

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



## CREATIVE COMMUNITIES

The Kew Historical Society promotes Kew's history to the community, families, schools, students, historians and other researchers through monthly meetings, public lectures, exhibitions and publications.

In particular years, we may focus on specific aspects of community history. During 2015, the anniversary of the Gallipoli landing, much of our efforts went into providing speakers and exhibitions relating to World War I. In developing materials or activities for the commemoration, we worked in partnership with the City of Boroondara and other community groups, strengthening connections between organisations and groups committed to researching and promoting history across the City of Boroondara.

During the second half of 2015, our activities were shaped by a Local History Grant from the Victorian Government, administered by the Public Record Office Victoria, which allowed us to conserve, catalogue, digitise and exhibit items from our wonderful map collection.

Since the foundation of the Kew Historical Society in 1958, our collection has been enlarged through donations by individuals, community groups and large organisations, and has been maintained by generations of members. The diverse nature of the collection allows us to illustrate different aspects of Kew's history.

In 2016, we will be able, through a 'Creative Communities' *Community Strengthening Grant* awarded by the City of Boroondara, to increase community involvement in, and understanding of our extensive clothing and textiles collection. Regular readers of our newsletters will be aware that we have been raising funds to allow us to store these items in a more archivally sound way. For those who have visited our archive, located at the rear of the Kew Library, you can now see shelves filled with new numbered polypropylene and blue grey board archive boxes, filled with photographs, documents, ephemera, objects, and clothing and textiles.

The Creative Communities grant enables us to involve individuals and groups, from within our membership and from the wider community, in the conservation, measurement, photography and exhibition of some of the most rare items of clothing in our collection. These will be used to focus on 'Victorian Fashion: Dressing for society'. Exhibitions are scheduled to occur throughout 2016 at community venues and museums in Kew: the Kew Court House, Villa Alba and at the Kew Library.

## CONTENTS

- 3 SOCIETY ACTIVITIES**  
News about exhibitions, special events, and future meetings
- 4 CHANDLER HWY**  
Details of what the Society submitted to VicRoads about the proposed Chandler Hwy Upgrade
- 5 14 IRYMPLE AVENUE**  
Protection takes centre stage in a significant heritage precinct in Kew
- 7 WORLD WAR 1 DIARIES**  
Extracts from Chris Robinson's wartime diaries transcribed by John Torpey
- 10 COLEY OF KEW**  
The extraordinary story of H.C.A. Harrison of Molonglo

Front-page

## Examining a 19th Century wedding gown

Members of the Collections Activity Group

Right

### The grave of H.C.A. Harrison, Boroondara General Cemetery

Photo: Suzanne McWha. See also article p10.



## CREATIVE COMMUNITIES (cont.)

A central component of the Creative Communities grant aims to solve one of our problems.

Today, girls and women are taller than they were in the past. This has resulted from a range of environmental factors. Social values have also changed, such as the unwillingness of women to be corseted, as they were in the 19th and early 20th centuries. In parallel to this development, the size and shape of modern, commercially available mannequins has also altered. This has resulted in our inability to dress and display modern mannequins in examples of our historic clothing. In many cases we cannot even get our gowns over the moulded shoulders of a commercial mannequin, let alone do the gown up at the waist. This grant provides us with the opportunity to purchase five museum standard mannequins, that are adjustable and that can be used to safely exhibit these fragile items of clothing.

Many of these historic costumes need to be measured and photographed before they are displayed. While we have developed some skills in this area, we are aiming to develop a training program that will allow us to improve these. While we have friends, such as Loel Thomson from the Melbourne Costume Collection whose expertise we have drawn on previously, we are seeking volunteers from within our community, both members and non-members, to become involved in this collaborative journey of discovery.

So, who are we looking for? Do you know the difference between lace and crochet, or how to tell silk taffeta from muslin. Have you constructed clothes or worked in the clothing industry. Are you interested in, or have experience in fashion photography? Or, do you just have an interest in finding out more about the history of clothing.

Workshops and lectures are planned for 2016. At these, it will be possible to meet, share and or develop knowledge and skills about the history of textiles and clothing and the exhibition of these.

If you would like further information, contact our archivist, Robert Baker (0438 370 967) or Suzanne McWha (0408 329 632) who will be organising the workshops and lectures.



Examples of German immigrant lace and crochet work, donated by Ruth Dwyer

## KEW HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

### PATRON

Sir Gustav Nossal AC, CBE

### MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

**President:** Andrew McIntosh

**Vice President:** Assoc. Prof. Don Garden

**Secretary:** Brad Miles

**Treasurer:** Keith Kendall

**Archivist/Newsletter editor:** Robert Baker

**Curator:** Judith Scurfield

**Members:** Andrew Frost | Mel Lawrence | Mary Kelleher  
Debbie McColl-Davis | Suzanne McWha | Judith Scurfield | Janet Walker

### 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 three days a week: alternate Thursdays (11.00am–1.00pm), and 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  
PO Box 175 Kew VIC 3101  
KHS Newsletter, No.113/2015  
ISSN 0155-1337

## EXHIBITIONS

The Kew Historical Society mounts regular exhibitions in the History Centre at the Kew Court House (Level 1, 188 High Street, Kew) and at Kew Library (Civic Drive, Kew).

### KEW COURT HOUSE Survey Maps of Kew

Until March 2016

This curated exhibition of Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) survey plans of the Borough of Kew date from the period 1894-1910. The exhibition is funded by a grant from the Government of Victoria through a Local History Grant administered by the Public Record Office of Victoria.

### KEW LIBRARY

#### The Technology of Communication

Until February 2016  
It is easy to forget past changes in communication technology in an age of mobile phones and computers. The exhibition in the large glassed display space at the south end of the Kew Library focus on a century of technological change, including rare items from our collection that were once used in the town halls of Kew.

