

# CAMBERWELL HISTORY

RECORDING THE HISTORY OF CAMBERWELL  
AND DISTRICT  
Camberwell Historical Society



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Principal Patron: Professor Emeritus Geoffrey Blainey, AC  
Patron: His Worship the Mayor of Boroondara, Cr Garry Thompson

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**George Fernando**

Our meetings for 2021 commenced with a meeting on 23 February at 7pm via zoom. Warren Doubleday spoke about the history of Melbourne's tramways. Our March and April meetings are also planned to be on zoom. Our member Carole Woods will be talking about Vera Deakin on 23 March 2021 and Ross McMullin will speak on 27 April 2021 on WWI. Our member Christina Branagan is looking at Boroondara's GAP study and is examining whether buildings are sufficiently protected by their gradings. Her article below is about one such building.

### **34 PROSPECT HILL ROAD (formerly called WARATAH): A TOWERED MANSION IN CAMBERWELL. Seeking greater protection and recognition of significance for the house.**

**Christina Branagan**

Boroondara Heritage Group for Advocacy and Protection. (BHGAP)

**Right:** 34 Prospect Hill Road. Currently graded as "Contributory" to the HO159.

Early last year Nerida Muirden and I, residents of the Prospect Hill Heritage Precinct (HO159) in Camberwell approached the owner of 34 Prospect Hill Road to see if they would support making a community heritage nomination to Boroondara council to review the heritage value of the house and to re grade it from "Contributory" to "Significant" to the Prospect Hill Heritage Precinct.

We had been researching the history and heritage architecture in this highly significant Camberwell heritage precinct and since it had not been reviewed by council's heritage consultants since



the 1990s, they were of the view that there was a small group of heritage houses that if reviewed today would probably be given a greater level of heritage protection. They had formed a group named the Friends of Prospect Hill Precinct in 2019, which nominated another towered Victorian Mansion at 61 Prospect Hill Road for protection. This house was subsequently given a Contributory grading by the City of Boroondara.

Since 34 Prospect Hill Road seemed to be a landmark house in the precinct, had a great deal of architectural value, was in its original state and because towered Victorian houses are special, rare, intriguing places, they decided to research the house and its history to see if it might meet

the threshold for a Significant heritage grading.



**Left:** View showing impact on Waterloo Street from west side.

Significant grading would provide the house with greater formal recognition of its significance to the precinct and the streetscape, as well as provide greater protection. Sadly, some wonderful heritage places with a Contributory

grading in suburbs like Camberwell and Hawthorn seem to be coming under increasing threat of being substantially demolished, leaving only a part of the original building remaining. There is a trend of developers buying heritage properties as development opportunities.

A recent example is on the corner of Kasouka and Riversdale Roads. A Victorian towered house, intact since the 1880s has been completely gutted internally, parts of the heritage building demolished and a highly detracting, 2 storey medical practice has been attached to the old building. Another example is 23-25 Canterbury Road, a now Significant graded Mediterranean Inter War Year house designed by Christopher Cowper. The owners initially proposed demolishing and later after the house was protected after a community nomination, they then proposed partially demolishing it and attaching to it a 2-storey block of flats.

The heritage system in Victoria uses the heritage criteria below to assess a place for protection and a “Significant” graded house must meet a high threshold to rise above being a “Contributory” graded place. It must be Significant in its own right even if it were not in a heritage precinct.

#### **Criterion A**

*Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria’s cultural history.*

#### **Criterion B**

*Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria’s cultural history.*

**Criterion C**

*Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history.*

**Criterion D**

*Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects.*

**Criterion E**

*Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.*

**Criterion F**

*Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.*

**Criterion G**

*Strong or special association with a particular present-day community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.*

**Criterion H**

*Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.*

In June 2020, a submission was delivered to the City of Boroondara asking for 34 Prospect Hill Road to be graded Significant. The owner of the house, Mary Drost, supported the request.

“The towered Victorian house at 34 Prospect Hill Road (formerly known as Waratah), sits on the corner of Prospect Hill Road and Waterloo Street. It has a sizeable, mature garden and the original stable building for its horses. The house is a large, unusual and striking Victorian mansion built circa 1888 that sits near the top of the high hill on Prospect Hill Road. It is one of an important cluster of 8 mansions in this part of Prospect Hill Road and in the HO159 Prospect Hill Heritage precinct. A number of the mansions are graded Significant, and all appear in the Melbourne Mansions Database. 34 is one of the oldest houses on Prospect Hill Road and a very intact example of a Victorian Towered house. Towered houses and mansions being a notable, outstanding, and distinctive feature of Victorian architecture in Melbourne.”

(excerpt from the submission document)

The Prospect Hill Heritage Overlay Precinct is described by Boroondara Council in its heritage statement at the Heritage Council as:

“One of the most intact and homogenous estates of its type in Melbourne, rivalling...Malvern...Hawthorn...Kew...It is the **foremost precinct of late Victorian and federation building stock in the former Camberwell municipality.**”

We think that this house would today be considered a “Significant” house within the heritage precinct given: a high level of architectural design, some of the rarer elements of its design, its historical significance as a towered mansion and its landmark role and position overlooking three streets. It has unusual external features: the high tower with unusual features and decorations, striking stain glass windows and original tessellated floor tiles. Internal features include original marble fireplaces, an original internal wooden staircase providing access to the roof and into the upper storeys of the tower and two original small rooms inside the tower with a stairway linking them.

The house's significance is supported by the historical significance of some of its residents, in particular Mary Drost OAM, a Heritage and Community advocate, who has lived at the house for much of her life. While living in the house, she has influenced and impacted the streetscapes



of Camberwell and in particular the retained heritage nature of the important Prospect Hill Heritage Precinct. Another resident, Don S. McMahon, the brother of Mary Drost, was a surgeon and a member of the team of doctors and scientists who developed the cochlear implant in the 1970s.

**Below:** Front gate as seen from Prospect Hill Road

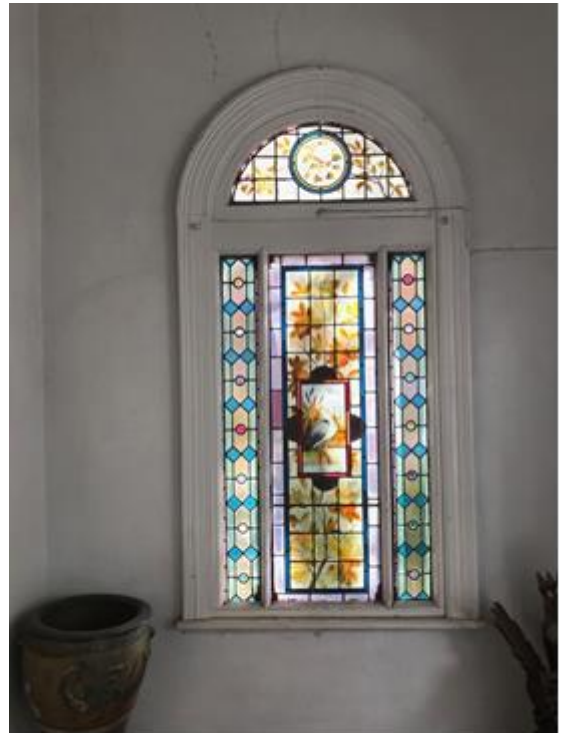


We have not been able to identify the architect, although there are several tender advertisements in the newspaper archives of the times that show that several of the prominent architects of the nineteenth century were building houses in the 1880s at that time along that section of Prospect Hill Road. There is no doubt that the house built was one of high quality and with good aesthetics and it would seem likely given its size and quality to have been designed by a notable architect of the time. The listing for the house in the Melbourne Mansion database states: “hip-roofed house, projecting wing, simple convex ver to balance and return, east side largely obscured but with an acanthus frieze suggestive of Law or Gall, plus 3 storey tower....”.

