



Hotham History Project Inc.

Estab 1995

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Hotham History News

Spring 2012

Dear friends and supporters of the Hotham History Project

Welcome to our new look newsletter format courtesy of Alan Ashley.

Bastow Institute of Educational Leadership

How many of you were able to tour the Bastow Institute as part of the Open House weekend in July? The old 1882 Queensberry Street school has been meticulously restored and a cutting edge extension, with an underground theatre, added to the rear of the building.

We are very fortunate to have such a ground breaking new institution in North Melbourne, and especially fortunate that one of the rooms can be hired for community events. We are taking advantage of this new facility and our next event – a talk by Val Noone will be held in the Dewey Common (see below). You should have already received an invitation to this talk.

A reminder about the remaining events for 2012.

A talk by Dr Val Noone about Archbishop Daniel Mannix in West Melbourne 1913-1917

7.30pm Tuesday 25 September

March 2013 will mark the centenary of the arrival from Ireland at St Mary's

West Melbourne of Daniel Mannix, the famous Catholic archbishop. From March 1913 until May 1917 Mannix lived at the presbytery in Howard Street as coadjutor archbishop of the diocese and parish priest of St Mary's. This talk will cover his extraordinary reception and discuss his activities on the issues of Catholic education, conscription, trade unions and Irish nationalism during those four crucial years. The conclusion will suggest that the people and conditions of West and North Melbourne contributed to changing the archbishop's outlook.

Val Noone is a fellow of the School of Historical and Philosophical Studies at the University of Melbourne and the author of *Hidden Ireland in Victoria*.

Venue: Dewey Common, Bastow Institute of Educational Leadership, 603-615 Queensberry Street, access from Union Street.

Annual General Meeting 2.00pm Saturday 20 October

Professor John Poynter will talk about the disastrous Free Banquet organised by medical practitioner and politician, Dr L L Smith, during the Royal visit of Prince Alfred in 1867.

**Venue: The Huddle,
North Melbourne Football Club,
Arden Street.**

Spring Fling

11.00am to 6.00pm

Sunday 21 October

As usual, The Hotham History Project will have a presence at our local community fair. We are also looking for volunteers to work on our stall from 11am to 5pm so that everyone has some time off to wander around and enjoy the festivities. Please contact us at info@hothamhistory.org.au if you are able to help.

Our chair, Lorna Hannan, will also be taking guided tours of the clock tower in the North Melbourne Town Hall. Numbers are limited.

Other Activities Burchett Index

Members of the Hotham History Project are continuing to put the data from the Burchett card Index of Notices to Build in the City of Melbourne into an electronic format, led by indexing supremo Guy Murphy who has taken some time off from his work to push the indexing along. So far, North Melbourne, most streets in West Melbourne, South Yarra, Flemington & Kensington, have been completed. Much of the work has been done by Guy and Lorraine Siska, with several other volunteers also spending days in at the Department of Transport Library in Exhibition Street. We are very grateful to all these volunteers. We hope the index will be completed by the end of the year.

History Week

21-28 October

Every year for a week in October, historians throughout Victoria schedule events to celebrate Victoria's colourful past. Our own celebrations include our participation in the Spring Fling, with our AGM scheduled the day before history week commences. For a list of the large and varied events taking place throughout the state, please check

www.historyweek.org.au.

Melbourne Theatres in Transition – 1840s to 1940s

We would like to congratulate one of our members, theatre historian, Mimi Colligan, for the fascinating exhibition she recently curated at the Royal Historical Society of Victoria in A'Beckett Street, which closed on Friday 31 August. Early photographs of once famous theatres and actors of long-ago fame, theatre programs, and artefacts built up a vivid picture of early Melbourne's vibrant cultural scene.

Obituaries

In recent months, two long-time residents of North Melbourne have died, and with them an important link with our past.

Vale – Ethel Mann

Ethel (1917-2012) spent most of her long life in North Melbourne. Her mother also lived in North Melbourne and in her teens remembers visiting the elderly folk in the Benevolent Asylum, the large institution on Curzon Street that dominated the North Melbourne skyline from 1851-1911. The link with the Asylum was reinforced when Ethel's parents, who had met at St Mary's Anglican Church, bought a block of land on the Asylum Estate after the Benevolent Asylum was demolished. The family moved into their new house just, before Christmas 1920 and Ethel lived there until 2008 when ill health forced her to move into a nursing home. Ethel was interviewed in 1995 for the Hotham History Project and she also wrote down her memories of growing up in North Melbourne. Her vivid memories of schooldays at

Queensberry Street State School and King Street State School have enlivened earlier newsletters.

Ethel went on to study at the Melbourne Girls' High School in Spring Street in 1930 and sometimes came home on the free open charabanc run by Fitzgeralds Department Store in Errol Street to bring prospective customers from the city to North Melbourne. When the Spring Street school was demolished, Ethel attended school in Government House, and later back at her old school in King Street until the purpose-built school funded by Sir Macpherson Robertson opened in South Melbourne in 1934.

She obtained a B.Sc from the University of Melbourne, as well as a Diploma of Education and a Bachelor of Education. Apart from one year at Williamstown High School, she spent most of her career as a science teacher at her old alma mater, MacRobertson Girls' High School.

Ethel had an extremely good memory for detail and was also a talented painter. The painting of Curzon Street by Ethel reproduced below dates from the 1940s-50s and is particularly valuable to local historians for its depiction of a streetscape that no longer exists as the houses in that part of Curzon Street have since been demolished.

Mary Kehoe



Vale – Helen Raftopoulos

Helen grew up working in her parent's shop alongside her older sister, Chris & brother, Peter. Her family lived above and operated the Fruit & Vegetable Shop in Victoria St, North Melbourne from the late 1920s. It was a thriving, busy place, simply because it was the best greengrocer's shop outside the Market.

Mrs Raftopoulos began the Florist side of the shop and Chris and Helen continued with it until it was closed at the start of this year, over 80 years of serving to the public by one family - and all three women were known for their generosity with flowers.

The Raftopoulos Family were always very private but very interested in the people and events in the area, and had strong visual memories of Victoria and Errol Streets in the 1930s 40s & 50s before many things changed.

Helen died of a heart attack whilst in her car on 10th June 2012. She loved that car and on the cold days of this winter was often seen in it, on the sunny side of the street, keeping warm.

Buried privately on 29th June 2012 according to her family's wishes - Helen will be remembered by so many as a generous woman, a 'character' of the area, always a sympathetic listener, always interested in the people of North & West Melbourne.

Our condolences to Chris in the loss of her sister.

Lorraine Siska

Thank you to all those members who have renewed your membership and a gentle reminder to those who intend to renew but haven't got around to it yet.

If you are unsure whether you are financial or you no longer want to receive our newsletters and notices, please contact us at info@hothamhistory.org.au.