## QUARTERLY BOOK SALES

In addition to income derived from memberships and donations, money raised at our quarterly book sales in the Phyllis Hore Room in the Kew Library provides a significant amount to our annual operating expenses. Funds raised allow us to hold regular exhibitions, as well as providing money to purchase materials used to conserve and store our collection.

The dates for book sales in 2016 have now been published. They are:

- 21 February
- 15 May
- 21 August
- 27 November.

You can help by donating books for sale, by assisting in setting up on the preceding Saturdays, and by joining us on the days of the sale.

For more information, please contact Andrew Frost by phone (03) 9817 5481. You can also contact Andrew by emailing him at this email address - [info@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au](mailto:info@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au).

## MEETINGS & LECTURES

*The Kew Historical Society holds eight monthly meetings and two special lectures each year. During the first quarter of 2016, we will hold monthly meetings in February and April, as well as the McIntyre Lecture given by a distinguished Victorian during the Kew Festival. Visitors are welcome to attend these events.*

### FEBRUARY 2016 MEETING LOST KEW

#### Research Activity Group

Phyllis Hore Room, Kew Library  
Wednesday 10 February, 8:00pm  
During the second half of 2015, Felicity Renowden, Robert Baker, Kerry Fairbank, and Judith Vimpani have been researching built structures that have been lost to Kew. Tony Michael and Andrew McKinnon have been assisting with additional research and the improvement of some of the digital images. The team will present the pictures and information that they have assembled for the 'Lost Melbourne' book to be produced by the Royal Historical Society of Victoria. (See pages 4 & 11)

### MARCH

#### 2016 DICKINSON LECTURE

Topic: To be advised

Speaker: To be advised

Just Theatre, Kew Court House  
Wednesday 9 March,  
7:30 for 8:00pm

In March, during the Kew Festival we will be holding our annual McIntyre Lecture. A number of expert speakers on issues relating to history and heritage have been approached to speak. More information will be provided when it is available.

### APRIL 2016 MEETING BOROONDARA REMEMBERS

#### Fiona Poulton & Katherine Sheedy

Phyllis Hore Room, Kew Library  
Wednesday 13 April, 8:00pm  
*Boroondara Remembers: Stories of World War I* as written by historians from 'Way Back When' (with help from Boroondara Historical Societies) includes the story of how Boroondara residents participated in the war effort 100 years ago. The quality of the book was recognised in the Victorian Community History Awards, winning the 'Small Publication Award'. At the meeting, Fiona and Katherine will focus on some of their discoveries about Kew residents and soldiers.

## KEW HISTORICAL SOCIETY ONLINE

The Kew Historical Society aims to promote the history of Kew, East Kew and Studley Park, including through its website. Over the last year, the content on the website has dramatically increased, with information about the Society, the history of Kew and the Society's collection.

On the History section of the website, you can find information about people, places and events that has been researched by members of the Research Activity Group.

The Collections area of the website includes photographs and descriptions of a number of items in our archives. These are listed in a number of categories: audiovisual resources, books, costumes, documents, ephemera, maps, objects, pictures and textiles.

Items are always being added to our website. Recent additions include photographs and descriptions of each of the 34 hand-tinted MMBW plans in our collection. Due to the file size of the digital copies, the images are reduced in size, however we can provide print copies that show much more detail than is available online. Print copies are available for purchase for \$50 each. Details are available on the website under Collections>Maps.



Collections@Kew

Collections@Kew is a non-profit section of the Kew Historical Society website. It houses a number of items for sale, including the original printed collection plans. These are available from the only specialist in this field and are the only collection of the history of Victoria as it has been known generally.

The collection plans are only available through the main site above. To learn more, please visit the Kew Historical Society website.

If you would like to purchase items from the collection, please visit the information on our Website. Outside of a number of items that are available, items will also be available on the Collections@Kew website.

### KHS Collections website

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

## CHANDLER HWY UPGRADE OPTIONS

The name 'Chandler Highway' is a bit of a misnomer – it is not really a highway and Chandler didn't have all that much to do with it!

The short section of roadway linking Earl and Princess Streets in Kew with Heidelberg and Grange Roads in Alphington is only about 1500 metres long and, when formed around 1930, the then Minister for Public Works just happened to be a bloke called Alfred Chandler.

Keeping up the misnomer theme, the latest proposal for Chandler Highway is not really an 'upgrade', as is advertised, but involves a totally new bridge over the Yarra River. Four different options are advertised, two for a six-lane bridge and two for a four-lane bridge, but as the four-lane options are actually designed to permit a future upgrade to six lanes, every option being offered is in fact a six-lane bridge. And the options are not really options either, as VicRoads has clearly identified one as its 'preferred option'. Every option, including the 'preferred option', will involve cutting a large swathe through the landscape of the Yarra River with many trees to be lost.

There is some good news though. Every option being put forward by VicRoads involves the retention of the existing bridge for a 'shared user path'. The existing bridge, as many readers will know, was constructed in 1891 by John Monash as part of the Outer Circle Railway. While it has some level of protection under the planning scheme, given that it is not listed on the Victorian Heritage Register it remains vulnerable to demolition, so its proposed retention is good news.

The Kew Historical Society has made a submission as part of VicRoads' community feedback process. Our submission supports the retention of the historic railway bridge and suggests that pedestrian and bicycle traffic across the bridge be "designed in a manner that separates cyclists from pedestrians so that pedestrians can safely cross the bridge at their leisure and take in the views of the Yarra River as well as marvel at the bridge construction". The submission also suggests that, as part of the upgrade project, that "some information panels be installed adjoining the pedestrian path highlighting the history of the bridge and the outer circle railway in particular".

