



**HISTORICAL
SOCIETY INC.**

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community,
families, schools,
students,
historians and
other researchers*

NEWSLETTER

No. 154
MARCH 2026



THE MOVE TO THE COURT HOUSE

Members and visitors have already experienced the advantages of our move to the Kew Court House in the use of the foyer for a meeting place and the Just Theatre as a venue for our February meeting and for our 2026 McIntyre Lecture

Behind the scenes, over the days of 15, 16, and 17 February, the long-awaited move of the Kew Historical Society to its new Heritage Centre at the Kew Court House took place. The move of the Society's artworks, photographs, archives, costumes, artefacts, library, and equipment took weeks of planning, and subsequent to the move, days of unpacking and working out how to use the new spaces to best advantage.

Since the end of 2025, considerable planning for the move involved measuring all the spaces in our new rooms at the Court House as well the equipment and furniture which houses our collection, so that we could match items to spaces. This measuring exercise determined how we would use the rooms in a building that had once been a police residence, with attached police offices and cells. As this is stage 1 of the move, with further rearrangements required at midyear, compromises were involved in how a number of spaces could be initially utilised before stage 2 eventuated.

What you can see pictured above is the room, and its layout, that will greet visitors when they enter the Court House during the first half of 2026. Subsequently, it will be used exclusively as a gallery space for our exhibitions, but in the interim, it houses our reference library, our archives, and half of our framed pictures collection. The adjacent room is a fitted kitchen where volunteers and visiting members can meet and share refreshments.

A number of other rooms have already had their function determined for the foreseeable future. On the ground floor, this includes a workroom where administration, archiving, cataloguing, scanning, and printing can occur. 'Out the back' we have exclusive use of the three former police cells, which have been utilised for artefact storage, exhibition equipment, and the third cell which stores our subject and real estate files, as well as cabinets for the storage of technical equipment and stationery.

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THE GROUND FLOOR FUTURE EXHIBITION ROOM

February 2026

THE MOVE TO THE COURT HOUSE

(from page 1)

When you ascend to the second storey by the stairs, or by the lift, we initially have rooms set aside for specific collections. These include a new *CostumeLab*, housing our fashion and design collection, as well as a workspace to use for exhibition preparation and conservation. This room was where we used to meet members and visitors, and which we used for our exhibitions. In the opposite room at the top of the stairs, a new Map Room houses our nationally significant map collection, housed in what can now be seen as old and battered second-hand plan cabinets. The need for their replacement is self-evident, not least for occupational health and safety reasons. Two of the plan drawers require volunteers to bend, kneel and struggle to open the heavy drawers to retrieve maps for research, scanning and for exhibitions.

The move of furnishings, technology and the collection were carried out by Red Lion Moving Services and funded by the City of Boroondara. Without this assistance, the move would not have been physically possible given the extent, dimensions and weight of a number of items. The Society also recognised that it had to spend money from its accumulated funds on new equipment to replace a large and heavy storage cabinet that could not be moved from the Kew Library to the Kew Court House. This particularly affected our unique collection of framed photographs of the chairmen and mayors of Kew, which were conserved a number of years ago through a Local History Grant. A new picture storage unit cost over \$5,000.

So how does the move affect our members and volunteers as well as members of the public? Initially, at least until the second half of the year, we will not be able to mount public exhibitions. We are investigating the feasibility of opening the new Heritage Centre to the general public for up to two days a week, extending to three days at mid-year. Opening would require locating one of our volunteers in the front entrance rooms of the new Heritage Centre. In the interim, our Management Committee is planning how to regularly open the Centre to members so they can see how the rooms have been adapted for use by a forward-thinking historical society.

ROBERT BAKER



NINE OF THE SEVENTY CRATES USED IN THE MOVE

February 2026

KEW HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

PATRON

Sir Gustav Nossal AC CBE FRS FAA FTSE

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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Curator: Judith Scurfield

Members: George Demetrios | Mary Kelleher | Julie King |
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MONTHLY MEETINGS

In 2026, monthly meetings and public lectures of the Kew Historical Society will be held in the Just Theatre at the Kew Court House on the second Wednesday of each month excluding the months of January and December. There is normally 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, located at 188 High Street, Kew. The former Police Station within the Court House complex is now our permanent home, housing events, exhibitions and our collection, each managed by experienced and committed volunteers.

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

KEW COURT HOUSE

On 16, 17, and 18 February, our working spaces, archives, collection and meeting spaces were moved from the Kew Library, where we had operated for a period of 39 years, to the Kew Court House. Unpacking, like the packing that preceded the move, occurred over a number of weeks. We have adapted the building to best meet the needs of our working and collection spaces. However, Stage 1 of the move, means that we are more cramped than we anticipated.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of the City of Boroondara in funding the move and in providing us with the former Police Station as our new headquarters.



