

## HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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other researchers*

# NEWSLETTER

No. 117  
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## MAYORS OF KEW

On 18 October 1918, a report of a meeting of the Kew Town Council in the *Camberwell & Hawthorn Advertiser* noted the adoption by Council of a recommendation by its Public Works Committee that: "... photos of past mayors of the town be hung in the mayor's room". The mayor's room referred to in the report was in the original Town Hall in Walpole Street, where the Woolworths Supermarket is now located. This is the first reference in newspapers and periodicals to the series of photographs of mayors of Kew. The Kew Historical Society has for many years been the custodian of the photographs.

In 2016, the Society received a request from the City of Boroondara to assist Ms Ann Carew, a heritage consultant, track down and identify extant portraits of former mayors in Kew, Camberwell and Hawthorn. Because of the number of mayoral portraits held in the Kew Historical Society's collection, the task of viewing and assessing the portraits took a number of days. But what are the mayoral portraits like, how many are there, and why are they significant?

The earliest mayoral portrait in the collection is that of George Lewis, the third Chairman of the Municipality of Kew. Portraits of the first two Chairmen, Cr. George Wharton and Cr. John Halfey were probably never created. The only reason that a framed portrait of Cr. Lewis exists is that he became the first Mayor of Kew by default, when Kew was declared a Borough in 1863. The latest portrait in the collection is that of Cr. Henry Wiltshire, Mayor of Kew in 1968-69.

Overall, there are eighty-three framed photos of Mayors of Kew, five of which, over time, have lost their frames. The framed photographs are almost identically housed in dark, stained wood frames, with narrow gilt borders above a textured brown mount on which the mayor's name and term/s of office are listed. Each frame is glazed. These features are evident in the example of Robert M. Young, Mayor of Kew 1869-70 (above). The styles used for mayoral portraits seem to be fairly typical across different towns and municipalities. The style suited the normally sombre atmosphere of mayoral chamber, typically filled with heavy wooden furniture and often surrounded by a high wooden dado.

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**Councillor Robert M. Young, Mayor of Kew 1869-70**

Collection: Kew Historical Society

Right

**High Street, Kew.** J.F.C. Farquhar, photographer.

Collection: Kew Historical Society



## MAYORS OF KEW (from page 1)

The move of the mayoral portraits to the mayor's room in 1918 proved a temporary solution as the portraits were ultimately to be hung in the council chamber, presumably because of the number of portraits. In subsequent photographs of the council chamber, the portraits can be seen hanging above the high wooden dado.

Many of the 19th Century mayoral portraits are now believed to be recreations from old photographs. Many have the signature of the photographer, Josiah E. Barnes who worked in Kew ca. 1906-21. His method was apparently to source old photographs and affix these to artificial costumes. So, in the portrait of Cr Job Smith (page 9), the shirt, tie and jacket are later additions by Barnes.

A number of local histories list the names of the chairmen and mayors, and in some cases described their contributions. In most cases though, the lives and achievements of individual mayors went unrecorded or were forgotten. It is in this context that the Research Group of our Historical Society - Robert Baker, Kerry Fairbank, Suzanne McWha, Desley Reid, Felicity Renowden, Margaret Robinson, and David White - decided that it was important to discover or recover these forgotten lives. Accordingly, they decided to divide up the list of mayors by decade and to research and write profiles of those mayors that they had been allocated.

Since the project began, we have been able to assist a number of descendants of mayors, or owners of houses where a mayor once lived, find out about the details of their lives. Recently, we received an inquiry about the past owners of *Onro* in Cotham Road. We were able to provide the current owner with information about Cr Walter Price, Mayor of Kew 1940-41, who lived and died in the house.

Ultimately, the Society has a number of responsibilities and options as the custodian of the mayoral portraits. Preserving the portraits is the primary responsibility that we have accepted for many years. With new knowledge about each mayor, it opens up the potential to access funding for exhibitions or print publications. The more complex task is to gain funding for the restoration of the portraits.

But perhaps you might ask why? After all, the City of Kew was amalgamated in 1994, and why are these stern figures relevant beyond an academic interest.

Ann Carew, when examining the portraits for the City of Boroondara, was convinced that these are in many cases the only known portraits of these men, a number of whom were prominent figures in colonial society. The number of portraits in the series also illustrates powerfully the 'Governing' Strand of the Australian and the Victorian *Historic Themes Framework*, especially with the addition of research into the political, social and cultural contributions of these men and women. (See also pages 3 and 9).

**EDITOR**

## KEW HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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### MONTHLY MEETINGS

The Kew Historical Society holds monthly meetings in the Phyllis Hore Room at the rear of the Kew Library. Meetings are held at 8:00pm on the second Wednesday of the month, unless otherwise announced. Refreshments are provided. Meetings are open to members and visitors. Details of meetings and lectures are listed on page 3.

### KEW COURT HOUSE

Members of the Society played a key role in the preservation and restoration of the historic Kew Court House. Volunteers staff the Kew History Centre on Level 1 every Friday and Saturday (11.00am-1.00pm). At the Centre, you can ask questions about Kew's history and view displays from the Society's collection. Inquiries about houses and past residents can be made using the Sands & McDougall Directories.

### NEWSLETTER

This newsletter is published quarterly and is distributed to all members. Some additional copies are made available to the community. Past newsletters can be downloaded from our website.

### WEBSITE

[www.kewhistoricalsociety.org.au](http://www.kewhistoricalsociety.org.au)

### MEMBERSHIP INQUIRIES

See page 12 of the newsletter or contact the Secretary, Brad Miles. Phone 9489 7815

Email: [secretary@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au](mailto:secretary@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au)

**Kew Historical Society Inc.**

Inc. No. A0010789W

ABN 97 824 890 237

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# SOCIETY NEWS

## VALE - JILL O'BRIEN

Jill O'Brien, a tireless worker to improve the lives of others, passed away in July this year.

