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NEWSLETTER

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SEPTEMBER 2025



OAKS, FLOWERING APPLES & STONEMWORK

Post World War I, responsibility for garden design moved from architect to landscape designer (Hardy, *The Unusual life of Edna Walling*. 2005:59). Edna Walling (1895–1973) graduated from Burnley Horticultural College in 1917/8, moving quickly from being a jobbing gardener to a famous landscape designer. From the 1920s she created hundreds of garden plans, only five of which were not installed (Trisha Dixon, p.c. 2025), wrote garden advice columns for *Australian Home Beautiful* and other magazines, published her own books, (Watts 2002, *Walling, Edna Margaret (1895-1973)*), and became a vocal advocate for sustainability and protection of the natural environment. Walling firstly designed homes in Victoria, but inspired by her word-of-mouth reputation, gardening columns, and books, interstate property owners became keen for a Walling landscape. Walling's plans can be viewed at the State Library of Victoria (SLV), on their website, and on the joint ABC and SLV website *Tantamount*.

There are seventy-one known significant extant Walling gardens in Victoria (Olsen 2003, *Edna Walling: Extant Gardens in Victoria*), excluding the remnant gardens in Kew. For confidentiality reasons, only publicly available data about addresses and owners which are given on the plan or in the literature is provided here. Electoral rolls, *Sands & McDougall City Directories* for Victoria, *Trove* and other print sites, and Council Rate Books were consulted for residence data. Heritage registers and assessments were consulted for heritage garden data, and garden plan remnants were observed from digital and on-site observation.

In Walling's plantings, colour and texture came from short-lived flowers, shrubs, and flowering trees, so few 1920–40 plants remain in 2025. Longer-lived trees like the hawthorn, eucalypt, cedar, oak, elm and birch may not have withstood later subdivisions, natural catastrophes, multiple new owners, and changes in garden trends over time. Architectural features do tend to survive.

A paucity of photographic or written records challenges 2025 attempts to identify garden elements, or attribute with certainty an element to one set out in a plan, as does the fact that some features of Arts & Crafts gardens had already made their way into pre-Walling gardens.

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CRAB APPLE WALK, METHODIST LADIES' COLLEGE

Remnant Edna Walling designed garden

Verna Rieschild, photographer, 2025

Private Collection

OAKS, FLOWERING APPLES & STONEMWORK

(from page 1)

Walling's contractors and students often branched out into their own landscaping careers, at times carrying Walling design principles with them, and lastly, homemakers often independently put Walling features into their gardens. From the public plans and relevant literature, we have identified seven Kew gardens linked to public Walling garden plans and two linked to private plans. This article focuses on the seven Kew gardens identified as having public Edna Walling plans.

In *Edna Walling and her Gardens* (1997:79) Watts identifies Walling's three garden styles as "cottage, structured and formal geometric" according to house type, and Pearson (2016 *Edna Walling's landscaping legacy*) notes that Walling's "[d]ry-stone walls, stone steps, pergolas, rock pools and meandering paths were signatures, while more affluent gardens featured classical colonnades and archways". The Kew remnant gardens cover this range.

Edward Billson designed the Cox clinker-brick home in Kew in 1924–25. In 1928, Mrs. William Stanley Cox twice called on Walling for garden plans. The final simpler plan included landscape architecture, a stone path, trees, lawn, and a hedge. The Coxes lived there for a few years, becoming repeat clients in 1938 when they lived in the Moonee Valley Racing Club Secretary's house. Currently, the Kew house appears to be 1970s style with the back garden comprising a double tennis court. There is no apparent remnant of this Walling garden.

Hudson, Wardrop & Usher designed *Skye*, in East Kew— an "all gas house" on 2,428m. In 1929, it was aptly bought by Rudolph Schuchard, the Gas Supply Company's executive and later Chairman, and his wife Marion. They commissioned a grand more formal garden including a bronze statue at the front gate, reflecting pool, garden seat, laundry steps, stone paving, clothes hoist and compost pit, conifers, poplars, blossom trees, shrubs, and low hedges. Walling typically used trees to strategically manage space, shade, and light. Each window in the house framed a garden scene and home was house plus garden. The gardens featured in celebrations, swimming/tennis events, and social events.

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FORMER GARDEN OF YARRA BLUFFS, 27 REDMOND STREET, KEW

[Not an Edna Walling garden]

KHS collection

KEW HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

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MONTHLY MEETINGS

Public meetings of the Kew Historical Society are held in the Phyllis Hore Room at the Kew Library on the second Wednesday of each month (excluding the months of January, March, October and December). There is usually a guest speaker. Visitors are welcome to attend.

KEW COURT HOUSE

Members of the Society played a key role in the preservation of the Kew Court House. General enquiries can be made, and viewing of our current exhibition, on Fridays (excluding public holidays) between 11am and 1pm. Our room is on the first floor of the former Kew Police Station at 188 High Street, Kew.

KEW HERITAGE CENTRE

The Kew Heritage Centre, at the rear of the ground floor of the Kew Library, is generally staffed on Tuesdays and Wednesdays between 10am and 3pm. Entry is by appointment.