FORMER POLICE STATION, 2012

MEMBERS

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.

Since December, we welcome as new members: Ms Heidi Delaney, Jonathan Wilkinson, and Kate and Michael Baines.

GRANTS & SPONSORS

KHS has applied for a third consecutive grant to support the delivery of our core services to members and to the residents of Kew and beyond. We are also actively seeking sponsorship by individuals and groups to upgrade our equipment at the Court House.

To date we have spent over \$5,000 on purchasing a new pictures storage unit for the portraits of the former mayors of Kew. We are seeking sponsorship and donations to our conservation account to replace three sets of map drawers. All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

NEW EXHIBITION

From 25 April to 10 May, we will be exhibiting costumes, textiles and artefacts as examples of 'Interwar Fashion & Design' (i.e. 1918–1939) as part of the 2026 Australian Heritage Festival. The exhibition will be open over three weekends, with morning and afternoon sessions. Guided group tours for groups can be held with prior arrangement on weekdays. We are seeking volunteers to be present in the main areas of Villa Alba Museum to ensure that fragile fixtures and exhibits are not compromised, but also to answer queries by members of the public. A description of the exhibition is linked from the front page of our website.



VALE JOHN ROGERS

John Rogers was a life member of Kew Historical Society. He died in October 2025 at the age of 95. John was one of three sons of Kew historian Dorothy Rogers. He was her photographer who took most of the pictures that she used in her published histories. After his mother's death in 1972, he was instrumental in preserving her collection through gifts of albums, manuscripts, photographs, and artefacts. Combined, they represent one of the most comprehensive parts of our collection.

John was born in Kew and grew up in Park Crescent. He later moved to Balwyn and subsequently Alexandra. On a number of occasions, John welcomed members into his home to talk about his memories of Kew. We are saddened to hear of his passing and pass on our condolences to his descendants.

POSTAL ADDRESS

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

Our email address remains info@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au

TOSCANO'S OF KEW

The story of Toscano's is the story of a family, of migration, of hard work and of the developing food tastes of Australians.

Pasquale Toscano came to Melbourne in 1926 from the small village of Ferruzzano in Calabria, Italy. He was 20 years old. His family was poor and he was seeking a better life in Australia. He began work chopping wood in Gippsland, picking fruit in South Australia and working as a general labourer.

Pasquale's father had been a struggling farmer who became the village postman, so Pasquale had no background in fruit retailing until he worked for a cousin who owned a fruit shop in Melbourne. With this experience, Pasquale saw an opportunity to run his own business. In the middle of the 1930s when he'd been in Australia for 10 years, he purchased an existing fruit shop in Newmarket.

Nunziata Virgona was three years younger than Pasquale and was born on an island in the Aeolian archipelago, off the coast of Sicily. Her large family struggled financially following the early death of her father. Two of Nunziata's siblings, Bartolomeo and Angelina had migrated to Melbourne in the early 1930s and encouraged the rest of the family to join them. Nunziata and her brother Francesco followed in 1937. Eventually, her mother and remaining siblings settled in Melbourne.



PASQUALE TOSCANO
Private Collection

It was soon after her arrival that Nunziata and Pasquale met. Nunziata was living with Angelina in Moonee Ponds when Pasquale, who was visiting a friend nearby, asked to be introduced. Following a two-year courtship, Nunziata and Pasquale were married in 1939 and the next day, they commenced work at a shop they had bought in Elwood during their engagement. With pooled savings and a loan from a friend, the saga of the family business had begun.



TOSCANOS IN HIGH STREET, KEW
Desley Reid, photographer, 2026
Private collection

When World War II broke out in 1939, Italian and German individuals in Australia were deemed 'enemy aliens.' These were nationals of countries at war with the British Empire. In 1941, this category expanded to include Japanese non-citizens. Everyday life was difficult for enemy aliens in Australia. Many were interned, including women and children. Prejudice against Italians meant the Toscanos spoke only English in public to avoid drawing attention to their nationality. Pasquale and Nunziata were not interned and continued to work in their shop, but some Italian businesses were boycotted which troubled them. The couple worked hard to provide their customers with the best produce available, and the business was intact and thriving at war's end.

By 1945, they had three children. Teresa was born in 1940, Joe in 1943 and Bob in 1945. By 1950, Nunziata and Pasquale were looking for a fruit shop with a larger residence. The Elwood shop only had a two-bedroom residence, so a shop with three bedrooms was required.

