



Patron: Sir Gustav Nossal AC, CBE

## KEW HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC. 63<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2021/2022

On behalf of the Committee of Management, I have great pleasure in presenting the President's Report for the Kew Historical Society's 63<sup>rd</sup> Annual General Meeting.

Although COVID-19 continued to affect the activities of the Society over the past year we managed to hold Committee of Management meetings each month, except in January, perform administrative duties, provide monthly members' meetings, plus hold exhibitions and events, either in person and/or via zoom.

I would like to acknowledge and personally thank the following Committee Members for their commitment and many hours of voluntary work for the Society, and for their continued support of me in the role of President over the past year.

David White	Vice-President
Desley Reid	Secretary
Jerome de Almeida	Treasurer
Robert Baker	Archivist
Judith Scurfield	Curator
Julie King	
Richard Bowen	
Mary Kelleher	
Debbie McColl-Davis	
Anne Josefsberg	(from October 2021)

In addition, I thank Members of the Society who served on the various sub-committees and working groups, including Noel Kelly our official photographer. With their help we are able to undertake activities related to research, our collection and archives, publicity, digitisation of records, indexing and opening the Kew Court House to the public.

Membership statistics for the past year are as follows: we have gained 15 new members; the total of 100 memberships are made up of 78 individual members and 22 household memberships; household memberships represent at least 2 people, in some cases more than 2; there are 16 Life Members or Honorary Life members and 11 memberships have either lapsed or the member has died. Unfortunately, our sole student member has lapsed.

After consideration of the Society's ongoing expenses and the fact that our membership fees have remained static for many years, the Committee decided to increase membership fees to \$25 for individuals, \$35 for households and \$10 for students.

It was with sadness that the Committee noted over the past year the passing of two Members who have generously served the Society over many years. Prue McColl, who was a member of our Research and Collections working groups, and Dorothy Benyei who was our former Archivist. Additionally, we conveyed our sincere condolences to our Patron Sir Gustav Nossal on the passing of his Wife, Lady Lyn Nossal, on July 1<sup>st</sup> this year.

We are indeed fortunate to have the support of the City of Boroondara through the provision of grants, meeting space in the Phyllis Hore room, archival/collection and display space in the Kew Library building, a licence to occupy the Kew Heritage Centre as our office, plus a lease for meeting and display space at the Kew Court House. We sincerely thank the Council for the opportunity to use these premises for our activities, and for the continued positive relationships we have with various Councillors and Council Staff.

Kay & Burton Hawthorn have continued their corporate sponsorship agreement for another twelve months to financially support us in conducting the activities of the Society. We are grateful for their financial support and acknowledge their commitment to our community.

We are also fortunate to have the printing of our quarterly newsletters generously provided by Tim Smith MP, State Member for Kew.

In August last year we entered into an agreement with Tyro, a financial company associated with the Bendigo Bank, to provide an EFTpos machine to be used for membership renewals, book sales, Court House sales, and lecture fees.

### **THE TUCK STAND PROJECT**

It is with some relief that the Council 2022/2023 Budget approved the Tuck Stand project expenditure to commence this financial year with the proposed finish date 2025/2026. The Capitals Works budget for the project is \$17,234,130.

As reported at our 2021 AGM, the Boroondara Council commissioned a consultant to provide a business case for development of a Boroondara Heritage Centre as part of the Tuck Stand redevelopment at Hawthorn. The consultant's report was to inform a feasibility study to be conducted by Council's Capital Projects team with a completion date in June this year.

### **ARCHIVES and COLLECTIONS**

The Collection of the Kew Historical Society includes artworks, maps, documents, items of fashion and textiles, books and archival materials. The latter includes the archives of the Society as well as those of other community organisations. Our Collection has been independently assessed and has been designated as including items of national, statewide and local significance.

We are proud to advise that the Society received the Australian Museums and Galleries Association award for excellence in the use of Victorian Collections.

During 2021-22, the Collection has been managed by our Archivist, Robert Baker, who has been supported by an active group of volunteers, including Judith Scurfield, Margaret Robinson, Janet Walker, Les Littlechild, Anne Josefsberg and Felicity Renowden. Individuals within the group have met in the Heritage Centre at the Kew Library each Tuesday and

Wednesday, excluding on public holidays and on those occasions in 2021 when the group was unable to access the collection during Lockdown No.6.

The group has participated in a number of activities including accessioning and evaluating new acquisitions for the collection, securely storing them to archival standards, publishing them online to ensure public access, and preparing items for exhibition at the Kew Court House, and during this current year, at the Hawthorn Arts Centre and Villa Alba Museum.

