



St Kilda Historical Society

No. 164

DECEMBER 2003

ABN: 25 188 646 275

Patron: Sir Zelman Cowen

Secretary, P.O. Box 177 Balaclava; Phone: 9690 9584, 0407 301 695

Email: mevereidelson@yahoo.com; Website: www.vicnet.net.au/~hsosk (Society)
www.skhs.org.au (Publications); Editor: Melinda Haldon mhaldon@bigpond.com

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

The end of another busy year approaches marred by the recent deaths of two St Kilda legends (see below).

*We hope you will commemorate our achievements (and losses) this year by joining with us for a **barbecue on 14 December** at the historic mansion (now occupied by the RSL) at **23 Loch Street, St Kilda**. Joining us will be octogenarian and raconteur, Helen Jacoby, whose grandfather gave his name to nearby Jacoby Reserve.*

Memberships are now due for renewal. Many thanks to those of you who have already re-subscribed. I strongly urge all other members to send their payment by 31 December.

*Your donation is **critical** to the work in promoting and maintaining St Kilda's heritage. The Society's only regular, if small, income is membership fees. These fees support volunteers to play a vital role as advocates on behalf of the community, as well as increasing knowledge to schools, groups and the wider community.*

WALKS

1. Discover the Gasworks Arts Park's amazing natural, **Aboriginal, industrial & recent history**. Enjoy morning tea and tour of 'Books Illustrated', hosted by the owners.

When: 9-30 - 11.30am, Sunday 7 December

Where: Meet at Graham Street entrance, Gasworks Arts Park, cnr Pickles & Graham Sts, Albert Park

Cost: Free to SKHS members ((Stephanie Rewha 9209 6229)

2. **Ned Kelly & St Kilda Cemetery Tour** by Friends of St Kilda Cemetery. Learn about the people whose lives crossed those of Ned Kelly & his gang, from Justin Corfield, author of "The Ned Kelly Encyclopaedia".

When: 2.00pm, Sunday 7 December

Where: Meet at entrance of St Kilda Cemetery, Dandenong Rd, St Kilda East (Melways 58-G8)

Cost: \$5. Bookings not necessary

Inquiries: 9531 6832

NEW!! IDEAL CHRISTMAS OR NEW YEAR PRESENT

The Spirit of St Kilda

A professionally printed A5 volume (colour cover)

Location Maps now included

Note: will be available from 10 December (fresh from publisher!)

Discover the history of St Kilda's places of worship since settlement. From the Aboriginal Dreamtime; to the Gothic spires on the hill; to the early Hebrew community. A must have for all History or Architecture buffs, or those who just like exploring St Kilda.

Paid up members: Only **\$12.00**

Public: \$15.00

To purchase your edition:

* To place order ((9690 9584 or 0402 016 539)

* Also available at:

St Kilda Library Front Desk & our End-of-Year BBQ (refer above)

CONDOLENCES

Sometimes there are periods of life in which many losses happen. This is one of them. Death is inevitable. But the memories of some people and their impact on our personal and community life often stand the test of history. Angela Wallace and Vida Horn are two of these people.

Angela Robarts-Bird (Wallace)

THE CITY OF PORT MOURNS CULTURAL TRAILBLAZER, ANGELA WALLACE
(12/7/51-18/11/03)

The Society expresses condolences to friends, family and colleagues of Angela Robarts-Bird (Wallace) who died on 18th November after a short battle with cancer. Angela was a dynamic pioneer of the arts in local government, the head of the CoPP Major Projects Unit and the former Coordinator of the Cultural Development Unit. She actively and enthusiastically assisted our Society with practical advice and support on many cultural projects. The entire community and us mourn her loss.

Photo courtesy of CoPP: Angela Wallace & artist Mark Douglass on his iron seat in front of Linden, 1993



Vida Vale Horn (Smith)

News release issued by Carmel Shute, Media Officer, City of Port Phillip on 17 November 2003.

“A TRUE PUBLIC SERVANT”
PORT PHILLIP MOURNS VIDA HORN,
FOUNDING ST KILDA LIBRARIAN
(9/5/25 – 14/11/2003)

The City of Port Phillip is mourning the death of Vida Horn (née Smith) who planned and established the St Kilda Library, which opened in 1973, after a huge community campaign. Vida Horn died in the Epworth Hospital from cancer on Friday November 14 at the age of 78. She was still working as a freelance editor at the time of her death.