The fruit shop they found was at 243 High Street, Kew where the Salvos store is today. At the time, the building comprised two shops. The freehold was owned by Moran and Cato, a major Australian retail grocery chain. Moran and Cato operated one of the shops and the other was a fruit shop available for lease. Nunziata and Pasquale were delighted to move their business and young family into the shop with its three-bedroom residence.

The Kew shop was a great success. Their customers responded to the quality and range of produce offered and valued the service and advice given. It was at this time that Toscano's cemented its place in Kew as a very special greengrocer.

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TOSCANO'S OF KEW (from page 4)

In 1960, Moran and Cato announced its decision to close its Kew store and sell the freehold, including the shop the Toscanos were renting. Nunziata and Pasquale immediately opened negotiations to purchase their shop, however Moran and Cato decided to sell the freehold of the two shops as one.

After ten years in Kew, Nunziata and Pasquale were again hunting for a new shop. Deciding to remain in Kew so that they could continue to provide service to their loyal customers, they purchased a shop at 217 High Street, Kew, the shop's current location. This single shop was the second from the corner of Peel Street.

Also in 1960, Nunziata and Pasquale bought a house at 13 Violet Grove, Kew East (since demolished). The children's primary schooling was at Sacred Heart Primary School in Kew where Joe Toscano met Anne Coates. When in 1967, Anne and Joe were married and the residence above the shop was vacant, the couple moved in. Joe had been assisting in managing the shop since he was 16 years old and following their marriage, Anne and Joe worked side by side in the shop. Anne is of English/Irish heritage but quickly perfected the art of Italian cooking. Joe told me that she is "the best Italian cook" that he knows!

Nunziata and Pasquale's daughter Teresa and her husband Joe Cafari joined the business in 1967. Their children, Dominic and Julie, have also worked in the shop, and Dom continues to work in the business for more than 20 years. Bob Toscano became an engineer but helped in the shop during busy times. Following his retirement, he has played a major role in the establishment of additional shops at Hawksburn and Victoria Gardens in Richmond. Bob's son Luke, and Angelo Vergona, Nunziata's nephew, both work at the Kew store.

When Safeway opened in the current Woolworths store in Kew in 1974, and introduced self-service throughout, Nunziata and Pasquale were initially concerned. Many of their customers tried the Safeway alternative but returned to the family-run store where the staff understood fruit and vegetables and offered friendly service and advice.

The potential loss of customers to the large supermarket chain was only one aspect of the Toscano family's concerns. As fruit was sold ripe at that time the chance for the produce to be damaged by customers testing for ripeness and causing bruising was likely. However, growers quickly realised the potential for damage to the produce and responded by early picking, while still firm, so less damage could occur.

In 1979, Toscano's embraced self-service which required more shelf space and precipitated expansion into five neighbouring shops. Consequently, the original shop at 217 High Street is now part of a terrace of what equates to six adjoining shops.

When Joe retired from the business after many years, three of Anne and Joe's children, Joanne, Damien and Patrick became the driving force behind the expansion and transformation into a 'one stop shop.' The addition of meat, seafood, a delicatessen, sushi, dairy, eggs, fresh flowers and wine appeals to busy people who are short of time to shop. A customer making a quick trip to any of the family's shops can purchase the ingredients for an entire meal. Daughter Danielle has also worked in the shop and her children are now among the fourth generation of the family assisting in the business.

The changes witnessed by Joe in the years since he began managing the store have mostly been positive. He applauds the practice of growers using portable cool rooms when picking their crops. Produce is transported to market in optimum conditions and then transferred to the cool room at Toscano's by refrigerated truck.



FLOWERS FOR SALE AT TOSCANO'S IN HIGH STREET
Desley Reid, photographer, 2026

Running a business that requires early morning attendance at market, the maintenance of respectful relationships with a wide range of growers, and the sourcing of the best quality fruit and vegetables has been a hallmark of the family's approach to business. Their decision to include international items on the shelves beside well-known staples led them to become renowned as one of the best-stocked greengrocers in Melbourne. Recipes and cooking tips are available in the shops and are welcomed by customers.

The story of Toscano's greengrocery business is the story of a family who worked hard to improve the economic condition of its members. They escaped poverty in Italy by emigration and withstood war-time prejudice in Melbourne to become warmly accepted into the Kew community. By providing quality fresh fruit and vegetables, including rare and exotic items, Toscano's has earned its place as a premier shopping destination for the true foodie.

