

2023 AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE FESTIVAL

FASHION IN THE AGE OF ELEGANCE

1840–1900

Villa Alba Museum

44 Walmer Street, Kew VIC 3101

Saturday 22 April to Sunday 7 May 2023

Opening hours and times

Saturday 22 April	10am – 12pm	1pm – 3pm
Sunday 23 April	10am – 12pm	1pm – 3pm
Wednesday 26 April	Lecture	1pm – 3pm
Saturday 30 April	10am – 12pm	1pm – 3pm
Sunday 1 May	10am – 12pm	1pm – 3pm
Saturday 6 May	10am – 12pm	1pm – 3pm
Sunday 7 May	10am – 12pm	1pm – 3pm



Description

In a foreign climate and environment, how did European women adapt to living in rural Victoria and the emerging suburbs of Melbourne in the nineteenth century. This exhibition allows you to view the opulent tastes and styles adopted by colonial women through their choice of gowns. One of these women, Mary Ann Henty, came with her husband to the Port Phillip District immediately after their marriage in Launceston in 1842. The gown that she wore at the ceremony is the centrepiece of a large collection of gowns owned and worn by pioneering Victorian families. The newly acquired costumes in the Henty Collection join other historic costumes donated by descendants of the Coombs and Weir families of Kew. The formal rooms of the Villa Alba Museum form a vivid and aesthetically appropriate background to the items exhibited.

Bookings for all events can be made through Eventbrite.

Cost of entry

Saturdays and Sundays \$20

Wednesday lectures \$25

Acknowledgements

Kew Historical Society and Villa Alba Museum acknowledge the individuals and groups who have made this exhibition possible, particularly the donor families. We also acknowledge the importance of grants by the City of Boroondara to support the exhibitions and lectures we deliver.

1-5 **THE PAINTED VILLA**

Russell Winnell [photographer]

Australia

Decorative finishes, 2011

Five detailed studies of the painted decoration within Villa Alba, created by artists employed by the Paterson Bros between 1882–84. The firm of ‘art decorators’ was commissioned by William Greenlaw to design and paint the walls and ceilings in the house. Flowers within the painted decorations were possibly the work of Signor Rizzi, a noted scenic artist in Melbourne during the 1880s. Many decorative elements were overpainted during the 1950s when the house was used as a home for nurses of the Royal Women’s Hospital. Uncovering or replicating the decoration is an ongoing task as funding permits.

Villa Alba Museum

6 **ANONYMOUS**

Australia

Blue silk day dress, c.1865

One-piece, floor length blue silk day dress with a bell skirt; slightly longer at the back. The dress is joined, centre-front with hooks and eyes. The bodice has a high round neck. The dress must at one stage have been reconfigured or strengthened at the join of the bodice and skirt, as there is evidence of the use of new machine stitching. The dress is fully lined with a stiffened cotton lining fabric.

Coombs collection, Kew Historical Society

Gift of Mabel Isola Grattan, 1961



7 **ANONYMOUS**

Australia

Purple silk ball gown, c.1900

Shot silk purple ball gown, featuring a fitted silk bodice with puff sleeves and a wide full-length skirt. The dress has coloured guipure lace at the neck and the cuffs, which has been identified as being of the period. The brush braid on the hem has probably been replaced at a later date.

Coombs collection, Kew Historical Society

Gift of Mabel Isola Grattan, 1961



BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Alice Frances Henty (1852–1932), the youngest of three daughters of Mary Ann and Francis Henty, was born at *Merino Downs*, near Portland. At the age of 23, she married John Hindson (1839–1919) at Trinity Church, East Melbourne in 1875. Following her marriage, she lived at *Shrublands* a stately Italianate mansion in Canterbury. In 1923, the house was donated to the Anglican Church which established *St John's Evangelist Homes for Boys* at the site. Alice Hindson died, aged 80, at *Field Place* in Kew in 1932. She is buried with her husband in the Boroondara General Cemetery.