Deirdre Pellizzer, a former City of Port Phillip library services coordinator, described Mrs Horn (as she was always known to staff) as:

“...a true public servant. She was passionate about libraries and always focused on the needs of library users. She understood the need for

civic space as well as books. The [St Kilda] library, which she helped to plan from 1970-73, had a real sense of grandeur. It was a very modern building for its time.”

As well as appointing staff and overseeing the purchase of books and other materials, Mrs Horn had to keep a watching brief on the building program. By the time the library was officially opened on May 14 1973, everything from the rosters to the filing system was in order ready for the rush of local residents who had waited so long for their own library. She even wrote the library by-laws!

“It was the sort of job people describe as challenging. Fortunately, I had marvellous staff,” she told people at the 30th anniversary celebrations of St Kilda library in May this year.

When Mrs Horn was appointed in 1970, the Town Clerk apparently told her he'd be watching her every move and made some aspersions about her politics. She told him in no uncertain terms that if he repeated the allegations, she would regard it as slander and would refer the matter to her solicitors.

“Mrs Horn was forthright but fair,” Ms Pellizzer says, “and always stuck up for staff rights and shared the workload by being very hands-on. She did most of the book buying herself and spent time on the front desk to keep in touch with the users. Mrs Horn was well-respected among members of the library profession.”

Mrs Horn sometimes had to do battle with Enrico Taglietti, the library's architect, who had already won an award for the Dixon Library in Canberra. Taglietti was a leading proponent of the 'Brutalist school' of architecture. Mrs Horn recalled:

“when we objected to his lighting plan and insisted that there be good lights over the reading tables, Taglietti snorted and said, ‘You librarians, you're all the same – obsessed with the printed word!’”

The St Kilda Library is the only Australian library to have its photograph in the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

The new library was immensely popular but keenly administered. Librarians didn't wear uniforms but were expected to turn up in the **St Kilda colours of red, black and white.**

If users had overdue books, they could expect a visit from council by-laws officers. Staff maintained a file of blacklisted users with very overdue books.

“Everyone would agree that Mrs Horn was pretty strict. She sometimes checked the rubbish bins at night to make sure staff weren’t wasting paper. Librarians weren’t allowed to chatter in the workroom. I think she’d fought so hard for public resources that she didn’t want to see them squandered,” Ms Pellizzer said.

Mrs Horn said earlier this year that the library was **the biggest** toy the local kids ever had.

“Local kids broke everything that could be broken. We used to call them “the St Kilda Product Testing Association”(!). They even stole the red public phone from the foyer! But when they needed help with school work or, in fact, any help at all, they came to the library.”

Mrs Horn’s passion for cataloguing apparently extended to home where she reputedly catalogued her freezer in triplicate – but apparently her husband didn’t always follow it!

When Mrs Horn retired in 1987, she was **the only woman to head a department of the St Kilda Council**. She was a founding member of both the **St Kilda Festival Committee** and the **Garden Festival Committee**. She was an executive officer of the committee on **history projects** and liaised with Anne Longmuir, the author of volume 3 of St Kilda’s history, *St Kilda: The Show Goes On*. Mrs Horn was also behind the **memorial plaques** placed around St Kilda.

Mrs Horn’s retirement present was a (fake!) gold-plated library card. She was later appointed a life member of the library service. She remained an active member in the **St Kilda Historical Society** to her death.

Her **first job** was with the South Brisbane Municipal Library from 1943 to 1948. She then worked for the **State Library of Queensland** to 1952 where she studied privately to qualify as a librarian because the Queensland Public Service did not employ married women. She subsequently worked in **Lismore**, in **London** at the National Central Library and then became the children’s librarian at the **Holburn** Library.

When Mrs Horn returned to Australia, she became the **City Librarian** at Footscray from 1958 to 1960, then of **Mordialloc** in 1960. She was the first lecturer in children’s literature at **RMIT** and the library representative on the Municipal Officers’ Association **State equal pay** campaign. She also held the position of Secretary of the **Victorian Library Week Committee**.

Photos courtesy of CoPP: Vida & guests at St Kilda Library 20 & 30 Year Anniversaries



The President writes:

Vida Horn, the St Kilda Historical Society committee member, librarian, and Minutes Secretary, played a vital role in the founding and fostering of the Society from its earliest days. As the **founding librarian** of St Kilda Library she arranged for our Society to have the use of the Collection Room. Vida also wrote and presented a history of the Society on our 30th Anniversary.

