



HOTHAM HISTORY PROJECT Inc.

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Estab. 1995
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Chair's Report 2013-14

If you don't know history, then you don't know anything. You are a leaf that doesn't know it is part of a tree.

— [Michael Crichton](#)

These words, which we can think about, are those of an American born in 1942, a scientist and novelist who wrote under a number of different pseudonyms.

THANKS to the office bearers, committee members, membership and the wider community for supporting the various activities of the Hotham History Project

SPECIAL THANKS to Heather McKay from the North Melbourne Library who supports our various activities and takes a real and helpful interest in our various projects

OUR ROLE

Essentially we see ourselves as twigs and branches that make up the tree. Our aim is simple - to add to knowledge of the district we live in by exploring its past and then presenting that knowledge to the people who live and work in our neck of the woods or come back to visit people and places they remember.

Very often the activities themselves are fun and rather than hanging from a single tree, are becoming an urban forest. And of course they support a wide range of friendships that are characteristic of community organizations and which we can all enjoy.

So what have we done in the last year?

1. CONSTITUTION

Like many community organizations under the guidance of Consumer Affairs we re-worked our constitution. Thanks to the Committee members who spent time on the meticulous detail of that task.

2. The 2013 SPRING FLING

During the day our guides took small groups up into the clock tower of the building now known as the Arts House but which we continue to call Our Town Hall. They were able to see the now silent bells and learn something of their history.

We also maintained a street stall where residents could be provided with historic details of their houses.

Both of these activities were so successful that we will provide them again at this year's Spring Fling on October 17.

3. BOOK LAUNCH

In December last year we published *Moving Around*, which is based on recorded oral history from the Quinn family and Rae Nicholl's recollections. Richard Wynn who remembers many of the very people and places that the book refers to launched it at a gathering in St Michael's Hall. I would like to thank Richard again for his insightful and memorable talk and his interest in and support of Hotham History.

4. WORKSHOP

In February, Geoff Leach led a workshop for us at the Bastow Institute. The subject was the historical subdivisions of North and West Melbourne, an understanding of which clarifies a deal of our research. Thanks again to Geoff.

5. GOLD FIELDS WALK

In April, in partnership with the North Melbourne Library we mapped out a walk that recalled our connections to the goldfields. The route went along streets that had led out of town and off to Ballarat and Eureka. Bendigo and the Mount Alexander gold fields - part of our history that lies hidden out of sight under a thin layer of asphalt.

6. FIELD TRIP

In May, Bill Liddy and his friends prepared a walk round sites he remembered from a childhood in the Victoria - Abbotsford Street vicinity. Many of the houses and buildings are now gone of course but Bill and friends could still show us where they had been. The occasion itself was marked by really bad weather and the last leg was abandoned which was a pity but Bill, his family and friends had taken us into the past and we really appreciated their generosity.

7. EXCURSION

On a Sunday in June, we visited the Essendon Incinerator Gallery in the Burley Griffin Incinerator followed by those who wanted to buy lunch and a walk to Pipemakers Park. It was an eye opener.

8. ANOTHER THANKS

Throughout the year we have maintained a website and from time to time our members also receive newsletters in digital or print formats. Thank you to the committee members who take on responsibility for these communications.

9. THE YEAR TO COME

The 2014 Spring Fling

A talk in October by Mary who will add to her previously published work on the Benevolent Asylum.

In November a walk in West Melbourne where our informants will be people who grew up in the area. And?