Born in Bendigo and trained as a nurse in the 1950s, she devoted a lifetime to social and environmental issues at both the State and local level. From her work in the 1960s with the Family Planning Association of Victoria, of which she was a founding member, through to the 1990s as a member of the Ethics Committee of the Department of Health, she supported efforts to improve women's health and reproductive rights.

At the local level she was most active on committees that worked to save the natural and built environment. The Powerline Action Group, the Studley Park Conservation Society, and the Yarra Bend Park Trust all benefitted from her indefatigable endeavours as well her vision.

In 1980, Jill O'Brien successfully stood for the Kew City Council and served as Mayor in 1983 and 1984.

With an eye to preserving the past as well as guarding the future, she had the Mayoral robes restored and in 1980 and 1981 was president of the Kew Historical Society. Villa Alba's preservation and restoration owes much to Jill's determined efforts throughout the 1980s. On Council, she chaired a number of committees involved in the saving of the Kew River Parklands from the proposed transmission line of the SEC. To this end, she was the Council representative on the Merry Yarra Municipal Protection Committee.

Few have given so unstintingly to their local community as Jill. The community of Kew in particular is in her debt.



**Cr. Jill O'Brien, Mayor of Kew 1980-81.**  
Collection: City Of Boroondara Library Service

**VALERIE BOURKE**

## WHAT'S ON



### KEW ILLUSTRATED



#### NEW EXHIBITION

A new exhibition, drawn from the collection of the Kew Historical Society, opens on Level 1 of the former Police Station at the Kew Court House complex on Saturday 5 November. The exhibition features the complete set of twelve panoramas of Kew commissioned in 1891 by Sir Henry de Castres Kellett. The silver albumen photographs by J.F.C Farquhar are the most important series of nineteenth century photographs of Kew.

**Each Friday & Saturday 11.00-1.00PM**

Level 1, Kew Court House, 188 High Street, Kew, 3101

Kew Historical Society  
PO Box 175 KEW VIC 3101  
info@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au | www.kewhistoricalsociety.org.au

### ANNUAL XMAS DINNER

#### INVITATION

2016 has been a very successful year for the Kew Historical Society and the President and Management Committee would like all members to join them for an End of Year Celebration in a lovely, comfortable venue with beautiful views.

Venue: Kew Golf Club, 120 Belford Road, East Kew.

Time: 6.30 for 7.00pm

Date: Wednesday, 14 December 2016

Cost: \$50 (2 Course Meal with glass of wine, tea/coffee and chocolates).

**RSVP by 1 December to the Secretary**

([secretary@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au](mailto:secretary@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au)

or phone 9489 7815).

[Vegetarian and Gluten free dishes etc. are available if nominated at time of booking]

#### MEMBERSHIPS

There are still some members who are not financial. The Management Committee has decided that non-financial members should be removed from our member database and newsletter mailing list. If you are unsure whether you have paid your 2016/17 subscription, please check with the Secretary ([secretary@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au](mailto:secretary@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au) or phone 9489 7815).



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# RATTING ON THE YARRA

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As the recession of the 1890s commenced, many unemployed people turned to furred and marsupial skins to make a living. In 1891, auctioneers Young Husband & Co were selling kangaroo, wallaby and opossum well above the general market price. Skins of less importance such as hare, goat, bear, cat and water-rat were also selling well. Any unemployed man could “earn a modest livelihood” at this trade, while, at the same time “ridding the country of [so called] destructive pests”.

In the Lower Yarra there were a number of foreign rats that had literally jumped ship and made Melbourne home. There were two main varieties: the large brown Norwegian rat and the smaller bluish-black English rat. These ship rats were to reach plague proportions. In 1900, the Smith Brothers created the sport of rat catching at the Port Melbourne Railway Pier. The mayors of Melbourne and suburbs congregated at a Rat Catching conference, in late March 1900, to address the problem and it was decided to put a price on the head of each dead rat delivered to the various council depots. There was no market for the skins of these imported vermin.

In the Upper Yarra, the situation was very different. Here the shy, native water-rat lived in burrows on the river bank. Known colloquially by various names such as the Rakali, Rabe or Beaver-rat, the technical name is *Hydromyini chrysogaster*. A mammal, it is not entirely nocturnal and can be seen scavenging for food, such as insects, fish, crustaceans and mussels during the day. Like the platypus, it is a curious animal having webbed rear feet. Historically, its water repellent fur was much prized for its beautiful ‘buffy brown’ colouring and softness of touch. Hence, the tanned pelts were used to make rugs, coats and trims to ladies garments. The Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, houses a superb example of a water-rat fur coat.



The Kew Historical Society’s collection includes a rare book, *Kew Where We Live*, which was probably self-published by Kew resident and councillor, Henry Kellett. It is a collection of photographs taken by the talented photographer J. F. C. Farquhar. Henry Kellett wished to capture Kew at a specific time, 1891, to record ‘landmarks’ that would change over time. One such photograph is entitled ‘Rattling on the Yarra’ (below left). This occupational practice has disappeared due to changes in social attitudes about the sustainability of indigenous animals and an anti-fashion for luxe clothes of animal fur in an era where faux fur is a viable option. So, the photograph captures a lost occupation.

The right half of the photograph includes a man wearing a Fedora hat. He appears to be holding his tools of trade, a bag for his catch and a stick to, perhaps, procure his water-rat. The man is intent on his activity, while his companion, the pert Fox Terrier, sharply turns his head to watch Farquhar snap the shot. The deep raking shadow of a sapling or tree branch across the stretch of the Yarra River in the left half of the photograph suggests it is dusk, a time when the water-rat becomes particularly active, and presumably easier to catch.