Vida represented the best virtues of a Society member. She was loyal, warm and dignified with unshakeable integrity and principles. Vida treated everyone from all walks of life with equal and great respect. She had very strong intellectual interests and was the editor of many books including our about to be published *‘Spirit of St Kilda’*. Vida was a key member of the Garden Club and initiated the annual planting of trees in the Botanical Gardens in honour of significant people of the world.

The Society will dedicate our next book ‘Hotels of St Kilda and South Melbourne’ to Vida, to be published in the New Year. Vida conceived this project, successfully pushed for it’s funding and participated on the steering committee. We hope to focus not just on her loss, but also on her achievements and most of all her personal example as a strong advocate of local heritage.

The Society expresses sincere condolences to Vida’s family.

ANNUAL REPORT JUNE 2003 -- AUGUST 2003
ST KILDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
PRESENTED TO AGM 10 AUGUST 2003

Committee of Management: Your committee has held regular planning meetings (open to all members) on the first and third Monday of the month. A *special tribute to Gillian Upton who retires from the Committee of Management after five years of outstanding service.*

Society in Cyberspace: Our website, managed by our Webmaster John Hulskamp (www.vicnet.net.au/~hsosk) is being expanded to include an Internet library with approximately 20 articles on a wide range of subjects. An additional web site www.skhs.org.au has been created to hold our published books, i.e. the St Kilda Historical Series One to Five.

Volunteers. We recruited many new volunteers this year although there was considerable turnover. Our *Voluntary History Recorders* have been typing valuable articles on St Kilda for publication on the web site. Other volunteers are working uploading material to the web. In addition many volunteers were recruited to the *Collection Team* by articles in DiverCity, local papers and the Council's volunteer register. They have done a fantastic job under difficult conditions. A special thanks to **Toula Elefsiniotis**.

Newsletter. Our new editor **Melinda Haldon** has tackled the six newsletters per year with great passion, skill and enthusiasm. **Sheila Harris** distributes our newsletter with amazing efficiency.

The Collection has seen enormous progress this year but much remains to be done. Many thanks are due to **Ruth McLean** and **Heather McCrae** of CoPP who delivered four workshops in 2002 for members. A **Collection Policy and a Procedures Manual** was completed. A **Collection Volunteer Team** was recruited. Numerous articles were listed for deaccession. A working bee in February cleaned the dungeon. Costume items were used in the CoPP Margins, Memories and Markers launch. John Hulskamp submitted funding applications for computer equipment to Arts Victoria. Unfortunately we were unsuccessful. We try again! **Pearl Donald** liaised with the 14th Battalion to arrange access to the their historic banner.

The Sunday Public Events Program: Another successful year of monthly public Sunday presentations with a twelve month program of wonderful guest speakers including Sir Zelman Cowen, Beth Gott and Arnold Zable. All events were advertised in the Leader, EHST and The Age. **Melanie Eagle** has been a prime mover in many keynote events. Many thanks to **Carmel Shute**.

Society's Records: Outstanding work remains to be completed on subject files, correspondence, newsletters, and filing in the Records Room and Office. We have recruited a current volunteer to assist with filing of records but lack of permanent premises is a major obstacle.

Heritage Inquiries: Our excellent Heritage Officer, **Peter Johnson**, capably responded to many of the 40-50 requests we receive annually. The media successfully picked up lobbying of CoPP to create a Heritage Tree Register. We await the Council's formal response.

Heritage Walks: Two heritage walks were conducted in late 2002 with assistance of **Don Taggart**, **Gillian Upton**, **Meyer Eidelson** and **Peter Carwardine** of the Australia Railway Historical Society including the *St Kilda Windsor Railway Loop 1859* and *Saints and Sinners on St Kilda Hill*. A further free program of twelve walks sponsored by the Council and coordinated by the President was extensively advertised this year. Congratulations **Pauline Thompson**, **Sheila Harris**, **Max Nicholson** and **Don Taggart** for contribution to the Elwood Heritage MMM Trail.

Community Representation was provided by the Society at numerous events. A memorial wreath was provided by SKHS to the Albert Jacka commemoration on Australia Day.

Exhibitions: Four exhibitions were displayed in the glass exhibition spaces in the St Kilda Library foyer. Themes included Melbourne's Trams, St Kilda Crest, Point Ormond and 'Granny'.

Finance. Our financial health was well maintained by Treasurer **John Hulskamp** this year despite hefty insurance increases resulting in a membership fee rise. John's outstanding contribution also includes being Webmaster, membership database, grant preparation and public officer.