James Gall and Walter Scott Law were talented and prominent architects in Melbourne. James Gall designed many houses and buildings in Boroondara and lived locally on Burke Road.

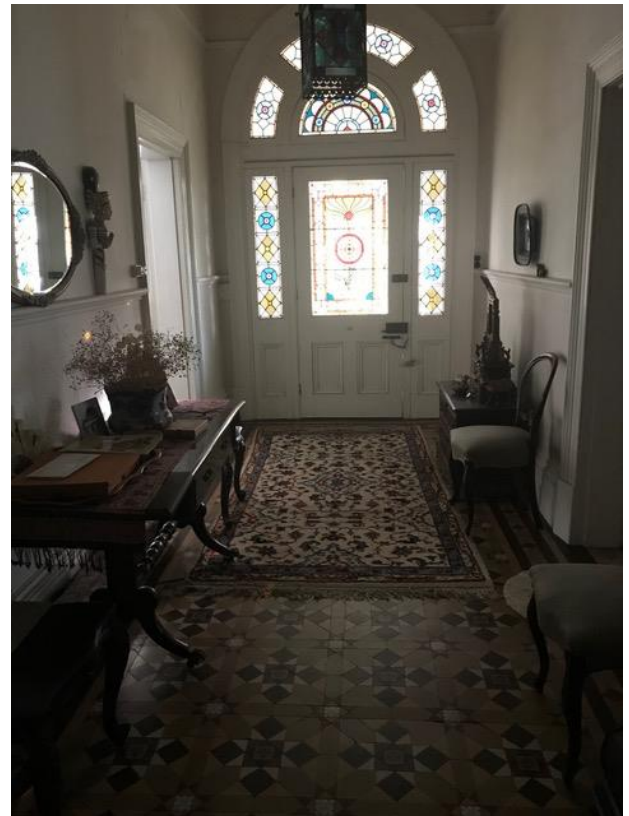
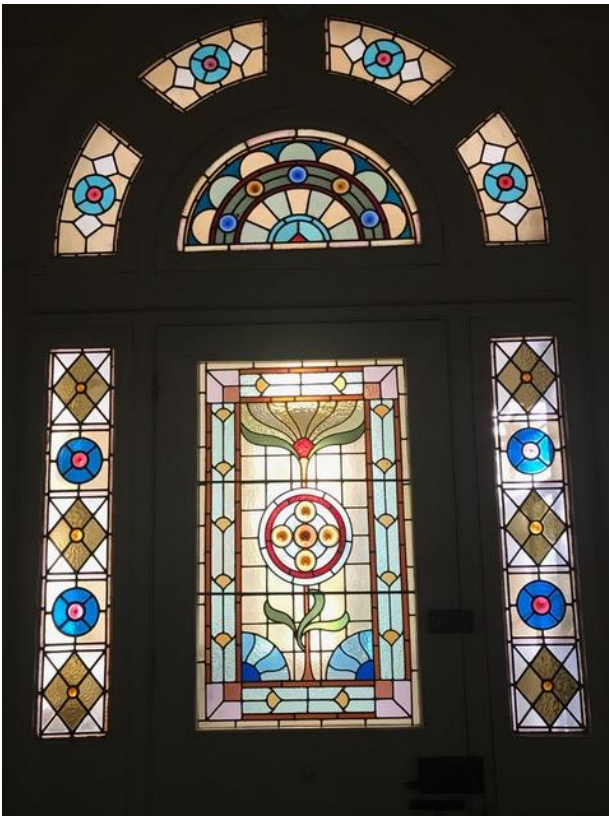
His notable buildings in the late 1880s and early 1890s include The Camberwell Town Hall and a number of state level heritage protected towered houses including Parlinton, 46 Parlinton St, Camberwell and Frognall, 54 Mont Albert Road, Canterbury. He also designed a mansion close by at 619 Riversdale Road. The tower at “Waratah” is reminiscent of the much larger, grander towers at both of these towered mansions. In addition, it is recorded in archives that James Gall owned and speculated on land and subdivision in close proximity to ‘Waratah’. For example, the probate documents after his death, describe him as owning land on Lorne Grove and Stanhope Grove. These streets are only a few metres away from ‘Waratah’. It would not be surprising if James Gall were the architect. Walter Scott Law another prominent architect whose buildings are recognised as significant in several parts of Melbourne designed ‘Ubberholme’ a protected mansion at 53 Prospect Hill Road, close to Waratah at 34.

Houses such as Waratah have social value to the local community. Its value is not only a material, or fabric one. It means something important to local people. “Social Value” (a contemporarily accepted Heritage protection Criterion) is a collective attachment to a place, or object that embodies meanings and values that are important to a community or cultural group.



Above: Victorian stained glass window on the ground floor of the tower.

Tower detail above: 3 storey tower with decorations, acanthus freeze and window columns



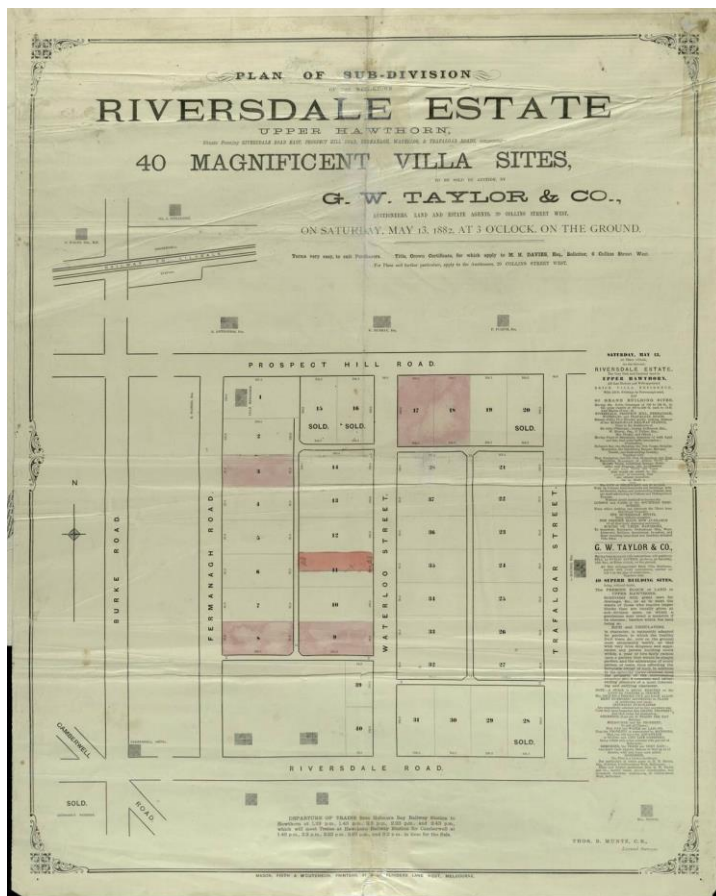
Large, impressive, Victorian stain glass window. Set in and surrounding the front door. Entrance hallway with original tessellated floor tiles



