

CAMBERWELL HISTORY

RECORDING THE HISTORY OF CAMBERWELL
AND DISTRICT
Camberwell Historical Society



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Principal Patron: Professor Emeritus Geoffrey Blainey, AC
Patron: Her Worship the Mayor of Boroondara, Cr Jane Addis

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

George Fernando

I am pleased to announce that Cr Jane Addis, following her appointment as the Mayor of Boroondara, has accepted our request to be a patron of our Society. We wish her well for her forthcoming term of office and thank her for accepting the role of our patron. I would like to thank Cr Garry Thompson for his support during his time as Mayor of Boroondara.

With the year coming to an end, it is fitting to reflect on how the Society has fared over another difficult 12 months. Digital technology has allowed us to continue many of our usual activities. Both committee and general meetings have been conducted via Zoom. I am particularly thankful to Jennifer McArthur for willingly taking on the role of hosting these meetings and mediating the process. We have been able to keep members informed about what the Society has been doing. The Newsletter has appeared regularly through the year, and our Facebook page and website are constantly being updated. These activities, at least, have been large unaffected by the pandemic.

Our meetings for 2022 will recommence at Ashburton Library Meeting Room on 22 February at 8pm. Bruce Watson from the Friends of the National Film and Sound Archives will share early sound recordings with us. All our 2022 meetings are planned to be held in person.

I thank all those who helped make this year a success for CHS. Thank you especially to our committee and all those who gave their help throughout the year. Congratulations to Alister Bennie our archivist who was responsible for the Victorian Collections Highly Commended Award detailed on the next page. Thank you to the CHS membership for your continuing support. I look forward to a good year in 2022 and I extend my best wishes to all members and their families for the Christmas Season.

AMaGA
Victoria

2021 Victorian
Museums +
Galleries
Awards

Victorian Collections Award
Volunteer-run organisations

HIGHLY COMMENDED



VICTORIAN COLLECTIONS HIGHLY COMMENDED AWARD

Alister Bennie

The 2021 Victorian Museums and Galleries Awards were held on 5 October by AMaGa (Australian Museums and Galleries Association). It was conducted via an online presentation and Zoom. Camberwell Historical Society was shortlisted for the Victorian Collections Award for Excellence in Museum Cataloguing (Volunteer Organisation). Other organisations nominated in this category were Numurkah & District Historical Society, Kew Historical Society, and Malmsbury Historical Society.

Camberwell Historical Society was honoured to receive the Highly Commended Award in this category. The Victorian Collections Awards acknowledge the strong efforts of organisations that have been cataloguing their collections online, in order to document and preserve their heritage material.

Victorian Collections is an online digital archive that is publicly accessible, and acts as a central portal to cultural items held by museums and galleries across the State of Victoria. Fields on Victorian Collections include metadata such as identifier number, subject keywords, physical description, inscriptions and markings, materials, provenance and context, acquisition and location details.



Camberwell Historical Society has been using the collection management software Victorian Collections to catalogue their collection of items.

Last year the Society received a large donation of architectural drawings by Margaret Picken, who worked as a property illustrator for several real estate agents in Melbourne between 1983 and 2005. Victorian Collections was used to catalogue the high volume of Picken's architectural drawings, along with other items within our collection.

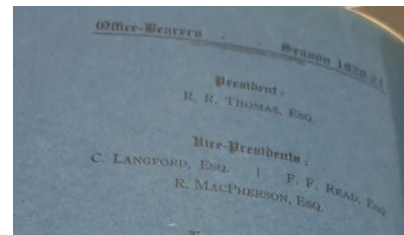
DIGGING INTO FAMILY HISTORY – HOW & WHERE

Peter Beer

In our final meeting of the year, Peter Beer gave a presentation about his family history journey. The presentation had an emphasis on the many online sources he leveraged, and methods and processes used to make significant family history breakthroughs, and how his family history journey is relevant to Camberwell Historical Society members, both from a process perspective and from a Camberwell, Boroondara and Melbourne perspective in general.

Peter's family history journey started when he joined his tennis club's Centenary sub-committee in early 2019. His club, the East Camberwell Tennis Club (ECTC), located in Riversdale Park, had its Centenary in 2020. Much to his surprise he found that one of his great-grandfathers,

Clements Langford, was an inaugural Vice-President of the Club, and a major contributor of funds to help start the Club. This piqued Peter's interest, and he also wondered about the first President of East Camberwell Tennis Club, R. R. Thomas Esq.



