

2pm Sunday 25th February 2024

Historical Walk—The Burwood Corner



Explore the northwest corner of Monash. Learn where ancient song-lines went. What was where the huge Mt Warner development is, and why the mysterious green swathe has never been built on. See some of Monash's Significant Vegetation, some very old homes, and the site of Burwood hospital. Hear about the bushrangers that terrorised this area when it was "beyond the black stump."

Wear good walking shoes, bring water and either sunscreen or an umbrella, as needed. Free for members, \$5 for others.

The meeting place will be revealed to those who book. **Booking required by 20.2.24**

via our Email

waverleyhsvic@gmail.com

2 pm Sunday 24th March 2024

ANZAC Day Flags

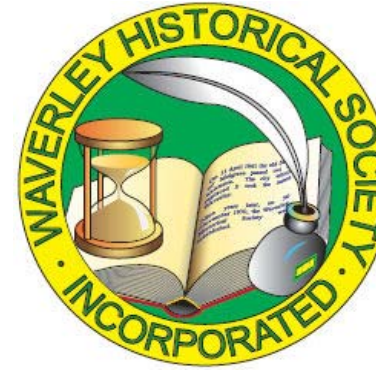
Ralph Bartlett



Booking required by 19.3.24

via our Email

waverleyhsvic@gmail.com



HISTORY HERE 246

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The House

This well-maintained home in the Burwood corner of Monash was built in 1955 following the Small Homes Service plan V326. That is, it was of brick veneer construction, (in this case cinder blocks like schools were made of) in the 1950s to 80s, and had 3 bedrooms.

The WHS is open each Wed afternoon 1 to 4.30pm.

Events on page 8: Unless otherwise stated, General Meetings are held at 2pm on the fourth Sunday in our rooms above Mt Waverley Library (Lift Available) 41 Miller Cres., Mt Waverley.

Coming Events

Next Event

2pm Sunday 25 February 2024

Historical Walk in Burwood

See P.8 for other events

10am Sunday 21st April 2024

GW Cenotaph

Near Glen Waverley Library



Some WHS members at the 2023 ceremony

No booking required

2 pm Sunday 26th May 2024

WHS Rooms above MW Library

The Friends of

Damper Creek Reserve

By Doug Scott



Booking required by 20.5.24

via our Email

waverleyhsvic@gmail.com

MarJo Angelico Feb 2024

Proudly Australian?

Australia Day has once again been and gone (though not before this was written). No doubt we again heard the loud voices of the few who deem the day a disgrace. However there is much to celebrate about this nation!

Some things that were begun here well before the rest of the world include freedom of the press (1824), responsible government (1856), secret ballot (1856) and universal male suffrage, including for indigenous men (1858), free education (1872), female suffrage (1894) and female parliamentarians (1921).

Never having been based on slavery, like 167 other nations is something to applaud. Never having been torn by civil war, nor crippled by a long-established aristocracy, but rather celebrating self-made inventors and entrepreneurs – these are mighty reasons to be proud of Australia. Here is one of the world's longest established and most stable democracies that has enabled Australian ingenuity to make the world a better place.

Examples of such achievements include:

- ✕ Howard Florey's drug (penicillin) that saved countless people around the world
- ✕ David Robinson and George Kossof invented the ultrasound scanner
- ✕ Cyril Percy Callister invented Vegemite, a tasty Vitamin B supplement
- ✕ Charles Tait shot the world's first feature film.
- ✕ Gilbert Tony invented the Hills Hoist that uses less room and dries clothes faster than alternatives
- ✕ Unknown Aboriginal inventors created the aerodynamic boomerang, and the woomera
- ✕ Louis Brennan invented the underwater torpedo
- ✕ Professor Graeme Clark ended profound deafness with his cochlear ear implant
- ✕ Dr David Warren invented the black box flight recorder, which made air travel safer than any other form of transport
- ✕ Professor Fiona Wood invented spray-on skin
- ✕ Dr Mark Lidwill and Edgar Booth invented the pacemaker
- ✕ Lars and Jens Rasmussen invented the Google Maps platform
- ✕ John O'Sullivan and the CSIRO developed Wi-Fi and
- ✕ James Harrison invented the compression system used in refrigeration systems and air conditioners.