To retain the splendid natural sheen to the fur, the water-rat needed to be killed quickly, skinned and the pelt staked out to dry before being delivered to the tannery for final processing. In the 1890s the water-rat was considered the perfect pest, as it interfered with camping activities by stealing food and making a racket diving into the water at night.

By the 1930s, also an era of depression, the value of the water-rat pelt increased rapidly due to a Government ban on the import of furred skins, such as the American Muskrat. This led to the native water-rat being heavily hunted, and resulted, eventually, in protective legislation. Populations of the native water-rat seem to have recovered and some people report sightings on the banks of the Yarra at Kew, today.

**SUZANNE MCWHA, 2016**

*Editor: An antique rakali (water-rat) coat is part of our current exhibition - Kew Illustrated - at the Kew Court House, enhancing the iconic photograph described here. It has been loaned by one of our members.*

Left: Plate 9 - ‘Rattling on the Yarra’, J.F.C. Farquhar, photographer, 1891. Kew Historical Society collection.

# SAVING THE RIVER PARKLANDS

*During the 1980s, a number of Kew residents joined together to fight the SEC's proposal to build an overhead transmission line from Richmond to Brunswick, which was to crisscross the Lower Yarra Valley at Studley Park. This is the story of how this iconic environment was saved from the despoliation of huge, ten-storey high concrete pylons.*

...

The 1970s was a decade of changing social dynamics and demographics. The gradual gentrification of the inner suburbs brought an articulate, environmentally aware professional class to areas along the river valleys of Melbourne's eastern suburbs. They tended to have a broad network of connections within state bureaucracies.

The changing demographic was supported by newspaper campaigns to beautify and revitalise the lower Yarra. The redevelopment of South Bank was part of this rediscovery of the Yarra River on which Melbourne had, for a century, turned its back. The idea of valuing and saving our rivers gradually entered public consciousness. Community groups became aware of the value of the public parklands along waterways such as the Yarra River and Merri Creek. These waterways and their linear parklands were, in the 1970s, beginning to be appreciated as more than mere ditches.

## **The SEC and the provision of power**

During this period, the provision of electricity was the responsibility of the State Electricity Commission of Victoria, the SEC. This was a government instrumentality; a powerful utility. During the Second World War, construction and maintenance of power stations had been delayed, so after 1945 the SEC had to scramble to keep up with a rapidly increasing demand for power. Coal burning stations at Yallourn and Newport were expanded and hydroelectric power stations were developed at Eildon and Kiewa. The end of the 1960s saw 90 per cent of Victoria's power generated from brown coal. In the early 1970s, a new gas fuelled power station was proposed to replace the old Newport facility, however for the first time, the SEC encountered considerable local resistance. The Newport Power Station was finally reopened in the 1980s but at a smaller capacity than originally proposed.

During the 1970s, the SEC had a nightmare vision of inner Melbourne enduring blackouts such as those that the city of New York and cities in the United Kingdom had endured some years before. In a prolonged power blackout criminals rampaged, people were trapped in lifts, hospitals lost blood supplies, the sound of fire alarms was everywhere and the police were largely impotent to control riots. The SEC convinced the Victorian Government that growing demand might similarly outstrip supply to the Melbourne CBD. However, despite these stated fears, the newspapers at the time included a proliferation of advertisements encouraging the use of power. The truth is the SEC was all about selling power.

The SEC proposed to provide for the future power needs of the CBD by connecting the Richmond Terminal Station with the Clifton Hill Terminal Station. To this end, in February 1974, the SEC received permission from the Department of Crown Lands and Survey to replace the existing 66kV steel pylons with a new transmission line that included bigger pylons capable of carrying 220kV of electricity. This transmission line would provide for future power requirements in the northern inner metropolitan area and would consist of huge, new concrete pylons ten storeys high. These "light-house-like" towers would replace the old 'meccano' set, girder pylons, and on their proposed route from Richmond to Brunswick, would crisscross the Yarra and Merri waterways eleven times.

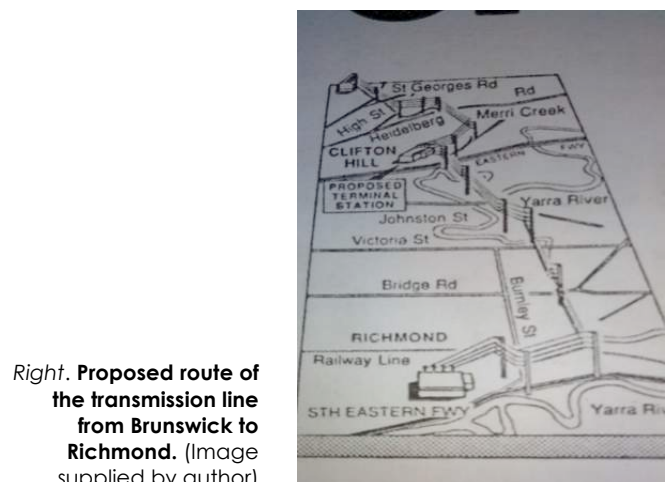
The proposed path of the transmission line would pass through suburban streets, the Lower Yarra and Merri valleys, as well as the Hall Reserve and playground in Clifton Hill. One pylon would even be sited in the grounds of Richmond High School. In Kew, the transmission line would follow the gully behind Young Street, leaving the residents with a 220,000-volt overhead line at the back of their properties and a 66,000W line along the street in the front.

Considerable community debate was generated when the proposal to install these huge pylons became public in 1980. Because of community concern, in mid-1982, the parliamentary Natural Resources and Environment Committee prepared an environmental impact statement. In May 1985, the Government endorsed the Committee's recommendations that the construction of the overhead transmission line should proceed as proposed.