8-9 **UNKNOWN**

Australia

Alice Frances Henty, c.1872

Studio portrait of Alice Henty, probably taken before her marriage to John Hindson. Her hair is centrally parted and severely pulled back from her face. She is posed wearing a high-necked, dark coloured dress with extensive ruching. Her jewelry is limited to a brooch at the neck and earrings.

Henty family collection

**J HUBERT NEWMAN**

Australia

Mr and Mrs John Hindson, 1875

Wedding portrait of Alice Henty and John Hindson, taken at the atelier of J Hubert Newman. As was customary in wedding portraits of the period, the man is seated with his wife standing to his right. In 1876, the 24-year-old bride's single piece silk and dress features a low decolletage with lace modestly covering her neck and chest. The long lace cuffs and the tails of the silk faille, silk and satin jacket are apparent, as is the visual evidence that the jacket of the outfit was opened to reveal the dress beneath.

Henty family collection

10 **ANONYMOUS**

Australia

Blue cotton voile and lace dress, 1858

This child's dress is a rare survivor. It belonged to and was worn by Alice Henty at the age of six. The two-tone, one-piece cotton voile dress has a high round neck and short sleeves has a lace insert on the front of the bodice and matching lace at the rear. The layered skirt is bordered with lace.

Henty collection, Kew Historical Society

Gift of descendants of Francis Henty, 2023

11 **ANONYMOUS**

Australia

Ivory silk bridesmaid's dress, 1874

An ivory silk skirt and matching jacket worn by Alice Henty, aged 22, at the marriage of her friend Lizzie Hopkins and S.T. Staughton in 1874. The ivory silk satin peplum jacket is boned, tailored, and fitted with many princess line panels. The front closure has handmade embroidered buttonholes and covered buttons. The collar and sleeves are decorated with gathered silk tulle frills. The peplum back features a silk cord bow decoration. The skirt with bustle and train features a central panel with hand ruching and silk satin piping. It is decorated with five rows of pleated silk tulle frills.

Henty collection, Kew Historical Society

Gift of descendants of Francis Henty, 2023



12 **ANONYMOUS**

Australia

Two-tone pink, moiré silk afternoon dress, 1875

Alice (Henty) Hindson's afternoon dress is a two-piece, two-toned pink ensemble made of silk taffeta. The detailing is done with fine knife-pleated trims piped in ivory satin and decorated with ivory silk moiré bows on the bodice and skirt. The panelled peplum jacket is boned and the front button closure has hand-embroidered buttonholes with handmade covered buttons. The gathered full buttoned skirt falls into a train. The skirt is decorated with rows of ivory tulle corded lace and the hemline is edged with crisp fluted organza and tatted lace.

Henty collection, Kew Historical Society

Gift of descendants of Francis Henty, 2023



13 **ANONYMOUS**

Australia

Pink lobster-tail bustle, c.1875

An exceptionally rare and fine, floor length, 'lobster tail' bustle that belonged to Alice Henty possibly worn with her two-piece pink silk gown but also with other dresses that she owned that required a bustle of this shape. The structure of the bustle includes an outer layer of polished cotton with inserted steel hoops and ties at the front. The lower four hoops have flounces of the same fabric. Overall, the bustle contains 12 hoops, crossed nearer the waist and semi-circular for the remainder of the undergarment. [One of the tapes of the bustle is imprinted with the word lockstitch. Elias Howe invented the lockstitch sewing machine in 1846.]

Henty collection, Kew Historical Society

Gift of descendants of Francis Henty, 2023



14 **ANONYMOUS**

Australia

Ivory silk wedding dress with a silk, silk faille and satin jacket, 1875

Alice Henty's wedding dress, made in 1876 for her marriage to John Hindson was remodelled in 1943 for the wedding of her granddaughter, Alice Henty Hindson to Norman Lithgow Tait at Holy Trinity, Kew. In contrast, the ivory silk, silk faille and satin bodice with long tails remained unaltered. The front closure of the jacket has handmade embroidered buttonholes and covered buttons. The collar and sleeves are decorated with gathered silk tulle. The jacket features long tails.

