

St Kilda Historical Society

ABN: 25 188 646 275

Patron: Sir Zelman Cowen



Newsletter No. 180: Aug–Sept 2006

Website: www.vicnet.net.au/~hsosk

Publications: www.skhs.org.au Orders (books): Phone: John 03 9596 2782

Inquiries, Correspondence & Book Orders: info@skhs.org.au

Mail: P.O. Box 177 Balaclava, 3183

President: meyereidelson@yahoo.com Ph: 9690 9584, 0408 894 724

Vice President & Heritage Officer: prj@bigpond.net.au

Secretary: lobertdp@optusnet.com.au Treasurer: john@hulskamp.com.au

Archives: mark@bssound.com.au Newsletter: fbader@bigpond.net.au

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Membership renewals are now due and I hope you will continue to support the Society in its active advocacy for heritage in the City of Port Phillip by renewing your valued membership once again. Our AGM on 10 September is also an opportunity to renew memberships, vote for the new committee or volunteer your services. There has also been a suggestion for creating family memberships which would enable children and couples to share a joint membership.

Recently Dorothy Lobert has joined us as acting Secretary and has really 'booted-up' our morale with her excellent work in the office, collection database and minute taking.

Don't miss our historic book launch on 13 August 2006 (we apologise for the previous date in error). Not just the *History of Elwood* but also *Voices from Elwood* which include oral histories of our very own Pauline Thompson and Don Taggart. (See pp3,6, for more details.)

In October we shift venues to the beautiful Elwood Angling Club to co-meet with this valuable community group to help them launch their two new publications, hopefully by the Deputy Premier. This brings together two great St Kilda community organisations to share a meal and the view across the glorious bay. (Turn to pp3,6, for more details.) The club is the oldest club on the foreshore and has a treasured collection of historic items. Three of the Elwood elders in our new book *Voices* are long-time members of this club. I and my son Joe are also members and it's glorious to be off Elwood beach when the flathead are biting!

SKHS will share a stall with the Port Melbourne Historical Society at the 'Family and Local History Fair' at Dallas Brooks Hall on Saturday 19 August 2006. Hope to see you there!

Meyer

Vale Phyllis Darroch

contributed by Sheila Harris

Members will be saddened to hear that Phyllis Darroch passed away on 05 July 2006. Her many friends, colleagues and neighbours filled the Uniting Church in Chapel Street for her funeral which took place on 11 July.

I first got to know Phyllis at the Elwood Gardening Club, then the St Kilda Historical Society and Port Phillip U3A. She loved writing and was known for her delightful short stories which were published in two books. Cycling was another passion of hers. She is greatly missed.

Sympathy

On behalf of its members, the committee of the St Kilda Historical Society extends condolences to Phyllis Darroch's family and friends on the passing of a remarkable local personality. Those of us who knew Phyllis will always remember her with affection and admiration.

SKHS Elwood Exhibition

Exhibitions Coordinator, Carol Stals is currently preparing an exhibition to complement the launch of Meyer's new *History of Elwood*, *Flood, Fire and Fever* and SKHS oral history project, *Voices of Elwood*.

Newsletter

'St Kilda Times' or 'St Kilda Tymes' have recently been proposed as banner/title for our newsletter. Should members have other suggestions, do contact the President or Secretary before the AGM on 10th September.

SKHS thanks the office of the Hon. Michael Danby for photocopying this issue of the newsletter.

National Trust 'Stars'

Mary Bonser, Filming Coordinator, National Trust Victoria, was our public speaker at the June SKHS meeting, held in the former Wesleyan, now Uniting Church on the corner of Chapel & Carlisle Sts. (The church was designed in 1876 by architects Crouch & Wilson and its two-manual organ of nine stops, built by Fincham and Hobday in 1891, is classified by the National Trust as being of local significance. Source: Bomford, J, *Spirit of St Kilda*, Pub. SKHS, 2003.)

In her introduction, Mary pointed out Trust properties which have 'starred' as backdrops to various television shows, fashion shoots, commercials and films, e.g. *Glenfern*, *Labassa* and *Ripponlea*). One just had to be at the meeting to hear Mary recounting some of the amusing and amazing scenes and off-screen dramas she has encountered or observed at *Ripponlea*, e.g. 'Kath & Kim', 'Huey's Cooking Show' and 'Rove Productions' as well as commercials which variously required two elephants on the lawn, dogs and meaty bites, ice cream and suitable weather.

(The National Trust is keen to welcome new members and volunteers. It offers events and activities, historic properties to visit, membership functions and updates on heritage issues. (Visit www.nattrust.com.au.)