## **The argument against the above ground route**

Arguments against these recommendations were typically grouped under: health fears of links between cancer and electromagnetic radiation; environmental issues and loss of public amenity; and planning and engineering where it was argued that advances in technology made a more direct underground route viable. In the end it was civic action rather than these three factors that won the debate.

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Right. Proposed route of the transmission line from Brunswick to Richmond. (Image supplied by author)



## SAVING THE RIVER PARKLANDS (from Page 5)

A number of organisations, including the Merri Yarra Municipal Protection Committee (representing the eight municipal councils from areas adjoining the proposed transmission line), the Yarra Bend Park Trust and the Studley Park Association, campaigned against the installation of the pylons. From the start, Councils along the route of the proposed transmission line vehemently opposed the SEC proposal. In a 1983 report provided to the Minister for Ethnic Affairs, the Merri Yarra Municipal Protection Committee voiced its concerns about the impact of the transmission line and local government aspirations for the future use of the Merri and Yarra valleys.

*The proposed new power lines and associated towers will, in the view of the committee, invade the park in a real and physical way. It is not just a visual threat, but a real loss of parklands ... People who would most use these parks are from the above inner suburbs and, in the main, live cheek by jowl with industry and high rise accommodation. They are people who can least afford to lose the valuable asset of open land for recreation.*

The protest in 1980 against the SEC extension of the Newport Power Station had already demonstrated that there was a growing resistance to the authority of these seemingly omnipotent public instrumentalities.

### Debate in the newspapers

A series of letters to the editor of *The Age*, and articles in the *Progress Press*, from December 1983, indicate the flavour of the growing debate. A letter by Cr Jermyn, of Northcote, 'Power Corrupts' (*The Age*, 27 December 1983), illustrates this growing questioning of the power of instrumentalities to do as they pleased with publicly owned open space. The Councillor decried the desecration of the Merri and Darebin valleys by public authorities, instancing the proposed SEC 220Kv transmission line through the Yarra and Merri valleys. He pointed out that the eight councils in the transmission line's path were opposed, as well as residents' groups, and the Yarra Bend Park Trust. Cr Jermyn also noted the opposition of the conservative MMBW, and that the chairman's casting vote had been required to pass the Parliamentary Committee's recommendation to permit the aboveground line.

In 'Determined coalition opposing the SEC', (*The Age*, 11 January 1984), Cr Jill O'Brien, Mayor of Kew, questioned the narrow terms of reference used by the consultants from British Electricity International Ltd., who had produced the report recommending the aboveground route. The Mayor claimed that there had been no consideration of the environmental impacts. She also questioned the legality of the SEC claim of an easement, purportedly existing since the 1930s, through the Yarra Valley. "The Yarra Bend Park Trust has been unable to find any evidence of an easement agreement over land under its control." Cr O'Brien carried on the battle in 1985 with a letter (*Progress Press*, 19 June 1985) promoting the virtues of an alternative, shorter underground route.

J. R. Smith, Chief General Manager of the SEC responded, warning that other electricity consumers would have to pay for the extra \$31 million cost of undergrounding the transmission line. He argued for "a middle way", proposed by the Parliamentary Natural Resources and Environment Committee, whereby \$5-7 million would be spent to reduce

the visual impact of the aboveground line. This involved camouflaging the huge pylons with paint.

In June 1985, Cr O'Brien condemned the Victorian Government for its support of the overhead transmission line. She pointed to an alternative, underground Hoddle Street option that "would be a better, shorter route". The Liberal State Member for Kew, Prue Sibree had by then taken a stance against the Government/SEC view, reminding the Labor Government of its commitment to the beautification of the lower Yarra Valley as a statewide amenity, and the small extra cost when spread out over the years ahead. The Hon Robert Fordham, Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources, reiterated Government support for the SEC plan.

By 1987, a new health element had entered the debate, illustrated by the headline "Power Line Opponents Call for Delay after New York Cancer Link" (*The Age*, 10 July 1987). On 16 September, the *Melbourne Times* reported that eighty people had marched along a section of the proposed transmission line beside the Merri Creek from Sumner Park near the Brunswick Terminal Station to the Hall Reserve near Clifton Hill. The march had been organised by the Merri Creek Coordinating Committee, the Merri Yarra Municipal Protection Committee and the Transmission Lines Task Group. These groups distributed pamphlets arguing that: "This is your last chance to stop the Richmond to Brunswick power line".

Because of the proposed power lines at the front and rear of properties in Young Street, Kew, residents believed that they would be trapped in a field of high dose electromagnetic radiation. In October 1987, *The Sun* included a photograph of the Gallaghers of Young Street, standing beside their grazing goats, voicing their concerns about the increased risk of cancer for children in the street if the new overhead transmission line was built. Articles about resident protest and the need for an assessment of the health effects of the overhead transmission line persisted in the major daily newspapers.

Opponents of the above ground transmission line organised community walks along the banks of the Merri Creek to protest against possible health hazards. Prue Sibree pointed out that the extra cost of undergrounding the transmission line was far less than figures being used by the SEC, and that advances in technology were bringing down the cost of tunnelling.

At the start of the 1988, the SEC used a generous pay offer to overcome union opposition to building the huge pylons. All five unions involved lifted their previous work bans. However, the unions threw a lifeline to the protesters by refusing to work if there were police on



## SAVING THE RIVER PARKLANDS (from Page 6)

By January 1988, the National Trust of Victoria and the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) were on the anti-transmission line side. The National Trust urged members of the Yarra Bend Park Trust to rescind their previous acquiescence to SEC demands, and to contest the legality of the SEC intrusion into their land.

In February 1988, a public meeting in Hawthorn resolved to send a deputation to the Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources. The group included the director of the ACF, paediatric cancer expert Dr John Colbatch, Prof Peter McIntyre, and representatives of the Merri Yarra Municipal Protection Committee. This eminent group requested that the Minister form an expert panel to review studies of the possible health effects of high voltage transmission lines.

