

CANTERBURY HISTORY GROUP



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Newsletter May 2023

Greetings to members and friends of the Canterbury History Group

Our next meeting is on **Monday 22nd May at 8.00 pm** at the St Paul's Parish Centre in Church Street Canterbury.

Our Speaker will be local resident and potter, Kevin Boyd who taught ceramic art at Camberwell Grammar School for over 20 years. He will speak to us about 20th Century Australian ceramics.

Other meetings:

Monday June 26th

Ian Berg will speak about entrepreneur James A Monroe, a Melbourne pioneer of the motor business, and his cars.

July and August recess

Monday 25th Sept

Emeritus Prof. Graeme Davison will speak to us on his discoveries about researching Scottish family history, about frontier warfare and dispossession in the Borders, economic turmoil and emigration. His latest book 'My Grandfather's Clock' will be launched in September.

Monday Oct 23rd Dinner:

Emeritus Prof Richard Broome will speak on Indigenous peoples of Melbourne and Victoria and the impact of early settlement.

Canterbury History Group SHOW AND TELL on April 24th

Robin Kelly started off the Show and Tell by showing us reproductions of her brother, Leslie Van Der Sluys', vibrant hand coloured linocuts of Australian plants and animals. She told us about Leslie who was a teacher of History and English before he became a professional printmaker. Sadly, he died of leukaemia in 2010 and his partner published a book about his art after his death. The commentary was written by Barry Humphries who had met him in 1963 in Highgate, London where other artists such as John Perceval and Leonard French were clustered. Leslie's beautiful art work is found in many public and private collections and sold at Kay Craddock's bookshop.

Neil Curry showed us the vase which he'd bought in New York in 1976 made by French glass artist Émile Gallé (1846-1904) Neil lit it from behind to show the beautiful floral shapes which remained when sections of different layers of blue and green glass were removed by etching with acid.

He showed us photos of wonderful vases, bowls and table lamps and told us the history of Gallé who was born in 1846 into a family who owned a small glass manufacturing business in Nancy, France. There he studied philosophy and poetry and in his spare time explored the natural world and studied botany. At 16, he went to Germany to Weimar to study and while an apprentice in a glass factory in Meisenthal, he made a serious study of the chemistry of glass production. He returned to the family company at Saint-Clément and travelled extensively in Europe visiting art galleries. His father was head of the company but Émile gradually took over design and production. By 1889 he had 300 employees and trained the designers himself, ordering them to use only real flowers as their models. He exhibited at Exhibitions in Paris and Chicago and became founder and

President of the École de Nancy and involved himself in social causes. In died in 1904 of leukaemia, aged 58. His firm went out of business in 1931. His hand blown and finished work, his use of colour and botanical detail and his technical innovations had a huge impact on glass manufacture.

Des Roman, following a Coronation theme, showed us Solomon Island stamps from George VI's coronation in 1937. A generic design was used by many Commonwealth countries but with the name of each different country added.

Des also showed us some glass milk bottles of the 1930's and 40's from his collection. They were from local Boroondara dairies with the name and number embossed in the glass. He explained where these dairies were: Highfield Rd and Leeds Street; Mont Albert Rd and Talbot St; Golding and Short Streets- as well as the model dairy in Belmont Avenue, Kew. Some dairies were producers and others just bottled the milk and delivered it by horse and cart.

Des also showed us a rare 1876 lithographic map, printed on linen, of the metropolitan area, including Canterbury.

Leila Griffiths brought along the medal that she and other children were given at school to commemorate the 1954 Royal visit, with a booklet listing the Queen's daily itinerary. Leila was a six year old, so although she was taken to see the royal couple, she doesn't remember much about it. Her father had taken a good photo which he enlarged. It clearly shows the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh waving to the crowd as the royal train slowly passed through Surrey Hills Station.

Ann Gibb showed us a book of the clans of Scotland which showed her family's Cameron tartan and Don's Buchanan tartan. She invited us later to use it to look up our own Scottish history and tartans. She also showed us a blue and white Wedgwood dish showing Edinburgh Castle; it was part of a series with scenes of The Royal Houses of Britain.

Libby Wilson showed the 70 page Coronation Project she wrote and illustrated in Year 8 when she was 12. It was written with a fountain pen on lines ruled with pencil and is full of information describing the regalia, each part of the ceremony and its history. She had copied it word for word without acknowledging any sources. The incentive was a money prize to be spent on books at Margareta Webber bookshop, upstairs in Little Collins Street. Quite a few prizes were given, donated by a benefactor. Margareta herself helped Libby select the books.

Philip Barton could not attend but sent some beautiful Coronation magazines: Illustrated London News and Country Life. He also sent an amusing list of '**Coronation Mishaps**' which Sue Woolley amazingly was able to explain from her extensive knowledge of British History.