Year of La Trobe

The National Trust of Australia (Victoria) has declared 2006 the Year of La Trobe (*he officially named St Kilda*). Events planned by the Trust for the rest of the year include talks, walks, a garden party and an exhibition of La Trobe's watercolours, starting at La Trobe University Gallery and visiting several rural galleries.

La Trobe Watercolours Tour

Melbourne and regional Victoria

Monday 24 July – Friday 25 August

La Trobe University Art Museum, Glenn College, La Trobe University, Bundoora. *Free Entry*.

Monday 4 September – Sunday 22 October

Swan Hill Regional Art Gallery. *Entry by donation*.

Monday 27 November – Sunday 14 January

La Trobe Regional Gallery in Morwell. *Free Entry*.

La Trobe Walks

Wed 23 August 10am and Sun 27 August 1pm

Visit some of the City sites with links to our first Lieutenant-Governor. Each walk is approximately two hours and includes Morning or Afternoon Tea and admission to City Museum. Adults \$33 Concession/Trust Members \$27.50.
Enq. 9656 9841

'No Shops in Acland Street'

At the SKHS meeting, Sunday 09 July 2006, Australian entertainer, **Hélène Jacoby Swieca** who was born in Acland Street some ninety five years ago and grew up in St Kilda, recalled her long life and show-biz career — which was recently published by Prahran Mechanics' Institute Press and titled, *No Shops in Acland Street: the Autobiography of an Entertaining Lady*.

Hélène not only revealed (insider) stories about her career and adventures in theatre, radio, television and the fashion industries, she also took us back to a time when there really were 'no shops in Acland Street'.

No Shops in Acland Street was transcribed, compiled and edited from taped interviews by Helene's second cousin, Cecily Parris who recounted how she became involved in writing the book, which was launched earlier this year by arts historian, Frank Van Stratten.

Hélène has close family ties with St Kilda and some of its historical landmarks. For instance, her paternal grandfather, Sigismund Jacoby was a lessee of the 'Esplanade' hotel. He was also Councillor of West Ward from 1888-1907 and 1912-1915. Sigismund served as Mayor of St Kilda with his wife, Hannah nee Horwitz as Mayoress from 1892-1894 and 1908-1909. In addition, he donated the 'Sigismund Jacoby Memorial Playground for Children' now called 'Jacoby Place Reserve' to the people of St Kilda.



Frank van Stratten wrote in the foreword ...

... she was there when movies learned to talk, when radio was at its best, and when television started its flickering progress. And Hélène knew everybody, socially and professionally. Her extraordinarily far-reaching memory is a unique treasure house of people and places.'

SKHS members wishing to purchase *No Shops in Acland Street* by mail order may do so at a discounted price of \$25.00 plus \$3 postage. Send your cheque or money order for \$28.00 (made payable to C Parris) to Cecily Parris, c/- Post Office, Lake Conjola, NSW 2539.

Book Launches

Stories from the Elwood Angling Club and the *Catalogue of the Elwood Angling Club Museum*

The monthly SKHS meeting on **Sunday 08 October** will be held at the Elwood Angling Club to celebrate the launch of the above two publications. These have been produced by the Elwood Angling Club, which is one of the oldest angling clubs in Port Phillip Bay.

Stories from the Elwood Angling Club is a collection of articles from current and former members who share their secrets of successful angling in Port Phillip Bay and elsewhere.

The Catalogue of the Elwood Angling Club Museum is an inventory of the club's unique collection of historic artefacts which includes fishing equipment, boats, photos, memorabilia and books. These have now been catalogued into a single resource and a much-needed reference for the wider community.

A tour of the Collection will take place after the launch and refreshments will be provided.

RSVP 9531 3104 for catering purposes.

Jacka VC: Australian Hero

All St Kilda Historical Society members are warmly invited to attend the launch of *Jacka VC: Australian Hero* by Robert Macklin at 3pm Sunday, **September 24** at St Kilda Town Hall, council chamber reception area.

Jacka was the first Australian to win a VC during World War 1 and became mayor of the former City of St Kilda during the depression. His death on January 17, 1932 is marked each year by a ceremony at St Kilda General Cemetery.

