French confectionery is kept in stock. Country orders, too, are promptly and carefully attended to. Within the factory the utmost cleanliness and thoroughness are observed, making it necessary for Mr Plisch to employ a large staff of competent and skilled employees.

The branch shops are situated thus:- Cathedral Cafe, 5 and 7 Swanston Street, opposite St Paul's Cathedral; Fink's Buildings, corner Flinders and Elizabeth Streets, and at 288 Bourke Street, near Swanston Street; 117 Chapel Street, near High Street, 88 Greville Street, Prahran, and 15 Chapel Street, Windsor. City telephones, 3580 and 2586."

Di Foster recently purchased a Plisch biscuit tin on eBay on behalf of the Malvern Historical Society.



Johann Plisch c1890s Stonnington History Collection PH23019



Julia Kate Plisch c1890s Stonnington History Collection PH23021



**Left: Plisch's bakery c1906 Stonnington History Collection PH7257
Above & above right: Details from the Plisch biscuit tin (Images:Di Foster)**

'Glenferrie Road - As I remember it and more' Dudley Lucas

Neil Lucas, the son of the late Dudley Lucas, former Malvern Council Town Clerk, has donated a copy of a talk Dudley gave at Koot Restaurant, Glenferrie Road, Kooyong. The date of the talk is not known but it is thought to have been given around the early 1970s.

Dudley Lucas (1905-1990) was born in Malvern and joined the staff at Malvern Council as a junior boy in 1925. He was appointed Town Clerk for the City of Malvern in 1951, a position he held until his retirement in 1973. During this time he was instrumental in the formation of the Malvern Elderly Citizens' Welfare Committee in 1958 (now mecwacare).

'Glenferrie Road - As I remember it and more'

“What better place to start than right here in the Koot Room. Why Koot? It's a peculiar name for a restaurant. Robert Hoddle who surveyed the creek which forms the northern boundary of what is now the City of Malvern recorded in his notes on the survey plan the native name of the creek - Kooyong Koot on the south side of the Yarra Yarra River near to Gardiners Creek station, 1837, hence the name. In my talk I will travel along Glenferrie Road on the west side and return along the east side. As well as my own memories I will also refer to the earlier history of the road.

Glenferrie Road was first referred to as a Government road leading from Richmond to Brighton. It is hard to link that description with the road as it is today but originally it was a bush track running from about the Hawthorn Bridge over the Yarra and linking up with Hawthorn Road in Caulfield. It was also referred to as Hawthorn Road or the road leading to Hawthorn from Brighton. It was given the title Sir Henry's Road after the Governor of Victoria, Sir Henry Barkly. The name, Sir Henry's Road, did not gain popular approval so it was changed to Barkly Road and in 1859 the bush track received its first attention when the surface was gravelled from Gardiners Creek to the Main Dandenong Road. The name Barkly failed to survive the test of time and the present name of Glenferrie Road replaced it. The road led to a ferry over the Yarra and Ferry Road was suggested but then in addition the approaches along the road had the appearance of a glen and the road to the ferry on the Hawthorn side passed the mansion of a W H Glen of the Collins St music shop. The combination of the two resulted in the name Glenferry spelt with a 'y' before its final name ending in 'ie'.

The raised section of the LTAV, Lawn Tennis Association of Victoria, land was the only stable land between Glenferrie Road and the Yarra. All the area covered by the tennis courts and most of St Kevin's College land was swamp and completely covered by water in wet weather. The LTAV on purchasing the land constructed the levee banks and it has been only on rare occasions that they have not been successful in keeping the courts clear of water. One of those occasions was in 1934 when very heavy rains and abnormally high tides caused extensive flooding of the river and creek valley. It was then that the water reached almost to the Kooyong shops.

On the south side of Toorak Road was the lovely palatial home, “Grosvenor” the handsome gateway being splayed across the corner of Toorak Road with a wide gravel drive leading to the house. Between the Grosvenor Estate and Malvern Road, the land had been subdivided by a barrister C B Skinner who later became Judge Skinner. His forbears lived in Ledbury, Herefordshire, England within the sight of the Malvern Hills. Skinner for the purpose of the sale, made a plan of a village called by him, Ledbury. The auction advertisement read “Freehold properties in the township of Ledbury, Parish of Prahran, Malvern Hill Estate”. The streets were as narrow as in an English village and the names given then were School Street (now Stonnington Place), Church Street, Russell Street after Skinner's son and Gertrude Street (now Denham Place) after Mrs Skinner. On the corner of Malvern and Glenferrie Road, Skinner built an inn which he called the Malvern Hill Hotel. The hotel for the times and for the hamlet of Gardiner, was an inn of some importance with its five parlours, four bedrooms and two outside bedrooms.

Further east along Malvern Road, the Malvern Vale Hotel, was built at a later date. In between the two was the original settlement – the village of Gardiner not far from the permanent spring which provided their water. The first Post Office was in Malvern Road opposite Glenview Avenue and next door to the building where once Gill Wood created his famous Heather Brae Shortbread.