© DESLEY REID, 2026

PLANT PETS

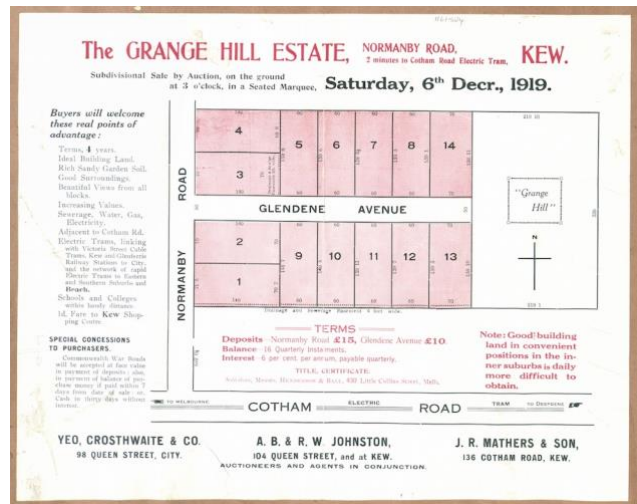
Edward Baines (1831–1916), from Leicester, England was an early settler in Victoria. He arrived, with his brother, William (c.1828–1856) on the ship *Erasmus*, on 4 June 1853. Being ironmongers by trade, they set up a wholesale ironmongery in Flinders-lane, Melbourne, residing on the premises. Aged 28, William died at Flinders-lane, in 1856. Edward continued the business, moved to Brighton and married Fanny Ann Richardson (c.1838–1871) of Collingwood in 1859.

Edward's business was financially successful, and the couple moved to 1 Hillgrove Place, East Melbourne, which had a small backyard. Having no interest in a public life, Edward took a deep interest in the Baptist religion and became an amateur horticulturalist. He was of the belief that Australian backyards should be filled with a substantial greenhouse. Given the expense of glass, he advised tough hessian could be used to protect the plants from the hot Australian winds. Beautiful native ferns, which he loved, could be foraged free from the surrounds of the Yarra River. He thought a small water feature would enhance the formation of a 'natural' garden within the greenhouse.

It was at his East Melbourne residence that Fanny died, aged 33 years, on 19 March 1871. Four years later he married Isabella Beatty (1837–1902), who had family associations in Valencia, Spain, via England. They moved to a rented property in Cotham Road, Kew.

It was at this time, that *Hillsbury* [later renamed *Grange Hill*], located on the corner of Cotham Road and Conner Street [later Normanby Road due to subdivision] was being put up for sale. The property had been developed by architect George Wharton, who lived adjacent. The eight-room brick villa was perched on an elevated position, giving glorious sweeping views of the countryside. It was designed for 'gentlemen' and was located on ten acres of good land. One and a half acres contained orchards, vines, and shrubbery as well as paddocks of 'artificial grasses', presumably imported fodder for animals. Naturally there were servants' quarters, stabling and necessary outhouses to manage the property.

It is not exactly known when Edward took possession of the villa and five of the ten acres. In an echo of the English nineteenth century love of Italianate Garden design, there was a long curving drive uphill. Lining the periphery of the carriage way was an eclectic informal grouping of mature exotic trees, originally planted by Wharton in about 1853. These trees were part of the colonial concept of taming, or even obliterating, the Australian native landscape in a nostalgia for 'Home'.



THE GRANGE HILL ESTATE
Dyer collection of auctioneers' plans, Melbourne and suburbs, 1919
Courtesy State Library Victoria

At the crown of the property, in front of the formal entry to the villa, was a large spectacular circular central garden. It featured an *Araucaria cunninghamii* [Hoop Pine] some 15.24m in height flanked by orange trees. Lily ponds were strategically placed throughout the garden, rocky grotto, and fernery. The conservatory housed exotic plants that he sourced from his New York supplier.

But his pride of place was a very large greenhouse. It was a *Wunderkammer* of exotic plants from around the world with a fishpond at the base of an artificial waterfall. But the most intriguing feature was a wooden plaque: *All Thy works do praise Thee, O Lord*. [Psalms 145:10. KJV]. It essentially means a blessing and thanksgiving for God's sovereign creations on earth and His heavenly home.

Edward's greenhouse was more than a reflection of colonial wealth, taste, success, and conspicuous consumption. It was his private place for deep reflection as he tended his 'plant pets'. His 'plant pets', along with his religion, became a therapy for resolving grief. All his children, numbering seven or eight, and his second wife had predeceased him. On his death in 1916, aged 85, at *Hillsbury*, he left a third wife, Henrietta Mary, née Appleford (1868–1945) and a grandchild, as well as a very fine garden. *Hillsbury* was subsequently sold by the executors of his will in 1918.