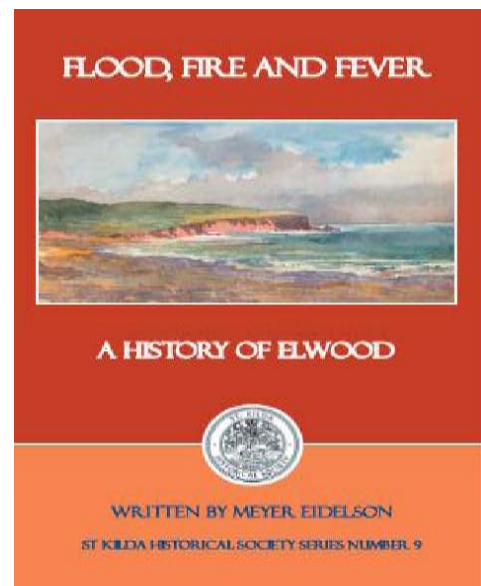
Port Phillip mayor, Janet Bolitho, will launch the book which will be followed by a talk by the author, Robert Macklin, a journalist for *The Diplomat*, who has co-authored three books with Peter Thompson: *The Man Who Died Twice*, *The Battle of Brisbane* and *Kill the Tiger*. He has also scripted a series of eight TV documentaries and is the author of *Fire in the Blood*, the epic tale of Frank Gardiner and Australia's other bushrangers.

Stay on for afternoon tea and a look at an historical display about Jacka. The book will be on sale.

RSVP to Anita Gilman by 20 September. on 9209 6431 or agilham@portphillip.vic.gov.au

FLOOD, FIRE AND FEVER: A HISTORY OF ELWOOD

The monthly SKHS meeting on **Sunday, 13 August** will be held at the Elwood RSL, Pine Ave & Ormond Esplanade where two new books will be launched. Meyer's new book, *Flood, Fire and Fever*, which was supported by the Elwood Community Bank, and the evocative short book, *Voices of Elwood* supported by the City of Port Phillip. *Voices* contains summaries of the oral histories by seven significant residents of Elwood. It also includes a guide for families and community members on how to undertake and record oral and written histories. (Cost of *Voices of Elwood* is \$5.00.)



'Has human life no quality at Elwood?'

In 1877 this was the heartfelt appeal from the residents of "the comical autonomous dreaming kingdom of Elwood".

Flood, Fire and Fever is an indispensable guide for all those who have fallen in love with, lived in, or just visited this delightful suburb on the crescent of Port Phillip Bay.'

After 13 August, *Flood, Fire and Fever* may be purchased for \$20 from the front desk of St Kilda Library. It will also be available at local bookshops or by mail order (please add \$3.00 for postage and handling)

Mail Order: *Flood Fire and Fever*

Name _____

Postal Address - _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Price \$20 plus \$3 p/h Quantity _____ Total \$ _____

Make cheque or money order payable to SKHS and send to

Book Orders, PO Box 177, Balaclava, VIC 3183

Further Inquiries: Meyer 0408 894 724; a/h 9690 9584

More Dates with Local History

Changing Seasons

at City of Port Phillip Libraries

Port Phillip Library Service presents the 'Ke Foundation', a seven piece *a capella* group delivering a spellbinding cycle of free concerts celebrating the voice and the changing seasons across Port Phillip. Light refreshments after each show. **Inquiries: Linda, 9209 6655.**

Spring

Tuesday 05 September, 6.30-7.30 pm
Port Melbourne Library.

Summer

Wednesday 13 December, 6.30-7.30pm,
Albert Park Library.



FRIENDS OF ST KILDA CEMETERY

Unless otherwise indicated, all tours of St Kilda Cemetery will leave from the main entrance gates in Dandenong Road, St Kilda East (Melways P58.G8). Tour cost: \$10.00 for adults (except where indicated). Members of the Friends of St Kilda Cemetery and children (under 18 years) are free. Pre-booking is not required except as otherwise stated.

Inquiries: 9531 6832.

MURDER MOST FOUL AND OTHER TRAGIC TALES

Sunday 17 September 2006 at 2.00 PM

Hear stories of murder, mayhem and other tragic tales on this walk through St Kilda Cemetery.

KEILOR CEMETERY TOUR

Sunday 1 October 2006 at 2.00 PM

Keilor Cemetery celebrates its 150th anniversary in 2006. Keilor Cemetery is located on the corner of Cemetery Road & Ely Court Keilor East (Melways 15 C9). Tour cost is \$7.00.

(NB No members discount for this tour).

Numbers are strictly limited and pre-booking is required by ringing 9531 6832.

STEEPLECHASES, STALLIONS AND STEEDS

Sunday 5 November 2006 at 2.00 PM

Spring is racing time in Melbourne. This tour will visit graves with an equestrian theme. Hear stories of steeplechases, stallions and steeds as well as the tragic accounts of the deaths of a number of 19th century jockeys.