Here are the questions: Do you know the answers? (see pages 5 and 6)

1. Which jilted queen was not invited to her husband's coronation and locked out of the Abbey?
2. Which coronation was unfinished because of fire and general panic?
3. Which coronation didn't go ahead as planned because of abdication.
- 4, Which king found that the crowns and other coronation regalia had been destroyed?
5. Which coronation had to be postponed because the king got appendicitis?
6. Which coronation was 5 hours long and full of bungles: the ring was put on the wrong finger and a crucial part of the ceremony was omitted.

Some of you may have seen/heard the following news item about Box Hill Historical Society's archive on ABC Sunday 16 April 2023. Our thanks to Jenny Norvick who sent us the link.

A record of Australia's suburban history lives on in this archive – and it was nearly lost

A historical society in Melbourne's east is racing to preserve thousands of photographs that were almost destroyed in a freak accident. The **Box Hill Historical Society's** collection came close to destruction in April last year, after rewiring works in the town hall building caused a humidifier to malfunction, increasing the humidity levels within the archive's rooms to nearly 90 per cent.

Lead archivist Helen Harris had stopped by the archive on a Saturday and found condensation dripping through the building and paint beginning to melt.

"It's every archivist's worst nightmare, to open a door and find condensation running down the walls," she said. "I think I lost 10 years just looking. We had stuff spread out in other rooms [to dry]. It's an entire archive, it's too much to take out."

Whitehorse City Council paid for a conservator to review the damage, who confirmed how close the archive was to being lost. Had the fault been discovered a day or two later, the delicate documents, papers and photographs of the archive would have been destroyed beyond repair.

The digitisation drive will become part of Victorian Collections, a state-wide catalogue that is available online, run by Museums Victoria and the Australian Museums and Galleries Association Victoria as a record of the state's past. Funding for the program is provided by the state government through Creative Victoria.

As an area rich in history ranging from the traditional owners, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation, early European settlement in the 1830s, to the migration boom of Chinese-Australians in the last few decades, the treasures within the archive are numerous...

The rapid development has prompted organisations like the volunteer-based Box Hill Historical Society to redouble their efforts to preserve the history of the area. Founded in 1963, the society works to preserve the local history of Box Hill, Mont Albert, Burwood and surrounding areas.

"Some of the images we get are in very poor condition — they've been stuck in someone's back shed, for example," Ms Harris said. "It's not just a matter of scanning them, it's working with them and removing the blemishes, tears, the spots, the drops, whatever. Old photographs can deteriorate fairly rapidly if they're not kept in archival condition. And most of the stuff we get is not kept in archival conditions," she said. "There are still albums and albums that we haven't even catalogued yet, so there's lots and lots of work to do."

The photographs range from school photos, beauty pageants, and ballet shows to unusual council records of a changing suburb. "In the 1980s, when a lot of Box Hill houses were being demolished, a council employee went around with a Polaroid camera documenting houses being destroyed," Harris explained. "That's the sort of more unusual things we have."

Other materials found in the collection include a carte de visite, a tiny business-card-sized, hand-coloured photograph stuck onto cardboard and generally shared among friends and family. Some documents are more than a century old and highlight demographic and cultural shifts over the decades, as well as changing fashions and technology.

One archived item from the 1950s depicts an advertisement for the first Chinese restaurant in the area. Decades later, about 60 per cent of residents currently living in the Whitehorse council area born overseas and about half of that number were born in China.

John Gothorp is a photographic archivist whose work to conserve and digitise the society's archive has been enabled by a \$14,500 grant from the Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) Community Projects Fund. Mr Gothorp said the sheer amount of material, combined with the slow and meticulous process to scan, photograph or otherwise record what is in the collection, would take months to work through.

"We're getting the low-hanging fruit first. What we can do on a flatbed scanner, we will, which is what we're mostly doing now. Anything large format, we'll be using a Hasselblad camera to retake the photos rather than using a drum scan," he said. Mr Gothorp said the photos showed a wide variety of people from the 1880s onwards. "There's a fair range. Photos back in the day were quite rare, so they tried to make them count," he said.

Harris described the funding from SRL to catalogue and preserve the collection of photographs as "just wonderful".

Whitehorse City Council Mayor Mark Lane said that it was important the community's stories could be accessible in the future... "It is important to recognise our diverse, unique history and preserve local stories for future generations to appreciate."

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From this article about Box Hill History Society, we get a picture of some of the technical aspects of preserving and sharing historic records.

Canterbury History Group's archive is currently stored in a small room in Inglesby Road Camberwell without working air conditioning, heating or wifi, but it seems safe. Frances Barrett has expertly catalogued the documents and photos which make up our collection, as did Jan Pigot who also took photos around Canterbury as a record for the future. These documents are an irreplaceable record of our suburb's history. We are very grateful that the work on our new 'home' in the Old Library has now started. Our records will be safely stored there and we can start further cataloguing, digitising and uploading to Victorian Collections.