NEWSLETTER

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

WEBSITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA

www.kewhistoricalsociety.org.au

victoriancollections.net.au/organisations/kew-historical-society

www.facebook.com/kewhistoricalsociety

www.instagram.com/kew_vic/

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DISCLAIMER

The views expressed, and information provided, by the authors of articles in this newsletter do not necessarily mirror the views and values of the Kew Historical Society. We also rely on authors checking the accuracy of their data and apologise if errors of fact have been made.

HISTORY NEWS

2025 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Kew Historical Society will conduct its Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 10 September 2025 in the Phyllis Hore room at the Kew Library, 1 Civic Drive, Kew, 3101. Commencing at 8PM, our President will outline the year's activities.

We have continued to receive some wonderful donations, mounted popular exhibitions and received donations and in-kind support from the City of Boroondara and other organisations. Our role in the community and the work the Society does in preserving the history and heritage of Kew has been noted by organisations such as the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, the Public Record Office of Victoria and the Australian Museums and Galleries Association.

Boroondara Councillor, Mal Osborne-Smith will represent The Mayor who is unavailable.

All members are invited to attend and if financial, are able to nominate for positions on the Management Committee. All the positions on the committee will be spilled and voting of nominees will take place.

DESLEY REID, PUBLIC OFFICER

MEMBERS

Annual Memberships were due on 1 July 2025. When joining or renewing a membership, please fill out the form on our website under Support Us > Members. Costs of membership are listed on page 12. The Society welcomes Anne Gillett-Duns, Alexander Berridge, Rod and Pam Harris, and Annette Cooper as new members.

GRANTS & SPONSORS

In 2024-27, Kew Historical Society is supported by the City of Boroondara through a Triennial Operational Grant. A 2025 grant from the National Library of Australia is allowing the Society to conserve four of our historic Henty costumes.



POSTAL ADDRESS

The Society's mailing address is PO Box 3147, Cotham, Vic. 3101.

Our email address remains info@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au

EXHIBITIONS

Currently, there are two Kew Historical Society exhibitions, the first at the Kew Court House with building, design and autobiographical reflections about Kew in the post-war period. This exhibition, initially planned to end by October 2025, will now remain on show until December 2025. The second exhibition is at the Town Hall Gallery. The latter is a retrospective of the designs of Viola Ayling, a potter from Kew, and Grace James, a dressmaker/knitter from Surrey Hills. These two women produced their works from the 1940s to the 1970s. A guided tour of the exhibition is scheduled for Wednesday 17 September between 11am and 12pm.

KEW WAR MEMORIAL



CENTENARY OF THE KEW WAR MEMORIAL

Robert Baker, photographer, 2025
KHS Collection

Saturday 30 August was the centenary of the Kew War Memorial. In preparation for the centenary, the City of Boroondara carried out restoration works totalling \$200,000. Despite inclement weather, a large number of residents and invited guests attended the event, including members of Kew Historical Society.

COLLECTION

The Society acknowledges the following donations to its collection since June 2025: christening and baby gowns of the Weir family, made between 1891 and 1910, from Jillian Rigby; a 1960s outfit made by Oggi of Melbourne, from Nicole Jenkins; a copy of *Yarra Birrarung*, from Judith Buckrich; a copy of the *Henty Journals*, from Suzanne McWha; and three outfits made for Dr Veronica (Syme) Condon in 1934, 1949 and 1954, from Christine Skinner.

A HISTORY OF THE INTRODUCTION OF A GAS SUPPLY TO KEW

In his *Jubilee History of Kew, 1910*, F.G.A. Barnard wrote that "In June 1866, the Borough Council decided to purchase three lamps to be lighted by kerosene for the main street. Gas did not reach the Borough until 1869."

Kerosene lamps were to be positioned outside the Woodsman's Arms at the Five Way Junction, at the corner of Walpole Street and the Bulleen Road (High Street) and on the Prospect Hill. These lamps would have done little to light the streets of Kew. An article in *The Argus*, describing the illumination of Melbourne and the suburbs in celebration of the visit by Prince Alfred in November 1867, reported that "in the pretty suburban retreat of Kew the village was left to silence and darkness, and the few municipal lamps showed dots of star-like brilliance here and there." Those citizens of Kew who hadn't left to view the lights in the city celebrated with a large bonfire on the reserve.

The illumination of Melbourne described in *The Argus* was reported to have attracted a crowd of 100,000 people to the city and was made possible by the availability of gas lighting. Buildings were illuminated with arrays of gas burners augmented by backlit 'transparencies' as large as 24 feet by 12 feet painted by, among others, the noted artist Nicholas Chevalier and the leading Melbourne stained glass makers Ferguson & Urie. As reported by *The Argus*, the event seems very much a precursor of Melbourne's White Nights events of the early twenty-first century.

By 1867, two gasworks provided gas for lighting to Melbourne and its suburbs. The first gas company in Melbourne, *The City of Melbourne Gas and Coke Company* [Melbourne Gas Company], was established in 1850 and their gasworks were opened in January 1856 on the western side of the city close to the Yarra.