While the anti-aboveground groups pursued the 'health angle', Cr Jill O'Brien continued to raise the issue of environmental damage. She pointed out that the Studley Park area had been nominated for inclusion on the Register of the National Estate, and this alone should ensure that the SEC choose an underground route for the transmission line.

Public Meetings were held across the suburbs impacted by the proposed transmission line. Richmond High School was the venue for a meeting on 15 February 1988 at which speakers voiced concerns about electro-magnetic radiation and the environmental impact of the transmission line. For their part, the SEC countered with pre-election spending of \$100,000 on full-page advertisements in daily and local newspapers, and the letterboxing of households across the affected suburbs. Complaints from the Liberal opposition and residents groups forced the Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources, to justify this use of taxpayer money.

The Powerline Action Group (PAG) produced a pamphlet in February 1988, outlining how to behave at events involving non-violent direct action. It stated that public demonstrations showcase "our committed opposition to the powerline and give an opportunity to draw attention to the issue and recruit nearby residents to join the campaign". Site occupations and work obstructions were also advocated in an accompanying information pack that included the home phone numbers of relevant politicians.

### Taking to the streets

A week before a by-election caused by the resignation of the sitting Liberal member Prue Sibree (Leggoe), the *Progress Press* (9 March 1988) under the banner "Police Act over Protests", reported that police had been called to Pridmore Park, Hawthorn to remove residents who were obstructing work on the transmission line. This followed an incident on 8 March at a stop work meeting by SEC workers at Burnley.

22 March 1988 saw a violent protest at the Rushall Railway Station. Fifty people gathered by 5.00am, including Jan Wade, the Liberal Party's proposed candidate for the seat of Kew. By 7.00am the protest had grown to 100, and included the Mayors of Brunswick and North Fitzroy, Gerry Hand MP, as well as representatives of a number of unions.

Those present called for a moratorium. John Halfpenny, Secretary of the Victorian Trades Hall Council, also requested a moratorium on work in progress while a study into the health effects of electromagnetic radiation was

## The anti-transmission line groups increasingly shifted their focus to political manoeuvres

Jan Wade, the Liberal candidate, promised to reroute the transmission line if the Liberals gained government. Former Kew Mayor, Cr Jill O'Brien, was asked by PAG to stand as an independent but she preferred to stand for the Democrats. She had been protesting about the environmental cost of the transmission line crisscrossing the Yarra and Merri Creek valleys since 1982, when a Cain Government committee had rubber-stamped the SEC plans.

As the date for the by-election neared, the Labor candidate, Tim Muffet sought vainly to make gun control the main focus of the by-election. However, newspaper headlines show that while the attempts by the Liberal Party to water down the Cain Government's gun control legislation was an issue for Kew voters, it was the snaking transmission line that had captured the debate. Jan Wade and Jeff Kennett, Leader of the Opposition, were only too happy to have the Liberal party back flip on support for tougher gun laws buried by the transmission line issue. Under the headline "Line must be buried", Jeff Kennett proclaimed it was worth the extra \$40 million to bury the transmission line. The Hon Andrew Peacock MP, Deputy Leader of Liberal Party, readily endorsed his State counterpart's stance.

### The Result Shocks Labor

At close of counting, Jan Wade had gained 52.1 per cent of the vote and the ALP only 20.5 per cent, a loss by the ALP of about 20 per cent of its primary vote. Anti transmission line activists claimed 60 to 70 per cent of the vote in the four booths closest to the proposed route, with many voters attaching yellow anti-power line stickers to their votes. At the time, this was the Democrats' most successful campaign in Victoria gaining 19.3 per cent of the vote, a trebling of their vote at the expense of the ALP. The Government, already riven by internal conflict, was now worried about the blowback in the ALP electorates affected by the route. By 23 March 1988, *The Herald* was talking of a split in the ALP over the transmission line. The results of the by-election put an end to Premier Cain toughing it out.

### Rifts within the ALP

Even before the by-election results, the *Melbourne Times* (9 March 1988) had headlined "Branch Revolt over Line." Eight ALP branches that were affected by the transmission line signalled their determination to have the Government's policy debated at the April Conference.

The protest at Rushall Station also sparked a heated debate in the ALP's parliamentary caucus. Two pre-selected ministerial advisors, Tony Sheehan, State Member for Northcote, and Demetri Dollis, State Member for Richmond issued a statement condemning the action. The Socialist Left Faction also pushed for a halt to the line. Crisscrossing its way through Labour heartland, the proposed transmission line traversed nine safe ALP electorates, only detouring briefly into the blue-ribbon Liberal seat of Kew.



Anti-powerline poster.  
Collection: Valerie Bourke

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## SAVING THE RIVER PARKLANDS (from Page 7)

Four State and two Federal MPs were vocal in stating that there must be a change of policy. The transmission line would pass through Lower House electorates held by Tom Roper (ALP), Theo Sidiropoulos (ALP), Prue Sibree (Leggoe) (Lib) and Frank Wilkes (ALP). The Labor-held Upper House electorates affected were those held by Evan Walker, Barry Pullen, Giovanni Sgro and Caroline Hogg. The State Government also faced mounting pressure from federal Labor. Two federal ministers had their seats in the pathway of the proposed transmission line: the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Gerry Hand and the Minister for Social Security, Brian Howe.

### The re-assessment process

By 26 March 1988, six days after the by-election, the newspapers began to reflect a shift in Government rhetoric about the transmission line. Nine days after the by-election, *The Age* headline, "Cain halts work on power line" signalled that the Government was about to change its mind. *The Sun* (2 April 1988) reported that any extra costs would be shared by the whole city, and that the health effects would be discussed at an international workshop during the following week.