© SUZANNE McWHA, 2026

FASHION DETECTIVES

A TALE OF TWO EVENING COATS

The decision to investigate the origins of this remarkable sequined evening coat was influenced by the decision to make it the signature collection item in the forthcoming exhibition of 'Interwar Fashion & Design' at Villa Alba Museum during the 2026 Australian Heritage Festival. The analysis was enhanced by the facilities offered by our new 'Costume Lab' on level 2 of the Kew Court House; and the effectiveness of online tools in identifying styles, materials and similar examples. The coat was donated to the collection by Robyn Fankhauser in 2023, after another exhibition at Villa Alba in 2023: *Fashion in the Age of Elegance*.



EVENING COAT

Gift of Robyn Fankhauser, 2023
KHS Collection

When the coat was acquired, it was given a detailed examination to see what we could be learned about its construction and style. This was somewhat challenging as its maker was unknown. There were queries about where and when it had been made, who it had belonged to, and whether it had been modified post construction. The evening coat had been owned by the donor's parents, who had been dealers in antiques. They had stored it, and another cape, in a leather suitcase embossed with the initials R. Nathan. It was believed by the donor's family that the name referred to the Nathan family, one of whose members was at one stage the Lord Mayor of Melbourne. They understood that the coat may have been owned by his mother.

The exterior and lining were made from heavy silk fabrics, while the elaborately patterned sequins on the dress were made of plastic. The beads were coloured glass. There was some debate about whether the rabbit fur on the collar and cuffs was original, or added later, as the beading extended underneath the cuffs to their edge.

One of clues that made dating more certain was the design, particularly that of the gold beading, which extends into the undecorated fabric of the coat above the sequined panels. This is particularly apparent on the reverse, where the beading can be seen to represent the sun's rays.



BEADING ON THE REVERSE OF THE COAT

Moulieres, Paris, c.1927
KHS Collection

This sunray (or sunburst) symbol was to become one of the iconic and defining motifs of the Art Deco period, and was used extensively in fashion, textiles, furniture and architecture. Coincidentally, the use of the sunray design is also included in another sequined dress of the period, which will also be displayed in the upcoming exhibition. Like the coat, it probably dates to the second half of the 1920s.

It was three years later, when preparing the catalogue for the upcoming exhibition that a web app was used with a picture of the coat to confirm the earlier analysis. We were excited to find an almost identical coat in the collection of the Costume Institute, which forms part of the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The New York version was almost identical apart from the absence of the fur on the collar and cuffs. More importantly, it included a manufacturer's label, identifying that the coat had been made by *Moulieres*, located at 7 Boulevard Malesherbes, Paris. The Costume Institute dates its coat to circa 1927.

Historic costumes frequently have partial provenance. It might be known who the manufacturer was, or even who owned and wore the garment, but it might not tell us whether the coat was purchased overseas or imported by a retailer to Melbourne. The coat would have been a luxury item at the time it was purchased. Like most elaborately sequined authentic garments of the period, its purchase price today would be high. You can see the coat in all its splendour by attending the exhibition.

© ROBERT BAKER, 2026

MCEVOY v MCEVOY

A LONG RUNNING COURT CASE

On the evening of 30 June 1873, the marriage of Charles Edward McEvoy and Elizabeth Mary Glasson took place in the Wesleyan parsonage in Hay, New South Wales. William Weston, the Wesleyan minister officiated, and the ceremony was witnessed by his wife Marianne Weston and a David Fleming.

Charles Edward McEvoy was a son of James and Jane McEvoy of Studley House in Kew. James had died at Kew in March of the previous year. Following the death of his father, Charles lived partly with his mother at Studley House and partly on 'stations' in New South Wales which had been inherited by Charles and his brothers. The homestead of the 11,000 acre Wooloondool Station, where Charles was staying at the time of his marriage to Elizabeth, was located some three quarters of a mile from Hay.

Elizabeth Mary Glasson was the eldest daughter of miner Charles Glasson and Elizabeth Glasson née Honycombe, of Morrisons, a small settlement, formerly known as Morrison's Diggings, south west of Ballarat. Before arriving in Hay a few months prior to their marriage, Elizabeth had been a barmaid in a hotel in Bourke Street, Melbourne. Following her arrival in Hay, she became a barmaid at Carter's Crown Hotel. One of twelve hotels in Hay at the time, the Crown Hotel was described by a special correspondent to the *Town and Country Journal* in 1872 as "... a good brick building having twenty-two rooms; and a large Assembly Hall, [known] as the Adelphi theatre, where travelling theatrical parties give entertainments."