A second company, *The Collingwood, Fitz Roy and District Gas and Coke Company* (Collingwood Gas Company) was incorporated in 1859 for the supply of gas to the north-eastern part of the town. Gasworks at the corner of Smith Street and Reilly Street (now Alexandra Parade) were opened in April 1861.

Town gas was produced by strongly heating coal at the gas works. After tar and ammonia compounds and hydrogen sulphide (rotten egg gas) had been removed, the resultant product – typically 50 per cent hydrogen, 35 per cent methane, 10 per cent carbon monoxide and some minor trace gasses – was ready for storage in gasometers and distribution through underground mains to consumers. In addition to its flammability, town gas was highly toxic due to its carbon monoxide content and, even by 19th century standards, gasworks were perceived as notorious polluters of their environment.



GASOMETERS IN ALEXANDRA PARADE, FITZROY

David White, photographer, 1974

Despite these disadvantages, gas lighting transformed cities in the nineteenth century. Gas street lighting was quickly taken up by municipal councils, and private homes and businesses were keen to replace their candles and oil lamps with the convenience offered by gas lighting.

The minutes of the Borough of Kew council meetings record that, as early as September 1866, Council was exchanging correspondence with both gas companies regarding the supply of gas to Kew. The Melbourne Gas Company requested advice about the number of gas consumers likely to be found in the borough, while the Collingwood Gas Company suggested that Council delay acting on the matter of gas supply for a few weeks until the company's mains were laid to the Johnston Street Bridge.

A letter from the Collingwood Gas Company received by Council in May 1867 asked how many public lamps would be erected if the mains were extended to Kew, and another from the Melbourne Gas Company advised that they did not contemplate extending their mains to Kew at present.

In June 1867, Council approved the provision of two additional lamp posts and apparatus for hanging a lamp in front of the town hall in Walpole Street and also sent a letter advising the Collingwood Gas Company of the additional lamps. The Collingwood Gas Company submitted a proposal in October 1869 advising that if Council would erect 30 lamps, they would light them for three years at £10 per lamp per annum for the first two years, and £9 per lamp for the third year. Council declined this proposal as being exorbitant.

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A GAS SUPPLY TO KEW (from page 4)

A further offer followed from Collingwood Gas Company in March 1870, proposing to light the lamps within one chain of their mains for three years for £9 per lamp. Council also decided to erect eight additional lamp pillars in Kew. One to be located at the corner of Barkers Road and the Bulleen Road (High Street South) with two more between Barkers Road and the Studley Park Road; one at the corner of Walpole Street on the Bulleen Road (High Street); another two on Cotham Road, at the Connor Street corner and opposite Kerfords; and one at the corner of the Studley Park Bridge and Johnston Street Bridge Roads.

In April 1870, Council accepted E. Chambers' tender of £5.14.0 for supply of eight lamp pillars and square lanterns. Enoch Chambers had opened Melbourne's third foundry in 1856 in Prahran, and later also established an engineering works in Little Collins Street West. In addition to lamp posts, he produced a wide range of products including mining machinery, stone crushers, building ironwork, bridgework and a single steam locomotive for the contractors of the Melbourne-Bendigo Railway. He died in a buggy accident on 1 May 1870. Council also advised their acceptance of the Collingwood Gas Company's March offer for one year, while the Collingwood Gas Company requested council permission to open the streets for installation of their mains.

A tender from F. Geoffrey for painting eight lamp pillars at 10 shillings per post was accepted by Council in May 1870. Francis Geoffrey had a painting and decorating business in Bulleen Road, Kew, and is the great-great-grandfather of current Kew Historical Society member Janet White.

In June 1870, after seeking estimates to light the Kew Town Hall with gas, a tender of £28 from Andrew Dempster, gasfitter and lamp manufacturer, of 89 Russell Street, Melbourne, for fittings and laying on gas to the Town Hall was accepted by Council.

The construction of the Kew Lunatic Asylum also appears to have encouraged the extension of the Collingwood Gas Company's mains to Kew. In December 1871, advertisements in the press requested that tenders for the supply of gas to the Kew Lunatic Asylum be provided by 3 January 1872. Only two tenders were received. The Collingwood Gas Company offer to supply gas from its mains at 10 shillings per 1000 cubic feet was accepted as being more economical than the other offer to supply gas manufactured on the asylum site at 7 shillings per 1000 cubic feet, subject to purchase of the gas plant by the Victorian Government on 30 June 1873 for £2080.

A meeting of Collingwood Gas Company shareholders in January 1872 was advised that a 12 inch main had been laid on to Kew as a result of increased demand, and of the company securing the contract for lighting the Kew Lunatic Asylum. The suggestion that tenderers would be permitted to build a gasworks on the asylum site was probably more of a symbolic gesture towards achieving a competitive tender process than a commercial reality.