In June 1988, a Powerline Review Panel (PRP) was appointed to re-assess the proposed route. Conservationists welcomed the three-member panel, headed by David Scott, Victoria's Commissioner for the Environment and Chairman

Under its Terms of Reference, the PRP was to assess both the environmental and economic implications of re-routing the transmission line. It was estimated that they would take a year to make their report. By 26 October 1988, the *Melbourne Times* was reporting that the PAG were using the \$40,000 they had received from the PRP to push information about feasible alternative engineering possibilities for the transmission line.

The PRP released its *Information, Options and Outlooks* paper in November 1988. It included eight detailed options for supplying electricity to the Melbourne CBD. Nearly all involved undergrounding the transmission line.

The first round of public consultations was held at the Exhibition Buildings from 5 to 16 December. Following further consultations and submissions in January and February 1989, a set of draft recommendations was released for final comment. From 17-20 April neighbourhood forums were held in North Fitzroy, Collingwood and Richmond.

The Powerline Review Panel's final report, with its seventeen recommendations, was released on 27 July 1989. Except for a small section above Merri Creek, the under Hoddle Street route was endorsed. In October 1989, the Hon David White accepted all recommendations on behalf of the Victorian Government.

The battle was won.

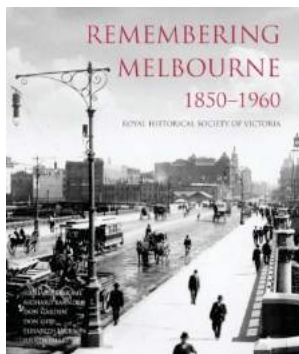
**VALERIE BOURKE, 2016**

### VALE - MARJORIE ORR

Marjorie Orr, who was born in August 1919 died in September this year. During the Second World War, she was on active service overseas as a physiotherapist. Marjorie joined Kew Historical Society in 2002. An avid gardener, her knowledge of Latin plant names was often indispensable when labelling plants sold by the Society during Kew Festivals. Marjorie lived in Kew from age of six and had many anecdotes of the area around Glenferrie Road where she lived.

### VALE - BILL REEVE

Bill Reeve and his wife Helen (dec) joined Kew Historical Society in the 1990s. They lived in Charles Street. Bill's memories of East Kew dated back to 1924 when his father was vicar of St Paul's. Bill made a wonderful Father Christmas at our annual Christmas Parties until he moved from Kew to live at Faversham House, Canterbury. He was an Honorary Life Member of the Society. A transcript of an interview with Bill and Helen in 1986 is held in the Society's archives.



## REMEMBERING MELBOURNE 1850-1960

***A new book on the suburbs and city of Melbourne between 1850-1960.***

**Richard Broome, Richard Barnden, Don Gibb, Don Garden, Elizabeth Jackson and Judith Smart.**

**The Kew photographs in the book were selected and described by members of the Kew Historical Society.**

\$35 for each book picked up from the RHSV, 239 A'Beckett St Melbourne 3000. Copies will also be available for purchase at monthly meetings of the Kew Historical Society in 2017.



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# MAYORS OF KEW

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## **YOUNG, Robert Morgan (Mayor of Kew 1869-70)**

Robert Morgan Young (1818-?), a gentleman landowner with land and a house in Walpole Street was first elected to the Kew Borough Council in 1864, and following the retirement of Cr Herbert Henty, unanimously elected Mayor in 1869. Cr Young was to resign from Council in 1870 midway through his mayoral term. On 11 February 1870, *The Argus* reported on a complimentary luncheon, chaired by Sir William Stawell, Chief Justice of Victoria, at the Scott's Hotel, to celebrate Robert Young's approaching departure for England. The report noted that having for the past 10 years filled the office of manager of the Australian Trust Company, whose affairs were being wound up, he was to sail to England on the *Kent* to take charge of the branch of the Land Mortgage Bank lately established by Mr. W. P. Muir in London. He is remembered in the name of Young Street, tucked away near the Yarra River close to the Walmer Street Bridge. *FR*



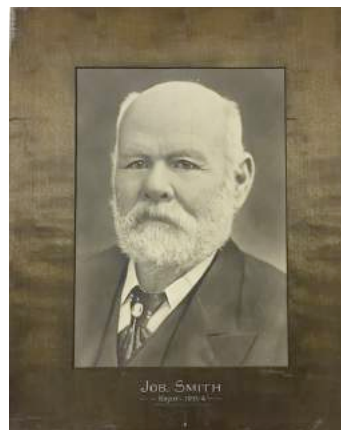
## **PHIPPS, Henry Francis (Mayor of Kew 1876-77)**

A solicitor by profession, Henry Phipps (c.1835-80) was, by 1863, already a Deputy Grand Master of the Manchester Unity Independent Order of Oddfellows. Moving from East Melbourne to Cotham Road, c. 1869, he was elected to the Kew Borough Council in August of the same year. The site of his house, *Woodlands*, was on land currently occupied by Genazzano FCJ College. The house was described as a nine-roomed villa with stables and coach house, on 11 acres. Phipps served seven terms of office before being elected in 1876 to fill the mayoral vacancy caused by the death of Archibald Smart. When it was discovered that Kew had been excluded from the *Railway Construction Bill 1876*, he led the campaign for a railway for Kew. His abrupt withdrawal from candidacy for the council elections in 1878 was followed two years later by his sudden death at the age of 45. He is buried in Boroondara General Cemetery. *RB*