Henty collection, Kew Historical Society

Gift of descendants of Francis Henty, 2023



15 **LOUISA AND ALICE HENTY**

Australia

Hand embroidered fire screen, 1870-6

This mid-Victorian fire screen was created by Louisa and Alice Henty, two of the three daughters of Mary Ann and Francis Henty. The multicoloured, silk floral composition on a black fabric background is held behind glass and is protected by blackened wood at the back. The screen is suspended in an ebonized and gilded frame with two rows of spindles.

Henty collection, Kew Historical Society

Gift of descendants of Francis Henty, 2023



16 **CABINET**

The display cabinet includes original costume accessories, mementos, and photographs of members of the Henty family. The most interesting is a hollow 1879 'cartwheel' penny, which includes a lock of hair of the Henty patriarch, Thomas Henty (1775–1839), who migrated with his family, his retainers and breeding flocks from West Tarring, Sussex, to Van Diemen's Land in 1832. A collection of original ambrotypes, daguerreotypes and tintypes include portraits of members of the Henty and Lawrence families. The oval framed photo in a suede case lined with velvet is of Alice (Henty) Hindson.



BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Mary Ann Henty (1821–81) was born in London, the eldest daughter of William and Mary Ann Lawrence. She emigrated to Van Diemen's Land in 1823 with her parents. On 5 January 1842, she married Francis Henty at St John's Church in Launceston, before embarking with her husband later that day to Portland. Initially living apart from her husband, she later moved to *Merino Downs* where it is said that she lived a life of relative isolation, with infrequent visitors. The couple had four children, one boy and three girls. Francis and Mary Ann Henty relocated to *Field Place* in Kew in 1876 when Mary Ann was 55 years old. Following her death, aged 60, she was buried in the Boroondara Cemetery.

17 A'BECKETT, EDWARD (1844-1932)

Australia

Francis Henty, c.1890

Francis Henty (1815–89) was born in West Tarring, Sussex, England. At the age of 17 he travelled to Launceston with his parents. Two years later he followed his brother Edward to Portland, becoming Victoria's second settler and reputedly the first to bring merino sheep across to the Port Phillip District. After his marriage to Mary Ann Lawrence, he settled at *Merino Downs* in the Western District. In 1876, he built *Field Place* in Kew where he lived for the last 13 years of his life. Edward A'Beckett was commissioned to paint this portrait by Francis Henty's family.



Courtesy of the State Library Victoria

Gift of Louisa Henty, Caroline Macleod and Alice Hindson, the daughters of Francis Henty, 1892.

18 MUNDY, HENRY (1798–1848)

Australia

Mary Ann Lawrence, 1841

Trained as an engraver and lithographer in London, Henry Mundy arrived in Hobart in 1831. After teaching at a school for young ladies, he established himself as a pre-eminent portrait and landscape painter, first in Launceston and later in Hobart. The portrait of Mary Ann Lawrence was painted in 1841, after the announcement of her engagement to Francis Henty. Mundy's practice was successful for many years before it was badly affected by the economic downturn of 1844. Over the next four years, Munday slowly deteriorated into advanced alcoholism, eventually dying in Hobart after drinking laudanum.



The portrait is discussed in an article by Joanna Gilmour, 'Fits of Delicacy and Despair' (National Portrait Gallery, 2009)

Courtesy of the State Library Victoria

Bequest of Miss Elsie Hindson through Mrs Beth Henty-Anderson 1968 and 1992.

19 ANONYMOUS DRESSMAKER

Australia

Mary Ann Lawrence's wedding dress, 1842

Mary Ann Lawrence's grey silk wedding dress has a V-line waist and a partly smocked bodice. It is lined with muslin throughout. It has hand-tatted cotton lace and handmade piping around the neck and bodice and pleated short sleeves. There was originally trimming on the hem of the skirt which was later removed. Orange blossom made of chamois and tiny coiled springs was used to decorate the neckline. The outfit was complemented by a bonnet to which a Limerick lace veil was attached. The marriage of 21-year-old, Mary Ann Lawrence, to 27-year-old Francis Henty took place early in the morning before the couple set sail for Portland later that day.