In March 1927, *The Age* reported that Kew was one of the few metropolitan suburbs still mainly lit by gas. There were 452 street lights of which almost 400 were gas lamps and the remainder electric lights. Councillors were divided on the question of the electrification of the whole system. Some councillors supported the abolition of the gas lamps in the name of progress while others believed that gas gave a brighter light than the ordinary street electric globe. Conversion of all the lights to electricity would have resulted in a saving of £270 per year, however Council would have to pay the cost of conversion. The rapid expansion of East Kew led to Council asking the lighting committee to investigate the matter and prepare a report on whether the two systems of lighting should be retained or one uniform system adopted for the whole of the municipality. In July 1927, the Reserves & Lighting Committee's recommendation that an early changeover from gas to electric street lighting be made throughout the City of Kew was accepted by Council, signalling an end to the era of gas lit Kew.



KEW OFFICES WITH POSTAL, COURT HOUSE AND POLICE STAFF
Gas lit Queen Victoria Monument at left, c.1897
KHS collection

Gas continues to be used for heating and cooking in Kew; however, this is changing as climate change goals and the desire to reduce carbon dioxide emissions has led to the phasing out of gas connections in favour of electricity. A case in point is the recent City of Boroondara decision to adopt electric powered heat pump technology in the Kew Recreation Centre instead of gas fired boilers.

© DAVID WHITE, 2025

RODNEY FERNALD BEQUEST

The Kew Historical Society wishes to express its gratitude for the bequest by Rodney Fernald to the Society. Rodney and Joan Fernald were long-term members of the Society and are much missed.

I AM WOMAN, HEAR ME ROAR

THE LIONESSE CLUB OF KEW

The concept of women's clubs emerging from the patriarchal influence of male organisations reflected a trend where women created their own spaces and organisations, often in response to, or in contrast with, traditional male-dominated institutions.

In the 1960s and 1970s, women began forming their own clubs to address the historical lack of opportunities and support systems within male-dominated spaces. These clubs aimed to foster a sense of community, offer mentorship and support, and provide platforms for women to connect and collaborate. One such club was the Kew Lioness Club which operated under the sponsorship of the Kew Lions Club.

The first Lions Club International to be formed in Australia was established in New South Wales in 1947. By 1952, there were three Lions Clubs in Victoria, centred in and around Melbourne. In 1954, the Kew Lions Club was formed under the auspices of the Melbourne Lions Club.

In preparation for the visit of Queen Elizabeth II, one hundred members of the Lions Clubs held a working bee at the Kew Cottages to remodel the gardens and paint the Cottages in time for the Royal Visit. Many of the volunteers were women, wives and partners of members of Lions clubs. They were affectionately known as 'lionesses', but they received no official recognition of their role. Lions Clubs were service organisations composed of a community's leading business and professional men. Membership was by invitation only. Their purpose was to recognise community needs and meet them, either through a club's own efforts or in co-operation with another agency.

The first Lioness Club in Australia was established in 1976, and in 1978 twenty-two women met to discuss the idea of opening a Lioness Club in Kew. Having heard of the introduction of Lioness Clubs to Australia, Helen Joyce, a Balwyn woman, decided in 1977 that she would join. Upon discovering that no clubs existed in the local Lions District, she wrote to eighty women: friends, acquaintances, old school friends and local politicians inviting them to a meeting to discuss starting a club. She was underwhelmed by the response. Very few women bothered to reply. However, Helen persevered, and the introductory meeting saw fifteen women keen to be part of the new women's club.

Permission had to be obtained from the District Governor of District 201 which covers all Lions Clubs in Australia.



CERTIFICATE OF ORGANIZATION: LIONESSE CLUB OF KEW, 1978
KHS collection

Following the granting of permission, an approach was made to the President of the Lions Club of Kew to add his permission for a women's club to be formed. Neither objected to the notion of a Lioness Club being established in Kew and the Kew Lions Club agreed to auspice the local Lioness Club. The Kew Lioness Club was later called an auxiliary club of the Kew Lions.

The Kew Lions placed advertisements in local newspapers to recruit women into the Club, outlining Lions International's aim to help the community with welfare and social programs and encouraging local women to become involved.

The Kew Lioness Club was the first to be established in the Melbourne area. The founding members were Helen Joyce, Dorothy Cameron, Cherie Kinnear, Arleen Ekberg, Marjorie Rogers, Beryl Mainon, Thelma Leach, Lorna Patching, Shirley Van Scoy, Ruth Finger, Valerie Newbegin, Norma Finley, Jan Watkins, Caroline Opie, and Joyce Ward.

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I AM WOMAN, HEAR ME ROAR (from page 6)

The women were not all Kew residents as many came from other suburbs in Melbourne's east. Following the successful launch of the Club, six more women joined within a few days having read of the new Club in local newspapers. They were Debbie (McColl) Davis, Edna Cartwright, Joan Cromie, Edna Glover, May Clapham, and Jean Franklin. Following them quickly came Glad Kinnear and Jessie Watson.