## **SMITH, Job (Mayor of Kew 1893-94)**

Born in Hertfordshire, Job Smith arrived in the Colony of Victoria c. 1852. In 1854, he purchased 17 acres of grassland, Crown Land Portion 136, facing the Merri Creek. His name for this landholding, *Thornbury Farm*, was eventually used to become the name of the suburb. Job Smith's agricultural interests were reflected in his membership of both the Royal Agricultural Society and the Heidelberg Agricultural Society; he was a foundation member of both organisations. He sold *Thornbury Farm* during the 1880s land boom, buying land in Kew in 1884. His new home, *Berrington*, a substantial two-storey Victorian home at 29 Sackville Street, was constructed in 1888-90. In 1892, he was elected a Councillor for College Ward, and in 1893 became Mayor of Kew. Job Smith died at his home in September 1918, a colonist of 66 years. *Berrington* was to be owned by his descendants until the late 1930s. *FR*



## **MOGG, Henry Francis (Mayor of Kew 1939-40)**

Herbert Francis Mogg was born in St Arnaud in 1884. In 1926 he moved to Kew, living at 324 Cotham Road for ten years before moving to Wimba Avenue in 1937, to 33 Carson Street in 1953, and finally to 10 Fenton Avenue, where he died in 1975. Henry Mogg was elected a Councillor of the City of Kew in August 1837 as a representative of College Ward, held the position of Mayor from August 1939 to August 1940, and continued to represent his Ward until 1953. During his term as Mayor, the Second World War commenced and in June 1940 he presided over a citizens patriotic rally held by the City of Kew in the Rialto Theatre in High Street, and took the salute at the War Memorial when 100 men from the district left to join the AIF. When he died in 1975, he was cremated at Springvale and his ashes placed under a rose. *MR*



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# THE GREAT WAR IN KEW

## PART 4: THOSE THAT STAYED

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The people who stayed in Kew during the War were supportive of the troops and the need for victory. Virtually no opposition was voiced in Kew publicly. This support for the war effort resulted in a strong "YES" vote in the October 1916 *Conscription Referendum*. It also led to a mobilisation of community resources to assist the war effort, particularly the troops. At times this led to a tendency towards militarisation of some aspects of civilian life. While patriotic themes were never far below the surface, it was support for the troops that galvanised the community effort.

What was life like in Kew in 1916, far from the battlefields?

The upper classes of Melbourne society – the political, business and social elite, have always been part of Kew life. This group seemed to take the war in its stride and took a leading role in the mobilisation of community resources in 1916. For instance, the Mayoress of Kew, Mrs E Ratten, was president of the Kew Branch of the Red Cross Society, and organised a Christmas Fete in the Alexandra Gardens in December, as well as an amateur dramatic night in the Kew Recreation Hall. Privileged life continued in Kew. Society weddings involving Kew couples were announced in the society press. Summer holidays and travel continued with Point Lonsdale, Flinders and Tasmania popular destinations to avoid the summer heat. There were trips abroad to Manila, New Zealand and Fiji.

Fundraising for the war was ubiquitous. Individuals donated to established funds and organisations, worked to raise funds for war related purposes, some of which were for the troops, and some for humanitarian aid like the Serbian Relief and Belgian Funds. Fetes were popular ways to go about this. Some were organised by society ladies, such as a 'Bag Fete' held in the home of two society ladies, at which there was a model of a trench, a dug out and a periscope used at Gallipoli with returned soldiers as guides. A produce sale was held elsewhere. Some girls held street bazaars for the Red Cross. Anzac Day buttons were also sold.

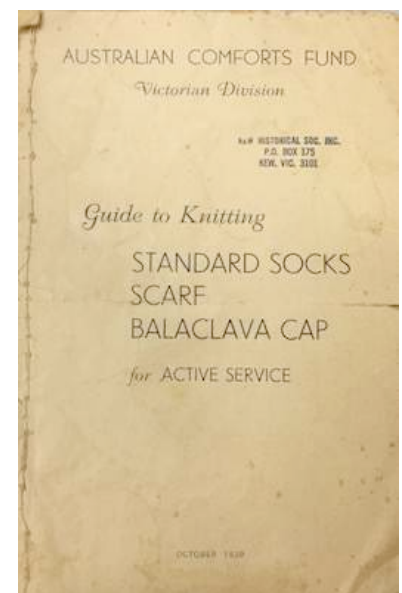
Organisations were also involved in fundraising. Schools and churches held concerts, collections and fairs. The Kew Golf Club and the Kew Horticultural Society donated funds raised through their activities. The Red Cross in Kew was active, having already raised funds in 1914 for a motor ambulance. But they also held regular collections in Kew each month and the funds were used to buy material for ladies to take home, and make into socks, pyjamas and underwear for the troops. This work was social too, as the ladies often held communal work parties. The finished goods were then sent on to the Red Cross Kew Committee. The Red Cross also benefitted from a 'Grand Allied Fair' in aid of wounded soldiers. Individuals worked by themselves to provide comforts for the troops. A Kew resident asked readers of *The Argus* to send her bits of material she could use to make rugs for the troops.

A 'tin afternoon' was organised in the Kew Recreation Hall to fill boxes and billies for the troops with tobacco, cigarettes, chocolates, sweets etc. There were collections for specific units; Kew ladies supported the 6th Infantry Brigade, the 2nd Field Artillery and HMAS Yarra.

Patriotic activities were conducted in Kew from time to time during 1916. There was a special day of prayer for Divine guidance on New Year's Day. Kew Council supported 'wowsers' moves to reduce the number of race meetings, which it was thought undermined recruitment drives. They also supported early closing times for hotels. Empire Day celebrations were held as well as a meeting to mark the anniversary of the start of the war. The Mayor of Kew held an essay competition for children. Some activities took on the appearance of the militarisation of civilian life. School cadet corps training was compulsory for all young men between 12 and 26. Trinity Grammar School and Xavier College both had such units with the emphasis on drill and simulated war games. It is not clear how seriously the boys took such activities. The Kew Boy Scout Troop learned drill and signalling and were involved in military parades. The Kew Rifle Club was part of the Metropolitan Rifle Brigade, set up by rifle clubs to assist in enlistment and military training. The Kew Club held a route march and manoeuvres at the Kew Golf Club in March.