Further information on the Chandler Highway Upgrade can be found at <[vicroads.vic.gov.au](http://vicroads.vic.gov.au)>.

**BRAD MILES**  
KHS SECRETARY

## 'LOST MELBOURNE'

Typically, members of the Research Activity Group of the Kew Historical Society work separately on their own research projects and report on, and gain feedback about these at monthly meetings of the Research Group. A number of areas researched end up being included in these newsletters.

In June 2015, Richard Broome [Emeritus Professor of History, La Trobe University] wrote to the Society explaining that the Royal Historical Society of Victoria (RHSV) was intending to publish an illustrated book including photos of 'lost' Melbourne and its suburbs. Local historical societies, including Kew, were invited to select and write about up to fifteen photographs of built heritage in their suburb that had been 'lost' or whose original purpose/s had changed, and/or where the past usage had perhaps been forgotten. The period of time selected by the RHSV for the project was 1850-1960.

A number of members in the Research Group have worked individually and collaboratively to select and write about photographs of Kew, East Kew and Studley Park that are largely drawn from our own collection. In some cases, we have had to seek permission from other organisations and institutions to include photos where we do not have a suitable photo in our collection.

The date for submission of the images, and captions of up to 100 words, was on 30 November 2015. The Research Group ultimately made their selections based on a number of factors. Among these, was that the building had to be significant or representative. Also that the photo submitted had to be of reasonable quality.

Ultimately, a 'caption writing team', including Robert Baker, Kerry Fairbank, Felicity Renowden, Suzanne McWha and Judith Vimpani wrote about the twenty-one built structures and or buildings: the Athenaeum building and subsequent 'Kew Town Hall' in Walpole St.; 'Blackhall' in Sackville St.; 'Byram' in Studley Park Rd.; 'Chipperfield's Boat House'; 'Clutha' in Studley Park Rd; 'Elm Lodge' in Wellington St.; 'Fairyland' in Malmsbury St.; 'Fernhurst' in Fernhurst Gve.; the second 'Harp of Erin'; 'High Street, Kew' in 1891; the 'Kew Lunatic Asylum'; the 'Kew Railway Station'; the 'Recreation Hall' in Wellington St.; 'Kilby Lodge'; 'Ordsall' in Cotham Rd.; 'Range View' in Mont Victor Rd.; the original 1910 'Rotunda' in the Alexandra Gardens; the 'Salvation Army Citadel' in High St.; the old 'Studley Park Bridge'; and 'Windella' in Studley Park Road.

From these examples, the RHSV team will make a choice based on significance, representativeness and image quality. Don Garden, our Vice President has been invited by the RHSV to write an introduction about Kew for our section.

Four of these images and their captions are included on p.11 of this newsletter.

# HERITAGE ISSUES

## 14 IRYMPLE AVENUE

The Victorian *Heritage Act 1995* was designed to: protect and conserve significant places and objects of cultural heritage, and to register of such places and objects; to establish a Heritage Council; and to establish a Victorian Heritage Register. In defining what is covered by the concept of the 'conservation of places', the *1995 Act* defines these as including [significant] buildings, gardens, trees, remains of a ship or part of a ship, archaeological sites, precincts, and sites.

Since the *Act* was published, the Victorian Government through the Heritage Council has provided guidance on how to determine whether a 'place' or 'object' is significant and the criteria that should be used in making these judgements. In 2008, the Heritage Council defined, adopted and promoted the following heritage assessment criteria:

CRITERION A	Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history
CRITERION B	Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history
CRITERION C	Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history
CRITERION D	Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects
CRITERION E	Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics
CRITERION F	Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period
CRITERION G	Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions.
CRITERION H	Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.

These criteria were used when the City of Boroondara deliberated on the heritage value of Gough Whitlam's birthplace in Rowland Street. Heritage consultants to Council advised that CRITERION H was particularly pertinent to, and could be used to justify the heritage value of the 'Whitlam' house.

In addition to these published Criteria, the Heritage Council defines the parameters, or 'principles', which define whether a place or an object has local, Victorian, national, or universal heritage value. If a place is judged to have heritage value to a locality or municipality, it has the potential to be recognised as being of local cultural heritage significance (and may be included in the Heritage Overlay of the local planning scheme).

Evaluating places and objects takes time, and is dependent on a number of factors. Typically, a Council uses qualified and experienced heritage consultants to research the history of a place before it is recommended for inclusion in a planning overlay.

In the case of urban precincts, the streetscape and the natural and built structures (eg gardens, trees, houses) are considered together when researching and recommending the heritage overlay.

So, what kinds of information are relevant to a discussion about the heritage value of Irymple Avenue in East Kew and the gardens, trees and houses that constitute the precinct? Initial data that should be researched include when the street was first established, and the dates when the individual houses were built.

The so-called 'Oswinia Estate' subdivision in East Kew was planned and auctioned in the first half of the 1920s. 169 allotments were created in a triangular section of land bordered by High Street and the Government Boulevard (later Kilby Road). Allotments were surveyed fronting Glass, High, Namur, Oswin Streets, Irymple Avenue, and the Government Boulevard. The name for the Estate was derived from Oswin's farm, which had been one of the largest landholdings in East Kew. The original subdivision plan for the Oswinia Estate is held in the Kew Historical Society archives. The Agency who sold allotments off the plan indicated land sales with a cross (X). In Irymple Avenue, the lots at the south end of the street closest to High Street were sold first. On the east side of the street, nine consecutive lots were sold, presumably at auction, while on the west side, eleven blocks were marked as sold.