Initially, two meetings were held each month. Business meetings were held in private homes, and dinner meetings were held at the Clifton Hotel, followed by the Greyhound [Skinny Dog] Hotel. Angellucci's in Walpole Street and the Whitehorse Inn in Hawthorn followed. At each dinner meeting, a guest speaker entertained the members with insights, stories or specialised knowledge. Helen Joyce wrote later that a feature of the Club was the enjoyment that members derived from the companionship of other women, while helping others. Many members considered this aspect to be the Club's greatest strength.

Looking through the Lionesses official photograph albums in the collection of the Kew Historical Society, it is clear that the members were an energetic group who enjoyed the company of their fellow members and the activities in which they were involved.

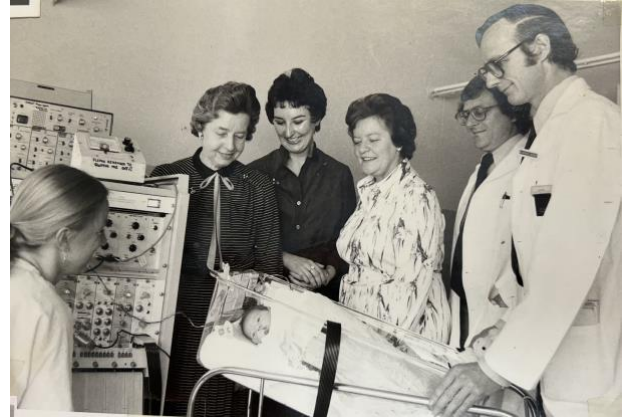


LIONESS CLUB OF KEW ENGRAVED BRASS BELL, 1978
KHS Collection

Many of the Club's fundraising projects used the community caravan which was donated to the City of Kew by the Kew Lions Club. From the caravan, the Lionesses sold refreshments, handcrafts, Christmas puddings, baked goods, and Lions mints. Other fundraising included catering for parties and anniversaries, the opening of a pavilion at Hays Paddock, street stalls, trash and treasure markets, bread making courses and the Kew mayoral garden party. Each meeting featured the sale of raffle tickets.

The Kew Lionesses initially concentrated their efforts in helping organisations concerned with aid for women and children.

Other charities to benefit were the Epilepsy Foundation, the Chronic Pain Association, the Copeland Family Centre, Melbourne City Mission, Ellerslie Home for the Aged, Eva Tilley Home, Guide Dogs Victoria, the Kew City Band and many more.



DOROTHY CAMERON, KATHLEEN HOLGATE, LORNA PATCHING AT MONASH MEDICAL CENTRE, DONATING TO RESEARCH INTO INFANT COT SYNDROME
KHS Collection

Kew Historical Society management committee member Debbie McColl Davis was twice President of the Kew Lioness Club and a profile of her written for the Club's scrapbook relates that one of Debbie's children frequently slept in a baby carry basket under the President's table while the gavel pounded away over her head. An excellent example of multi-tasking.

Membership expanded over the years and at its largest, the Club had thirty-four members.

The Constitution of Lions International was amended in 1987 to allow women to become members of the formerly male-only Lions Clubs, but the Kew women remained Lionesses. However, the Kew Lioness Club closed in 1992 when only six members remained. Some of those Kew Lionesses joined the Balwyn Lioness Club. All extant Lioness clubs were closed by Lions International in 2021 and the women were asked to join the mixed-gender Lions Clubs.

As the Lioness Club of Kew was the first Lioness Club in the Melbourne area, it is of historic and social significance as an important example of a post-war community welfare and philanthropic organisation run by women.

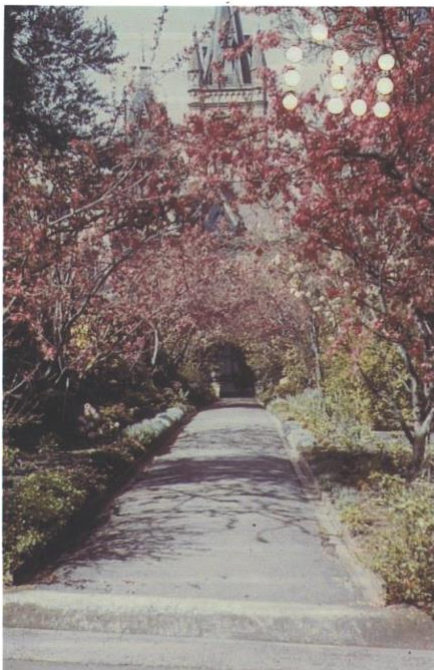
© DESLEY REID, 2025

OAKS, FLOWERING APPLES & STONEWORK

(from page 2)

In 1936, for example, when the Schuchard's entertained 25 members of the visiting Russian Ballet, guests "tried to play tennis (three on a side) which was a scream" and took photos of the garden (*The Leader (Orange)*:2). There were many fundraisers. In 1953, *The Age* advertised a "garden afternoon", at *Skye* hosted by the treasurer of the Women of the University Fund. Goods for sale included "seedlings, pot plants, cut flowers and jams, pickles, sweets and ice cream" and the garden was described as "looking its best with iris, rhododendrons- arid azaleas in full bloom". Currently, this beautiful garden retains elements of the plan, including aged conifers and other trees, and low stone walls. It now has a more classic than an Arts & Crafts' resonance.