Henty collection, Kew Historical Society

Gift of descendants of Francis Henty, 2023

20 **ANONYMOUS DRESSMAKER**

Australia

Pink silk evening dress, c.1842

A one-piece, pink silk taffeta evening dress, lined with polished cotton, probably worn by Mary Ann Henty, and later by her daughter, Alice. The V-waist line of the dress and the dimensions of the skirt are comparable to Mary Ann's wedding dress. The bodice in contrast is less structured. At a later stage, the sleeves were removed.

Henty collection, Kew Historical Society

Gift of descendants of Francis Henty, 2023



21 **ANONYMOUS DRESSMAKER**

Australia

Black chalk-striped ensemble, 1870

A two-piece silk taffeta chalk-striped afternoon dress worn by Mary Ann Henty, aged 49, in the period when she lived at *Merino Downs* near Portland. The outfit has bands of black silk and rows of fabric covered buttons on the bodice and skirt.

Henty collection, Kew Historical Society

Gift of descendants of Francis Henty, 2023



22 **ANONYMOUS DRESSMAKER**

Australia

Black moiré silk faille day dress, 1880

A two-piece, moiré silk faille day dress, owned and worn by Mary Ann Henty, aged 59, while resident at *Field Place*, Kew. The fitted and panelled bodice on the day dress features wide velvet ribbon, hand sewn to form 'V' detailing at front and back. The front bodice hook and eye closure is decorated with handmade velvet covered buttons. The high round neckline is trimmed with pleated ivory fine tulle lace. The wide long sleeves of the bodice are also trimmed with velvet ribbon and buttons forming exquisite cuff detailing. The full length skirt and train are tucked into a fitted waistline band. The hemline is hand finished with wide velvet ribbon. A separate attached peplum is worn over the full bustle of the skirt.

Henty collection, Kew Historical Society

Gift of descendants of Francis Henty, 2023



23 **ANONYMOUS**

United Kingdom

Midnight blue sateen and velvet bodice

Alice (Henty) Hindson's midnight blue sateen bodice is highlighted using velvet lapels, cuffs, and a rear bow. The velvet, in contrast to the plain midnight blue sateen, is embellished [in the weave] with pink and navy spots. Joined at the front with 23 round domed buttons, hooks and eyes are used to close the neckline. The bodice also features coffee-coloured lace at the front and on the cuffs, which may have been added later. The bodice has some condition issues, missing one cuff and the lace on the cuffs needing re-attaching. The inside of the bodice is heavily boned, complete with a floral chintz lining.

*Henty collection, Kew Historical Society
Gift of descendants of Francis Henty, 2023*

24 **MADAME JAY**

United Kingdom

Grey silk and lace bodice, 1875

The yoke is a bustier bodice, made of silk and silk organza with an insert of hand-tatted lace. The bodice is carefully boned and has a little padding in the bust line. It includes the name of the maker of the bodice as 'Madame Jay, Brighton, 38 London Road'. The silk organza sleeves have hand shirring, trim, and frilled cuffs. The bodice is finished with a large, frilled bow at the back. Believed by the Henty family to be part of the 'going away' outfit worn by Alice Henty in 1875.

*Henty collection, Kew Historical Society
Gift of descendants of Francis Henty, 2023*

25 **CABINET**

Australia

Grace Burland's ivory silk and lace bodice, 1912

Margaret Grace Burland married John Lawrence Henty Hindson at St George's Church, Malvern in 1912. A report in *Punch* [12 September 1912] described her outfit as "... white crepe de chene finished with Mechlin lace and pearl trimming; also pearl crescent brooch (gift of the bridegroom's mother)." Mechlin lace or *Point de Malines* is an old bobbin lace, one of the best-known Flemish laces, originally produced in Mechelen, Belgium. Used for women's clothing, it was popular until the first decade of the 20th century.