Walk and Talk

City of Port Phillip Program

July to December 2006

Walks are free but bookings are essential.

Phone Kristy 9209 6229 and you will be advised of meeting points.

Park to Park

Saturday, 26 August, 3.00 -5.00pm

Leader: Meyer Eidelson

Walk from Albert Park to Middle Park shopping centres exploring the heritage buildings and suburban lanes once traversed by dunnymen, garbos, coal carts, icemen, bottle-os, milkmen and grocers.

Squizzy

Sunday 24 September, 6.00pm to 8.00pm

Leader: Meyer Eidelson

Travel the lanes and byways of gangster St Kilda whose streets have been the stage for notorious criminals such as Squizzy Taylor, Rhedda Lewis, Dulcie Markham and others.

St Kilda Rock and Roll

Wednesday 4 October 7.30pm-9.30pm

Take a walk through the musical past of St Kilda where pop music, heavy metal punk and contemporary music in Australia had their early beginnings.

A South Melbourne Odyssey

Sunday 22 October 2.00pm

Leader: Kay Rowan

Join Port Phillips own Local History Librarian Kay Rowan as she delves into the history of the area.

A walk on the wild side

Tuesday 14 November 7.30pm

Leader: Neil Blake

Wander along West Beach looking at all the plants and critters that live there. The walk will include a visit to St Kilda Pier and if you are very lucky you may see a penguin or two. Please note: seeing the penguins requires sitting still and being quiet for up to an hour, so please dress appropriately.

Discover the Docks at Night

Tuesday 12 December 7.30pm.

Leader: Janet Bolitho

Travel from *Perce White* Reserve towards the mouth of the *Yarra* and discover the eerie lightscapes, biology, history and environmental issues of the changing *Webb Dock* area.

Harry George Hawker: Australian Aviator

K Barclay

Harry George Hawker (1889-1921), expert pilot, engineer and for a brief period, a St Kilda resident was, perhaps the most famous Australian aviator of his time. Born in a small rented cottage in Wickham Road, Moorabbin, on 22 January 1889, the Hawker family moved to 31 Gourlay Street, St Kilda in 1899/1900. In 1908, together with his brother, Herbert, he became a member of the St Kilda Brass Band.

Harry commenced work at the age of twelve with Hall & Warden, a firm of motor and bicycle agents. Over the next few years he gained experience with different motor firms, including Tarrant Motor Company (which produced the first successful petrol-driven car in Australia in 1901), emerging as a very skilful mechanic.

Airborne

As his interest turned towards aviation, then in its infancy in Australia; he set off for England (1911) where he hoped to learn more about the industry. In June 1912 he obtained a position with the Sopwith Aviation Company.

He quickly learned to fly and was awarded the Royal Aero Club Aviator's certificate and presented with licence No. 297 on 17th September 1912. Just over a month later, with less than 20 hours flying time to his credit, he took to the air in a Sopwith 'Farman', establishing a British endurance record by remaining airborne for eight hours 23 minutes. He also set a world record for a seaplane in August 1913, covering 1,043 miles in an actual flying time of 21 hours, 44 minutes. Towards the end of 1913, Hawker helped design and test the Sopwith 'Tabloid' biplane, a small plane which was capable of reaching a height of 1,200 feet in one minute and had a top speed of 92 miles per hour.

St Kilda Reception

He visited Australia with the 'Tabloid' in early 1914 and was given a civic welcome at the St. Kilda Town Hall. His two-seater 'Tabloid' plane was kept in a garage at the corner of Glenhuntly Road and Nepean Highway Elsternwick and his first flight was from a paddock in New Street (Brighton) which together with Elsternwick Golf Course became his sites for take off and landing. A number of flights were made over Melbourne including an exhibition flight over Caulfield Racecourse where so many people turned up to see him, he found it difficult to take-off.

In mid 1914 Hawker returned to England and with the outbreak of World War I on the 4th August 1914, he registered for active service. The British Government, however, felt he was far more valuable to the nation as

a test pilot, and so, with two other test pilots employed by the Sopwith Aviation Co., he began testing 'Tabloids', 'Pups', triplanes and 'Camels' for use in WWI.



Harry Hawker postage stamp

courtesy of Australia Post.

The stamp was part of a set of four issued, 19th April 1978

All in all, he tested over 290 machines and made many expert suggestions for improvements. Undoubtedly the designs of the Sopwith 'Pup' and 'Camel' owe much to Hawker's engineering brilliance.