In the only recorded case of unpatriotic activities in Kew in 1916, Patrick O'Connor of Denmark Street was convicted in the Kew Court for making statements "likely to cause disaffection with His Majesty and to prejudice the recruitment of His Majesty's forces" under the *War Precaution Act*. He was sentenced to three month's gaol, although it was reduced on appeal. O'Connor had stated that anyone who went to the war was a fool and that any flag was as good as another. He told a woman that her sons, one of whom had been killed and another maimed, were fools.

**Guide to Knitting  
Standard Socks Scarf  
Balaclava Cap for Active  
Service.** Published by the  
Australian Comforts Fund  
(Victorian Division). Kew  
Historical Society  
collection.



## THOSE THAT STAYED (CONT. FROM PAGE 10)

Daily life in Kew went on despite the war. Issues familiar to Kew residents kept on occurring and some new issues were raised as modernity advanced. The *Annual Health Report* showed a growing population and the normal health problems for Melbourne in this era of Tuberculosis, Diphtheria, Typhoid, Whooping Cough and Meningitis. As always, the town was battling to get extra rail services to Kew. This was to no avail as there was a reduction in traffic to Kew overall. There was concern at the gap in the footpath along a short stretch of road between the Kew and the Victoria Street Tramways. There were complaints about the smells from the Kew Asylum's unsewered premises as well as escaped inmates. During 1916, there were 220 unsewered houses in Kew.

Sporting life continued, especially with Golf, Lacrosse, Bowls and Cricket. Football teams suffered from the loss of young men to the war. The Box Hill Association, which included teams from Kew to Fern Tree Gully, had to abandon matches due to the war. There was a report that the Collingwood team had to include three players from Kew to make up numbers. Loss of men also affected the Kew Band, but it was able to find enough replacements for members who went to the war.

Domestic arts and crafts flourished on a small scale. The Kew Horticultural Society held its Summer, Autumn and Spring shows. A Kew resident wrote to *The Australasian* with hints on how to destroy woolly aphids. *The Argus* had a request from a Kew lady on how to bleach yellowish ostrich feathers, and another Kew lady sent a recipe for kedgeriee. The war did not take up all charitable fundraising. There were collections for hospitals, children's charities, and the Burnley Free Kindergarten.

Modernity raised its head in increasing incidents involving motorcars and motorcycles, from noise to accidents, some fatal. Then there were all the day-to-day inconveniences and accidents that affect life at all times and places. An engine on the Kew rail line derailed. As always, fire was a hazard when a carpenter's shop was destroyed. Some girls drowned in the Yarra while canoeing with their boyfriends, and a man was killed when thrown from a cart when a tram scared his horse.

Kew Court was busy with dealing with the detritus of Kew life: the selling of undersized fish, the Harp of Erin being open during prohibited hours, a sexual assault and cattle stealing – just to remind us that Kew remained a semi-rural community.

To cap off the year, there were major rain and hail events in Spring, causing major flooding on the Yarra, leaving the East Kew river flats under water.

So, life went on. For most.

But, hanging over Kew was, of course, death. On death there was a great silence. Casualty lists were published relentlessly. Many Kew men and boys were included in the lists of sick, wounded, missing and killed. The lists in January contained the final wash up from Gallipoli; lots of reports of illness. Then in May and June the lists from France started. Sometimes day-after-day. Killed Whitelaw, Jackson, Olive, Wallis. And so on. Pozieres, Fromelles, Armentieres.

And then silence. Never again mentioned on the public record. This silence is shown in the Kew Town Council. At the end of each meeting, all deaths of Kew soldiers were recognised. A motion to send a letter of condolence to each family was moved. "The Councillors rising whilst the same was put and carried in silence."

Then nothing. Requiescat in Pace.

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## NEW TO THE COLLECTION



One of our new members, Micky Ashton, a descendant of Cr John Marshall, Mayor of Kew 1872-73, recently donated two photographs of the Marshall family to our collection. Subsequently, Micky also offered and the Society gratefully accepted, six separate pieces of late Victorian clothing including a black silk damask ensemble, two black silk capes, a long black skirt, and a separate bodice.

The outfit and one of the shawls are currently displayed in our room at the Kew Court House.

These are important additions to our pictures and costume collection.





**Kew Historical Society Inc.**  
**PO Box 175**  
**Kew VIC 3101**

**DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

09 November - Monthly Meeting  
 27 November - Quarterly Book Sale  
 16 December - Annual Xmas Dinner  
 17 December - Court House closes  
 20 January 2017 - Court House reopens

**MEMBERSHIP & DONATIONS**

**KEW HISTORICAL SOCIETY – KEEPING ALIVE KEW HISTORY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS**

The Society has operated continuously for over 50 years holding monthly meetings, conserving historical records and items, undertaking historical research, arranging public exhibitions and lectures, and giving guided tours. You can become involved and support the Society’s work by becoming a member or renewing your membership and/or making a donation.

[Tick relevant boxes]

- I/we wish to join the Society
- I/we wish to renew my/our membership *Note: Renewals are due 1 July each year.*
- Individual membership (2016-17 annual fee \$20)
- Household membership (2016-17 annual fee \$30)
- Student membership (2016-17 annual fee \$10)
- I/we agree to be bound by the rules of the society.
- I/we prefer to receive the Society’s notices by email.
- I/we prefer to receive the Society’s quarterly newsletter by email.
- I/we would like to volunteer – on a committee, on the courthouse or supper rosters, or with research.
- I/we would like to make a donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ *Note: All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.*

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 OR Pay by direct bank deposit to KHS account 063-142 10066376 with your surname as the subject or reference and email payment details and/or scanned form to treasurer@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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