Professor Charles Sowerwine, Emeritus Professor: University of Melbourne and Chair: Royal Historical Society Victoria Heritage Committee, states in a recent article published by The Camberwell Historical Society:

“...for state heritage listing or for hearings for permits to alter or demolish registered buildings, the demonstrated attachment of citizens to an historic site is considered by the Heritage Council and by Heritage Victoria. A similar criterion should apply for local heritage, so that Councils and VCAT must take public opinion into account in deciding on applications involving heritage sites”.

Local people have walked, rode, or driven past Waratah for the past 130 years as they have travelled to the shops at Camberwell Junction, or to work, or to school, or as they take some exercise in their local area. It is a part of our local landscape and means something positive and valuable to local people.



### The Historical significance of Prospect Hill Road:

Prospect Hill Road is a highly important thematic and historical street in Boroondara. As you move eastwards along it over its length of a couple of kilometres, it represents an historical and physical timeline. It is a time capsule demonstrating the story of over 150 years of the development of the architecture of homes and of the social history of Camberwell. It is full of and has a great many intact examples of fine Melbourne architecture.

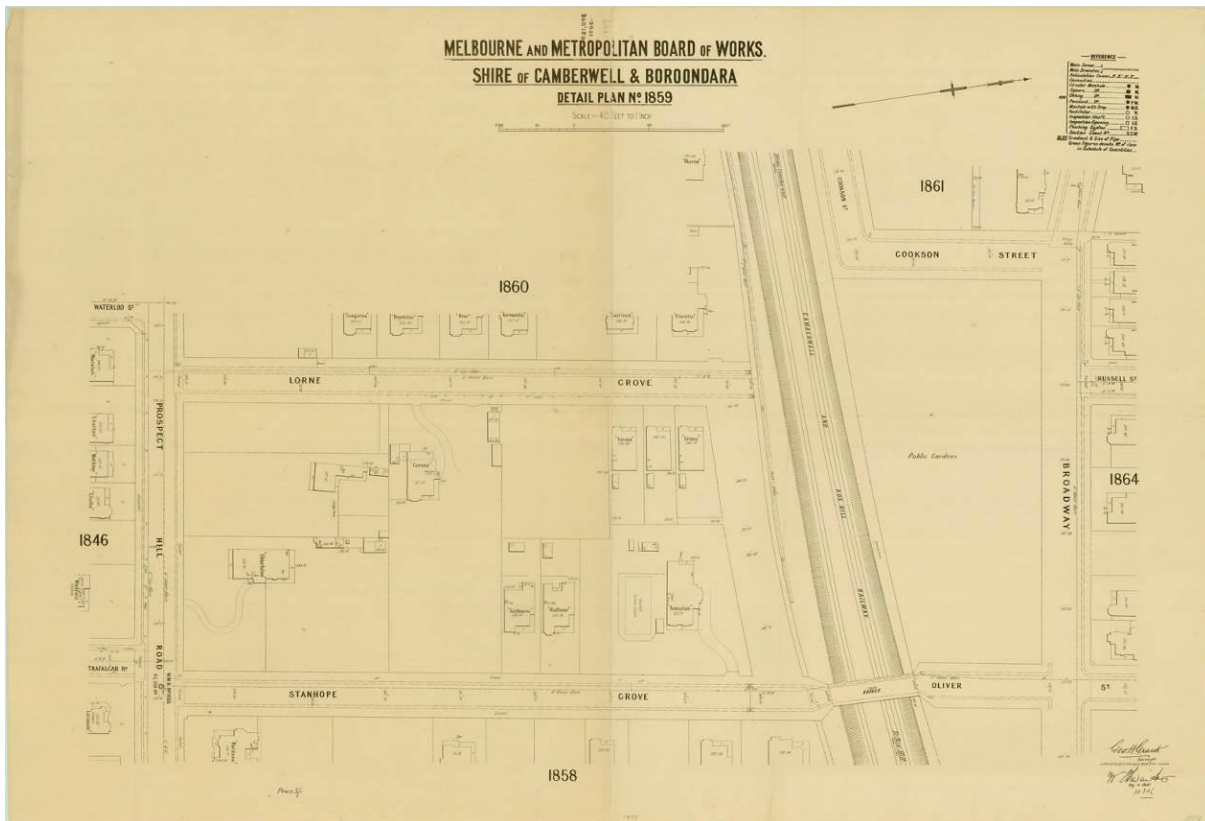
### Past owners and residents:

- **1881:** The land on which Waratah, 34 Prospect Hill Road now exists was purchased by Edward Waters. He purchased 20 acres in the area. Edward seems to have been the first, or one of the first patent agents in Melbourne.
- **1884:** The land was further

subdivided and parts of it purchased by the National Land Company.

• **1886:** The National Land Company appears to have transferred the land to Joseph Wilmoth. Due to Covid restrictions we have not been able to access the Boroondara rate books to confirm when the house was built on the land.

• **1888** Joseph Wilmoth, (Solicitor) built the house, according to Sands and McDougall street directories. He was still living there lived there at his death in 1891 according to his probate documents. He was a partner in two city practices (Wilde and Wilmoth and Trollop and Wilmoth) that appeared frequently in the contemporary Melbourne newspapers. His wife Sarah and he lived at the house.