Luckily, the club's first minutes book still exists, and in it the President signed the minutes of each meeting. It looked like his name was Robert R. Thomas. Peter started the search to find more about Thomas. The 1920 Sands & McDougall Directory listed a Robert Thomas in Warburton Road. However, checking the relevant electoral roll in Ancestry.com proved that this was a Robert B. Thomas. Below him, however, was a Robert Raymond Thomas, in Faversham Road. From the National Archives Peter found that Robert Raymond Thomas enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) in 1915, and his signature was very similar to the Robert R. Thomas signature in the ECTC minutes book. Using the State Government's Birth, Deaths & Marriages (BDM) website, Ancestry.com, and the National Library's Trove repository Peter found out more about Thomas and his family. He had a daughter called Sue, and it looked like Sue might still be living. Using a modern method, LinkedIn, he contacted Sue's son, and then Sue, and a few days later Peter had a wealth of information about the Club's first President – Robert Raymond Thomas, known as Ray.



During Peter's search for information about ECTC founders, he contacted the Camberwell Historical Society. An article in the Society's September 2019 newsletter included an aside about Peter's great-grandfather, Clements Langford, being an inaugural ECTC Vice-President. That article prompted a reply from the Society's own Peter Harms, saying that he had some information about early ECTC members, and that his house was possibly built by Clements Langford or a John Langford. This led Peter Beer to search for the unknown John Langford.

Via Ancestry.com Peter discovered that John Langford had been born in 1824 and was an uncle of Clements Langford. In 1849, John Langford married at Shirley, a village near Southampton. He could not be located in the 1851 England census records in Ancestry.com, suggesting he had moved overseas. Peter then used a combination of Trove, Sands & McDougall and Ancestry.com to find that John and his wife Louisa lived in Rowena Parade, Richmond for around ten years in

TWO MASONS.—TENDERS WANTED, for FOUNDATION four room cottage. J. Langford, Shirley-cottage, Rowena parade, Richmond.



the 1860s and they called their house 'Shirley'. He would also name his houses in Power Street, Hawthorn and then Burke Road 'Shirley'.

LANGFORD.—On the 16th February, at his residence, "Shirley," Burke-road, Camberwell, John, the beloved husband of Louisa Langford, builder, late of Richmond, aged 75 years. A colonist of 50 years.

Various advertisements were found in Trove about his building business in the 1870s. In 1883 the Camberwell Rates Books in Ancestry.com (which are a little difficult to locate) show that he bought land on Burke Road, immediately south of Alma Road. These rates books (and Trove) show that he built three houses on this land, selling the first, living in the second and using the third as a rental property for more than twenty years. Via Trove, Peter found that John Langford died at 'Shirley', at today's 524 Burke Road, Camberwell, in 1902.

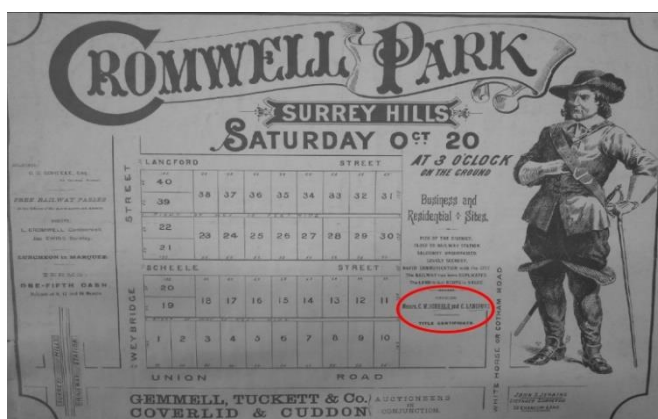
Peter's family history journey then turned to George Langford, one of Peter's great-great grandfathers, father of Clements Langford and brother of John Langford. While a book had been written about Clements Langford, there was very little information in it about his father George. The bare bones of his life were found via Ancestry.com. The British Newspaper Archives (BNA) and Trove added details about his life. George Langford went bankrupt in 1846 in Southampton and had ongoing financial issues for the next fifteen years. His financial issues continued after he and his family moved to Tasmania in 1864. Via Trove, it was found that he again went bankrupt in Launceston, and then again about six years later in Melbourne.