There are many others that could be included.

These are just some of the reasons to be grateful for being Australian.

A recent poll conducted by the Institute of Public Affairs shows that 87 per cent of those sampled are proud to be Australian and support celebrating Australia Day on January 26.

Ordinary Australians, indigenous and immigrant, have a proud history of doing extraordinary things with whatever materials they found around them.

Long may that continue!

Kevin & Jeanette Ryland remember

After our marriage in April 1962 we moved into our new house (11 squares) in Sunhill Road in December 1962. I had bought the land in 1959 from the "Sunhill Cooperative" (Nirens Family). The road was to be fully constructed with kerb and channel. The base was down but was not sealed until months later. No footpaths were provided.

Lot 37 was bounded on the north side by vacant land and by the Bryant Heslop property. It was a great place to live, young battling families with lots of children, no through traffic, close to primary school. In 1965 a social golf club was formed in the street. I was a foundation member and am still an active member. Games are played monthly and after each game in the earlier days a social night was held for the members and their wives. A child minding scheme was implemented within the street.

When it was proposed that Heslop's land could be subdivided for housing, a meeting was called (1968) at Barry Counsel's house and the group "Damper Creek Conservation and Development Group" was formed.

We supported 2 prospective councillors, Peter Davies and Laurie Ryan. Peter was successful on the first try and Laurie next time around. I believe this brought a change in Council attitude to public open space and conservation. In 1993 with Council support *The Friends of Damper Creek Inc.* was formed.

The Friends Group is still very active and have contributed greatly to achieving the terrific result we have today. Since our marriage we have only lived in Sunhill Rd (though with various extensions and alterations over the years) and have no regret. I remember well the horses and Heslop's cows that lived on the Heslop property.

Post script The Rylands have since moved into a retirement village in Glen Waverley

Did You Know?

The current area of the Mt Waverley Shopping centre in Hamilton Place was once planned to be named the Dalston Estate

motor trucks or cars - and paid for them too! Petrol was available at the store through a portable bowser wheeled out every morning, wheeled in every evening and padlocked. Oils were available in bulk lots or in smaller containers. One day a customer had run out of petrol along the road and wanted two gallons. A search was made at the rear of the shop for a tin. One was found, but the tin had something loose in it. The contents were shaken out through the small opening into the hand, and out came a handful of bees! It was an empty honey tin. It had been washed out, but nonetheless had attracted the bees.

The Brown family acquired a motor van for the business in due course, this proving to be quite advantageous, and the business consequently extended into areas further afield. When the various services such as telephone (trunk lines), water and electricity were introduced, the terminus of these services was outside the store in each case.

Robin Boyd SHS Continued from p.5

Exhibition. It was a SHS T2103 and showcased many of the features mentioned – separate active and passive areas, ground-hugging floors and gently-pitched roofs, large windows and natural finishes. Controversial in design, it was offered as the first prize in a competition and relocated to Bogong Ave (then Home St) Glen Waverley for the winning family. It has since been demolished.

Robin Boyd was the director of the SHS from 1947 to 1953. At its peak, in 1952, owner-building was expanding and over 50% of houses being built in the shire were built by owner builders. Ten percent of permits used SHS plans – and more than half of these SHS plans were being used by owner builders! Many adapted SHS plans to suit themselves and built on weekends, some watching qualified builders and copying their actions.