'Grosvenor' 1919 Stonnington History Collection MP590



**Malvern Hill Hotel c1870s
Stonnington History Collection MP1239**

Travellers along Malvern Road - known previously as Kuhls Road, Valley Road or Great Neck Road, passed the two hotels. The name of Malvern began to refer to the hamlet, instead of Gardiner, and somehow the evolution of the name of Malvern germinated and was established.

On the south east corner of Malvern and Glenferrie Roads once stood the old stockyard in which travelling stock from Gippsland on the way to Melbourne was yarded and where the stockmen's horses were bedded in the size stall stable while the masters found food and shelter within the hotel opposite. There were several springs which provided drinking water for the stock and even at the present time problems with excess water in the area are still experienced.

In my time there were already dwellings built between Malvern Road and High Street which was earlier referred to as Middle Dandenong Road. The largest house was a doctor's residence now the hospital opposite St Georges Church. On the north corner of High Street I remember when the row of single storey lockup shops were being built by the Orpheus Theatre Co. It was in one of these that Ron Palmer opened his business after the war. It was planned to build a large theatre and dance hall on the land and the shops were being built as a first part of the complete plan. The walls were of substantial construction of reinforced concrete as the theatre was intended to be on the first floor and the dance hall on the ground level.

Shops and vacant land fronted Glenferrie Road, from High Street to Stanhope Street with a couple of large trees near Willis Street. These trees proved to be a source of amusement to some of the lads who at night perched on a branch above the footpath and as people passed below would drop a couple of coins attached to a thin string so they'd land on the asphalt path behind them, very quickly picking up the coins again. Of course the sound of coins dropping would always get results. Lighting in those days was somewhat less than it is today. The land on the south side of Stanhope Street has had a variety of uses during my lifetime. The earliest recollection is of a large square two storey brick house, the home and surgery of Dr Willis, the doctor who assisted in my arrival into the City of Malvern. When his house was demolished the Malvern Market was built but it had a short and unprofitable life, then followed the Embassy Theatre, the name being changed to The Metro, when new owners took over.

The site of the Malvern Tram Depot was once part of Cold Blo, a famous dwelling where Peter Lalor, who lost an arm in the Eureka Stockade, once lived. At the time of the Stockade Lalor was proclaimed an outlaw and subsequently became the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. Cold Blo was demolished in 1909 by the Prahran and Malvern Tramway Trust to make way for the erection of a car barn for the electric tramway.

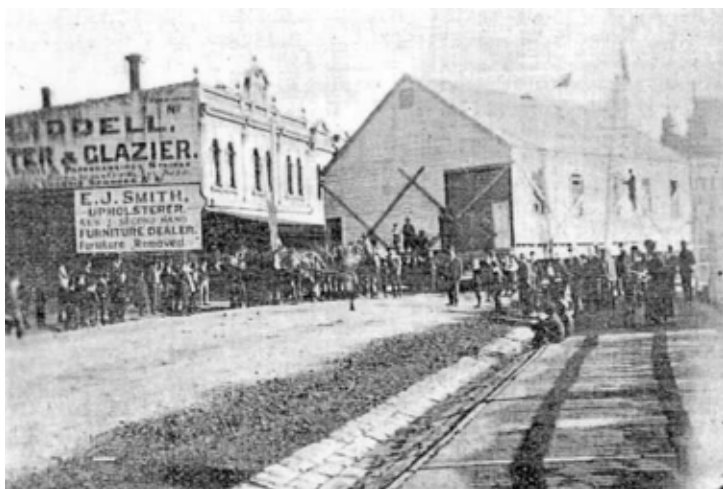
The Salvation Army Citadel was a weatherboard building where the present building now stands in Union Street just west of Glenferrie Road. During the Friday late shopping night the Army Band would play in Union Street. By the way, it is recorded in the history that the Salvationists were not very favourably regarded because they marched in the streets of Malvern playing their noisy instruments. The Council passed a By Law in 1885 which required the permission of the Council before any body of people could march. The Salvation Army was refused a permit but decided to march and take the consequences. The Council decided to prosecute, the charge being 'they continued after repeated warnings, to parade in the streets in procession to the annoyance of the residents'. The charge fizzled out and did not reach the court. The Army agreed to cease the band marching in Glenferrie Road from Union Street to the next street, Barkley Avenue.



Block of shops, north west corner of Glenferrie Road and High Street Malvern c1950 Stonnington History Collection MP4518



The Embassy Theatre 1948 Stonnington History Collection MP6596



The Malvern barracks on route along Glenferrie Road from Bell Street to the new site in Union Street 1900 Stonnington History Collection MP8197

'Glenferrie Road - As I remember it and more' Dudley Lucas (continued)

There were a number of shops and a few vacant blocks, one in Glenferrie Road, opposite Winter Street, is worthy of note.

