



# HOTHAM HISTORY PROJECT Inc.

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## Chair's Report - 2012-2013

Sometimes it must seem to members that the Hotham History Project is like Topsy, it just grewed - and it is the case that we started out as a research group hoping to publish but have steadily added to our activities as members of the Project and the community sought to use and add to the information we were gathering.

So that is where we find ourselves now and the past year has been quite diverse.

### **SPRING FLING 2012**

At the 2012 Spring Fling, (Lorna and Bill Hannan for the HHP) provided tours of the Clock Tower of the Arts House (which we still refer to as the Town Hall.) The view draws attention to the topography that influences the character of the area and re-establishes the dominance of some important landmarks. Last year's tour was a success and has been requested again for this year.

Also at the Spring Fling, Guy Murphy's assistance to supporters and book buyers who wanted help with researching the history of individual houses was also a feature of HHP's activity and will be on offer again in 2013. (I'd just like to add that we would also appreciate offers to help staff the stall at the Spring Fling next Sunday the 20<sup>th</sup>).

### **TALKS**

We had two major presentations of original research during the year. In March, 2013 Mimi Colligan spoke about *Billy Edwards: A West Melbourne Identity* and in July Mary Chapman presented *Mineral Mt Somers to Marvellous Melbourne: the use of New Zealand limestone in Melbourne*. Mimi's talk was given at the Bastow Institute where we were pleased to use the community space and Mary Chapman's was most suitably held in the crypt of St Mary Star of the Sea. We would like again to thank both the Bastow Institute and St Mary's for their hospitality which is an important support for our work.

### **WALKS AND EXCURSIONS**

In May, we held a major and well attended Temperance Walk by which Bill Hannan explored another aspect of the district's social life. Apart from ex-pubs, the tour included an unexpected opportunity to visit the old Court House, a tour of the Temperance Hall by representatives of the Legion of Mary (the present owners) and further information from Bill Liddy, about the premises when the Temperance Hall was the Friday Night home of Graeme Bell's jazz band and Ken Mansell on his days as an active left winger with the Eureka Youth League who were tenants at the time.

Three walks in the Hotham Hill area were organized to accompany events at the Public Records Office and concentrated on stories of people from the late C19th and early C20th whose houses can be identified.

Recently HHP members went as a group to the Burley Griffin Exhibition in Heidelberg and would like to thank the Heidelberg Historical Society for the opportunity.

## **PUBLICATIONS**

The HHP Newsletters prepared by our secretary, Mary Kehoe, the website kept up to date by webmaster Guy Murphy and contributions to the North and West Melbourne News usually prepared by Bill Hannan are important ways in which we keep the membership informed of our activities and receive suggestions from them about what to do in future.

All but two of our print publications are still available and we are currently planning re runs of *R-Rated Real Estate* by Lorraine Siska and *The Melbourne Benevolent Asylum* by Mary Kehoe. We have buyers waiting for both of them.

We are moving into the final stages of production in print of *Moving Around, Stories of a North Melbourne Family 1902-64* which uses oral history and as far as possible allows people from the past to tell their own story. The book has been assembled by Rae Nicholls, whose family story it features and Lorna Hannan. We expect to launch it in December on Saturday 14.

We have also printed a secular *Guide to St Mary Star of the Sea*. As well as its use as a guide, the content explores aspects of community life associated with the church itself. Because the church is actively used, the Guide is intended for single visitors or small groups to use on their own. For the moment, the Guide can be bought or borrowed.

## **CONTINUING RESEARCH**

A highlight of our year was the re-launch of the Australian Architectural Index, incorporating the Winston Burchett card index of notices of intent to build in the City of Melbourne.

The digitisation of the card index was carried out voluntarily by members of the Hotham History Project under the direction of our webmaster, Guy Murphy and launched in April at the University of Melbourne by Stephanie Alexander (a member of the Burchett family). The event was catered for by the HHP Committee.

North Melbourne rate books have been digitised and HHP committee members are about a third through making them more accessible by listing entry numbers each time streets are listed.

## **NOTE**

All the members of our volunteer committee, especially the office bearers must be thanked. Their joint achievement, year after year, is a body of work that helps strengthen the community that we live in and that in itself is worthwhile.