The Collection includes items that have been donated since 1958 and understandably includes many thousands of objects. Identifying, evaluating, cataloguing and storing these items has been an ongoing process, with many legacy items still to be processed. Where possible, the most important items are prioritised for processing. New acquisitions in 2021 and 2022 include important additions to the Collection, filling identified gaps in subject content. These new acquisitions have been acquired by donation, purchased with funding provided by the Friends of the KHS Collection, or from ongoing financial donations by members and friends.

Amongst the numerous new items to have entered the Collection, items of particular significance have included: the archives of the Kew Community Festival; an original ink and watercolour drawing of Madford dating from c.1875; documents, reports and photographs from the estate of Dorothy Benyei; and photographs, audio tapes, documents and reports collected by Dr Cliff Judge. A complete list of all new acquisitions is recorded in our quarterly newsletters. We would particularly like to acknowledge all donors to our Collection in this report.

The year has also witnessed an important milestone in making Collection items more publicly accessible. In addition to the almost 6000 items photographed and described on Victorian Collections online database, the new book launched tonight by Cr Addis includes 31 items from the collection, selected to represent significant aspects of our heritage as well as its diversity. All of the items were professionally photographed and described by members of our research and collections groups.

Our important Collection has benefitted from a number of purchases during 2021-22 that have been acquired through accumulated funds and through grants. These include new bookcases for our reference library and an overhead scanner for scanning books and documents.

Additionally, we wish to acknowledge new and emerging partnerships with other cultural organisations that have included: making inter-collection loans to the National Wool Museum in Geelong; and exhibitions at the Town Hall Gallery and at the Villa Alba Museum. The exhibition of fashion and textiles at Villa Alba during the 2022 Australian Heritage Festival is the second exhibition we have developed in partnership with the Museum. Planning is already underway for a third exhibition at Villa Alba during the 2023 Australian Heritage Festival.

## **RESEARCH**

The Research Committee has met monthly throughout the year. Most meetings were conducted using ZOOM or as ZOOM hybrid meetings as a result of COVID pandemic restrictions on gatherings.

The Oral History Studio at the Kew Courthouse was equipped and members of the Research Committee trained in use of the video equipment and software.

A book *Stories They Tell* featuring objects from the Society's collection has been completed for a launch at the 2022 AGM.

These projects were funded from the City of Boroondara Strengthening Community Grants. Special thanks to KHS Archivist Robert Baker who has worked tirelessly on these projects.

A series of Walks exploring Kew history and heritage are being prepared for completion in December with funding through Josh Frydenberg, former Member for Kooyong. Members of the Committee have responded to public queries and researched and written articles for the KHS Newsletters and content for the *Stories They Tell*.

Thanks to all members of the Research Committee for their participation during another unusual year ably led by David White.

## **EVENTS AND EXHIBITIONS**

### **Exhibitions**

#### Outdoor Leisure Activities: Lawn Bowls, Tennis & Croquet in Kew

This remained in place from 2021 into early 2022 when we could finally open to visitors again. However, we do have some difficulties with getting enough volunteers, and with uncertainty over when QArt Gallery is open, so have cut back to only opening on Fridays.

#### Community Spirit in Action: Kew Senior Citizens 1952 - 2022 (March - September 2022)

Photographs and objects associated with Kew Elder Citizens, as well as some other objects from our Collection.

#### The Interpreted Landscape (12 April - 21 May)

We were invited to mount a community exhibition in the Town Hall Gallery at Hawthorn Arts Centre, and submitted a selection of maps, paintings and photographs of Kew landscapes, which attracted about 450 visitors to the Gallery, and gave good publicity for the Society.

### **Open House Melbourne**

Kew Court House was open for this event on 30 and 31 July, which attracted many visitors, including 91 taking guided tours. Two tours were taken by Brad Miles on the Saturday, and one each by Robert Baker and Judith Scurfield on the Sunday, with Andrew McIntosh, Debbie McColl-Davis, Julie King and Felicity Renowden providing information to visitors in our upstairs galleries.

### **Lectures and monthly meetings**

Members' meetings for the last few months of 2021 had to be held via Zoom but managed to attract good numbers of participants to hear about: The Public Halls of Kew (Brad Miles, August), Henry Beater Christian's photographs (Robert Baker, November), and from Amanda Dunsmore, Senior Curator International Decorative Arts & Antiquities at the National Gallery of Victoria, who presented the Dickinson Lecture on new acquisitions at the Gallery (October).

In 2022, we have heard about Boroondara's Private Schools (John Torpey, February), taken a "Grand Tour of Kew", looking at houses of the Edwards and McVitty families with Antony Edwards (April), heard about Charles Troedel, Melbourne's most acclaimed lithographer (Amanda Scardamaglia, May), the Outer Circle Railway (David Beardsell and Frank Greenhalgh, June), Xavier College archives (Catherine Hall, July), and Victoria's earliest potteries (Greg Hill, August).

