



# HOTHAM HISTORY PROJECT Inc.

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## Annual General Meeting 2012 Chair's report

### **What have we done and what do we plan to do?**

#### **Reviewing our 2011-2012 Event Calendar**

25 November 2011 – A twilight walk taking in St Mary Star of the Sea & St James Cathedral. We count this event as a great success. Thanks especially to Bill Cook, one of our members and a regular bell ringer, we were able to watch the bell ringing and begin to appreciate the effort and discipline that goes into the pealing of the bells.

10 Dec 2011 - Family Day at Arden Street. Members of the Hotham History Project helped record memories of football club members. With the current re shaping and re surfacing of the ground, there is considerable interest in the history of the site and stories of the old days. The footie club ties many families back to North and our use of the Huddle over the last few years is testimony to that connection.

24 March 2012 – A visit to St Mary Star of the Sea & the 1870 presbytery, which is a Wardell building. These buildings are both landmarks of considerable architectural and historic interest to the area. Over the past decade, the church itself - both inside and out - has been strikingly restored and there are also many points of interest in the presbytery which was for some years the home of Archbishop Daniel Mannix. Thanks to Tom Hazell the restoration co ordinator for spending time with us and showing us many of the treasures.

12 May 2012 – A street walk to the sites of some of West Melbourne's and North Melbourne's schools. In the 19th century the district seemed to be swarming with pubs and schools. Some of the schools we traced had been set up prior to the Education Act, many were linked to the churches and all used methods of teaching and discipline that were strikingly different from today's. As Lorraine Siska demonstrated, our oral history collection enriches our understanding of the place of the schools in the local community.

June 2012 – A street walk for members of the Deepdene U3A and a follow-up workshop, both lead by Bill Hannan. The walk took in schools in the area, the workshop concentrated on the Town Hall, its history and architecture.

21 July 2012 - Stained glass in North & West Melbourne. Ferguson & Urie were well-known 19th century stained glass makers based in North Melbourne and there are fine examples of their work in the district. Our speaker, Geoffrey Down who is curator at the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, has made a study of this work which we were very pleased to be able to hear about. Our special thanks to Lyn Martin who organised and arranged the afternoon and to the Uniting Church for allowing us the use for the afternoon of the Elm Street hall, which is at present their parish church.

25 September 2012 – Dr. Val Noone talked to us about the years that Archbishop Daniel Mannix spent in West Melbourne as coadjutor bishop of the diocese and parish priest at St Mary's. The evidence that Val has collected suggests that changes in certain of Mannix's views might be traced to the influence of prominent Catholic laymen living in the parish at the time. This event was the first for which we used the

Dewey Common Room at the Bastow Institute, formerly the Queensberry Street Primary School. The venue and the site are also of interest to the project and we will follow that up in the coming year.

21 October 2012 – The Spring Fling. The Hotham History Project will be part of this community festival tomorrow. Guy Murphy will be at the stall in Errol Street to provide information to people interested in the history of their houses and Bill and I will guide small groups of people up inside the tower of the Town Hall (aka The Arts House)

During the year, Guy Murphy has maintained the Project's website.

### **On Going Projects**

We have an ongoing relationship with the Public Records Office and provided local walks suited to their community activities on several occasions during the year. We continue to rely heavily on our local arm of the City of Melbourne library and on the expertise and ready help of Heather McKay. Thanks to Bill Hannan, the Project also provides articles to the North and West Melbourne News.

We have incomplete projects. Some of them have been going on for years. For example Rae and I are still toiling away at a work which has oral history as its foundation. Lorraine has helped with that during the past few months and is also amassing material relating to West Melbourne

### **Indexing the Burchett Index.**

Under Guy's guidance and with the active involvement at various times of Jenny Cook, Mary Kehoe, Rae Nicholls, Lyn Martin, Lorraine Siska, Gina Stuart, Xenia Gorny and Marlene Shanahan, entering the index for North Melbourne and West Melbourne is now complete as are Parkville, East Melbourne, Carlton, South Yarra, Newmarket, Flemington and Kensington. Once finished the accessible digitised version will hopefully be related to Miles Lewis' data base and thus represents a major plank in providing access to researchers interested for whatever reason in the buildings of the inner city.

### **What next?**

Apart from the unfinished business that I have identified, we are interested in future work on the Rate Books both for Hotham and North Melbourne and also for the City of Melbourne

We have ideas but no firm plans for 2013. Of course we hope to complete some works and since the response to walks and talks continues to be good, we will probably plan a year's program not unlike those of the last two years. If you have any ideas or requests, please tell us so that we have a good chance of including them.

Thank you all for your support during the year which has been a good one for the Project.