



Patron: Sir Gustav Nossal AC, CBE

KEW HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC 64th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2022/2023

On behalf of the Committee of Management, I have great pleasure in presenting the President's Report for the Kew Historical Society's 64th Annual General Meeting.

Firstly, 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
Byron Smith	Treasurer
Robert Baker	Archivist
Judith Scurfield	Curator
Julie King	
Margaret Robinson	
Anne Josefsberg	
Mary Kelleher	
Debbie McColl-Davis	

In addition, I sincerely thank Members of the Society who served on the various sub-committees and working groups. 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. Thanks also to Noel Kelly who continues to photographically record our events.

Furthermore, I wish to record and acknowledge our gratitude to Robert Romanin of Romanin Accountants who has served the Society firstly as Treasurer and more recently as Auditor. We thank Robert for his pro bono contributions and wish him well in his retirement from the position of honorary auditor.

We continue to have a strong membership base which comprises 70 individual members, 25 household members of two or more, 15 Life Members and 4 Perpetual Members. The newly created title of Perpetual Member has been awarded to the following members in recognition

of their major donations to the Society's Collection: Anne James (Henty Collection), Jillian Rigby (Coombs Collection), John Rogers (Dorothy Rogers Collection) Betty Shelton (Kew Senior Citizens Club).

Throughout the year the Society has appreciated the financial and in-kind support we received from the City of Boroondara through the provision of the Triennial Operational grant, 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.

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

In January Kay & Burton Hawthorn decided not to continue their corporate sponsorship agreement for another twelve months. However, I would like to acknowledge we are indeed grateful for their financial support over the past two years which has enabled us to use their untied funds for general operational activities of the Society.

GRANTS

In addition to the third year of the inaugural Council Triennial Operational grant we received, we have been successful this year in being awarded a Federal Stronger Communities Grant, Round 8, of \$10,725 for archival shelving.

ADMINISTRATIVE PURCHASES

As foreshadowed at our AGM last year, the Committee of Management has funded the following purchases to facilitate the administration of the Society:

- Lexmark wireless colour printer;
- Nokia Fastmile 5G Gateway Modem and Telstra internet plan to improve the speed and connectivity in the Kew Heritage Centre for research and cataloguing;
- Microsoft Office 365 Business Premium
- Intel Core i7 PC and monitor;
- Overhead scanner.

ARCHIVES and COLLECTIONS

2022-23 has been a significant year for the collections and archives team. The team has met each week to manage the collection, scanning documents and photographs and cataloguing them for posting online. To date the team has posted over 6,000 collections items online so that the public can appreciate the depth and scope of our collection.

It is pleasing to note that the Society has again received the Australian Museums and Galleries Association award for excellence in the use of Victorian Collections.

In January, the Society was gifted a number of historically important garments from the descendants of Francis Henty. These include the wedding dress worn by Mary Ann Lawrence at her wedding to Francis Henty in 1842. The items augment a number of other Henty related

items in the collection. The first half of 2023 was spent preparing the Henty collection for display during the Australian Heritage Festival at Villa Alba Museum. The Society has additionally applied to the National Library of Australia for a Significance Assessment of the Henty Collection.

Storage of collection items remains an ongoing issue for members of the Collections Group. Therefore, in 2023 the Society successfully applied for a Stronger Communities Grant from the Commonwealth Government to provide new and improved storage for items in our Fashion & Design and Art Collections. This storage is designed to be flexible and relocatable to any new facilities in the future.

I would like to record our appreciation for the enormous amount of work undertaken by our Archivist, Robert Baker, in managing the Collection, along with the support provided by an active group of volunteers, including Judith Scurfield, Margaret Robinson, Janet Walker, Les Littlechild, Anne Josefsberg, Cathy Dodson and Felicity Renowden.