Lot sales did not inevitably lead to house building, but we are fortunate that a Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) plan from 1926 (No 2015) shows early building following the land auction. The map shows the outline of newly constructed houses that would have corresponded to the present buildings at 8, 10, 12, 14, 16 and 26 on the east side. On the north side, five of the eleven blocks sold at auction are represented on the plan as built structures.

So, how can we relate this evidence to broader local and Victorian themes? The *City of Boroondara Thematic Environmental History* (2012) discusses significant phases in the development of the former cities constituting the current City of Boroondara. One of these phases was urban development in the decade following World War I.

## 14 IRYMPLE AVENUE (CONTINUED)

Two Government schemes to resolve a housing shortage problem were the War Service Homes Commission (1919) and the *Housing and Reclamation Act 1920*. The 1920 Act, administered by the State Savings Bank, assisted people who did not already own a house and, had an annual income of below £400. The Bank provided loans through its *credit foncier* department, as well as standard architectural plans for the houses, which were “drawn up by the bank's own architectural department under George Burrigge Leith”. The Bank also chose the builder. Dorothy Benyei, a distinguished archivist of the Kew Historical Society inspected the original Bank files for East and North Kew, and discovered that more than 1,000 such dwellings had been erected in Kew by the late 1930s.

The first *Kew Conservation Study* (1988) identified significant houses and precincts in Kew, recommending to the then Council that these be afforded degrees of protection. In 2006, the City of Boroondara commissioned a *Review of Heritage Overlay Precinct Citations*. In this Review, Irymple Avenue and surrounding streets were considered, and a Statement of Significance was developed and approved by Council. Heritage Overlay (HO) 157 Oswin Street Precinct Kew asserts that:

“The area is one of the more intact concentrations of 1920s and 1930s housing in Melbourne. It compares directly with the 'Urquhart Estate' (located within the Leslie Street Precinct, Hawthorn HO164), but differs in being composed largely of State Bank and Burrigge Leith designs. The State Bank housing scheme played an important role in the development of the northeastern part of Kew prior to WWII. Other State Bank concentrations (Mont Albert and Wandsworth Roads, Surrey Hills for example) have been eroded by redevelopment in recent years.

The area is marked by a number of highly skilled and pioneering suburban house designs, including several prototypes for the Australian post-war suburban vernacular.

The area is marked by a high concentration of original fences and outbuildings, and by its mature gardens. It retains the lightly treed character of pre-war Melbourne suburban landscapes when most have become more heavily treed.”

This statement of the precinct's heritage significance suggests that the area defined by the overlay has local, Victorian and national significance. The streets and the houses within them meet CRITERION A, B, C, D, E and F as defined on the previous page.

Bearing in mind this carefully argued statement of significance, the demolition of 14 Irymple Avenue, is of local, statewide and national concern.

The 1926 *Sands & McDougall Directory* lists W. J. Laidlaw as the first occupier of 14 Irymple Avenue. Later owners included the Duxbury family, who lived in the house for approximately fifty years. The Duxburys maintained the house, and particularly the façade in its original style. While the garden, by 2015 was not in a style typical of the 1920s, there was extensive use of plants native to the area: three large gum trees plus numerous smaller trees and shrubs and a nature strip of native grasses.



In November 2014, following the death of Mrs Pat Duxbury, and the division of her estate, the property was sold for \$1.135 million. In early 2015, the property was vacated and a new owner took possession. In July 2015 a permit was issued by Council to enable repairs, renovation and the extension of the property. This building and planning permit was in compliance with the overlay. Locals did not object, as it appeared that the proposed works would not impact on the streetscape described in HO157.

Demolition and decay can occur incrementally. Initially, topsoil and two of the three very large trees on the property were found to be in “a poor condition” and were removed. Subsequently, parts of the house itself were also removed: first the roof tiles, followed by the removal of walls leaving the original light fittings exposed to the elements, Then brickwork was demolished, and by 2 October 2015 all was gone.

Fortunately, the vigilance of locals and the response of Council using the existing heritage overlay, meant that Council could issue a retrospective demolition permit, the approval of which required “the reconstruction to the same detail as the original, reusing the existing roof tiles, bricks to the porch and chimney, front door and windows”. We believe at this time that reconstruction is proceeding.

There has been a lot of publicity about the demolition and the community's response. Media coverage has included that by newspapers (*The Age*, *The Sun*, the *Progress Leader*); radio (3AW); and television (Channels 2, 7, 9, 10) including a particular ‘reality television’ program associated with the current owners.

So what can be learned from this debacle? Heritage and planning legislation works but it cannot prevent properties being deliberately destroyed or being destroyed by neglect. Locals need to be aware of the concept of Heritage Overlays and what they are designed to protect. Local government role is to respond to and enforce violations of precincts with a Heritage Overlay. Finally, while the owners may be forced to reconstruct the property, the original heritage-protected house is not adequately replaced by a faux reconstruction.

**The Society would like to acknowledge the contributions of Debbie McColl-Davis and Richard Peterson to this article.**

# THE DIARIES OF CHRIS ROBINSON

## THE HISTORIAN

John Torpey is the author of *A History of Kew RSL*. He is also a member of the Hawthorn Historical Society and a volunteer at the Royal Historical Society of Victoria. This year, John made a significant contribution to the activities conducted by the Gallipoli and Beyond 2015 Committee. During the commemoration, he led a walking tour of war memorials in Kew and curated an exhibition on the First World War at the Kew RSL.

John has also been working voluntarily, assisting with the transcription of a number of First World War diaries and collections of letters. As he has completed these, he has provided copies to the relevant local historical society.

