



St Kilda Historical Society Inc.

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

As President, my main aim has been, together with our very our hardworking committee of management, to set the Society on an established footing with quality processes in place to ensure its ongoing viability. To do this we have been meeting almost every fortnight since last August. Slowly we are getting there. We soon hope to print a handbook for the Society outlining its vision, goals, and processes.

We have employed two excellent historians Richard Peterson and Jeannette Brompton to write two books for us, one on the history of St Kilda's churches and the history of St Kilda's significant buildings. I think Richard and Jeannette will do a marvellous job and will promote the work of our Society to the broader community. Seeking more punishment, the members voted at our February meeting to seek funds for two more publications this year namely Crime and Punishment in St Kilda and Hotels of St Kilda.

Importantly we have met with Councillors David Brand and Dick Gross and head of the library Deirdre Pellizer and pressed our members' recent vote for a permanent room in the library that would allow us to mount permanent exhibitions, improve services to the public and the discouraging access barriers. It would be marvellous to have a home like other Societies after 30 years especially in such an appropriate venue.

We have also asked for more resources such as a local history officer employed by the City to provide recurrent hours to support the infrastructure of the three historical societies in Port Phillip as well as direct assistance from the council archives officer to support our collection. Such support is essential to maintain vigorous community participation and is provided by other Councils such as Stonnington and Yarra.

Two members of our Committee of Management have successfully applied to be members of the

Urban History Centre Committee that holds its first meeting in April.

We welcome our new Secretary Melanie Eagle. As a former Mayor and founder of St Kilda Heritage Watch, she brings many skills and abilities.

This leaves a vacancy for a new Committee member and would be delighted by any expressions of interest. We also need media officer for our newsletters. If you have graphic design skills we have a draft St Kilda history children's book which needs layout. We also need an exhibition officer to mount displays in the glass cases in the library and council foyer.

We were saddened recently by the recent and unexpected death of Trish Hulskamp, our former Heritage Officer and committee member. Our very best wishes for the future to her daughter and her partner John Hulskamp, our outstanding Treasurer.

WELL DONE!

The Society congratulates the Councillors on their re-election to the City and also the new Mayor Darren Ray. The Councillors have been strong supporters of the city's cultural heritage. Congratulation also to our committee member Gillian Upton whose book *The George. Life and Times of St Kilda*. made the Age best seller list. If you haven't read it, you're missing out. Book is available for \$35 from www.historyonline.info or Gillian 95311519.

DUNGEONS AND DIGGERS

We recently assisted the Elwood RSL with material from our collection in the "dungeon" to mount an exhibition on the history of Elwood at the first Elwood Festival on Sunday 26th March. Thanks to former Don Taggart who attended to provide advice to the public. The Society is assisting the RSL to mount a further display on Albert Jacka.

In January the Society supervised Deakin University museum studies student Catherine Witteveen to complete a project on our collection. Her excellent final report includes 25 pages of descriptions of donations to our collection extracted from 30 years of newsletters. The Committee of Management has formally requested the City of Port Phillip to undertake key responsibility for the process of cataloguing the Society's collection.

Margaret Russell from Queensland recently donated finely embroidered garments belonging to her grandmother who was married in St Kilda early this century. These will be on display at our next General meeting

GENERAL MEETINGS

Our last general meeting was a visit to the Holocaust Museum where we were addressed by the Director John Morris and given an exclusive guided tour by their volunteers. One survivor spoke about her experience as a 15 year old in Warsaw and how the events in Nazi Germany show importance of fighting to retain civil liberties for all minority groups in today's Society.

At our February meeting author Pat Grainger spoke on her and Mary Mason's outstanding new book: *Linking Us Together. A History of Transport in the City of Port Phillip*. It is available from the Society for only \$15.00.

NEXT MEETING 28 APRIL AT 2.30 PM

The Bearbrass tour has been postponed due to lack of bookings. Instead we are meeting at 2.30 pm at the St Kilda library to hear Don Taggart's talk return by popular request on *Reminiscences of Harrods, London in the 1960's*.

COMING ST KILDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY EXHIBITION

Our next Exhibition will be mounted on 'Separation Day' in the glass case in the St Kilda library. Melbourne was only 16 years old when it separated from N.S.W in 1851, a town still marked by tree stumps in the street, mud roads, bullock carts and few if any buildings over two stories high.

LOCAL HISTORY SEMINARS

The Royal Historical Society is running an excellent and low cost series of seven short seminars in 2002 at 239 A'Beckett Street (cnr William Street) near Victoria Market. They include several workshops on

photography, family history (14/6), indexing for historical societies (30/8), the RHSV indexes (2/7), protecting and using paper collections (2/8), newspaper cuttings (6/8), and mounting exhibitions (11/10). Details 9326 9288.

ABORIGINAL HISTORY/CULTURE SERIES

The Victorian Union for Progressive Judaism is running an excellent lecture and discussion series on history and culture and issues for indigenous people. Cost is only \$10.00 per session. Inquiries Georgie 0408 321 950 or georginameyer@hotmail.com.