Grants: Funded projects on the St Kilda Historical Series continued. *Places of Worship* was launched 10 August 2003. *Significant Buildings* is now undergoing editing. The *Hotels of St Kilda and South Melbourne* manuscript is almost complete. *The Children's History Project* is slower than we would have liked but is substantially advanced. 'Cinemas of St Kilda' donated by SKHS member **Peter Fogarty** will be web published this year by volunteer Diane Boyle. The Steering Committee including **Vida Horn**, **Gillian Upton**, **Melanie Eagle**, **Pearl Donald**, **Peter Johnson**, **Tom Ingram** and **Meyer Eidelson** did a great job driving these projects, which absorb many hours.

St Kilda Heritage Day: SKHS organised the first ever such event with the help of the Palais, Screensound, the CoPP and Friends of St Kilda Cemetery. It was successful with 400 attendances at the four events including a reunion of the Glen Huntley descendants at Point Ormond. Many thanks to our passionate member **Caroline Harper**, who is also the manager of the Palais.

Premises: The Society continues to negotiate with the CoPP for permanent premises. After two years of regular discussion, the Council and the Library maintain that the matter is still 'under consideration'. This issue remains a source of great frustration to all our members.

CoPP Urban History Advisory Committee (UHAC): In 2001 and 2002 SKHS lobbied strongly for the creation of a municipal-wide advisory committee. The City has now implemented it and **Gillian Upton** ably serves on the committee on our behalf.

Southern District Historical Association: SKHS initiated the convening of this Association in July 2002 after learning that it had lapsed for 2 years. Meetings successfully continued in 2003 bringing a valuable sharing of ideas and activities from a dozen local societies

Welfare Officer: Joan Charlton has continued her able and invaluable contribution as the Society's welfare officer. Many thanks also to **Irene Johnson** who shares catering with Joan.

Annual Bookings System. The Society successfully negotiated the use of the library community room a year ahead for all general meetings, planning meetings as well as exhibition spaces. This has greatly eased the burden of administration and is, we are told, a permanent arrangement. **Meyer Eidelson, President**



St Kilda Historical Society Free Public Events 2004

PO Box 177 Balaclava 3183 Info: **9690 9584; 9850 5734**
www.vicnet.net.au/~hsosk; www.skhs.org.au

General Meetings at 2.30 pm. Speakers start at 3.00 pm approximately.

DEC 14
Sunday @ 2.30 p.m.
Venue - West St Kilda RSL, 23 Loch Street, West St Kilda.

JANUARY
FEB 15*
Sunday @ 2.30 p.m

MARCH* 14*
Sunday @ 2.30 p.m

APRIL 18
Sunday @ 2.30 p.m.
Venue to be determined

THE REST OF 2004 SUNDAYS@ 2.30PM

* = Meet at the St Kilda Library Community Room.

FREE unless otherwise stated. Afternoon tea available. Agenda is subject to change – note advertisements in local papers. ALL WELCOME.

FINAL YEAR EVENT 2003

*Octogenarian **Helen Jacoby**, whose grandfather was three times Mayor of St Kilda, shares her history of St Kilda with us over a free barbecue and drinks in the garden of a 19th Century mansion. Members are also asked to bring a plate. Friends and family are all welcome to attend.*

NO MEETING

WOMAN MAYORS IN PORT PHILLIP*

*For over 130 years there was not a single female Mayor or councillor in the three municipalities which now constitute the City of Port Phillip. Since 1973 there have been five women Mayors including the incumbent Liz Johnston. We invite the five including **Elaine Miller, Liana Thompson, Melanie Eagle and Christine Haag** to share highlights of their terms. **DON'T MISS THIS!***

THE ST KILDA DREAMING*

Meyer Eidelson, author of 'The Melbourne Dreaming' by AAV discusses the records of indigenous history of St Kilda collected by European society since settlement.. Maps of indigenous sites of Port Phillip will be distributed. Tools will be exhibited. Stone tool manufacture will be demonstrated.

THE SCREENING OF ST KILDA

*St Kilda has an amazing and largely undiscovered history of **early Australian cinemas** from the early bioscopes to the outdoor shows in Alfred Square. Our new web book 'The Screening of St Kilda. A History of St Kilda Cinemas' by Peter Fogarty will be launched.*

9 May, 13 June, 11 July, 8 August, 12 September, 10 October, 14 November & 12 December.