To date, John has transcribed a number of primary sources including:

- The Boer War diary of Trooper Gordon Osborne Moule (member Kew RSL);
- The World War I letters of Pte. E.E. Bottomley (member Kew RSL);
- The Gallipoli Diaries of Sgt. Alf Birkill (member Kew RSL);
- The diaries of Pte. Chris Robinson (Kew resident); and

John is currently transcribing the 'Finlay Robinson' letters.

In this issue of our newsletter, we are including the initial sections of the first diary of Pte. Chris Robinson, of St John's Parade, Kew. The two diaries cover the periods 8 May to 25 December 1916, and 1 October 1917 to 5 October 1918. Sections included in this newsletter are drawn from the months of May and June 1916. Different entries are separated by the marks --.

## THE SOLDIER

Christopher Robinson enlisted in Melbourne on 24 July 1915 giving his occupation as 'salesman' and his next of kin as his father who lived at 11 St John's Parade, Kew. He was 26 years old at enlistment and single. After basic training he embarked on HMAT Kabinga 8th May 1916 as a reinforcement for the Australian Army Service Corps (AASC).

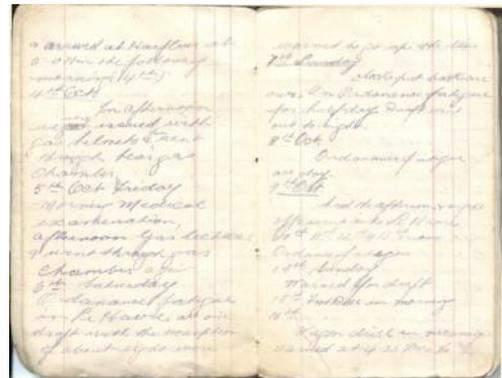
He spent most of the next year at Tidworth, England before being posted to 31st AASC in May 1917. He arrived in France in October 1917 and was attached to the 6th Divisional Train. Pte. Robinson was transferred to the 11th Machine Gun Company, 3rd MG Battalion in June 1918, attached to the 11th Battalion, and saw action with them in the battles for Hamel and Peronne.

He returned to Australia in February 1919 on HMAT Ascanius and was discharged in Melbourne in May 1919.

May 1916

*Embarked on Transport A58 "SS" Kabinga. On board we found 450 horses, 80 Light Horsemen & \*\*\*. Had a rough trip through the Bight at times the boat could only steam one knot an hour. -- Arrived at Freemantle two days overdue. Went ashore at 3-30PM & arrived back at 10-30 PM. After having a quite time. We coaled up & took in water all through the night. -- Finished coaling & taking in water about 3-0AM. We moved out again about 4-30AM & it was not long before we lost of shores of Aus. An order came out to day that all men had to get their hair clipped short, I got mine clipped straight away. --*

*Sea very calm, during morning the sun got very warm, but as the night approached a slight change came & at 7-0PM it commenced to rain. Half-dozen horse clipping machines commenced the work of clipping the horses to-day. -- Nothing of interest to day or yesterday. We had Devine Service in form of Military Acts being read to us. -- Commenced work at 4-0AM. Was on horse picket from 4-0AM till 6-0AM. From to-day our hours are from 5-30AM till 5-0PM. Passed the first school of flying fish. A horse was thrown overboard to-day making the 4th for the trip. --*



*Weather getting very warm nearly everybody has started to sleep on the top deck Another horse died to-day which makes 5th for the trip.*

*Very little dress is worn now majority have cut their trousers off above their knees. -- Last night was hottest up to date another horse died late last night. Bottom deck It is getting very hot down in bottom deck, the horses sweating very much. -- Pleasant Sunday. Rise at 5-30 am clean out stall as usual up to dinner time. After dinner we went down the hold & juggled Bran, chaff, Oat & Lucerne up till 3-30PM, had half-hours spell them, watered horses. 7th dead horse was thrown overboard to-day. A coolie who has been hospital for a fortnight jumped over-board during the night. In future we have to start work at 5-0AM & have from 12-0 to 2-0PM for dinner. --*

Continued p.8

## THE DIARIES OF CHRIS ROBINSON (CONTINUED)

### May 1916 (cont.)

Lost two more horses one of them had to be shot. Lime juice is issued to us every day at 11-0AM Saw a number of Salmon to-day also ½ doz large animals which no one seemed to know the name of. Flying fish are very plentiful here The sea is very calm Just like a piece of glass. We have witnessed some very fine sunsets & sunrises the last couple of days.

### June 1916

Crossed the line about midnight. On account of the heat most of the chaps only wear short pants & boots, in some cases boots are not worn I was vaccinated to-day & the performance was very painful. -- Sea commenced to get rough & by mid-day the waves were rolling very high, it turned out that we had struck a monsoon which the Captain had been trying to dodge. -- Got up feeling unwell saw the doctor & had the day off. Sea very rough, Saw a number of porpoises. -- Do not feel much better than yesterday, went to doctor again, but he said I was well enough for w duty.

Some of the chaps are seasick again on account of the rough seas. -- Sea rough up till about 11-0 AM, it was at that time that we sighted Socotia in the distance, there was great excitement as we drew near. We got a very good view of it. It took from 11-0AM till 7-0PM to pass it, after we passed it the sea commenced to get rough again. Commenced to groom horses to-day & exercise the horses around the decks. -- Passed Aden & several steamers during the night. There were also flash search lights flashing about the sea, things were quite exciting for a change. After tea the OC gave us a few hints about Egypt & the places we are likely to go to. Saw a sword fish. --