*Henty collection, Kew Historical Society
Gift of descendants of Francis Henty, 2023*

26 **ANONYMOUS**

Australia

Undergarments of Grace Burland, 1912

Fine cotton chemisette and knickers worn by Grace Burland as undergarments at her wedding to John Lawrence Henty Hindson. In contrast to the structured underpinnings of the Victorian era, these undergarments were attractive yet utilitarian. The bodice and knickers are bordered with lace and are highlighted using blue silk ribbon threaded through the lace. The rear of the knickers uses a buttoned flap to enable ease of toileting.

*Henty collection, Kew Historical Society
Gift of descendants of Francis Henty, 2023*



BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Edith Mary Weir, nee Betteridge, (1867–1948) was born in Clare, South Australia. In 1891 she married George Weir (1866–1937), who was to become General Manager of the North Broken Hill Silver Mining Company in 1903 (later renamed North Broken Hill Mining Company 1905–12, and North Broken Hill Ltd 1912–88), and subsequently President of the Mine Owners Association. The costumes of Edith Weir exhibited here date from the period when the family lived in Broken Hill, before moving to Princess Street, Kew, in c.1917, whereas most costumes in the Weir collection date from the first half of the twentieth century. Edith Weir died in Kew at the age of 81 in 1948 and is buried in the Boroondara General Cemetery.

27 **ANONYMOUS**

Australia

Edith Betteridge's ivory silk wedding dress, 1891

This wedding dress was worn by Edith Mary Betteridge at her marriage to George Weir in 1891. The two-piece cream silk wedding dress consists of a long-sleeved pleated bodice and a full skirt. The interior of the bodice exhibits extensive use of baleen to provide structure. The outfit includes a marching pair of cream silk shoes.

*Weir collection, Kew Historical Society
Gift of Jillian Rigby, 2017*



28 **ANONYMOUS**

Australia

Silk and Lace Bodice, c.1905

This striped pink and cream silk bodice was owned by Edith Weir. It is joined at the back with twelve mother-of-pearl buttons and has extensive cream coloured lace at the cuffs of the wide sleeves. There is an inner sleeve of lace as well as an extended ruffle of lace extending from the cuff. The bodice has a floating panel at the front, which is bordered with lace. The lace extends in a wider panel to the round neck.

*Weir collection, Kew Historical Society
Gift of Jillian Rigby, 2017*



29 **CABINET**

Australia

Embroidered satin pelmets, 1890s

Two pelmet decorations, with hand embroidered arum lilies on delustrated satin backed onto canvas. One pelmet is slightly longer than the other, but each has the same number of commercially made bobbles on the trim.

*Hornby collection, Kew Historical Society
Gift of Anna French, 2022*



30-31 **MANTLEPIECE**

Men's lounging caps, Nineteenth century

Smokers, or 'lounging' caps and hats were usually examples of women's work, using published patterns in magazines such as the Ladies Home Magazine.

The earlier conical hat is constructed of dark green cotton embroidered with narrow ribbon of a paler green silk. It dates from the 1860s, and was made for a Mr Middleton, of Vaughan, in Central Victoria. Middleton was the owner of Middleton's Reef Gold Quartz Mining Company, which at one stage had the largest water wheel in the Colony. [1]

The second example was made for William Horner Richardson by his wife, the grandparents of the historian, Dorothy Rogers. It is constructed of dark green velvet, and hand embroidered with yellow and green silk thread and topped with a lime green tassel. [2]

[1] Gift of Marion Blatchly [2] Gift of Dorothy Rogers

Kew Historical Society



VESTIBULE

COOMBS FAMILY DRESSES

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Caroline Mary Michel (1851–1924), was the daughter of Henry Edward Michel who emigrated to New South Wales from *Dewlish House*, Dewlish, Dorset in about 1839. Her father purchased three land grants and set up a 'traveller's house' at *Mundarlo* on the Murrumbidgee River. Caroline, his first daughter, was born in 1851 in this remote region. In 1869, 18-year-old Caroline married Joseph Butterworth Coombs (1842–1901) at St Peter's, Eastern Hill. Coombs was an accountant and squatter who made a fortune as a mercantile trader with a Collins Street address. After his death in 1901, Caroline Coombs returned from their country estate in Taggerty to *Hope Mansell*, the family's long-term home in Fenwick Street, Kew. She lived there until her death.