Before WWI ended, Harry George Hawker was made a member of the Order of the British Empire.

In March 1919, Hawker, together with a companion, set off from Newfoundland in an attempt to fly the Atlantic. Engine trouble forced them to land on the sea after completing about 1,400 miles, nearly two thirds of their journey. They were picked up by a steamer which did not have a radio. In the meantime they had been given up as lost and their obituaries had already been published.

Air Force Cross

The news of their rescue was greeted with great enthusiasm and upon their arrival in London, Hawker was carried through the streets by men from the Australian Imperial Forces. King George V congratulated them both in person, awarding each the Air Force Cross, which until that time had been exclusively a service decoration.

Hawker returned to his test flying. He also began motor racing and in late 1920 formed the H.G. Hawker Engineering Company (a forerunner of the Hawker-Siddeley Aviation Co). Once again Hawker showed his designing ability and produced the first 1500cc car to reach 100 miles per hour.

While making a practice flight, in a Nieuport 'Goshawk' for a forthcoming Aerial Derby, Harry Hawker was killed on 12th July 1921. King George V wrote: 'The nation has lost one of its most distinguished airmen, who by his skill and daring has contributed so much to British aviation'.



ST KILDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Free Public Events 2006

Members' Meeting:
2.30 pm
Public Speaker:
3pm (approx.)

Unless otherwise stated, public talks are held on the 2nd Sunday of each month, 3pm in the Community Room, St Kilda branch library, 150 Carlisle Street, St Kilda, 3183. RSVP not necessary. Publications for sale. Afternoon tea provided. Public welcome. Admittance free.

SUNDAY
13 AUGUST 2006

meet 2.30pm at
the Elwood RSL
Cnr Pine Avenue and
Ormond Esplanade
Elwood

LAUNCH OF HISTORY OF ELWOOD

History of Elwood and Voices of Elwood

SKHS members meet at the Elwood RSL to celebrate the launch of Meyer's new book, *Flood, Fire and Fever, a History of Elwood* sponsored by the Elwood Community Bank as well as *Voices of Elwood*, a SKHS oral history project supported by the City of Port Phillip which features seven Elwood Elders. Refreshments will be served.

There will be no meeting at the Community Room, St Kilda Library

SUNDAY 10 SEPT 2006

2.30pm sharp:
Community Room
St Kilda Library

AGM 2005-2006 plus ROCK & ROLL ST KILDA

After the AGM at 3.00 pm **Brian De Courcey** explores how St Kilda venues and performers played an essential role in the development of popular music in Australia.

Also the new CD, *Sounds of St Kilda*

SUNDAY 08 OCT 2006

meet 2.30pm at the Elwood
Angling Club, next to
Elwood Beach car park,
off Ormond Esplanade
(situated on beach side of
Elwood Beach House café
and Elwood Beach
Community centre).
Melways P67.B4

JOINT MEETING WITH ELWOOD ANGLING CLUB

Launch of *Stories from the Elwood Angling Club*
and the *Catalogue of the Elwood Angling Club Museum*

Today, SKHS shifts location for a joint meeting with the historic Elwood Angling Club to help launch their two new publications: *Stories from the Elwood Angling Club* and the *Catalogue of the Elwood Angling Club Museum*. Refreshments will be provided in their beautiful clubhouse. (RSVP 9531 3104 for catering purposes.)

There will be no meeting at the Community Room, St Kilda Library

SUNDAY 12 NOV 2006

2.30pm: meet at
Community Room,
St Kilda Library

DUNGEONS AND DATABASES: ANNUAL OPEN DAY

Today the SKHS collection will be open to the community. Come and see our collection of artefacts, catch up with the work done by members in the past year and see the completed computer data-base up and running.

SUNDAY 10 DEC 2006
1.30-4.30pm

Elwood Beach Community
Centre with a children's
playground: Entrance: 63A
Ormond Esplanade. (Beach
House café attached to
Elwood Beach Community
Centre) Melways P67: B4.

SKHS END-OF-YEAR HERITAGE EVENT

Lady of St Kilda Picnic

Meet at the Elwood Community Centre. All-agers welcome to evoke the original picnic when St Kilda was 'officially' named by Superintendent Charles La Trobe as well as the first auction of St Kilda lands, held 07 December 1842.

Performers, prizes, fantasy auction, children's games and more. Watch this space. Invite your family, friends and friends of friends along. All welcome.

There will be no meeting at the Community Room, St Kilda Library

PS: *The St Kilda Heritage Quiz has been held over till next issue.*