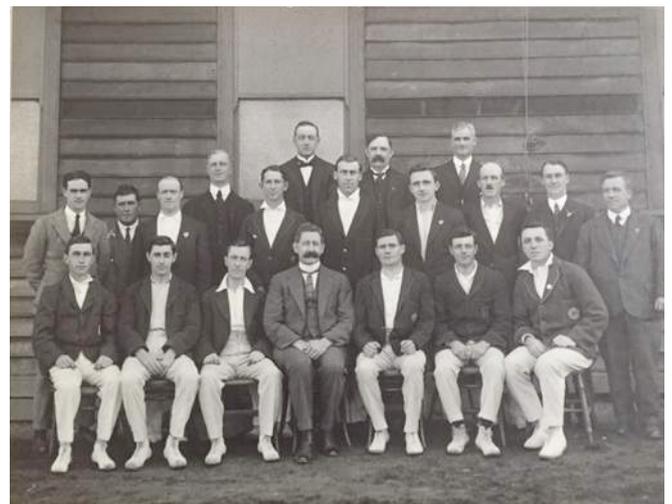
Passed two lighthouses to-day one was on the islands of the twelve Apostles. We also sighted the coast of Africa for the first time. -- Land out of sight again passed three boats. Moon was a peculiar color tonight (it was blue) in fact there was a great variety of colors in the sky. -- Passed RMS Mongolia & had a very good view of it. Five extra large porpoise about 10ft long headed the boat for about three miles. Got issued one days rations. Which consisted of 20 cabin biscuits 1lb tin of meat & 2 ozs of Tobacco. --

Got first sight of Egypt about midday, it just looked like a ridge of mountains at first but as the day got on we got a better view of it. We expect to arrive about midday tomorrow. Had final medical inspection to-day. -- Dropped anchor in harbour about 2 miles from wharf at 6-0PM.-- Commenced work at 2-0AM Steamed into wharf at 9-0AM & commenced to unload horses from boat & load them on to train at 10-0A this job was finished at 3PM after some excitement. The people around here are a queer lot. The little boys are always willing to dive into the water after any coin that may be thrown in. We left Suez at 9.30PM for Tel el Kebir which is on the main line to Cairo.

Arrived at Tel-el-Kebir at 3.30AM after a tiresome journey. We looked a very sleepy lot when we arrived in camp as it was over 24 hours some of us had any sleep. We had our breakfast from our own rations, then put up our tents. The weather is very warm here the temperature averages is always about 110 to 112. We paid a visit to the village that night & found about half dozen dirty art shops. The natives always ask double the value of a thing article. Drill is out of the question here we have three parades just to answer the roll call they are at 5-30AM 9-30 AM 2-30 PM. -- Attended Mass which was held in a Shed. -- On Station piquet, about 8 troop trains passed through on their way to embark at Alexandria. -- returned from Station piquet at 10-0AM --

Paraded sick, had to walk about a mile to see doctor hospital then waited about an hour to see doctor, came back & went for my gargle, but as they did not have a bottle, I went without as I did not feel inclined to look around for a bottle as they wanted me to do. We were inoculated to-day. Had a dust storm just as we got into bed. -- Only two parades now 5-0AM & 4-0PM. -- Went to Mass 6-0AM only one parade to-day. -- Called up at 4-30AM & went on a route march & arrived back at 7-45 AM during march we were inspected by Gen Major General Ingleston. --

Issued with summer uniform & helmet parades are at 5-0AM & from 5PM to 7PM from this date. -- Called out at 4-0am & were told that we were going to pack up as we were going to move the following. We all thought that we were off to England but... -- Fell in at 5-0AM & were told that to take our tents down as we were going to move our camp about a quarter of a mile away, there was great disappointment amongst the crowd. Settled down in our new camp in the afternoon. -- Got up at 4-30AM had another inspection by Major General. During afternoon went back to old camp & cleared up. We told that we would be getting away to England on Tuesday, we are all anxiously waiting to see if it is true.



Right: Chris Robinson, Kew Cricket Club First XI.

Editor: Chris Robinson, middle row fourth from left was a keen sportsman, playing for cricket and baseball teams in Kew following his return from the war.

# PATRIOTIC BUTTONS

## First World War buttons

In the last newsletter (No.112), we published details of a donation to our collection by Adrian Grigg, a resident of Kew. The donation included numerous 'buttons' [ie badges] mainly from World War I that were collected by his grandfather, Francis Horace Rigg. In addition to the 'buttons, Adrian also donated a number of Kew Cricket Club medallions from the 1920s and 1930s. All told, there were 55 items donated, 45 of which are war related.

In April 2015, the Society included two collections of 'patriotic buttons' in a special display at the Kew Library. An accompanying text explained the purpose and use of the buttons for fundraising on the home front.

The use of war buttons as a means of raising revenue through patriotic sentiment occurred soon after Australia pledged allegiance to Empire. Buttons reflected 'public sentiment, courage, patriotism, generosity and several [unnamed] virtues' such as the martyred mother of a 'fallen' hero. Attention was paid to attractiveness of design, encoded symbolism and high quality of production. Expressing 'loyalty', they were tokens to be kept for perpetuity.

Female labour was used to operate the die that compressed the tin backing, photographic print and celluloid cover together. The pin was applied by hand. Women, of all ages, entered into the spirit of voluntary sales. Often they were sold at the entry and exit points of major pedestrian thoroughfares. The women of Kew set up a kiosk in front of the Post Office and the Railway Station to solicit their round, oval and square shaped wares. Pride in salesmanship was affected by publishing the name of the woman and her fiscal achievement in the major newspapers of the day.

Three of the buttons in the collection are represented below. Cataloguing information about each buttons was assisted by information provided on the *Australian War Memorial* and *Museum Victoria* websites, which also hold a number of buttons identical to those in the Rigg collection.



### FOR KITH AND KIN [1915]

A celluloid paper and tin fundraising button printed with an illustration of a Red Cross flag and printed text on a red ink background surrounded by a white border. The Commonwealth Button Fund issued buttons of this design for a Victorian Red Cross appeal in July 1915. All funds raised during the appeal were used to support the Australian Red Cross and the servicemen in their care. Between 300,000-400,000 of these buttons were distributed.