The McIntyre Lecture in March was presented by Katherine Sheedy, who is co-author of the book on the Kew Elder Citizens, which is celebrating its 70th anniversary this year, and has been the subject of our recent exhibition in the Court House (as reported above).

## **PUBLICITY**

### **eBulletin**

The monthly eBulletin continues to inform our members of upcoming events and exhibitions, promotes local societies and their events, and includes short articles as a way to regularly keep our members up to date. As a result of the 2021 COVID19 lockdowns, exhibitions and events across most historical societies were forced to cancel or return to an electronic delivery format. In particular, following the 2021 continued restrictions and lockdowns, the eBulletin maintained expanded content to provide members with additional reading and weblinks to diverse and interesting material to maintain engagement and interest in local history.

### **Facebook**

Recently the Society commenced a social media presence by launching a Facebook page at the end of June 2022. Already within a couple of months the KHS Facebook page has an increasing number of 'likes' and 'followers'. The purpose of the Facebook page is to:

- facilitate two-way communication between the Society and the local community, promoting audience engagement
- provide a marketing tool to promote events, exhibitions, publications and collections
- network with other historical organisations and professionals
- network with other popular social media accounts that relate to local heritage
- obtain user feedback and knowledge that can potentially enhance information about collections
- provide an additional point of contact and engagement with the organisation.

### **Website**

Our website continues to be an important public marketing tool to publicise the Society and its activities. Special thanks go to Robert Baker as website content editor and Andrew MacKinnon as webmaster for ensuring our website is regularly updated and informative.

## **BOOK SALES**

During the 2021-22 financial year two book sales were held in the Phyllis Hore Room at Kew Library. Book sales were held on Sundays 28 November 2021 and 22 May 2022 with the room being set up on the previous day.

The book sales scheduled for August 2021 and February 2022 were cancelled due to the COVID pandemic.

The Tyro terminal was used at the May sale to permit card payment with approximately half the purchasers choosing to take advantage of its availability.

Gross sales total was \$2,943.10 with a \$1471.55 payment to Boroondara Library Service resulting in \$1,471.55 net income for the Kew Historical Society. Income from the book sales was significantly less than previous years as a result of the cancellation of two sales.

Books for the sales are either donated by the public or are de-accessioned books received from the Boroondara Library Service.

The book sales rely on volunteers to run the sale on Sundays and for setting up on the Saturday before and packing up after the sale.

Thanks to all KHS members who have contributed to success of the book sales this year, particularly David White as the Co-ordinator of the book sales and his supportive wife Janet.

## **EXTERNAL PARTICIPATION AND MEMBERSHIP OF OTHER ORGANISATIONS**

The Society is a member of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, the Australian Museums and Galleries Association and the Boroondara Historical Societies Association. We are also members of Council's Tuck Stand Steering Committee and the Kew Court House Tenancy Committee, and the Boroondara Cemetery Trust Springthorpe Memorial Conservation Project. In addition, we have been active participants in the Boroondara Volunteer Resource Centre workshops, provided input into the establishment of a History Wall at the new Kew Leisure Centre, and met with representatives of the Middle Camberwell Community and Friends Group which aims to nominate houses and precincts for Council heritage protection across Boroondara.

## **THE YEAR AHEAD**

Importantly, we will continue to work with Council to facilitate and inform the Boroondara Heritage Centre development at the Tuck Stand in Hawthorn, as well as the future redevelopment of the Kew Library.

A particular challenge going forward with the proposed redevelopment of the Kew Library will be the opportunity to hold book sales next year in the Phyllis Hore room. This will severely impact on the income of the Society and potentially for a subsequent four years until completion of this Council project.

More than ever proactive marketing will be at the forefront of our efforts to publicise our activities and to realise broader sponsorship and partnership ventures to finance our activities, as well as promoting the importance of history and heritage values to the broader community.

We will also support and work with the Boroondara Cemetery Trust to pursue the financial requirements to implement the Springthorpe Memorial Conservation Project.

We will continue to invest in technology and improved administrative processes to support the work of the Society for the benefit of our Members.

Furthermore, we will encourage our Members to get involved in the Society's activities to ensure the Kew Historical Society remains relevant to its membership as well as a community organisation respected and recognised as a progressive repository of historical knowledge and artefacts. In particular, I encourage all Members to consider serving as a Committee Member as part of the process for succession planning for the future benefit of the Society.

**JUDITH VOCE**  
**PRESIDENT**