THE CHRONICLE FOR JUNE 2002

Gillian Upton and Vida Horne are currently editing articles submitted for the Chronicle at PO Box 177, Balaclava 3163. We are also seeking any members with experience in graphic design or layout skills for the magazine. Contact Gillian 95311519.

ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT A PLANNING PROPOSAL THAT AFFECTS HERITAGE IN YOUR AREA?

The Society receives occasional queries from residents concerned about planning proposals that impact on neighborhood heritage. The Society suggests six practical tips to pursue concerns. Contact the CoPP Planning Department 9209 6424 and:

1. Ask for a copy of the excellent publication *Community Guide to Planning: The ToolKit*. Part Five includes preparing a submission about or an objection to a proposal.
2. Talk to the Heritage Advisor who provides specialist advice on buildings of heritage significance and proposed changes.
3. Talk to the officer assigned to a particular address or application number or your neighborhood.
4. Talk to the Strategic Planner assigned to your neighborhood for policy advice and guidelines.
5. Access the local history collection and officer 9209 6662 for general information about your neighborhood heritage.
6. Look at the three St Kilda Conservation and Architectural reports in St Kilda library for information about historic buildings.

The Society also responds to community concerns on large-scale developments that may affect heritage. Community concern about the laser arch proposal at St Kilda Junction was a factor in its abandonment.

Individual members of the City's historical societies appeared recently at the panel hearing objections to development on the heritage structure of Princes Pier. This extraordinary proposal is to create five stories of apartments along the length of the pier above crown land and blocking the existing views from the foreshore. It departs from the long held principle of reserving the foreshore for public use.

JACKA MEMORIAL SERVICE

On 20th January 2002, members attended the public Memorial Service at St Kilda Cemetery together with the Mayor, Bruce Ruxton, armed forces members and Jacka family members. All Jacka family members signed the Society's 100 Years Book. Jacka's enduring popularity is astonishing and deserved. His combativeness in war matched his pugnacious fight for social justice for the unemployed as Mayor of S Kilda.

ALBERT JACKA'S STORY

'I managed to get the beggars, Sir'.

Albert Jacka reporting on his single-handed routing of Turkish troops.

Albert Jacka was seven years old at the time of Federation and died at only 39 years of age. The winner of the first Victoria Cross at Gallipoli was held in enormous esteem during his short life and his popularity continues today with annual public gatherings at his grave. The adulation of Australia's greatest front line soldier indicates the importance of war in fashioning national identity. Although nationalist sentiment was strong during the Boer War 1889 -1902, it was the Gallipoli campaign that created an immense pride in being Australian. Jacka's personal character is seen as the ideal of an Australian ethos: 'the Anzac creed of mateship, bravery, fairness and an absence of pretentiousness'.

Jacka met his destiny at Anzac Cove, Gallipoli Peninsula early in the morning of the 19th May, 1914. The child of a Victorian laborer, he had enlisted with his two brothers as a private in the 14th Battalion Australian Imperial Force. At 4 am the

Turks attacked along the entire line and rushed Jacka's trench. His three companions were hit but Jacka returned fire and organised a counter attack. While others distracted the enemy, he single-handedly attacked the Turks from the flank, shooting five and bayoneting two.

Receiving the first Victoria Cross awarded to the A.I.F, Jacka became an instant national hero. He was eventually promoted to the rank of Captain. In 1915 at Poziers, France, Jacka received the Military Cross for what was described by war historian C.E.W Bean as '*the most dramatic and effective act of individual audacity in the history of the A.I.F*'. On 7 August Germans attacked his dugout killing two soldiers. Jacka counter-attacked furiously with his platoon rescuing forty Australians being rounded up as prisoners, capturing fifty Germans and retaking the line.

After recovering from serious wounds he saw further action and in 1918 was gassed at Villers-Bretonneux. He returned home to a hero's welcome and established an electrical goods business with A.I.F comrades.

In 1921 he married Frances Carey and settled in St Kilda at 45 Murchison Street. He became Mayor of St Kilda in 1929 using most of his energy to assist the unemployed. He believed the role of local government was to actively support the disadvantaged and made the Town Hall available to store the possessions of those evicted from their homes during the depression.

St Kilda's most popular son died of nephritis at Caulfield Hospital on 18 December 1932. Nearly 6000 people filed past the coffin at Anzac House. One thousand returned soldiers led the funeral procession and eight Victoria Cross winners were pallbearers. The sculpture and memorial plaque for his grave was paid for by public subscription. Jacka Boulevard bears his name.

His gravestone reads 'A gallant soldier and a concerned citizen'.

Extract from 'Nation Builders. Great Lives and Stories from St Kilda Cemetery' by Meyer Eidelson.

RAILWAY TOUR

Peter Carradine of the Australian Railway Historical Society (9571 8958) has organised to run an historical walk for us along the former short-lived St Kilda Brighton Railway 1859 – 1867 starting from St Kilda station and ending at Windsor Station on Fitzroy Street on Tuesday 12 October at 6.30 p.m. (see calendar overpage).