EVENTS and EXHIBITIONS

Exhibitions and Kew Court House

‘Stories they tell’ was an exhibition of many of the 32 items which are described in our book of the same name, published and officially launched by the Mayor, Cr. Jane Addis in September 2022. For a number of reasons, the exhibition was shown at the Kew Court House for longer than planned, to be replaced recently by one on the Court House itself, its history and the battle to save it.

Earlier in 2022, our exhibition focussed on the Kew Senior Citizens in its 70th anniversary year, so it was on show for Open House Melbourne, held on July 30th and 31st. This is always an important event on our calendar as it gives visitors from all over the state an opportunity to be guided through the Court House complex, and to participate in a short Q & A session in the Just Theatre.

Our rooms in the Court House continue to be open to the public on Fridays between 11am and 1pm, and are staffed by a stalwart band of volunteers: Andrew Macintosh, John Torpey, Debbie McColl-Davies, Robert Baker, David White and Julie King. There have been a few issues with opening if there is no-one on duty in the QArt Gallery downstairs, but we hope this has now been resolved with having new fellow tenants upstairs.

Lectures

Our two main events held at the Court House are the McIntyre and the Dickinson Lectures, held in March and October respectively. Last year’s Dickinson Lecture was given by Dr. Rosalie Triolo, Vice-President of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria. She spoke on ‘Remembering our State School Teachers and Pupils of Kew and Surrounds: the Home Front and the Battle Front 1914 - 1918’.

The McIntyre Lecture in March this year was given by another eminent historian, Dr. Janet McCalman, and also had an educational slant. It had the intriguing title ‘Journeyings: the 69 tram turns 16 and has a makeover’. This turned out to be far more than the history of a tram route and the schools it serves. It was also a thought-provoking investigation of the social background to those schools and their students, families and associates, bringing the story up-to-date after changes in the political landscape following the 2022 Federal election.

Members' meetings

Other lectures held in 2022-2023 have been on subjects as diverse as the Archives of Xavier College, Gardiner's Creek, Anne Fraser Bon of Charles Street, and postcards in the Society's collection. There has been something of an emphasis on school histories, not surprisingly considering the number of schools in our own and nearby suburbs. Member John Torpey has published a record of over 160 of these, and at least one has celebrated its centenary this year. This is Carey Baptist Grammar School, whose historian, Helen Penrose, spoke eloquently to us about her writing of its history in the comprehensive volume "Torchbearers". A copy of this beautiful book was donated by Carey to our growing library, which is held in the Archives Centre.

I extend a huge thank you to our Curator, Judith Scurfield, for organising such a diverse and interesting number of lectures and events throughout the year for members and guests to enjoy.

RESEARCH

The Research Committee has met monthly throughout the year. Meetings were conducted as ZOOM hybrid meetings to allow committee members to participate in meetings remotely if they wished.

The members of the Committee have responded to public queries and researched and written articles for the Society's Newsletter.

A series of walking guides exploring Kew history and heritage were completed in December with funding through Josh Friedenberg, the former Member for Kooyong. These are available to download from the Society's website. Special thanks to Julie King for all her work co-ordinating this project.

Our thanks to David White, Convenor of the Research Group, and members Desley Reid, Julie King, Robert Baker, Margaret Robinson, Anne Josefsberg, Felicity Renowden, Suzanne McWha, John Torpey and Tony Michael for their participation and contributions during the year.

PUBLICITY

Newsletters

The Research Committee continued to produce a quarterly newsletter that was capably edited by our Vice President and Newsletter Editor, David White. The team members, sharing the commitment, provided interesting, well-researched articles using the variety of resources available – correspondence, original documents, photographs, book articles and online databases. For those without access to email, printing and postage was able to be continued for distribution of the Newsletters. Our Secretary, Desley Reid, regularly received complimentary emails regarding the excellent, comprehensive and informative editions of the Newsletter over the past year.

eBulletins

The monthly eBulletin continues to inform our members of upcoming events and exhibitions, promotes local societies and their events, and includes short articles to regularly keep our members up to date. Post COVID, the eBulletin maintained its expanded content to provide members with additional reading and weblinks to diverse and interesting material to maintain engagement and interest in local history.