News of the marriage was apparently not well received by Charles' wealthy, upwardly mobile and staunchly Catholic family. Whether it was Elizabeth's occupation, family background or Protestant faith, a few days after the ceremony, the overseer of Wooloondool Station was sent to Hay to compel Charles to leave Elizabeth and return to Melbourne.

An article in *The Gundagai Times and Tumut, Adelong and Murrumbidgee District Advertiser* of 21 November 1874, reported that Elizabeth had summoned Charles for desertion at the Gundagai Police Court on 16 November 1874. She gave evidence that she was married at Hay, on 30 June 1873, by the Rev William Weston, Wesleyan minister. The marriage certificate and a certified extract from the Registrar General's office in Sydney were produced as evidence of their marriage. It was submitted that Charles had lived with her for eight days before going to Melbourne to inform his friends of the marriage. The Bench unanimously made an order for Charles to make payment of four guineas a week for one year to Elizabeth, together with £5 costs and 4s. 6d. Court costs.



STUDLEY HOUSE
John E Rogers, photographer, c.1970
KHS Collection

Apparently, Charles duly commenced payments to Elizabeth, but the matter did not end there. The case of McEvoy v McEvoy was to occupy the attention of the Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Jurisdiction in the Supreme Court of the Colony of Victoria from August 1875 until March 1882. It was followed by both New South Wales and Victorian newspapers, and many articles are available on the National Library of Australia's *Trove* newspaper archive. The voluminous Supreme Court file, consisting of a number of petitions for divorce by both parties, numerous affidavits and transcripts from the proceedings of a Special Commission appointed by the Victorian Supreme Court to take evidence in Hay, are held by the Public Record Office Victoria and are available for viewing on its website. In addition to the details of the case, the Court documents are interesting in themselves. All handwritten, they range from the immaculate flowing copperplate penmanship of originals to scratchy cursive script of copies turned out by clerks. Court orders carry the signatures of Sir William Foster Stawell, Redmond Barry and other notable judges whose names are memorialised in the street names of Kew.

On 11 August 1875, Charles petitioned the judges of the Supreme Court of Victoria seeking a decree that his marriage to Elizabeth be dissolved on the grounds of her adultery with co-respondents named as: James Howe Saunders, storekeeper, Alfred Raymond, solicitor, both of Hay; and Charles Vincent aka Frederick Belano, acrobatic actor of Melbourne.

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MCEVOY v MCEVOY (from page 8)

In her response, Elizabeth denied that she had been a dancing girl, as alleged in Charles' petition, and submitted that since both petitioner and respondent lived in New South Wales, the matter was outside the jurisdiction of the Victorian court. The allegations of adultery were denied and Elizabeth suggested that Charles had been guilty of cruelty since their marriage by wilfully infecting her with a venereal disease, and that by leaving her without means or protection, he had helped to bring about the alleged adultery, if any.

The Special Commission appointed to take evidence in Hay commenced its proceedings at Cox's Caledonian Hotel on 18 April 1876. A large number of witnesses were examined and cross-examined in proceedings that were closed to the press. Legal representation for those involved was complicated by there only being three solicitors in Hay, one of whom was named as a co-respondent in the divorce. The transcripts of evidence provide interesting insights into nightlife in Hay in the early 1870s. Elizabeth was represented in the proceedings by Ballarat solicitor Agar Wynne, whose brother Edwin Percy Wynne would later become a resident of Kew and its mayor in 1916–17.

Charles' suit for divorce was withdrawn without prejudice in August 1876. He later suggested that his Catholic faith had influenced this decision, but it seems equally likely that his case was not looking good and that he was disappointed with his legal representative William Duffet. The McEvoy family also seemed to have begun the process of divesting Charles of any assets that could be drawn on in any future claims by Elizabeth.

A notice in the *New South Wales Government Gazette*, October 1877 advised that the partnership between William and Charles McEvoy as squatters and graziers, in and upon certain stations situate in the Colony of New South Wales, and known as Wooloondool and Boyong, had been dissolved by mutual consent. The Wooloondool and Boyong Stations were then sold by the trustees of James McEvoy's estate in October 1877.

In December 1877, Elizabeth, now mostly resident with her parents at Morrions, petitioned for a judicial separation from Charles on the grounds of his adultery with three women. She also petitioned for alimony from Charles. His recent sale of the stations valued at £40,000, ownership of a stud of racehorses at Flemington, and interest in other property left in his father's will were cited. This petition was dismissed by the Court in August 1878. But Charles still had other problems. In July 1878, 18-year-old Rebecca Cleland had brought an action against him for breach of promise [of marriage].