A selection of the buttons from the collection assembled by Francis Horace Rigg

### OUR DAY: NATION AND HONOR [1916]

'Our Day' buttons made of celluloid paper and tin were sold for 1/- each, in aid of the Red Cross to provide a fund for Military Nurses who were sick and or incapacitated. The buttons contained a medallion portrait of 'the heroic martyr, Nurse Edith Cavell' (*The Argus*, 5 February 1916), placed in the centre of a red cross, surrounded by the words *Our Day: Nation and Honor*.

### SERVIA SYRIA ARMENIA [1917-18]

A celluloid paper and tin fundraising button associated with a program of support directed at survivors and victims of the Armenian massacres in the Ottoman Empire (including northern Syria). The badge was designed by Mrs Frances Woolcott, Honorary Organiser of the Melbourne branch of the Commonwealth Button Fund. The design was approved and registered (No.3905) on 20 November 1917. Over £7,300 was collected nationally during this appeal.

### Local Sports

Among the buttons donated by Adrian Rigg are a number of local medallions. Ten of these are Kew Cricket Club medallions from the period 1922-36. Some of these are duplicate medallions.



In addition to these badges relating to cricket in Kew during the interwar period, are two badges from the *East Kew Citizens and Sports Carnivals* in 1922 and 1924. Initial research about these Carnivals in local or daily newspapers has not thrown up any results to date, so some of our members and friends may wish to investigate this further.



SUZANNE MCWHA &  
ROBERT BAKER

# COLEY OF KEW

Coley of Kew was a character and a half. He lived to the ripe old age of 92, almost 93, before the 'Great Umpire' called him to eternal rest. Scores of footballers from a myriad of Victorian football clubs followed his mortal remains to the Boroondara Cemetery [C/E C 1082]. The number of floral tributes was such that two 'floral cars' were required to transport the wreaths to the graveside. The Victorian Football League had spared no expense in their tribute, which was a large football composed of violets, his favourite flower. However, Henry Colden Antill Harrison (c 1837–1929) was no shrinking violet.

Coley, more formally known as Colden, was a man of Empire and Umpire. That he was a man of Empire is symbolised in an undated photograph taken of him in his exotic garden. Clearly, at the time, he was a man of mature years but he stands ramrod straight before his flagpole upon which the Union Jack flaps in the health inducing winds of Kew. That he was a man of Umpire is a historical fact. In 1866, the Victorian Football League formally adopted his rules and regulations for the game. Initially he was considered to be the 'Father of Football' but later became 'Football's Foster Father' as historically the introduction of football into Victoria was realised by his step cousin, charismatic cricketer Tom [Thomas] Wills.

In 1864, Coley married Tom's sister, Emily Spencer Wills, and brought his bride to Kew. Initially they resided in Pakington Street but later moved to a large property in Walpole Street, bounded by Malmsbury and Peel Streets. In the early 1920s Coley sat down and penned *Story of an Athlete: A Picture of the Past*. His autobiography was well received, being considered a personal and colonial history. As a very young overlander, being one year old, he travelled Major Mitchell's crude and rutted track from the Molongo River, New South Wales, to the Plenty River, some 35kms from Melbourne. His childhood was a series of self-confessed 'Anni Mirabiles'. Coley played in the virgin bush and fished for blackfish, yabbies and eels. He took the Indigenous people for granted, describing them as 'mere children'. Romantically, he recalled a brush or two with bushrangers. Aged 14, his father had taken him to the gold rush, where he found both the gold and the tucker slim pickings. He liked a rough and tumble tent life so it seems odd that he became a government clerk, pen pushing his way up the career ladder.

Fortuitously for the ever-active Coley, at the end of the 1850s, gentlemen recreational sports became popular. It was in pedestrianism [foot races including hurdles and water jumps] that he became a champion before his football period. He retired from active play in 1872 but maintained administrative positions. Forever needing to flex his muscles he also engaged in cricket, rowing, boxing and gymnastics. The Yarra River was to pose a physical challenge. Some Christmas vacations were spent, with his brother, navigating the Yarra rapids, in a small boat, to the upper reaches from Kew. By night they bivouacked and sustained themselves on fish.

He lamented that the blackfish of his youth had been lost to the un-flavoursome introduced perch.

After 31 years of government service, he took himself on a Grand Tour of the world, notably without his wife who met him on the last leg of the adventure in New Zealand. Tellingly, Emily had her aged mother in tow. Even after retirement, Coley had 'superfluous energy'. Against all the predicted odds, in 1896 aged 62, he jumped upon an Elswick rubber-tyred bicycle and rode to Sydney via the old Sydney Road. Despite the February heat he averaged about 101kms per day over nine and a half days. He lost about 3.6kg, felt 'fit' for the venture and sat down to watch a cricket test match between Australia and the English XI. Coley remains silent about his mode of return to Kew. Although it is interesting that thereafter his exercise consisted of five and a half hours per day gardening at Walpole Street. He continued to walk to the Kew Court House to exercise his long-term civic duties as a Justice of the Peace and readily signed Statutory Declarations at his home.

Coley was a man's man. Family seems not to have figured strongly in his macho life. Emily remains a mysterious and veiled woman, of independent means, stained with the shame of convict heritage. She did not even get her name engraved upon the grave that notates only 'H C A Harrison'. (see p.2 photo) She was a product of patriarchy. Of the ten children she bore, five died before the age of four. They too were buried without public acknowledgement in the family plot. Norman, his architect son, had the promise of an active, robust manly life but succumbed to dysentery aged 25. Alma, a talented amateur actress in the Kew Mugwumps theatrical troupe, married a well-connected Fremantle merchant who Coley admired for his 'supreme sacrifice' in the Great War. A snappy dresser, Rosalie followed her spiritual healing husband to England. Unlike many people, Coley seemed sceptical of his son-in-law's 'unusual gift' for religious 'miracles'.