Indirectly, the article shows the sorts of items which Canterbury History Group is interested in collecting too. Those of you who have renovated Canterbury houses may have photos showing the house or garden before (and after) it was altered or information about those who lived in it before you. You may also be interested in taking photos of Canterbury houses as you walk around the suburb. If you email them or put them on a USB we can download them to our archive. Please contact us.

You don't need to donate items themselves to us, a good scan or digital photo of a precious photo or letter etc is useful to us too - with as much identifying information as you can give us.

Does anyone have photos of the house which Francis Rennick built, 'The Grange' in Mont Albert Road when it was 'St Duthus School' or later Fintona Junior School? It burnt down in the 1950's.

Below are 3 photos sent to us of 49 Mangarra Road by James Nicolas, for our archive. He informed us that it has recently been demolished



Answers to Coronation Mishaps see page 2

1. *Which jilted queen was not invited to her husband's coronation and locked out of the Abbey?*

Before he became king, George IV was so much in debt that he was forced to marry his cousin Caroline of Brunswick - whom he despised. He tried to divorce her but she was popular with the public who took her side against him. She spent time abroad, paid for by the government, but when George became king, she returned to England. She planned to attend the coronation in 1821 as Queen although she was not invited and was warned not to do so. When she tried to enter Westminster Abbey, she was turned away at all the doors which were barred by guards. She lost support with this undignified behaviour and she died a few weeks later.

2. *Which coronation was unfinished because of fire and general panic?*

William the Conqueror was crowned on Christmas day 1066 not long after the Battle of Hastings on 14th October. Tensions in London were running high and his french speaking Norman guards were outside the Abbey ready to put down revolt. When they heard the congregation shouting God save the King, they panicked and set fire to nearby buildings so that the congregation fled out of fear. William 1st remained seated as they completed the ceremony but he was rather shaken.

3. *Which coronation didn't go ahead as planned because of abdication.*

Edward VIII's coronation was planned for May 12th 1937 but he abdicated on December 11th 1936 in order to marry Wallis Simpson. His brother Albert became King George VI and since he

had attended all the planning meetings, (unlike his brother) he decided to go ahead with the coronation as planned. As he said 'Same date, different king.'

4. Which king found that the crowns and other coronation regalia had been destroyed?

King Charles II was the oldest surviving son of Charles I who was executed in 1649, following the First Civil War which started in 1642. What followed was the English Commonwealth when England was governed as a republic by Oliver Cromwell. Charles had meanwhile fled to France. After Cromwell died in 1658, there was a crisis and Charles was invited back to England to become king - the restoration of the monarchy, in 1660. His coronation took place on 23rd April 1661. It was delayed for nearly a year because there was no crown, sceptre, orb, mace or sword. They had been kept in Westminster Abbey where in 1649 Cromwell's men had seized them, removed and sold the jewels and melted the gold frames down in the mint. The only item saved was the anointing spoon which had been bought by Clement Kynnersley and later returned to Charles II. Most of the current coronation regalia, including St Edward's crown was made for Charles II's coronation. Since 1661 it has been kept under guard at the Tower of London.

5. Which coronation had to be postponed because the king got appendicitis?

Edward VII's coronation was set for June 1902 and guests had been invited from all over the world, when he developed appendicitis a few days before the ceremony. He survived the operation and the coronation was postponed until August 9th.

6. Which coronation was 5 hours long and full of bungles: the ring was put on the wrong finger etc

Queen Victoria was crowned on 28th June 1838 in a coronation which took 5 hours. Politician Benjamin Disraeli who attended wrote, 'the whole thing left a lot to be desired...[Those involved in the coronation] were always in doubt as to what came next, and you saw the want of rehearsal.' Somehow, the Archbishop put the ring on the wrong finger so that later the Queen had great difficulty and pain in getting it off. When attempting to pay homage, 88 year-old Lord Rolle rolled down some steps and when he tried to do it again, the 19 year-old Queen left her throne [or chair] and went down the steps to meet him. The Bishop of Bath and Wells accidentally turned over two pages of the Order of Service. Unfortunately, the bit he missed was the crucial part, forcing him to call Queen Victoria back so that he could do it properly.

Australian Coronation trivia

Simon Abney-Hastings lives in Wangaratta, Victoria. Look out for him bearing **the Golden Spurs** in the Coronation ceremony on May 6th. It is a hereditary role and has been part of coronation ceremonies since Richard the Lionheart. Simon Abney-Hastings is the 15th Earl of Loudoun, a direct descendant of George Plantagenet who was brother of Edward IV and Richard III. The spurs are no longer worn by the monarch because they tend to get caught up in the vintage vestments. Like many other parts of the regalia, their function is symbolic: in this case of knighthood and the monarch's role as head of the armed forces.

The coach which will take King Charles III to the Abbey was built in Sydney in 2010 for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and first used in 2014. It's called the Diamond Jubilee State coach and is air conditioned with a number of 'expensive and symbolic components, including New Zealand-made door handles ... , fragments of Sir Isaac Newton's apple tree and wood from the door of 10 Downing Street.'