**Above:** 1904 MMBW plan showing 'Waratah' at the corner of Waterloo St and Prospect Hill Road.

- **1891:** Joseph left the house to one of his children Eliza Mary Bennett, who was married by then to Thomas Benson Bennett, an accountant. He left another significant property to his son Joseph Alfred, who was also a solicitor. Eliza and Thomas are recorded in The Australasian newspaper as having a daughter who was born at 'Waratah' in 1896. Sadly, she is also recorded as dying there from pneumonia aged 12 months in 1897.
- Eliza was involved in local charitable activities and in **1892** with other local women set up the Camberwell Ladies Benevolent Society to help the poor in the local community. Several of her letters to the editors of Melbourne's newspapers, requested donations of money and clothes and describe her residence as being at 'Waratah'. The Argus records that Eliza died in 1924 at 'Waratah' and was buried at Boroondara Cemetery. As was Thomas, who worked for the London and Lancashire Insurance Company. He died in 1928.
- **1935:** The next owner of 'Waratah' is recorded as Arthur Watkin Wynne. He purchased the house in 1935. Newspaper announcements state that he lived at the house with his wife and daughters, Joy and Patricia. He was a prominent person in the world of newspapers and held amongst other roles the sub editorship of the Telegraph in Sydney. He was also the Secretary of The Associated Press of Australia and a member of the Overseas Telecommunications Commission. His grandfather was Watkin Wynne a prominent newspaper owner and a Mayor in the Sydney area. Arthur's daughter Joy married from the house in 1940.
- **1940:** The Wynnes sold the house to the McMahon family in 1940. Henry and Alma McMahon lived at 34 Prospect Hill Road with their 5 children who grew up there. Henry McMahon was a GP. The McMahon family and their descendants have owned and resided in the house since that time, over a period of 80 years. Their daughter Mary has described to us her memories of living and growing up in the house, including riding her horse along Waterloo Street when she was a child and her brothers playing cricket in the garden.



- One of the McMahon sons was Don S. McMahon who became an Ear, Nose and Throat surgeon and assisted Dr Graeme Clark in the development of the Bionic Ear (a Cochlear implant) in the 1970s. Dr McMahon lectured at the University of Melbourne for several years and has also written a number of books. He also served during the Vietnam War in a surgical unit.
- **1977:** In 1977 Alma McMahon sold the house to her daughter and son in law, Mary Alma Drost and Peter Hermann Drost. Peter Drost was a Marketing Manager and Mary, a business woman.
- Mary Drost (OAM) became a councillor at The City of Camberwell in the 1980s and then a well-known, successful campaigner for the conservation and protection of heritage buildings and sites in Boroondara and elsewhere in Melbourne. Perhaps the most publicised and long running campaign she has run was for the protection of Camberwell Railway station in the early 2000s. She has also been a Planning Activist for many years. She was awarded The Medal of the Order of Australia for her contribution to Victoria and Boroondara. Mary Drost still resides at 34 Prospect Hill Road.

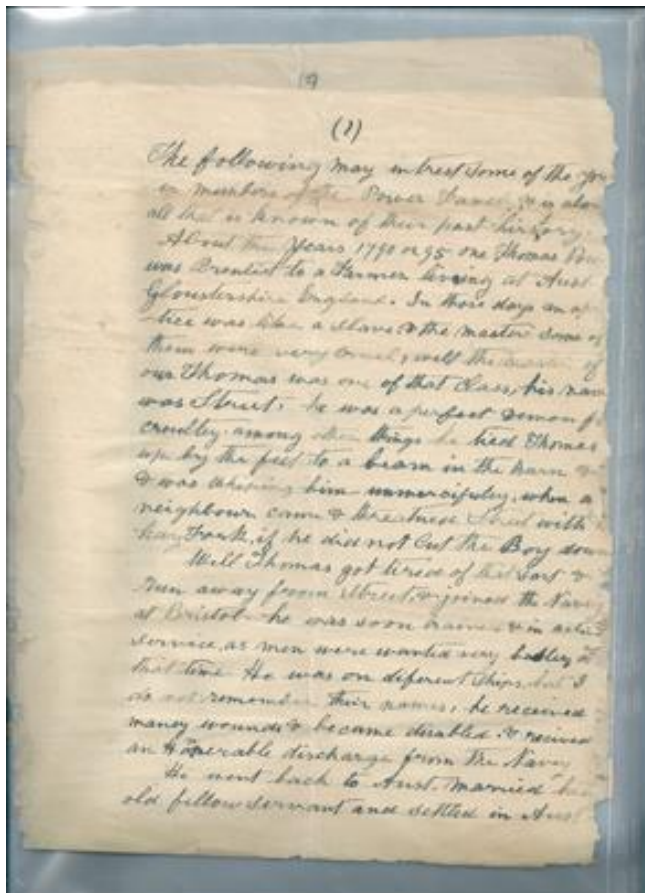
Local residents are currently awaiting a view by council and its heritage consultants about the grading level of 'Waratah' and they hope it will be heritage reviewed and will be granted the greater protection it surely deserves.

## POWER FAMILY HISTORY

### Peter Harms







John Power senior arrived with his family of 4 in Melbourne on the 31st of January 1852 aboard the barque, 'Bride' after his young wife had died in the U.K. aged 25. He had 2 pounds 10 shillings only in total savings to support his family.

His youngest son John wrote the pictured notes (**left**) just prior to his death and they were hidden in a tin in the walls of the Heritage listed "Carome Homestead" by the Plenty River at Mernda. Carome is now open to the public. The tin was accidentally found when they were renovating one of the rooms and relacing a window. John had passed the documents on to his nephew, Henry John Power who left Camberwell and farmed at 'Carome' from 1920 until his death, when his son Lance took over the property. Henry must have given them to my late father Ivo Harms to care for them, as he was keen on genealogy and so they came down to me on Dad's death.



**Left:** Great Uncle Arthur Power had the chemist shop in Burke Road for many years. 654 Burke Rd with my Great Uncle, Arthur Davies Power standing out front. He lived with his family above the shop. The shop is little changed on the exterior as of 2021.

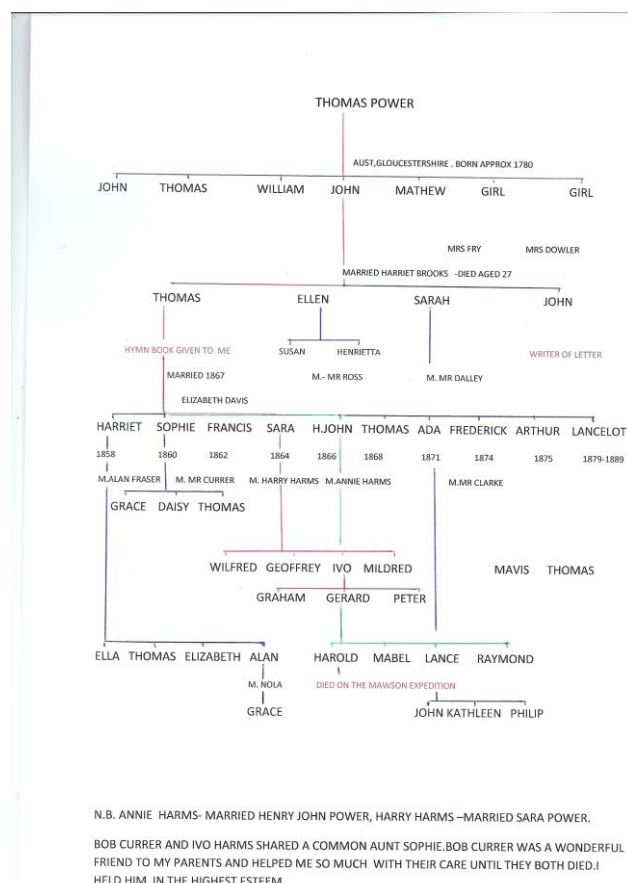
The painting (**previous page**) of the original slab hut with the shingle roof made from flattened kerosene tins built near the corner of Burke Rd and St Helens Rd was done by Sophie Power as a birthday present for her brother Arthur at his request. She painted it in a stylized setting with The Dandenong's in the background and creek in the foreground. He wanted her to paint it as she remembered the small home which Thomas and Elizabeth had built. It was one of the very early Camberwell homes built in the early 1860s when Thomas purchased 4 acres, roughly between Leura