Ruby and Kate remained at the family home Coley had named Molonglo in remembrance of his early colonial origins. He failed to acknowledge their charity work in fund raising for hospitals and the Great War. Alma gave him an heir but his grandson, Geoffrey Macknight, proved less than robust, dying suddenly at Molonglo, aged 4 years, in 1911. In contrast Coley of Kew survived a serious fall from a tram aged 87.

In the year following Coley's highly publicised death, Molonglo was subdivided into eight lots and sold. The two unmarried sisters left Kew. Coley's autobiography is a recommended read and can be found in A. Mancini and G. M. Hibbins (eds), *Running with the Ball*, Melbourne, Lynedoch Publications, 1987, held in the Boroondara Library.

**SUZANNE MCWHA, 2015**

## SOME EXAMPLES OF 'LOST KEW'

### BYRAM (1888-1960)

An architectural fantasy of red brick, Marseilles tiles and stucco, 'Byram' was a local landmark on Studley Park Road. Designed by the architect Edward G. Kilburn in 1888 for George Ramsden, the paper magnate, the house was later to be owned by Sir Malcolm McEacharn MP, the papal knight Count O'Loughlin, and finally by the Royal Women's Hospital. Byram was also to be known as Goathland, Lowden and Tara Hall. This late Victorian mansion, one of the greatest in Melbourne, was sold and demolished in 1960.



### CHIPPERFIELD'S BOAT HOUSE (c.1919-1972)

Several boathouses were built in Kew and Fairfield in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. They included Chipperfield's 'Moorings' and floating pontoon. The substantial two-storey house was named the Moorings, and incorporated an upper storey residence. The Moorings was almost washed away in the 1916 floods, and in 1934 almost totally submerged when the Yarra River rose 26 feet in 14 hours. Following the 1934 flood, the house was restored. The floating pontoon, sometimes referred to as a 'kiosk' or 'canteen', was used to store canoes. Both were removed in 1972 for the construction of the Eastern Freeway.



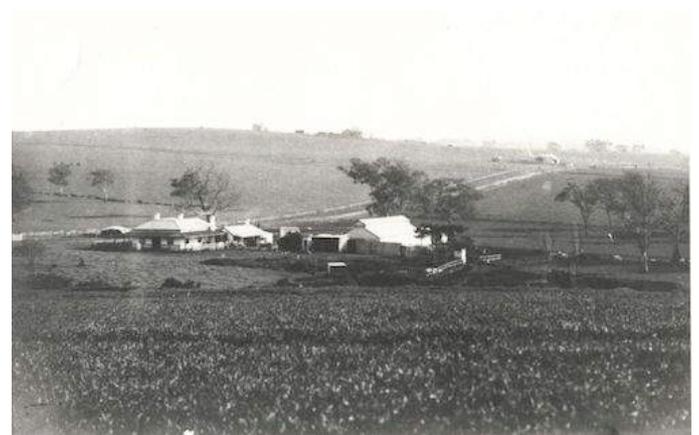
### ROTUNDA, ALEXANDRA GARDENS (1910-c.1960)

The Alexandra Gardens' rotunda was located within three acres of 'gem like' gardens 'bright with verdant lawns and choice blooms' in the centre of Kew. Designed by architects Grainger and Little, the ornate two-storey wooden kiosk functioned as a children's shelter on the ground level and a bandstand and oratory dais on the upper. Funded by council and community subscription, it was a 'symbol of the public spirit of Victoria' and a Kew Jubilee commemoration memorial. Opened in 1910, the Kew Brass Band christened it the 'finest band rotunda in Melbourne'. Deterioration saw its demise 50 years later.



### KILBY LODGE (c.1845-c.1922)

William Oswin purchased Crown Land Lots 52 & 53 in 1845. These lots ran north from an old bullock track [later Kilby Road] to the Yarra, and east to Burke Road. Oswin purchased a neighbouring Lot in 1851, separated by the bullock track from the rest of the farm. Oswin built 'Kilby Lodge' and, with his brother, farmed dairy cattle on the site. Oswin's descendants owned the farm into the 1890s. New subdivisions of Kilby and neighbouring farms in the 1920s changed the rural nature of north Kew. Housing and large recreation reserves replaced dairy farms and market gardens.



# 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 (2015-16 annual fee \$20)
- Household membership (2015-16 annual fee \$25)
- Student membership (2015-16 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.*

NAME/S: \_\_\_\_\_ [PLEASE PRINT] TITLE/S: \_\_\_\_\_

POSTAL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ POST CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ MOBILE: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

PAYMENTS: Please mail form and cheque, made out to Kew Historical Society Inc., to KHS, PO Box 175, Kew, 3101.  
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 scan form to <treasurer@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au>.

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

Privacy note: The KHS will not pass your details to a third party without obtaining your permission.

*Kew Historical Society Incorporated      Registration A001078W      ABN 97 824 890 237      info@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au*

Amount Paid:	Card / Receipt #	Database / Label	Name Tag: Yes / No
--------------	------------------	------------------	--------------------

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

10 February - Monthly meeting  
 21 February - Quarterly Book Sale  
 4-19 March - 2016 Kew Festival  
 9 March - 2016 McIntyre Lecture  
 13 April - Monthly Meeting  
 16-24 April - Australian Heritage Week  
 15 May - Quarterly Book Sale

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