By the mid to late 1950s the building industry was reorganising after its war-time shutdown. Entrepreneurial builders started building houses speculatively. One of these was Albert Croft whose firm *Contemporary Homes* was based in Beaumaris. Croft commissioned Boyd to design a house called the *Peninsula*. It was an 11.5 square timber house that his advertisements offered could be built in 6 weeks for just £3140. These were the first 'off-the-shelf' houses that have become known as project houses. The ease of buying a finished house, rather than buying plans to build oneself soon led to the demise of the SHS. An early *Peninsula* erected in

The General Store eventually closed down. After the passing of the late Mr Sidney Charles Brown and his wife, Florence Brown nee Timberlake, the family gradually wound up the business. The building, which was situated at what is now 456-458 High Street Road, was purchased by the nearby Huntingtower school south across the railway, and moved in one piece as a storeroom there.

Family of Mr and Mrs S.C. Brown:

Rowland Jesse Brown
Marjorie Adelaide Brown
Ernest Harry Brown
Sidney Arnold Brown
Vivian John Brown

The site on the South west corner of Fleet St and High Street Rd was later used as a Shell Petrol Station and is now occupied as a multi unit housing development.

MarJo Angelico

1956 still stands at 32 Clifford Street, Glen Waverley. Maybe it will not stand for much longer as it was recently sold. There were once 18 *Peninsulas* in nearby Garrison Drive! Not many are still standing.

The next challenge to the SHS was AV Jennings who later became one of Australia's most successful project home builders. Many of their first houses at their early and ambitious *Mountview Estate* in MW (Howell St) were derived from SHS designs published in *The Age*. They provided all services except sewerage, and the houses were mainly brick veneer and built for interstate owners who were interviewed off site. Olinda St GW also features AV Jennings designs. These houses were promoted as "houses off the hook," easy to purchase and ready to move into, and they swamped the market, causing the sales of struggling SHS to plummet.

After leaving the SHS Robin Boyd designed the barrel shaped shop and residence in Ashwood, using the Ctesiphon construction system. There were also two Boyd designed houses in Lum Rd, the Troedel and Moore houses, together with the nearby and famous *Appletree Estate* where most of his houses still exist, although some have been modified. The Troedel House, known as 'The Oaks', is long gone, but the oak tree it took its name from is still there, as is the Moore House at no 67. However the Small Homes Service was of special interest as it made such a huge impact on Waverley's history.

The First General Store in Mount Waverley

Summarised from a story by S.A. Brown

The white mare plodded along drawing the covered wagon behind it. The driver had stopped a little earlier to let the back flap down against the rain.

Now the horse began to limp badly. The driver stopped, got down, and inspected the sore hoof. He found quite a chunk of bluestone wedged behind the iron shoe. This prised out, the horse was able to move on again untroubled. The roads were rough in those days, surfaces being maintained with coarse bluestone metal, some pieces being a good two inches across. In fact children often used chunks to pelt at a snake that had slithered across the road, or at swooping magpies.

After delivering the load of groceries to one area of Mount Waverley, the storekeeper was returning to deliver in another. Such was the work of Mr Sidney Charles Brown who built (in 1922) and operated the first General Store in Mount Waverley, when homes of this rural area were quite a distance apart – up to a mile through orchards, market gardens and bushland, less on main roads.

Before 1922 local residents brought home provisions from the markets of Prahran and Melbourne where their produce was sold, or they would trek to Ashburton, tie their horses up near the station and travel further by steam train. Sid had worked in the city, walking to the tram on Warrigal Rd.

With the advent of the Brown's General Store in High Street Road, a new era of services began. The variety of goods available was almost unbelievable from such a small store. From a beginning of groceries, sweets and soft drinks, one

could later purchase bacon, needles, cottons, materials, a suit, hardware, bicycle parts, Gloria light outfits, lamps, kerosene, insurance, a pair of boots, a pound of butter, tin of jam, stick of lolly, bottle of lemonade from the cellar, a variety of medications, a piece of rope, cigarettes, or ice cream home made in the churn!

Since the residents of the area were occupied mainly with market gardening and orchard work, the shop sold agricultural sprays, pastes and powders.

Transport in those early days being by horse and horse-drawn vehicles, there was a demand for repairs to harnesses and gig or jinker wheels. These were

jobs for specialists, so Mr Brown acted as agent. He would take a wheel or harness by wagon to the saddlers, coach builders or similar expert in Chapel Street, Prahran for repair, and bring them back later.