In August 1878, Charles' mother, Jane McEvoy, held an auction of furniture at Studley House and appears to have moved to a large house named Coleena in Fitzroy Street, St Kilda. In October 1879, Charles announced his retirement from the turf, holding an auction at the Pastoral Hotel, Flemington, of his twelve horse racing stud and Kensington training stables.



POSSIBLY ELIZABETH MARY MCEVOY NÉE GLASSON

A photograph from the McEvoy v McEvoy court files.
Inscribed on the reverse 'a' McEvoy v McEvoy 16/12/81
Source: Public Record Office Victoria

On 17 November 1880, Elizabeth, now living in a cottage in Emerald Hill [now South Melbourne], and described as “a young lady-like woman of prepossessing appearance”, sued her husband Charles, for maintenance at the Emerald Hill Police Court. She advised the Court that she understood her husband, who had squandered his wealth in horseracing and other dissipations leaving her totally without means of support, lived with his mother, a lady of means, at St Kilda. The Court made an order for payment of one pound and ten shillings a week to Elizabeth together with 42 shillings costs and a £100 surety against Charles to ensure payment. However, in June 1881, Charles successfully appealed against the Emerald Hill magistrates' order on the grounds of Elizabeth's adultery in Hay in 1874 and his now having no means to support his wife.

In October 1881, Charles petitioned for divorce from Elizabeth on the grounds of her adultery in Hay with a Walter Wylde. On 21 December 1881, the Supreme Court granted him a decree for divorce. Subsequently, Elizabeth lodged an affidavit in March 1882 seeking to prevent the divorce becoming absolute on the grounds that she had not received £100 after an agreement with Charles that she would not oppose the divorce. Her application was dismissed.

It appears that Elizabeth moved to Adelaide where on 5 November her daughter Ivy Josephine McEvoy died aged 5 months. Ivy's parents are listed in the Australian birth index as Charles McEvoy and Elizabeth Mary Glasson, her place of birth Emerald Hill and her date of birth about 1882.

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STREETS OF KEW

FROM LITTLE DERBY STREET TO COBDEN STREET

Cobden Street, Kew, is part of my morning walk and its narrowness, the timeline of its houses and their various architectural features quickly intrigued me. This curiosity prompted me to meander through its at least 150-year history; its homes and people.

Initially named Little Derby Street, it was part of the 122-acre *Kew Estate Portion 87* bought in 1851 by Crown Lands Commissioner Nicholas Fenwick for 4/6/- per acre. The portion ran from the corner of High Street [then Bulleen Road] and Princess Street to just past Derby Street. The surveyor, George Wharton, planned the wide Derby, Pakington, and Walpole Streets, all named after British statesmen, reaching east from High Street, to alternate with the narrow Little Walpole Street, Little Pakington Street, and Little Derby Street.

In the block between High and Malmsbury Streets, there is one lane on the eastern side, sometimes called McAlpine Lane, which connects in a dog leg to Malmsbury Street. In the block between Malmsbury and Eglinton Streets, a split lane runs on the west from Pakington to Cobden then down from Cobden. A dog leg service lane runs east from Cobden Street behind the High Street shops to apartment rear access and up to High Street.

Newspapers and residents have their stories to tell about the people of Little Derby/Cobden Street. In 1882, while on short release from the Kew Asylum, the wife of a Cobden Street resident drowned herself in the Yarra. Mr Cruickshank's Cobden Street timber cottage was broken into in 1887, and knives, forks, spoons, and drapery stolen. In 1891, a monkey escaped from its chains in a Cobden Street back garden, ran away, and bit a child. The monkey was chased high and low until it succumbed to a stone thrown by a local lad.

In 1902, a fire started in the washhouse of 103 Cobden Street but was extinguished by fire trucks before the cottage itself was lost. In 1922, the curator of Alexandra Gardens, Mr George Pockett, resident of 18 Cobden Street, had an accident with a motorcycle while riding his bicycle near home, and sustained fatal injuries. In 1924, 16-year-old Fred Elles of Cobden Street and his employer dived into the deep waters of the Yarra at Kew to try to save or find the bodies of two girls in difficulties. In 1929, a Cobden Street resident, an employee of the Kew Asylum, died in Malvern after attempting to murder his wife, and in 1942, during a wild car chase, there was a shootout on the corner of Cobden and High Streets between police and attempted murder and theft suspects.