Grove and St Helens Rd facing Burke Rd with his father, John, and Uncle John each purchasing 5 acres behind Thomas's land. After clearing the land, they initially ran cattle but then successfully turned it into a market garden then a violet farm. [With the death of Prince Albert, Queen Victoria fostered the giving of violets, hence the number of violet farms in the surrounding area towards Gardiners Creek]

Of interest is the fact that Harold Power the eldest son of Henry John, died on the Mawson Expedition to the Antarctic. I have notes on this in my collection. He was the Radio Officer on board.

My great Aunt Sophie lived at 12-14 Alma Rd Camberwell and studied art at the Gallery School under Frederick McCubbin. She and my Grandmother Sara Power then opened a tapestry shop in the Block Arcade, Melbourne opposite Haigh's chocolates until my Grandmother married Harry Harms and went on to teach embroidery and art in Western Australia. Harry Harms was the school Principal at Pinjarra and Glen Forrest.

**Below: POWER FAMILY TREE** (several are buried in Boroondara cemetery)



## POWER FAMILY HISTORY

### Lee Power

### GLOUCESTERSHIRE - Power family – poor beginnings

The Power name came from the Norman French word povre meaning poor - from the Latin adjective pauper, meaning 'poor'. Nellie Power's poor forebears for many years lived at the southern end of the Cotswolds near Bristol, where Power is a common family name.

In January 1764 William Power stated age 10 years; and in January 1766 Joseph stated age 9 years, and Thomas Power stated age 8 years. The sons of Thomas and Sarah Power were apprenticed as poor children. William, Joseph, and Thomas Power were apprenticed to farmers. William absconded due to his master's bad treatment of him.

Thomas Power the younger [b 1759] told his family, as an apprentice, his master Robert Street, treated him atrociously. On one occasion, Street tied Thomas to a beam in the barn and was whipping him unmercifully when a neighbour came and threatened Street with a hay fork if he did not cut young Thomas down. Sometime during his apprenticeship, Thomas ran away to Bristol and joined the navy. His son, John Power, noted in his memoir, for many years his father 11 served on navy ships that engaged in battles and was wounded many times. Eventually he was honourably discharged after hostilities ceased.



The American Revolution was a global conflict. Captain Cook and his scientific explorations opened the Pacific world to the British. In 1779, Joseph Banks proposed in Parliament a solution to handling the British criminals and riffraff, formerly sent to the American Colonies, was to colonise Australia. Australia was soon a British possession.

### **Thomas Power – Aust, Gloucestershire**

After his discharge from the navy, at Aust on the Severn Estuary, Thomas Power the younger [b 1759] married Sarah Tuck. Son of Thomas Power the younger [b 1759] and Sarah Tuck, John Power [b 1807], in his memoir noted, his father was wounded many times during active naval service. He wrote, after his father's honourable discharge: "He went back to Aust and married his old folks' servant and settled down in Aust. It is a pity I can't give you the dates, but they can be obtained from the church register at Aust, and they had seven children – two girls and five boys." 'Old Folks' was in reference his grandparents, Thomas Power the older [b 1718] and Sarah Power née Fletcher [b 1722]. In February 1819, William Power, the eldest son of Thomas Power the older, sailor, married Jane Arnold at St Mary Church, Henbury in South Gloucestershire. Jane was born in nearby Alveston in 1799. Three years before marrying William, she had a daughter Sarah Arnold base born. Sarah Arnold influenced the Power family greatly; she was catalyst for migration of the extended Power family to Australia.

### **Power family at Aust – 1850s**

By the year 1851 there were three surviving sons of Thomas Power the sailor; William born 1793, John born 1807, and, Matthew born 1811. Each had their own families and had either endured, or observed at close hand, enough personal hardship to consider turning their backs on Old England.

John Power had four children born at Aust. His wife Harriet died in 1844, aged 25 years when her youngest child John was 2 ½ - years-old. The same younger John Power later recorded that his father John Power continued working long hours to earn eight shillings each week from which he paid rent and supported his family.

John the youngest child recalled how his grandmother Sarah Power would arrive each morning using two walking sticks given by grandfather Power. Each day, at the household, she would do chores and return to her home at night. The family subsisted in hardship, but never went into debt. In January 1851, Matthew Power's wife Hannah died after giving birth to their fourth child and Grandmother Power turned her attention to caring for Matthew's newborn son Thomas. Matthew looked after his other children. The three surviving Power boys, William, John and Matthew, formed a strong bond. Informed by their half-sister Sarah, they took a keen interest in the goings on in the Empire colonies, especially Australia.

### **Power family – first migration**

In March 1835, the small-town Melbourne was formally named after the British Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne. There was no wharf. Ships moored to stumps on the banks of the deep river. 12 Port Phillip area grew rapidly, largely on profits from the wool industry. Generally, prices of wool and sheep were low, but wool was profitable because of the enormous sheep runs and a huge flock for each shepherd. By the late-1840s, there were 6,600,000 sheep on 1,200 squatter's stations or runs. Pastoralists complained labour was scarce.

Immediately after their marriage in 1848, William and Sarah Worsley née Arnold, with children from their respective first marriages, were granted assisted emigration to Victoria, Australia. They sailed on the ship “Adelaide” under Master Stephen Wharton.

The extended Worsley-Arnold family lived in the Boroondara area encompassing Hawthorne, first settled in the 1830s. The suburb “Hawthorne” gazetted in 1840 was officially changed and gazetted “Hawthorn” in 1860. William had stables at his property on Riversdale Road, and worked nearby at Thatcher’s Hotel, Hawthorne. Now inner-city Melbourne, the Boroondara area was in 1850 the outer north-western area of Melbourne. The improved work opportunities in Australia Sarah and William Worsley experienced on arrival in 1848 were relayed to her Power family members at Aust in Gloucestershire.

The older William Worsley and Sarah Arnold prospered after arrival, their residence situated among stately premises in Riversdale road Upper Hawthorne, occupied by privileged citizens.