There were certain experiences Mr Brown had in the business. On his round there were moments such as when the mare did not want to go any further, or when, on the other hand, she wanted to keep on going, or move on without him when he was in a house making a delivery of orders! On one occasion Mr Brown observed a young lad running off with a bottle stolen from the

wagon, apparently thinking it was a soft drink. It was kerosene. Mr Brown was heard to say, "Well, I hope he enjoyed the drink!"

With the advent of the motor vehicle into the area, a demand arose for motor spirit and oils. Market gardeners and orchardists purchased



Looking South East



Looking north at the back of the store and house. towards High Street Rd with the Lechte home in background

Kooyong Koot - A report on our October general meeting

Virginia Barnett

Gary Presland, our October speaker, led us on a walk to the origins of Gardiners Creek and beyond.

He is a self-professed lover of natural history encompassing the First Nations people and mingles the past and the present with ease. He has published a very worthwhile volume: *'Natural History of Melbourne'*.

He presented his talk as "a brief but multi-faceted history of Kooyong Koot", which is exactly what it was. 'Kooyong koot' means: place of the water-fowl'. This once free-flowing natural creek has been altered in every possible way to suit urban development. Another metropolitan creek which 'suffered' in the same way was the Moonee Ponds Creek, over which the Tullamarine Freeway now stands.

We viewed a geological map showing the Camberwell and Box Hill region and the areas of 400 M years old bedrock with large patches of basalt outcrops underlying this city. It was this basalt plain which attracted the early white

settlers as they realised the benefits thereof. Gary's knowledge of Indigenous people and the culture contained within the broad Kulin Nation allowed him to explain that Kooyong Koot, or Gardiners Creek as we know it today, was once a boundary between two language groups: the Woirurung and the Bunurong, both containing additional smaller classes and language groups. Each of these clans had an up-country and low-country area, within which the population moved according to the seasons and staying close to river valleys where water always flowed.

Gardiners Creek's source is on the northern side of Whitehorse Road where it joins with Blackburn Creek. It merges with the Yarra after passing through an enormous tea-tree swamp, no longer there but we saw a picture drawn in the 1830's. The catchment of Gardiners Creek covers 140 square kilometres and its length is twenty-five km. There is an Alliance afoot which aims to change the names of Gardiners Creek to Kooyong Koot which, as Gary says, is the European thing to do, whereas to the Indigenous people, *Kooyong Koot*

would explicitly refer to that part of the Creek where the water-fowls dwelt.

John Gardiner, after whom the Creek is named, was the first white settler in the area and he and others set up cattle runs. He built his home somewhere between Gardiners Creek and the Yarra; the exact site is open to conjecture. We saw a photo, taken in 1935, the Year of Melbourne's Centenary, of the unveiling of a monument to Gardiner, which is in the grounds of Scotch College, somewhat inconveniently placed.

Gary displayed several very interesting old photos and sketches. Some outlined the problems associated with development; the way the Europeans stripped vegetation from the banks of the Creek, leaving no tree-roots, ergo nothing to prevent the loose alluvium from disappearing at an alarming rate. The drastic flood of 1934 was shown in black and white. Much has since been done to halt some of the

damage, like the construction of weirs, retarding basins (at least ten) and canalising the course of the Creek. One picture in particular is of the canal leaving Sparks Reserve. Then there was a very attractive shot of rocky placements on the river bed, which slows down the flow and greatly

restricts damage in times of flood. A shot of the old Burwood Drive-in showed the car-park on one side of the Creek, projection booth on the other. A few sculptures exist today to mark the spot and can be seen from the walking track over the road from Deakin University.

Gary rounded off his talk showing Louis Bovelot's *'The Big Tree'*, Gardiners Creek, circa 1869, along with the explanation that the Box Hill School of *plein air* painting actually preceded that of the famed Heidelberg School. And, perhaps a poignant note to finish: Jane Sutherland's very beautiful painting *'Field Naturalists'*, three little boys dabbling near the Creek in the very early days, each ensconced in the wonders of nature and the world seeming so far away.