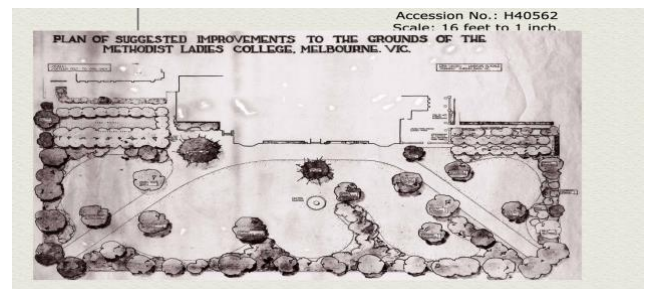
Edna Walling planned improvements to the Methodist Ladies College (MLC), Kew garden at the front and sides of the boarders' Tiddeman House and the Headmaster's Residence [pictured right]. Parts of the plan were installed for MLC's 1932 fifty-year celebrations (MLC archivist, p.c. July 2025). Features of the plan were urns, a sandstone courtyard, fruit trees, hedges, a retaining wall, fourteen main garden trees, and lawns. Two blossom tree walks were planned for either side of Tiddeman House. Boarders accessed this grand garden and day girls were allowed in for Easter egg hunts (J Scurfield pc.).



THE CRAB APPLE WALK IN SPRING 1955

Courtesy MLC archives

Over almost a century, garden space shrank with necessary building additions, but the Crab Apple Walk to The Residence and four of its original trees remain, as do the urns and stone wall [pictured page 1]. Two of Walling's tree plantings appear to have survived, a Claret Ash and a Scarlet Oak. These, the pre-1931 trees, as well as other trees, are tagged as protected. The school has worked hard to preserve heritage aspects of their gardens, so have replaced old crab apples with new ones and underplanted with era appropriate flowers.



EDNA WALLING'S MLC GARDEN PLAN

Courtesy of the ABC/SLV website *Tantamount*

Before 1934, an MLC primary school teacher, Lorna Fielden, read about Walling's Bickleigh Vale, Mooroolbark community, approached Walling and in 1935 Fielden bought *Lynton Lee*; a property in Bickleigh Vale, retiring to the community in the late 1930s. Later, when MLC students visited her there, Walling gave them a talk on roadside plantings (Zainu'ddin, 1982:264 *They Dreamt of a School*).

Walling had wide-reaching social connections. She met Nellie Melba while working on Melba's sister Dora's garden, and in 1928 designed a garden for Isabella, another of Melba's sisters. Married to Thomas Alexander Patterson (estate agent, and Secretary of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria), Isabella commissioned a garden design from Walling for *Rohese*, in Barry Street, Kew. Included in the design were a washhouse, stone path and wall, pavilion, pergola, shed, birdbath, clothes hoist, and flower beds, fruit trees, hedges, lawns, and shrubs. Practical and aesthetic.

Newspapers of the day often featured flowers or gardens when reporting society events. In 1928, for example, *The Sun News-Pictorial* described an event at *Rohese*, commenting on coloured gladioli in the drawing and sitting-rooms, a bowl of waterlilies on the supper table, red and pink roses on the sideboard and "rich hued strelitzia regina, marigolds and agapanthus" mixed with ferns and foliage on the "spacious closed-in veranda, where bridge was played". Over time, *Rohese* has been subdivided, garden features altered, while landscapers are currently working on the garden.

OAKS, FLOWERING APPLES & STONEMWORK

(from page 8)

Not far from *Rohese* is *Caversham* in Stawell Street, Kew. In 1932, Lucy Swanton (art gallery owner), daughter of *Caversham's* owner, William Swanton (shipping company chairman) commissioned a garden with short-lived fruit trees, a garden seat, landscape architecture, lawn, reflecting pool, steps, and trees. The property was later advertised for sale, indicating "possibilities of subdivision into three allotments" (*The Argus* 5 March 1955:16 and 19 March 1955:14). No hard or soft Walling elements appear to have survived.

Down the road from *Caversham* is the home purchased in 1943 by S. Cunningham, hardware merchant. Features include boulders, landscape architecture, lawn, pergola, steps, and stone paving as well as fruit trees, and a eucalypt. A twenty-first century real estate advertisement for this property highlighted its garden by Edna Walling. The garden appears to have retained aspects of plantings and landscape architecture, notably the dry-stone low walls, boulders, blossom trees and the old boundary eucalypt. The garden is currently being renovated.

Walling created outdoor spaces prompting experiential discovery and a sense of comfort, wonder and seclusion. She was uniquely inspired by childhood memories of the English countryside and a later love of the Australian bush. Arts & Crafts garden ideals resonated with her, particularly William Morris' notion of "beauty through utility and simplicity" (Hardy, 2005:70) and Gertude Jekyll's use of 'wild' rather than controlled plantings to soften hard elements and aim for design harmony between house and garden (Watts, 1997:58-62). Her enthusiasm and energetic creativity forged a unique blend of design style.