COBDEN STREET LOOKING NORTH

Google Maps
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Real estate sales advertisements from the twentieth century until roughly 2019, show Cobden Street as an ever growing patchwork of what has, over the past century, been described as modern townhouses (like number 8 and 16-18); timber Edwardians (like number 22 and 36); Victorian cottages (like number 30, 40, 42, and 52); brick unit blocks in a range of styles (like number 63); timber cottages (like number 14, 20, 33, and 35); rustic cottages (like number 26); Californian bungalows (like number 24); and brick cottages with art deco features (like number 37, 39, and 42). Street numbering has also changed over the years.

The present streetscape of Cobden Street has few original timber cottages, displaying instead architectural styles from the late nineteenth century through to the twenty-first century. These reflect changes in material and architectural preferences and fashions, the changing pursuits of family and social life, and a diversification of owners' aesthetic sensibilities.

The first Cobden Street residents were involved in local retail or with building and development-related sectors, which had contributed to the urban building boom. Early in the 1850s, a few shops were built on High Street, Kew, and many more appeared by the late 1850s. In 1858, the Prospect Hill Hotel was built on the corner of Little Derby Street and Bulleen Road. At 76 metres above sea level, it was the highest point in Kew's commercial area and the hub of an increasingly lively urban area. In the 1970s and 1980s, the hotel showcased live music bands like *Skyhooks*, *Mental as Anything*, *AC/DC*, *Midnight Oil*, *Men at Work*, and *Hunters and Collectors*. It was later converted into a licensed bottle shop.

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STREETS OF KEW (from page 10)

At the request of residents in 1884, the names of each of Wharton's narrow streets were officially changed to Brougham, Peel, and Cobden. In newspapers and official records, there was a considerable transition period from the naming of Little Derby to Cobden, and the later renaming of the northern part of Cobden Street to Tennyson Street. The use of Little Derby Street can be found in newspapers and records until 1877.

Cobden Street first appeared in family notices from 1880, with early twentieth century resident names of Pennefather, Lowe, Nash, Metters, Chambers, O'Fee, Hodson, Chislett, Carney, Harcombe, Cruickshank, Forster, Cornish, McCagern, Browne, and Fleming. The nomenclature flux is transparent as early as 1881 with some records referring to "Little Derby Street (see Cobden Street)" or "Cobden Street (late Little Derby)".

In 1893, the end of Cobden Street from Eglinton down to Earl Street, near the Willsmere Railway Station, with its wider road and property frontages, was gazetted as Tennyson Street. Residents recorded in *Sands & McDougall* in 1906 as living in Tennyson Street were recorded in earlier years as living next to each other in Cobden Street. Tennyson Street began to appear in family notices in, for example, the deaths or funerals of Frederick Misdale in December 1906; Henry Haggarty, of *Alva*, Tennyson Street; and in transparently linking the old and new name in the 1908 family notice of the death/funeral of Mrs. Laurentze Hansen of *Bally Mully Villa*, "278 Tennyson Street (continuation of Cobden Street)".

Apart from learning a little about local residents from street directories, official records, and life transitions recorded in newspapers, other public material like naturalisation lists and personal and lost and found advertisements provide interesting information about residents. Leon Kuczynski of 47 Cobden Street was naturalised in 1967, and residents of number 34 advertised a £3 reward in 1946 for the return of their lost wirehaired terrier. Some residents had more public profiles, either through reports of unfortunate events like Mr Pockett's death by motorcycle, or through personal repute.

Frederick McCubbin's student William Nichols Anderson (1872-1927) apparently lived for a while in Cobden Street. Painter and mosaicist Mervyn Napier Waller (1893-1972) was on the electoral roll at 92 Cobden Street from 1919 after returning from the war until the early 1920s, later moving more permanently to Ivanhoe. Number 34 is said to have been the home of a famous ballerina, so far unidentified.

Mainly comfortably residential for over a century, Cobden Street has also housed at different times a dentist, a fruit shop, and a corner shop. Many properties have changed hands repeatedly. New homes appeared at different times. *Ramornie*, at 24 Pakington Street, was built in 1890 and backed onto Cobden Street, for decades taking up much of that western block to Malmsbury Street. Some houses have been demolished and replaced, and many have been renovated or restored a number of times, but there are no faux chateaux.

At the age of 94, one resident recently sold up to return to her homeland, Poland, and renovations have begun. There are still a few long-term residents, and the demographics are naturally quite different from those of the late nineteenth century.

Some things stay the same. At the intersection of Eglinton with Cobden and Tennyson Streets, the original cream and red wall with its MILK BAR notice remains.



COBDEN STREET SIGN
Verna Rieschild, photographer, 2026

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