A view from the recently installed power pylon looking over Kooyong Koot on Gardiners Creek towards Saxby Road, Glen Iris C.1925.

WHS File image

WHS File image

www

Robin Boyd and the Small Homes Service

Tony Lee

These notes were prepared by MarJo Angelico from Tony Lee's presentation with images at the WHS General Meeting 26.11.2023 .

Robin Boyd (1919 – 1972) was an eminent and influential architect, author, journalist, filmmaker and educator. He was born into an artistic family. His father was Penleigh Boyd (1890-1923), the landscapist, and his mother, Edith Susan Boyd (1880-1961) was also an artist and writer. Penleigh's grandfather Arthur Merric Boyd (1862-1940) was a Murrumbidgee potter, and the family tree included a good number of other artists – writers, crafters and painters in various combinations.

Penleigh Boyd designed and built a fanciful house called *The Robins* in Warrandyte, which was completed in 1914, where Robin grew up.



The Robins Warrandyte

It is still standing, and some locals call it the 'Gingerbread House'. It features split levels so that little-to-no excavation was needed, and rooms followed the natural ground contours. There are also interior-exterior spaces that may have influenced the young Boyd's spatial awareness and later approach to design.

A second, and possibly, the most significant influence on Boyd was Roy Grounds (1905-1981), designer of the Robert Blackwood Hall at Monash University, and many other famous buildings including the Victorian Arts Centre. Grounds adapted European modernism to Australian needs. He liked geometry, simple lines, natural timbers, large windows and low-pitched rooflines. He was teaching at the University of Melbourne when Boyd was studying there, and used to invite students to his beach house in Mt Eliza where they experienced open-plan living, so different to the usual cellular house designs of the time.

Boyd was an active student who in 1939 became the editor of a student magazine called *Smudges*, where each issue honoured a piece of good work with a *bouquet*, while poor design was awarded a 'blot' and strongly criticised. Here he developed as a writer, later authoring *Victorian Modern* (1947),

the first published history of Australian architecture and where he identified the traits that he felt should lead house design in the new post-war era, and *The Australian Ugliness* (1960) which criticised the copying of overseas fashions unquestioningly.

In fact, 1947 was a huge year for Robin Boyd due to three major achievements. His first book was published; secondly, he completed and moved into the first house that he had designed and built for his own family (wife and first child) at 158 Riversdale Rd Camberwell, featuring open plan living, large picture windows and a low-pitched gable roof. (It is still standing, though has not been well maintained for years. However, it was recently sold to new owners.) Thirdly it was the year he was appointed as the director of the Small Homes Service (SHS).

The late 1940s was the time of returning soldiers, refugees and massive immigration – this created a huge need for housing when there was a shortage of building materials as the building industry had shut down during the war. Geoffrey Mewton and Robert Demaine, senior members of the architecture profession, approached *The Age* (which had been editorialising about the impending housing crisis during the war) inviting them to partner in the Small Homes Service being proposed by the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects. The idea for the SHS was borrowed from the American *Ladies Home Journal* magazine of the late 1890s.

A condition of the partnership was the SHS was to provide a weekly article of interest to owner-builders and a sample house design which included a floor plan. If readers were interested, they could buy the working drawings for just £5, and they would have all they needed to either engage a builder or build it themselves. Shortages of materials and labour together with rising costs drove many to take up tools and build their own homes. This service was still operational until the early 1980s! The houses were affordable and restrained according to the limitations of the times. They generally had a simple square or rectangular footprint. Timber homes were 11 squares (1100 square feet) and brick 12.5 squares, and many were designed to be easy to