32 **ANONYMOUS**

Australia

Day dress, 1880s

Two-piece royal blue heavy silk dress comprised of a tightly waisted top that extends below the waist at the front and the back, and a floor-length skirt. The full skirt and the sculpted fabric that is part of the top are designed to cover a bustle. The elaborately styled bodice is joined with fabric-covered buttons at centre front. The bodice is distinctively styled with the use silk velvet banding and tassels that extend the woven silk webbing.

Coombs collection, Kew Historical Society

Gift of Mabel Isola Grattan, 1961



33 UNKNOWN

Australia

Caroline Coombs and her daughters, 1907

A studio portrait of Caroline Coombs and her five surviving daughters: Charlotte, Mabel, Hilda, Kathleen and Eileen. In this wedding photograph, taken at the time of the marriage of Mabel [front] to William Younger, the bride is wearing a gown of ivory duchesse satin, featuring a long trained skirt draped with old Limerick lace. The bridesmaids wore dresses of pale pink and blue *muslin de soie*, which had full gathered skirts trimmed with cream lace. They carried crocks draped with handsome bouquets of *La France* roses, delphiniums and ferns.

Coombs family collection

34 ANONYMOUS

Australia

Day dress, c.1880

Blue silk, floor length day dress comprised of a tightly fitted, long, waisted jacket joined by hooks and eyes at centre front. The bodice features large ornamental buttons from neck to waist, covered in a figured silk fabric. The gown has extensive pin tucking on the sleeves, on the flounce of the skirt, and on the long train. The line of the outfit is emphasised by the flattened front, which is typical of the period. Its cut and lack of adornment emphasises the tailored effect.

*Coombs collection, Kew Historical Society**Gift of Mabel Isola Grattan, 1961*

35 ANONYMOUS

Australia

Wedding dress, c.1880

Single-piece, floor length, gold silk taffeta wedding dress featuring the use of a very long fishtail train to which is attached a silk cord to allow the wearer to hold it above the floor. The dress includes a number of decorative features including the extensive use of box pleats on the sleeves and on the hem of the skirt; contrasting gold and cream braiding and tassles; and the extensive use of ruching on the bodice at the front.

*Coombs collection, Kew Historical Society**Gift of Mabel Isola Grattan, 1961*

BEDROOM 2**THE WEDDING DRESS OF CAROLINE MICHEL****36 UNKNOWN**

Australia

Caroline Coombs, c.1872

Studio portrait of Caroline Coombs, nee Michel (1851–1924), wearing a silk velvet hat and day dress.

Coombs family collection

**37 ANONYMOUS**

Australia

Wedding dress, 1869

Two-piece white silk wedding dress worn by Caroline Michel at her wedding to Joseph Coombs at St Peter's, Eastern Hill. The outfit is comprised of a short, tailored bodice and a bell shaped skirt. The most prominent feature of the bodice are the wide pagoda sleeves, with false undersleeves of muslin. Separate panels of lace, dropping from the waist are the only form of decoration on the skirt.

Coombs collection, Kew Historical Society

Gift of Mabel Isola Grattan, 1961

**BOUDOIR****CLOTHING SUITABLE FOR A BOUDOIR****38 ANONYMOUS**

Australia

Peignoir, 1900-10

Multi-layered muslin and chiffon pale blue floral dressing gown, with commercial lace at the neck and at the cuffs. Owned by Edith Weir, this would have been worn in the morning over a nightgown before dressing for the day.

Weir collection, Kew Historical Society

Gift of Jillian Rigby, 2017



Printing: Courtesy of Jess Wilson MP, State Member for Kew.

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