



# HOTHAM HISTORY PROJECT Inc.

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## *Hotham History News* *December 2007*

Dear friends and supporters of the Hotham History Project,

As we wind down with the approach of Christmas and the New Year, we look back on a year of successful events. We thank all our members for their support over the past year. It is very satisfying to see our events so well attended. We encourage members to suggest activities they would be interested in attending. If you would like to make any suggestions, please contact the secretary, Mary Kehoe, on 9329 5814.

### **PUBLICATIONS IN 2007**

*Prince of Angels: The story of St Michael's Church North Melbourne 1907-2007*, researched by Lorna Hannan & Rae Nicholls with wonderful colour photographs by Harry Nicholls, was launched at the celebratory mass in June to mark the centenary of St Michael's church. We are very grateful to Harry and Matt Nicholls for their enormous contribution to the printing of the book. Copies are available from Lorna Hannan & Mary Kehoe for \$12.

### **RECENT PAST EVENTS**

#### **27 November**

It was wonderful to see so many of you at the fascinating post-election talk by Chapman Street resident, Trefor Owen on HS Chapman and the Australian Ballot. The evening also provided the opportunity to see one of the lovely old wooden ballot boxes that were used until cardboard ballot boxes replaced them.

#### **11 August -- AGM**

In keeping with the theme of education, and to complement the talk by former University High School Principal, Peter Bryce, the committee assembled a display on the development of schools and educational facilities in North & West Melbourne in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. We are hoping to replicate some of this display at the Errol St Primary School next year.

#### **26 June**

Congratulations to Jim Brady for his masterful presentation of Albert Mattingley's memoirs of North

Melbourne in the 1850s.

### **NORTH MELBOURNE LIBRARY**

The split between Melbourne Libraries and Yarra Libraries is gaining momentum and you will now need a separate card at each. If you only use the North Melbourne Library, your old YMRL card will be changed for a Melbourne Library Services card. The catalogue has now been split and you will not be able to access Yarra library holdings. The staff at North Melbourne will be happy to help with any enquiries.

Being back with City of Melbourne has some huge advantages, particularly in IT. The Library's local and family history CD Roms have now been networked to the hard drive on the local history computer. No more flopping discs in and out! This also means that some of the fascinating but under-utilised resources are now more obvious. Come in whenever the library is open, or ring Heather in advance on 9297 3280 to arrange a time if you need some help.

Please contact Heather or Mary (9329 5814) if you would like us to arrange an information evening for members.

### **MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES FOR 2008**

Hotham History Project Committee meetings and activities will continue to be held bi-monthly on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month at the North Melbourne Library. Committee meetings for 2008 will be on 26 February, 22 April, 24 June, 26 August, & 28 October at 7.30pm.

**Some activities proposed for next year include:**

#### **Display on education at Errol St Primary School.**

As part of the Errol Street Primary School's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, we have offered to re-mount the AGM display about the development of schools and educational facilities in North & West Melbourne. The display will probably be early in the year but we will advise you nearer the time.

**Talk –Tuesday 25 March at 7.30pm, North Melbourne Library**

Six men in a Seat. Learn more about some of the six colourful men who have represented the seat of Melbourne since Federation.

**Walk – Saturday 10 May at 2.00pm**

A walk around the North Melbourne Recreation Reserve. We'll meet at Gardiner's Reserve.

**Talk – Tuesday 27 May at 7.30pm, North Melbourne Library**

John Jones, a Welsh builder and stonemason, built over forty homes in West Melbourne between 1861 and 1889, of which over fifteen have survived. Hotham History Project member, David Evans, lives in the two-storey terrace in Hawke Street that John Jones built for his family in 1881. David will talk about John Jones, his buildings and his legacy.

**Talk – Saturday 7 June at 2.00pm, North Melbourne Library**

Gary Presland will be returning to speak about his soon-to-be-published book on the natural history of the Melbourne region. We are sure all those who attended his absorbing talk earlier this year on the pre-European aboriginal presence in the area, will ensure this date is in their diary.

**Talk – Tuesday 22 July at 7.30pm, North Melbourne Library**

Long-term committee member, Lorraine Siska, has lived in her 1860s house in West Melbourne most of her life. She has become fascinated with learning the secrets of its past, and in particular, the story of the second owner of the house, George Donald, Inspector of General Markets, an important and highly respected figure of his time.

Lorraine will talk about her voyage of discovery and provide suggestions about how you can go about researching the history of your own house.

**Walk – Literary Connections – 6 September at 2.00pm**

An exploration of the literary connections of some of the historic buildings in North Melbourne with possible enactments by the more theatrical of our committee members.

**Talk – 23 September at 7.30pm**

The City of Melbourne Bowls Club is one of the oldest bowling clubs in Melbourne. The Club has been researching and writing its history over the past couple of years. Come along and learn more about its rich and varied past and the latest news on its exciting new clubhouse.

**WEST MELBOURNE MEMORIES**

*We lived in a two storey Terrace at 594 Spencer Street, West Melbourne, between Hawke and Abbotsford Streets. My parents slept in the front room downstairs, next to the Lounge Room which was only used on Sundays and special occasions.*

*The kitchen had a one fire stove, with wicker chairs either side of it and in the corner stood a large wireless. There was a dresser for the crockery and another cupboard called a "tallboy" which Syd had made. The kitchen table, which Mumma scrubbed each week with sandsoap was made of pine and the chairs had kangaroo motifs carved on the back. There was also a miner's couch under the window, which opened onto the sideway.*

*Out in the sideway, there was a gas stove, more cupboards and an old wash-stand with a marble slab on it, where we washed the dishes in a tin dish. There was no running water in the house. High on the wall outside the kitchen was a row of bells. Each room in the house had a handle set into the wall, which in earlier times was used to ring the bells downstairs, but they no longer worked.*

*The walls of the sideway were painted with pale green calcimine, which was widely used at that time. If you brushed up against it, you got it on your clothes.*

*...*  
*The wash house was outside the back door which led from the sideway to the yard. It contained two roughcast troughs and a copper. Next to it was the bathroom in which the old bath had been painted but unfortunately when we sat in it, the paint flaked off. The hot water was provided by an old chip heater and the light by a candle. The lavatory was situated at the end of the yard with a large lilac growing outside the door. Its bench seat was scrubbed each day with sandsoap, which had almost the same effect as sitting on a piece of sandpaper. The "toilet paper" was newspaper (often "The Sporting Globe" which was pink in colour) cut into large squares and hung on a piece of string. Allison was frightened of the dark, and even though I was six years younger, I would accompany her when it was necessary for her to go at night. I can remember being often left stranded outside in the rain and cold whilst she was inside with a candle or, in later times, a torch.*

*Our front door was never locked and only closed in very cold weather. When the Iceman delivered the ice, he would just sing out as he brought it in.*

**Excerpt from the memories of Carolyn Whiting (nee Howe).**

If you know of anyone who would like to share their memories of growing up in West Melbourne, we would love to hear their stories.

**Contacts**

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*We would like to wish you all a peaceful and joyous festive season. We look forward to seeing you at some of our events in the New Year.*