### **Power family – Victorian goldfields**

In 1850, John Power of Aust, Gloucestershire found an agent seeking labourers for Port Phillip in Australia, who could arrange assisted passage for adults younger than forty years, and children at the cost of ten shillings. John aged 43 years was too old for free passage. However, he could go if he paid five pounds for himself and ten shillings for each child accompanying him.

John sold up all he owned and booked his family to sail on the barque ‘Bride’. They departed on 14 November 1851. The family arrived at Hobson’s Bay, Melbourne on 31 January 1852.

The younger John Power, born at Aust, Gloucestershire in 1841, married Elizabeth Landon in 1872. He died without issue in 1913. In the twilight of his life, he wrote a memoir for his family. He dated the memoir 9 April 1912. John gave the memoir to Henry Power [1866-1924] the son of his brother Thomas. The memoir was discovered in a house called Carome, eighteen miles from Melbourne at Mernda on the banks of the Plenty River. It was built in 1864, from local bluestone milled by convicts from a quarry on the property. The same stone was used to build Parliament House in Melbourne. The house replaced another built for the original flour mill in the early-1850s that supplied flour for Melbourne.

### **Below: Carome**



The first house was washed away in 1863, when heavy floods destroyed the 13-mill dam. The restored Carome Homestead at 10 Hathfelde Boulevard, Mernda in the Plenty Gorge Parklands is heritage listed. In 1920, Henry Power left Camberwell and purchased Carome and the Mernda property to use as a dairy farm to supply cream to the market rather than fresh milk. In 1950, Henry’s son, Lancelot (Lance) John Power [1896-1981] renovated ‘Walter’s Room’, named after the aboriginal who occasionally used the



bedroom until 1940. Behind the window frame, in a tobacco tin Lance found the document that turned out to be the memoir written by John Power, the grandson of Thomas Power and Sarah Tuck. Henry secreted it there for safe keeping and it was forgotten.

### **Gold Rush**

The younger John Power later noted: “When we landed, everyone was talking of gold and a lot was being got at Forest Creek ... Father and Tom got the gold fever at once but the lack of money kept them from the Diggings. Father got work at nine shillings per day and Tom worked for a farmer at Moonee Ponds and after three months, they had saved enough money to go to the Diggings.”

After working for three months, John Power and his eighteen-years-old son Tom bought mining equipment and provisions and set off with a mate for Forest Creek. As John Power the younger noted, after about three months on the diggings John and Tom Power came back to Melbourne with 18 pounds of gold [216 troy ounces] this being the result of three men’s work. Father John and Tom had planned to stay in Melbourne for only two or three weeks before they returned to Moonlight Flat at Forest Creek, where they knew was plenty of gold. However, they found Ellen down with fever and a few days later Sarah got it as well. The girls both got better after a while, but it was thirteen weeks before John the older and Tom were ready to set off for the diggings again.

Before he left on his second trip to the diggings John reported home to his family in Aust and his deceased wife’s family at Old Down, the ample work opportunities in the colony, the gold fever in the colony, and his good fortune in finding gold. Little wonder many of the folks he had left behind were eager to follow him to Australia. When John the older and Tom got back to the diggings, they discovered the ground where they had been on the first trip had been all worked out. John the younger noted that on the second trip, “[they] only brought back seven pounds [84 troy ounces] of gold” for three months work.

Early in 1853, John Power and Tom aged nineteen made their third trip to seek gold, this time accompanied by young John who was then aged eleven and a half years. Young John had been working for a year on a farm at Moonee Ponds. Their destination that trip was Bendigo where gold had been discovered in September 1851. They moved on to the recent discovery at McIvor Creek now known as Heathcote. John Power and his two sons returned to Melbourne from McIvor with what young John described as, “only £150 worth of gold,” which equates to a little over four pounds, about 50 troy ounces. In youthful brashness he reproached their effort, and mused, “that two men and a boy should have recovered more gold, but they had lost time in running about from rush to rush.”

Young John noted in his memoir: “While we were at McIvor the gold Escort was robbed at a place called Mia Mia a few miles out of McIvor. All the troopers except one were shot and I saw him come galloping into the police camp.” The looting of the McIvor gold escort ranks among the greatest cases of robbery under arms in the history of Victoria. It was the first gang raid on an armed escort in Victoria, until then bushrangers had preyed upon single diggers or small 14 parties of diggers. On 20 July 1853, six troopers escorted a light dray carrying five thousand ounces of gold and other valuables from the McIvor goldfield to Kyneton. About six miles from the Mia Mia Inn was held up by seven armed robbers, including William Atkins and his wife Agnes. They allowed the two escort leaders to pass and fired on the other troopers wounding them, two seriously. The escort leaders’ horses bolted. From a distance, they watched the event

and the robbers ride off into the bush with two thousand ounces of gold and £700 cash. The escort officer-in-charge stayed with the wounded men and the other uninjured leader fled back to McIvor to seek assistance, as seen and noted by John Power.

### **Thomas and Matthew Power – migrations**

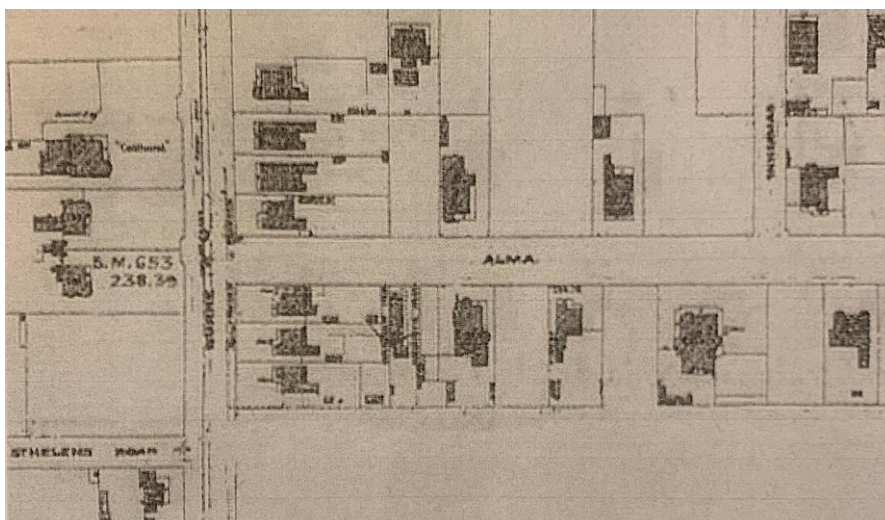
The next member of the Power family to migrate to Victoria was William Power's son Thomas born 1831. He married Harriet Pearce at Bristol and immediately after on 12 June 1853, departed England on the ship Charles, arriving in Victoria, Australia on 3 October 1853. As many able men had left their steady jobs and made their way to the gold-diggings work at Melbourne was easy to find, and wages were high. William Worsley, Sarah Arnold's husband of Booroondara, first employed Thomas for three months, at the rate one pound twelve shillings (\$3.20) per week, equivalent to eighty pounds (\$160.00) per year. This was four times his labourer's wage at Aust in England.