It was a bike shop conducted by an Irishman, Tom Finnigan, and his two sons. It was just a mediocre business until it was taken over by a Bruce Small, a one-time trumpet player in the Salvation Army. Small built up the business tremendously by forming the Malvern Cycling Club and by obtaining and developing such outstanding riders as Hubert Opperman, Fatty Lamb and others to bring the Malvern Star name (the name taken over from Finnigan) to the forefront.

The newspaper reports always read something like 'Opperman riding his Malvern Star won such and such, Fatty Lamb also on a Malvern Star was second' etc. They took their bikes overseas and created a big demand for the cycles not only in Australia but also beyond. The business soon outgrew its Malvern address.



**Don Kirkham with Tom Finnigan c1910
Stonnington History Collection MP2714**

Leonard Thomas

Karen Harmer recently sent through copies of two photos of her father, taken during his school days. Karen thinks they were taken c1934. Karen's father, Leonard (Len) Thomas was born in Malvern in 1926. He lived in Maitland Street Glen Iris and went to Gardiner Central School. In the group photo Len can be seen in the second row, second from the left. He has the name 'Oldfield' around his neck. Len always told Karen that the boys were wearing the names of the Australian Ashes players around their necks.



Group of students, Gardiner Central School c1934



Len Thomas with his younger sister Nancy (undated)

Chadstone High School cross country event 1971

John Embury recently shared photos and his memories of a Chadstone High School cross country event in 1971. "Chadstone High (better known as Chaddy High) had a strong house system. Apart from weekly sport there was also House swimming, athletics, chorals and cross country running. The venue for the cross country running was Darling Park, off Winton Road, Malvern East. However, the Monash Freeway had now covered part of the route we ran. Gardiners Creek ran through the course. After heavy rain the whole area tended to become flooded, which made for a damp run. The pictures show that, despite the weather, most runners enjoyed themselves."

Chadstone High School commenced in 1962 with students being bussed to temporary accommodation at Wattle Park High School.

The school complex was completed in 1963.

The school's symbol was the mythical phoenix.



**Chadstone High School cross country event 1971
(Image: John Embury)**

The Barlow Family - 107 years in Malvern

Thanks to Bill Barlow for sharing his memories and this photo from the family album. "This is a photograph of the three Barlow children, Mary, Bill (me) and John (L-R) heading out our front gate to walk to Gardiner Primary School. It was probably taken by my father in February 1959, Mary's first year at school. Our grandparents, George and Alice Barlow had moved from Castlemaine with their two daughters to a new weatherboard house they'd had built at (then) 39 Carroll Crescent in 1913. It was part of a new subdivision north of the railway line between Tooronga and Gardiner Stations. The house (by then renumbered to 57) eventually became the Gardiner Neighbourhood House. It was later demolished and became part of parkland to compensate for land taken by the South-East Freeway along the Creek.

My father Alec Barlow was born in this house in 1913 and it became his family home when he married in 1949. He and his older sisters went to Gardiner Primary School between 1914 and 1926. My brother, my sister and I spent our childhoods at the Carroll Crescent house and in turn went to Gardiner Primary School from 1956 - 1967. I still live in East Malvern where the fourth generations of 'Malvern' Barlows were raised. So Barlows have lived in Malvern almost continuously for the last 107 years. My father's reminiscences of life at Gardiner Central School can be read in 'A Gardiner Boy' (1994), which is available at the Stonnington History Centre. The story of the Barlow family in Australia from 1840 - 1922 is told in 'Guilty and Lucky' (W. Barlow, 2020), available at Prahran Mechanics Institute"

Bill Barlow 2020



Mary, Bill and John at the front gate c1959

Harold Holt Memorial Swimming Centre Glen Iris (VHR H0069)

A Heritage Victoria permit application (P35103) was recently publicly advertised. The application was for a permit to modify and repair the outdoor diving pool, tower and associated tiling and paving, install new 1 and 3m springboard boards, construct a new plant room building and replace the existing aboveground outdoor spa pool with a new outdoor inground slab pool. www.heritage.vic.gov.au

The Harold Holt Memorial Swimming Centre, designed by local architects Kevin Borlad and Daryl Jackson, is of state architectural, historical and social significance.

Right: Diving pool at Harold Holt Memorial Swimming Centre 1968 Stonnington History Collection MP5369

Below: Diving pool 1969 Stonnington History Collection MP5369



NEW MEMBERS WELCOME

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

I would like to

- Join the Malvern Historical Society
 Renew Malvern Historical Society

Annual Membership Options

- Individual \$13
 Full time student \$9
 Family \$20

Date: _____

Donation \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Member information

Name/s _____

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*** Please make sure the message/reference box states your name and what the payment is for.

***We would appreciate the return of your completed form by mail or by email.

- Paying by Cheque

Please make the cheque payable to the Malvern Historical Society Inc. Kindly forward your cheque and completed form to the Malvern Historical Society.

I would like to assist with:

- Committee and administration Newsletter Walks Talks Afternoon teas & suppers

*Financial year: 1 Jan - 31 Dec

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

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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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