The Brougham Place, Kew, plan, commissioned in 1930 by Charles Candy (engineer/surveyor) demonstrates this artful use of soft and hard elements and garden 'rooms' in a mixed-use Walling garden. Plantings were generous. From the Brougham Place side, and up around Mount Street, were poplar, hawthorn, flowering plum, apricot and pears. The back garden side boundary had fig, pear, and hawthorn trees. On the garage side was a crepe myrtle and a garden room at the back of the garage; fig, hawthorn, and silver birch trees marking the space around the reflecting pool. The back garden had a drying area, stone paths and apricot, apple, pear, and orange trees. The front garden had two paths, and three shrubbed 'rooms' with spaced hawthorn, elm, poplar and pear trees. Close to the house on the Mount Street side was a crepe myrtle. The Candys only lived there during 1930-33. The current house is differently angled and most trees appear to be under 95 years old. The driveway leading to the garage appears to be in the original place and the street corner angle of the garden is still softened to a curve.

...

Many thanks to Felicity Renowden, Judith Scurfield and Stacey Coenders, Archivist MLC, for their assistance in this project.

A copy of the full article with all references and URLs is available on request.

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100 YEARS AGO

THE EAST KEW GIRLS

Twenty talented girls from the Salvation Army's East Kew Home will give an interesting programme of 20 items to-night in the Horsham Town Hall. The girls have received a liberal education and are under the guidance of Commander Scott. On Sunday the girls attracted a large crowd, numbering about 500, in May Park, where they gave a sacred programme, including recitations and bell chimes from an improvised platform. The Horsham Borough Band assisted by supplying one of their usual fine musical programmes and afterwards escorted the girls down Firebrace street to the strains of music. The Horsham Town Hall was packed to capacity on Sunday night when the girls again gave a good programme. One of the principal items was a scriptural tableau on The Prodigal Son. The story was read by Ensign Hamer, and the girls acted in gesture. It was a moving item. The company visited Pimpinio yesterday afternoon and were well received by a large gathering. This afternoon the girls will perform at Wonwondah East.

The Horsham Times, 8 September 1925, p.4

GORILLAS v. PICKHANDLE WARRIORS

When three young lads from Balwyn, two aged 17 and one 18, were charged at the Kew Court today with offensive behaviour, Constable Toomer said they belonged to the "Gorilla" push, the activities of which had been the subject of many complaints recently. With another push, the 'Pickhandle Warriors', the 'Gorillas' had caused disturbances in Balwyn and Whitehorse roads. Pitched battles had been fought when the two bands clashed. The case was adjourned for six months, during which, time the lads will be kept under police surveillance. Three younger boys: will be brought before the Children's Court.

The Herald, 23 September 1925, p12

DAVID WHITE

VIGNETTES FROM THE DICKINSON TWIN SISTERS

Memories are living histories. Over the past century oral history has transformed the practice of contemporary history. Visual oral history recordings now capture not only what people look like and the significance of non-verbal communication, they also record the places and activities that are pictured in the recording. The society is gradually building their oral history collection, and we were privileged to interview the Dickinson twins – Janet Webster and Judy Goodes in June 2024. Topics included their early childhood, schooling, career and the beginnings of the Kew Historical Society.

Janet and Judith reminisced about their very early adventurous years in a simpler era, when children played in the outdoors, creating their own entertainment and when the neighbourhood seemed more secure than it does today.

Janet and Judith were born to Doris and William Dickinson at the Guildford Private Hospital (now the site of the Epworth Camberwell in Toorak Road) in May 1938. They were a surprise addition into a family with four much older children. At that time the family lived in Studley Park Road, Kew just near the corner of Studley Avenue. Both took turns talking about their family, firstly about their older siblings and then their parents' personalities, parenting style, and community activities and interests.



JANET & JUDITH DICKINSON, AGED 3 YEARS, 1941
Dickinson Family Collection

There was Margaret, who we called Peggy. She was 16, ... and Miriam, whom we called Miri, who was 15. And there was William we called Billy, who was 14. And Ron, the youngest of those four, who was 12 1/2 when we were born. Mum was very gentle, very quiet, very unassuming. Dad was very outgoing, very involved with a lot of Kew organisations and very different, adding spice to the family life.

Dad was very authoritarian, so whatever he wanted he expected you to do, you just didn't question that. But he was so involved with so many things that we didn't really see that much of him ... before the war he'd go off to work but then, when the war started, he was at the Victoria Barracks. So, he was there all day, and he would come home but then he'd go off to a meeting. He was on the Kew council at that stage and there were all sorts of things that he was involved with, meetings seemed to happen just about every night. And then he was very involved with the Kew Golf Club, so he was there at weekends as well...we didn't really see much of Dad in our younger years, but Mum was always there for us and Miriam also. Because when we were born, Dad realised that Mum wouldn't be able to manage our family of four children and two adults on her own with twins. And Miriam finished her schooling at Ruyton.