Before John left England in 1852, he promised to help his brother Matthew out to Australia. With the gold he found on the diggings, he was able to sponsor Matthew's passage to Melbourne. In 1854, at the age of forty-three years, Matthew emigrated with his young family, Emma, George, Joseph, and baby Thomas. Accompanying them was his brother William's daughter, Ann born 1836, carer for toddler Thomas. They sailed for Australia on the Eagle, arriving at Hobson's Bay in April 1854. Matthew immediately headed for the diggings with his brother Thomas.

John Power the younger recalled they had been back in Melbourne for some weeks when riots took place at Ballaarat. Nevertheless, the family group had been ready to start out for Ballaarat, but missed the steamer going to Geelong, so they went back to Castlemaine instead. John the younger seemed dismissive of the happenings at Ballaarat, but they were violent and significant in the history of Victoria and Australia. The Battle of Eureka Stockade (by which the rebellion is popularly known) was fought between miners and the Colonial forces at sunrise on Sunday morning on 3 December 1854, at Eureka Lead resulting in the deaths of at least twenty-seven people, the majority of which were rebels, it was the most significant conflict in the colonial history of Victoria.

John Power and his sons returned to the Castlemaine goldfields, this time with daughters Ellen and Sarah. They mined in various places and young John noted they "did well." Tom married

Elizabeth Davis daughter of Collingwood publican, Edward Wakelin Davis. 15 Tom started gardening at Melbourne, but he found it did not pay. In 1859, he and Elizabeth, and their first child Harriet then not yet one-year-old, reunited with the family at Pleasant Creek. They did not do so well at Pleasant Creek and moved on to Rokewood Junction, twenty- five

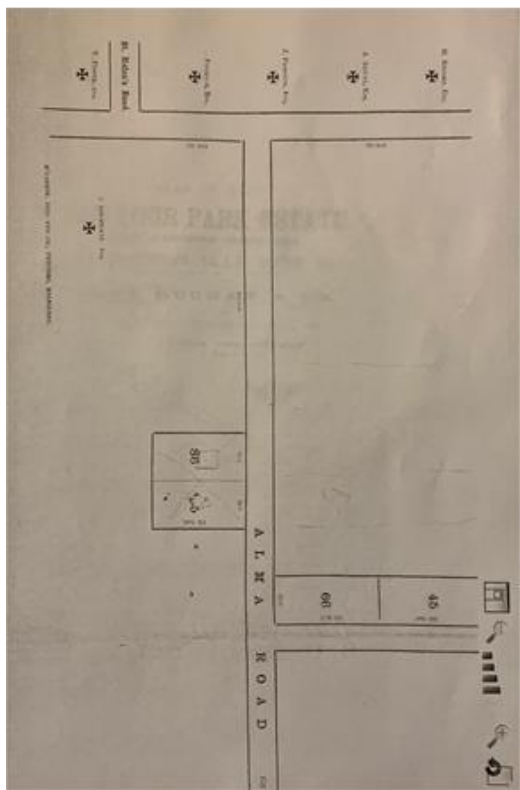




miles south of Ballaarat where they “did very well.”

By this time, the older John had rheumatism rather bad and could not work very well underground. The Power family finally left the diggings and returned to Melbourne in 1860. John cleared some land at St Helens Road off Bourke Road, in Hawthorn, and started a market garden. The operation of growing vegetables for the Melbourne markets was an instant success. Later they grew flowers, which the family found easier to grow and more profitable. In Hawthorn, Power Street, Brookfield Court, Henrietta Street, Dalley Street are all named after various members of the pioneering Power family and their relations.

In addition to John Power’s memoir, he passed on oral history of early times in Australia. At Hawthorn, the family cleared and then settled the land to farm firstly as mixed grazing with crop but found it unsuitable for cropping so changed to grazing and subsequent orchard, later diversifying into flower growing for the Melbourne market. Initially, they lived off the land and fished in Gardiners Creek and the Yarra River while hunting local game including koalas, kangaroos and ducks when their crops were not profitable.



At the corner of St Helens and Burke Roads, the family built the first permanent dwelling in the area a bark slab hut just south of Burke Road near what is St Helens Road corner. (see illustration above and painting of the hut on the first page) Ten Power children were born in that hut. The roof was made from flattened kerosene tins that came from England hammered to form shingles. Successive Power generations heard that during the clear summer nights, ducks would land on the shiny roof, thinking it was pond reflection, then the kids hearing the noise would run out and despatch the stunned birds. The account they preferred eating duck over koala is perhaps more believable.

John lived out his later years at his retirement home at 12 Invermay Grove, Denmark Hill, Upper Hawthorne, Victoria. For the last eighteen months of his life, he suffered clinacteric decay and died on 18 June 1877, and was buried at the Boroondara Cemetery.

John Power, the first son of the family to immigrate to Port Phillip, was fortunate to arrive soon after the commencement of the Victorian gold rushes. He was astute or lucky in his endeavours to find enough gold relieve his immediate family from poverty experienced in Gloucestershire. He used his new-found wealth to sponsor or attract to Melbourne: his nephew Thomas in 1853 on the Charles; his brother Matthew Power and family in 1854 on the ‘Eagle’; his brother-in-law Joseph Brooks in January 1853 on the ‘Confiance’; his brother William Power and extended family in 1855 on the ‘Epaminondas’; and his deceased wife’s parents Isaac and Hester Brooks and brother-in-law and George Brooks and his wife Mary who arrived on the ‘Parsee’ in June 1854.<sup>16</sup> Left: 12 Invermay Rd Hawthorn the home of John and Elizabeth Power, the writer of the notes. He died in this home as well as his father John Power.



**Left:** 12 Invermay Rd Hawthorn the home of John and Elizabeth Power, the writer of the notes. He died in this home as well as his father John Power.

### **William Power and Jemima Russ**

By 1854, William Power was the only surviving son of Thomas and Sarah Power remaining in England. William and Jane Power's daughter Anne and eldest surviving son Thomas had migrated to Melbourne Australia with William's brother Matthew in 1853. On 15 October 1854 in the Chapelry of Aust, William and Jane Power's son

William married Jemima Russ who lived at Aust at the time of the marriage.

### **William Power – migration**

Three months after their marriage, William and Jemima Power, joined William's mother, father, brother and sister to be the final Power family group from Aust to leave England for Melbourne Australia. They travelled on the 'Epaminondas'. On 7 June 1855, only one week after disembarkation, William and Jemima's first child Sarah was born.

