



HOTHAM HISTORY PROJECT Inc.

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Chair's Report 2014-15

The Hotham History Project takes pride in its activities which the AGM gives us an opportunity to review together.

This year, our secretary Mary Kehoe received a merit award from the Royal Historical Society. We are proud of the work that Mary does for the Hotham History Project as secretary, researcher and author and were delighted that she was recognised in this way.

A year ago, at our 2014 AGM, you will remember Judith O Neill spoke about housing in inner Melbourne in the 1960s and a few weeks later we were part of the Spring Fling which we will be again this year.

The Spring Fling, organised annually by The Centre, is a valuable opportunity for the North and West Melbourne communities to come together and experience the diversity of our part of the world at first hand. The Hotham History Project supports the Spring Fling and acknowledges the unique bonding role it plays as the nature and size of the district's population changes rapidly.

2014-2015 program

As for our 2015 program, during the year 2014-2015 we have had a variety of well-attended talks that have been highly spoken of by members and visitors. We thank the audiences for their support and would like to hear of any suggestions for the program for the coming year.

Talks

In October Mary Kehoe added detail to her seminal study of our first building, The Benevolent Asylum.

In March Graeme Butler outlined his expertise about heritage issues related to industrial buildings affected by the Arden Macaulay Structure Plan

In May, organised jointly with Geoff Leach and the NWMA, Jack Lewis gave an account of the work of the Citizen's Action Network from the period dominated by Ruth and Morrie Crowe. We recognise the need for a follow up occasion and are hoping to gather some more expertise and have one during the coming year.

In July, local author John Rickard outlined the history of St Mary's and, in particular, prominent figures in the Anglican community of a former period.

Walks

The noticeable feature is variety

In November, carefully orchestrated by Lorraine Siska, there was a walk-to-school with former pupils of King St Primary School ending with a cup of tea as guests of the Flagstaff

Hostel. The occasion was made strikingly authentic because their vivid memories were first-hand accounts of life in an earlier community

In April 1915 with Heather McKay from the North Melbourne Library, there were several walking tours on Hotham Hill drawing on her detailed research into war records, local honour boards and oral history. In streetscapes that are largely intact, we identified the houses from which volunteer soldiers and nurses, heroes and scallywags, had set off for what seemed to them to be a great adventure and learned a little of their fates.

In conjunction with The Huddle, we had six Walking Workshops for pupils from North Melbourne (Errol Street) and St Michael's Primary Schools. The route was selected to evoke the lives of the young people and their families in the years of their growing up before some enlisted to go to WW1 - eg the schools they attended, the current tram route then carrying cable trams, the Pleasance Gardens, the well trodden route to the pool and the footy ground - all still visible in the streets.

Landmarks

On Open Days at the PROV, we often offer walks in the nearby streets selecting landmark buildings (eg. the horse drawn tram terminus, the Dryburgh Street house leased for a time by William Maloney, the Shiel Street home where DLP senator Frank McManus grew up, homes whose women signed the 1890 petition to get the vote etc, remnants of buildings from the days of horse drawn traffic, the Ukrainian cathedral where the liturgy follows the Byzantine tradition, etc) These extant buildings open up discussion of important themes in the life of the district

Other activities

During the Open Melbourne weekend, Bill and I conducted 12 tours of the George Johnson designed Meat Market which is becoming available for community use.

With Centre support, there were also several short term display/discussion spots set up in George Johnson Lane highlighting events in the lives of locals John Monash and William Maloney.

We are among the 20 groups invited by the RHSV to contribute 15 black and white photos of Lost Melbourne 1859-1960 and are proceeding with a selection.

Some special thanks.

To the Committee which is a working group. We all have projects that contribute to the overall program and knowledge store of the HHP. Thank you to you all. And to Mary Kehoe and Felicity Jack who host many of our meetings and Rae Nicholls who provides or organises what goes with the rewarding cup of tea at the end

To Heather McKay whose energy in pursuit of localised history is unfailing and who alerts us to her 'new' discoveries.

We would like to thank Bill Hannan for his contributions on our behalf to the North & West Melbourne News, Guy Murphy for his work on our website and Don Mooney who has set up and maintains an HHP Facebook page.

We would also like to thank community members who have hosted displays such as names of the volunteers who went from North and West Melbourne to WW1. It occupied the windows

of The Centre in Errol Street at the time of the Gallipoli commemoration as did family histories displayed in Ray Walter's shop window in Queensberry Street.

Special acknowledgement to members whose donations support the work of the HHP eg. Kay Gibson's gift this year of two framed prints of early Melbourne: - an 1893 watercolour by Augustus B Pierce of the Metropolitan Meat Market building, and a lithograph of an 1863 panoramic view of Melbourne. Both are hung on the wall above the public access computers on the ground floor of the North Melbourne Library.

Other regular donors are Les Cassidy, Margaret Dean, Janet Graham, Bill Liddy and Carole Woods.

To come

David Evans on October 10 - we will be shown surviving houses built by John Jones, a prolific Welshman whose work has interested David Evans

On November 10 Screening of The Last Anzac, a short filmed interview with Deirdre Langenheim, made by Abi Richardson who donated her expertise to this project and which you will all have an opportunity to see on November 10. Mighty thanks in advance to Abi who took our project on board and made it work and to Deirdre who agreed to make her contribution by being filmed. More of that in a few months time.