



HOTHAM HISTORY PROJECT Inc.

C/o North Melbourne Library, 66 Errol St, North Melbourne, Vic. 3051
Ph: 03 9658 9700 Website: hothamhistory.org.au

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Hotham History News *Spring 2010*

Dear friends and supporters of the Hotham History Project,

Annual General Meeting

The Hotham History Project AGM was held on Saturday 9th October at The Huddle Learning and Life Centre, North Melbourne Football Club.

We would like to thank the North Melbourne Football Club, and in particular, Mairead Hannan and Sonja Hood for organising our use of their wonderful facilities.

Committee

As there were no nominations the committee remains the same as last year. Office bearers are:

Chair: Lorna Hannan (9328 3211)

Treasurer: Rae Nicholls (9816 9720)

Secretary: Mary Kehoe (9329 5814)

AGM Guest Speaker

Our Guest Speaker was Clare Hart, a horticulturist who has worked in many aspects of the horticultural industry and is particularly interested in plants that are indigenous, native and food producing.

Clare's presentation gave a visually beautiful glimpse into the wondrous plant life that occurred in the Melbourne area pre European settlement.

2010 is the year of Biodiversity and many of Melbourne's neighbourhoods and vegetation communities are still vibrant examples of this local diversity.

For anyone interested in purchasing some of the beautiful indigenous plants in Clare's presentation, Clare suggests you try www.greeningaustralia.org.au for a list of nurseries supplying indigenous plant stock.

Chair's Report

For those who missed the meeting, the Chair's Report, giving an overview of the past year, our ongoing projects and events to come, is reproduced, with a few small excisions and changes:

The Hotham History Project was originally set up to research and make some public use of its

findings about the history of the area which is now called North and West Melbourne. Once it was settled by Europeans, Hotham was an early name given to part of the area, a name no longer so widely used and yet it lingers on.

Lorna then gave a description of Sir Charles Hotham who was appointed as governor of the colony of Victoria in 1853 and died in office in 1855.

Once we had a name, our early activity as the Hotham History Project was research based and supported generously by the local community.

We had and still have no home of our own but the active cooperation of the North Melbourne branch of the City of Melbourne's Libraries has been invaluable and there is a great collection of primary and secondary material to be consulted there. Over the years, Heather McKay has been a mainstay and has herself become an authority on many areas of local history. We owe her our special thanks.

Over the years, as you know, we branched out into more activities - guided walks, talks and joint activities with other groups in the community. In the last year, we have had four walks or excursions.

The first was with Winsome Roberts, author of one of our important publications whose research and detailed knowledge equips her to blend an understanding of the life of our patch with the life of the nearby city, its influential people and institutions.

For the next, we uncovered the impact from 19th century horse traffic on the design of our streets and the now forgotten purpose of some of the remaining buildings. We passed by a horse-drawn tram depot, stable, forge, the residences and workshops of cab owners, coach builders and draymen and a house named after a horse.

Our autumn walk took us to three church buildings and we were met at each location by an expert who provided detailed knowledge on the spot....

Early in winter, our activity was more a field trip than a walk. We went to see the houses built by the Gidney and Donovan families in Canning and Wood Streets. The families had both been in horse breeding and we were accompanied on the day by members of the Horacek family who are descendants of the Gidneys.

Thanks to Bill Liddy and a lineup of former North Melbourne footballers and supporters who joined us

there, we were also let in on stories of life in those same streets in the 1940-70s. Special thanks to John Dugdale for his stories

Our best remembered talk during the year was about the Gracie Street Lost Dog's Home, close by here and an institution in which people who live round here take great pride.

Joint activities.

It is a real pleasure to bring our perspective to other local events and enterprises: for example, to talk to groups of primary school children from Errol Street, introduce some of the adult students of the NMLL to aspects of earlier local life, go on walks with them in their neighbourhood, and to provide material for each edition of the North and West Melbourne News. We often get messages of appreciation or queries from interested readers.

So, what about the projects?

At the moment we have five on the go:

1. ORAL HISTORY

Long ago, we had carried out interviews with people whose detailed memories stretched back to a North Melbourne that has largely disappeared. This material has an integrity of its own and although we have used extracts from time to time, it should also stand in its own right. After several attempts to publish it on paper, we are now about to transfer the original spoken material into a digitized format that allows it to be listened to in its own right. We have received a grant under the Victoria 175 Grants Program 2010 to enable the interviews recorded on cassette to be preserved.

2. BURCHETT INDEX

The Burchett index, a card index of notices of intention to build in the City of Melbourne, 1850-1916, compiled by Winston Burchett, contains valuable information about owners, architects and builders. The Hotham History Project is planning to transfer the data contained in the cards pertaining to North & West Melbourne onto a data base to make it more accessible. We need volunteers with laptops who would be willing to help.

3. THE BOWLS CLUB

The Bowls Club in the Flagstaff Gardens has material relating to its history as one of the oldest surviving bowls clubs in Melbourne. We are working towards a joint publication.

4, LIFE ON HOTHAM HILL and 5. WEST MELBOURNE are both projects that are a long time in preparation but as members and people interested in our work overall, they have yielded a great deal of information so far.

THE FUTURE

In the immediate future, we will play our part in the Spring Fling on October 24 and we have a great talk ready for October 26 when Liz Rushen

will talk to us about the emigration of women in the 19th century and Lorraine Siska will provide us with the story of one of those women, our own Jane Maloney. That will be at the Supper Room at the Arts House and we thank the City of Melbourne for sponsoring that event.

Finding a way forward with the oral history frees the project group. There has always been a half spoken promise to use that history and that has now been honoured.

As well as the three projects still on the go, there is also the question of the future. There are lots of other things that we would like to do and we also like to think that we would respond to suggestions from you about other activities and other topics. After all, it is from the membership and interested people in the community that most of our ideas and projects have come.

So please approach us in person, by mail or email with any suggestions and thank you for your support.

Of course as Chair, on your behalf, and my behalf, I would like to thank the members of the committee who look after the promotion, management, correspondence and financial dealings that go on behind the scenes and also to those who contribute to the hospitality that we like to offer and hope you will stay to enjoy this afternoon.

A REMINDER OF EVENTS STILL TO COME IN 2010

Spring Fling – 11.00am to 5.00pm Sunday 24 October, Errol Street, North Melbourne

As indicated in the Chair's Report, The Hotham History Project is planning to have a stall at this biennial North & West Melbourne festival, so please come along and say hello. If you would like to help on our stall for an hour or two, please contact us at:

Email: info@hothamhistory.org.au

Phone: Mary on 9329 5814

TALK – 7.30pm Tuesday 26 October, Supper Room, North Melbourne Town Hall, 521 Queensberry Street.

To celebrate History Week 2010, guest speakers, Dr Liz Rushen will talk about female migration to Victoria in the 19th century and Lorraine Siska will talk about Jane Maloney, the mother of Dr William Maloney who represented this area for many decades in both State and Federal government.

We wish to express our appreciation to the City of Melbourne for sponsoring use of the Supper Room for the evening.

Thank you to all those members who have renewed their membership for 2010-11 and a gentle reminder to those who have forgotten. **If you are unsure whether you are financial or if you do not wish to receive our notices and newsletters, please contact us at info@hothamhistory.org.au.**

We hope to see you at the Spring Fling or at our History Week talk on 26th October