Facebook

Since our last AGM, our social media presence via a Facebook page has been well accepted since its launch in September last year and has achieved an increasing number of 'likes' and 'followers'. As a marketing and communication tool, Kew Historical Society can provide further reach to its programs and promote events, exhibitions, publications and collections. Another communication tool the Society has commenced using is Eventbrite, an online event booking tool. The Society can create its own free, online ticketing and event information for the monthly member meetings and other public events in Eventbrite that connects with the Facebook events page. With the booking numbers the Society is able to plan for seating and catering.

A big 'thank you' to Julie King for skilfully co-ordinating our publicity program and expanding our online presence.

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 2022-23 financial year four book sales were held in the Phyllis Hore Room at Kew Library. These sales raised \$6520.90 which was shared equally between Boroondara Library Service and the Kew Historical Society.

The August 2022 book sale raised \$1673.10. Changes to the availability of storage space in the Kew Library building previously available to us resulted in carry over books being stored in the Heritage Centre Library and boxes in the former cleaners' store. This unsatisfactory outcome necessitated discussions with Council Staff to reassess the number of library de-accessioned books the Society could accept between book sales to facilitate appropriate storage options.

The November 2022 book sale raised \$1817.20.

The February 2023 book sale raised \$1624.50. This sale was set up on Sunday morning before opening to the public. This was found to be more efficient than setting up the sale on the Saturday. As a result, this timing has been adopted for all future book sales.

The May book sale raised \$1406.10.

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

Thanks David White for expertly organising the quarterly book sales, and all Society members who have contributed to the success of the book sales this year.

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 Boroondara Arts Tenants Group, the Tuck Stand Working Group, and the Boroondara Cemetery Trust Springthorpe Memorial Conservation Project.

THE YEAR AHEAD

Triennial Grant 2023-2026

We have been successful in our application to Council for a 2023-2026 Triennial Operational Grant which is our second such grant to be awarded to the Society. We are grateful for the financial support we will receive to help us provide the services and events to our members and the broader community over the next three years.

Tuck Stand project

As reported last year, the Boroondara Council approved a Capital Works budget of \$17,234,130 for the project to commence last year. It has now been decided that the Tuck Stand project will no longer be a stand-alone project but will form part of the expanded Glenferrie Oval Project with a total budget of \$27,452,000. It has been determined that the project is unable to expand the current footprint of the Tuck Stand but improvements to the surrounding area of the building will be undertaken. Structural works have been commenced to underpin the Tuck Stand and the Ferguson Stand has been demolished. Community consultation on the broad concepts for the Glenferrie Oval Project occurred up to 10 September 2023 with the finalisation of the vision and design brief expected mid-late October 2023 and appointment of the design consultant in December 2023. Stage 3 of the project will not commence until 2026/2027. This is level one of the Tuck Stand which is identified as heritage and community space, with the expectation to house the Kew, Hawthorn and Camberwell Historical Societies.

Kew Library redevelopment

After much deliberation the Boroondara Council have decided that the current Kew Library building will be demolished and a new library built with a budget of \$18M. It is anticipated that demolition will take place early 2026 and community consultation has commenced on the themes identified for the Kew Library from the previous community consultation process in 2017. The Management Committee has engaged with Council through the various consultation phases advocating for a presence in the building as well as community-shared spaces. Under the current proposal, it is most unlikely that we will be allocated space in the new library building given the limited budget and space allocation for the project.

It is both disappointing and worrying that both the Kew Library and Tuck Stand developments coincide in their timelines which will leave the Society without a home base in 2026 for at least two years. We are working with Council Staff to help identify alternative accommodation for our office, archives and collection, plus meeting spaces, during this time which presents significant challenges for us.

I thank our Members for their continued proactive support of the Society's activities. This support ensures 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. 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