### **Gold Rush**

In the month William and Jemima Power arrived in Melbourne a miner's right costing one pound replaced the 'bloody gold licence'. The diggers had also won the right to elect representatives to the Legislative Councils of Victoria and New South Wales. There were to be twelve new seats: four from the goldfields' regions. Various Power family members mined the Golden Point mining area for more than twenty years; area in 1859 at Golden Gully, Donkey Gully, Deadman's Gully, and Shicer Gully. Gold was still plentiful in the Forest Creek area, but sizable alluvial gold finds were rare by the time William Power mined at Forest Creek. Restless, the Power family moved to the even richer finds at Bendigo. In January 1861, the family was living at Rocky Water Holes, Guildford, seven miles (11 km) south of Castlemaine. William and Jemima decided to leave the Castlemaine area as they had heard good reports of the New Bendigo Goldfield sixty miles (100 km) to the west. Thomas Power and his wife Harriet settled at Cherry Tree Creek, in the parish Moyriesk, Redbank and raised their eleven children.

The families of Joseph Power from Wapley and Thomas Power from Tidenham in Gloucestershire, England endured the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century in circumstances that at best could be described, 'humble'. The emigration of Thomas Power's son John to Victoria fortuitously coincided with widespread discovery of gold at his destination and one the world's greatest gold rushes. They joined the rush and enjoyed immediate success, extricating the family from poverty. One third of the world's gold output between 1851 and 1861 came from Victoria. John Power's personal gold finds and his reports of a better life in Australia caused many of his relations to follow him, notably his brothers William and Matthew and their families, his deceased wife's family and two daughters of his sister Mary. The Australian descendants of the Power immigrants flourished, and by year 2000, many lived in Victoria, New South Wales and Western Australia.

## **DONATION**

John Power's Journal – photocopy and pictures – written 1913, donated by Peter Harms. Also as a digital copy.

## **REPORT OF MEETINGS 2021**

### **March            Warren Doubleday   Melbourne: a Tramway Titan**

Warren Doubleday is the Manager of the Melbourne Tram Museum collection, and the Museum Services Manager of the Ballarat Tramway Museum, a member of the Museum Accreditation Committee of the Victorian Branch of the Museum and Galleries Association of Australia and Communications Officer of the Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia. He is a retired Civil Engineer and Project Manager with a long interest in the heritage of rail transport, particularly tramways.

Melbourne retains the distinction of having the largest electric street tram system in the world. Until 1906 that distinction had been held by San Francisco. In 1885 Melbourne's first cable tramway opened. By 1891 Melbourne had 44 miles (71 km) of double track cable tramway, powered by 11 engine houses. Cable lines ran along most main streets in the city and along all major exit roads.

Melbourne's first electric tramway opened in 1889 with a two-and-a-quarter mile (3.6 km) line from Box Hill to Doncaster but it operated only until 1896. Victorian Railways began the serious move to trams in 1906 when it opened an electric tramway from St Kilda Station to Brighton. In 1907 Prahran and Malvern Councils applied to construct tramways and, by 1910, the Prahran & Malvern Tramways Trust was ready to go into service with 13 cars on two routes. Over the next 10 years the system grew to almost 100 trams and 35 route miles (56.3 km) which extended to St Kilda, Caulfield, Glenhuntly, Hawthorn, Kew, Camberwell and Mont Albert. Other local councils followed the lead of Prahran and Malvern.

In the 50 years since the establishment of the Melbourne Omnibus Company, Melbourne's street public transport had grown through unplanned and uncoordinated private and public enterprises, stimulated by the land boom, depressed by economic recession and world war. It was becoming clear that a more orderly approach was needed.

On 1 November 1919, the Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board (M&MTB) was established to operate the entire system. Mr Alex Cameron, former chairman of the successful Prahran & Malvern Tramways Trust, was appointed the first Chairman. In 1925, the first tramways buses came into operation from La Trobe Street down Swanston Street and Brighton Road, along Glen Huntly Road to Elsternwick Station.

By 1930 most cable tracks had been converted to electric trams, but the Depression brought further work to a halt. World War II provided another stay of execution for the cable tram, but the last one made its run to Northcote on October 26, 1940. The first 'W' was built in 1923 and the orange Z class was introduced in 1975.



## NEXT MEETING:



## **“Never Forget Australia”: Transformation at Villers-Bretonneux** a presentation via zoom by

**Dr Ross McMullin**

**Tuesday 27 April 2021  
6.45pm for 7pm**

**Please book  
[enquiries@chs.org.au](mailto:enquiries@chs.org.au)  
(zoom link will be sent after  
booking)**

The immense German onslaught in March 1918 caused Britain’s gravest crisis of World War I. Australians, rushed to the rescue, influenced the destiny of the world more than in any other year. The culmination of their contribution in the conflict’s climax was the stunning counterattack at Villers-Bretonneux. It was acclaimed as the war’s most brilliant exploit, and no-one was more significant than Camberwell’s own Pompey Elliott.

To commemorate the anniversary of this celebrated feat, award-winning historian Ross McMullin will illuminate what occurred. Ross has written two books on Pompey, and his biography *Pompey Elliott* won awards for both literature and biography. His multi-biography *Farewell, Dear People: Biographies of Australia’s Lost Generation* was awarded the Prime Minister’s Prize for Australian History. His other books include *Will Dyson: Australia’s Radical Genius*, which was highly commended by the judges of the National Biography Award.

<http://www.rossmcmullin.com.au>

## **DATES FOR MEETINGS 2021**

Meetings are currently being held via Zoom. Zoom links will be sent prior to the meetings.

<b>Tuesday 23 March</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>Zoom 7pm</b>	<b>Carole Woods</b>	<b>Vera Deakin</b>
<b>Tuesday 27 April</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>Zoom 7pm</b>	<b>Ross McMullin</b>	<b>WWI</b>
<b>Tuesday 25 May</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>Zoom 7pm</b>	<b>TBA</b>	
<b>Saturday 19 June</b> <b>Eastern Suburbs</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2pm</b>	<b>Tony Tibbles</b>	<b>Back to Flicks in the leafy</b>
<b>Saturday 24 July</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2pm</b>	<b>TBA</b>	

## **CAMBERWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY DONATIONS TO THE COLLECTION**

Camberwell Historical Society welcomes donations of the following items relating to the former City of Camberwell: photographs and prints, documents, letters, diaries, maps, plans, books, pamphlets, and reminiscences of former residents and people who worked in the area.

Contributions to *Camberwell History* contain the opinions of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of Camberwell Historical Society, its committee or members.

## **CAMBERWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS 2020**

Camberwell Historical Society's financial year operates from 1 July to 30 June. Subscriptions for the 2020 – 2021 financial year were due and payable from 1 July 2020. Single \$30, Family \$40. Camberwell Historical Society, BSB 633-000 Account No 142260678 Cheques to Camberwell Historical Society, PO Box 1274, CAMBERWELL 3124

## **CAMBERWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC**

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Committee members — Bryony Cosgrove, Alister Bennie and Jennifer McArthur

*Camberwell History*: Editor — Adèle Fernando-Swart

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