Tragedy struck when the little sisters were only three and their eldest brother Billy died suddenly from appendicitis. There were emotional adjustments and disruptions to the family's life as the parents, especially their mother, who the father had already noted, was having trouble coping with the children. The older one's grieved and tried to manage while the little girls started to wander all over Kew, going for quite long distances at times. Judith explains how they dealt with this unexpected chaos and developed a kind of independence. Her narrative also throws light on the tight community in Kew at the time.

We'd go down to Raheen. At one stage we even went down on our tricycles. We always travelled by trike, and we went down to the [Yarra] river. I know we had a bit of trouble getting back because around Stawell Street at that stage, there were paddocks and it was very hilly...we'd roam Barry Street, all the local streets...We even went off on our own to the Kew Baths, unknown to the family. We put our bathers under the mattress of our dolls' prams. Because we didn't have any money we said to Mr. Smith, the manager at the baths, "Oh, put it on the account", that's what Mum used to say at the grocers. He knew us because we'd go down with Dad when Dad went to see how the Kew Baths were getting on. And anyway, he happily let us through. We stayed there all day, and we were coming home, walking up Studley Park Road, it must have been quite late, and Mum and Dad and Peggy were walking down, and we were walking up and they said, "where have you been"? They were on their way to the police station to say that we were missing.

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THE DICKINSON TWIN SISTERS (from page 10)

Judith mused about their unsupervised freedoms.

We were quite adventurous and feral, I'd call it, but we loved the freedom...and that was probably the first and last time in our life we could absolutely do what we wanted to do.

Three weeks after Billy's death Judith and Janet were enrolled in Kinder at Little Ruyton in Princess Street (now Peppercorn Early Learning Centre). They became very quiet and demure there. All the same, they used to get on the bus in Studley Park Road by themselves, at three years old, and travel up Princess Street. The bus would stop outside their house to pick them up even though it wasn't a bus stop. The bus drivers knew they went every day in school term and the little girls loved that attention.

By the time the girls were eight years old, the family had moved to the corner of Cotham Road and Edgevale Road. They loved the house and the wild garden. They were attending 'big' Ruyton in Selbourne Road, so they walked to school or later on, they rode their bikes to school and would often come home for lunch. From about nine or ten, life seemed less exciting for them; it was just mainly going to school, and the family didn't go away on holidays either.



JUDITH GOODES & JANET WEBSTER
Jan Walker, photographer, 2025

Judith's recollection provides information about the buildings in Kew at the time and children's pastimes:

In the school holidays, we'd go down to the library, which was in Walpole Street, now the site of Woolworths supermarket. We were only allowed two books. Then we'd come home and read those and go back in the afternoon and get another two.

The girls left Ruyton after year 11 and became librarians.

We worked hard and for long hours at the Kew library but loved working there. We got to know the people who came in, not like nowadays with self-checkouts; it was a very personal interaction. We loved our library days.

The twin sisters had some amusing times too. Janet worked in the adult library and Judith in the children's library. People would get a little bit confused going from having their books checked out in the adult library then coming to pick up children only to find someone looking alike at the children's library desk. There were many well-known Kew residents coming to the library such as Sir McFarlane Burnet, Sir Gustav Nossal and Sir Zelman Cowen. Sadly, in the early 1960s they had to finish work once they got married. For a long time in Australia, many women were forced to leave their paid employment upon marriage due to a widespread "marriage bar". This ban, aimed to ensure men remained the primary breadwinners and was enforced until its abolition in the mid-1960s.

Janet and Judith's father, William (Bill) Dickinson MBE was Mayor of Kew 1946-47, 1960-61 and founding president and life member of the Kew Historical Society. Judith remembered fondly the early beginnings of the society:

In 1958, Janet and I were down at Sorrento sunning ourselves and happy. When we came home, we found, in our absence, we were assigned as assistant and vice-assistant secretary at the inaugural meeting! Councillor Bill Vaughan was the secretary. But not for long! And of course, Dad was president and organized it all. I typed up the minutes on my very old typewriter that used to miss letters. The meetings were held at our home in Cotham Rd, but then we'd occasionally go and visit some other places ... 'Roseneath' in Pakington Street, a beautiful old home that belonged to the Reed family; they had lovely antiques and 'D'Estaville' in Barry Street, home to Miss Figuerola and her sisters. I think the main attraction there was the death mask of Napoleon. She had some interesting antiques as well. She was a real character... We retired from our secretary roles after three or four years when we married. However, Dad continued until he died in 1974.

The newly formed society consisted of many interesting and well-known residents - Miss Daniell (headmistress of Ruyton) Miss Dumaresq (from a well-known Kew pioneering family) Alec Fraser (the Public Library librarian), Cr Bill Vaughan, Mr Chinner (the Parliamentary Librarian), Miss Alma Figuerola (artist in Kew), Miss Mackie (Academic) to name a few.

Bill Dickinson was active in both the local and wider community - the Kew Golf Club, Liberal Party, Kew Council, Kew RSL, Ruyton Girls' School Council, Yarra Bend National Park Trust, Amateur Athletic Association and more. But although he devoted his time to all these voluntary organizations Judith and Janet clearly recognized that the Kew Historical Society was really his baby.

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