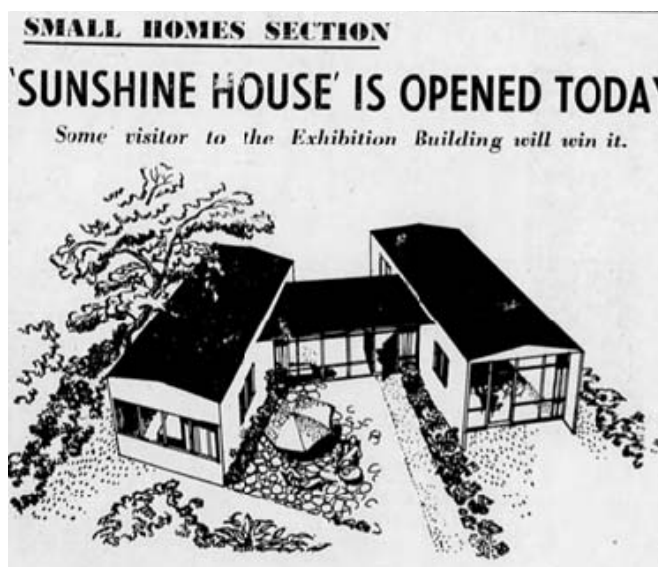
extend later. The plans were not prescriptive – owners could modify them. For a small home to function well, Boyd encouraged the active and passive areas to be separate, so bedrooms and the bathroom were at one end and the kitchen and living rooms at the other.



SHS V215 as built for Alexander Rose.

There were four categories of designs identified by their principle building material – T for timber, B for solid brick, V for brick veneer, and M for mud. The M-style was designed but never built. After this letter came the number of bedrooms - 1, 2 or 3. Two was the most common. After that was the sequential number of the plan, so a T23 was the third in the series of timber 2-bedroom houses offered. The designs were provided by more than 50 architects. Each design could only be sold 50 times, half in the city and half in the country, and the architects received royalties from the sales.

In those times houses were generally built on commission. Potential home-seekers had to arrange a design and working drawings and then find a builder – an unfamiliar and daunting process where there were all kinds of pitfalls for the unwary and inexperienced. The SHS changed all that, by making plans available for purchase. There were designs for corner blocks, sloping land, and various orientations. Clever louvres on eaves allowed winter sun in but kept out summer heat. The first SHS featured in *The Age* in July



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1947 included a full page of useful advice. As well as the plans *The Age* published articles written by Boyd to educate consumers and plan-buyers – "Black Market Builders", "Put it in Writing", and "Costs" were Boyd's titles for some of his early articles.



The standard working drawings were just a single sheet (not 30 pages like today), and council permits were typically available a few days after submission. Owners were only required to add specific details like land boundaries. Only rudimentary carpentry was required. As well as the weekly articles and plans published in *The Age*, newsagencies sold promotional folders of designs for 1/6 (one shilling and sixpence – 15 cents in 1966!)

Many of the SHS houses were built on the "eastern housing frontier," where land was cheap as farms and market gardens were subdivided. This frontier included the Shire of Mulgrave. The *Morgans* street directories of the day showed Melbourne's outer suburbs ending at Glen Waverley as development followed the railways. Here the small farms, orchards and market gardens in between the railway stations and railway lines radiating out from Melbourne, were replaced by new houses.

Over 250 SHS houses were built in the shire up to 1960. The first SHS house built in the shire was contracted by Alexander Rose in September 1947, just two months after the SHS opened. It was built by local builder Joseph Fairbrother and located opposite the general store in Glen Waverley (corner of Hinkler Rd). It was the standard SHS design V215 (a 2-bedroom brick veneer). Other examples were in Price Ave Syndal, Delos St and Beryl St. Oakleigh and in a little lane called Woodroyd Ave (the discontinued street off High Street Rd where Tait's hardware, formerly Flatmans is now.)

When the SHS opened, it was very rare for homes to be built speculatively. Most were built on commission, but demonstration houses were built annually at home shows held in the Royal Exhibition Building. One example of these was the *Sunshine House*, built for the 1951 Jubilee Better Homes and Housekeeping

Continued at p.7