His son, Clements Langford's 'crowning glory' was to build the spires of Melbourne's St Paul's Cathedral on budget. He also built hundreds of other buildings across Melbourne, including the Comedy Theatre, the Herald Building, Bank House, the old AMP Building, parts of Myer and many more.

An Assessment to the GENERAL RATE for the SHIRE OF FLINDERS
after the Rate of 1/1000
Pence in the Pound, by virtue of the "Local
FLINDERS ACT, 1885."

NAME	DESCRIPTION	VALUATION	ASSESSMENT	REMARKS
Langford
Clements

Peter explored Clements' early life, which had not been documented in the book written about him. Via Trove, it could be seen that Clements had won the first prize for architectural drawing at the Richmond School of Design in 1874 and was building houses and other buildings with a partner in the 1880s. However, delving into rates records in Ancestry.com, Public Records Office of Victoria (PROV) rates books and Boroondara Heritage Study materials told a much more 'acquisitive' story. In the twenty years from about 1885 he purchased around twenty blocks of land in the eastern suburbs, and around 30 acres (12 hectares) in Sorrento and Mornington.



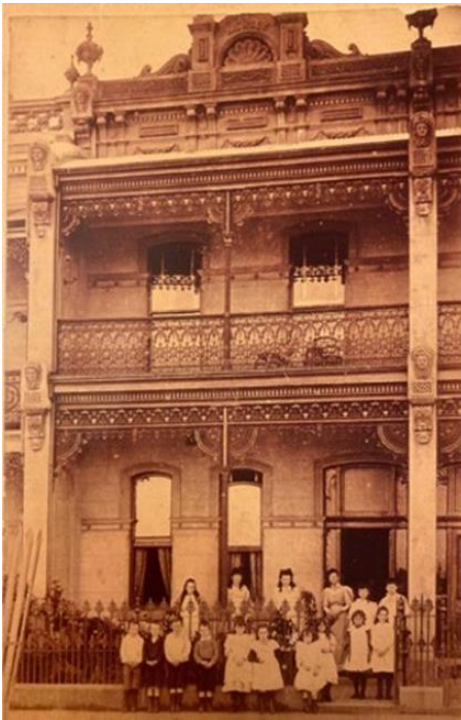
Clements was a 'developer' of sorts, having bought a significant area of land in Surrey Hills with C. W. Scheele, subdividing it and then selling it, with one of the streets named after him.

Some information was known about the Beer family, such as that Peter's great-great grandfather James Chalker Beer was a ship's captain who came to Melbourne in 1859.

For this branch, doing an Ancestry DNA test was vital to make major breakthroughs. Via the Thrulines feature in Ancestry.com, Peter contacted a lady in the US who appeared to be a good 'Beer' DNA match. She linked Peter with her sister, and she linked him with a cousin in England. That lady, Annette, had a treasure trove of relevant information, letters and photographs that she shared with Peter, including the first ever seen (in



Australia) photos of James Chalker Beer and his wife Emily. Annette also shared a letter from 1880 that her family still holds from James and Emily's son, Edwin, a letter that provided key information about James's early life.



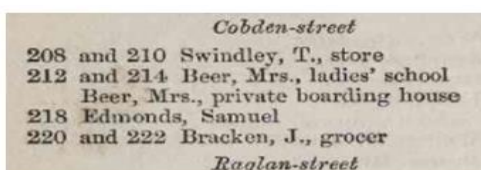
Sands & McDougall was again important to map James and Emily's movements in Melbourne in the 1860s and 1870s. The Melbourne University Sands & McDougall repository was crucial, providing online access to every Sands & McDougall directory from 1857 to 1880 (The State Library version has only every five years digitised). The image on the left shows that Emily had started to run a school in Moray Street South Melbourne by 1867 and was still there in 1868. She had remarried a few years after James had drowned near Christchurch and had changed her surname. Neither the 1865 or 1870 Sands & McDougall directories had records for her. It should be noted that the Melbourne University repository is not easy to use!

For this branch, Peter also used Google Maps Street View to help with his research. By collaborating with a previously unknown and still never face-to-face met cousin, they found that a photo of schoolchildren and teachers was taken in today's Park Street Brunswick, with one of the boys being Peter's grandfather.

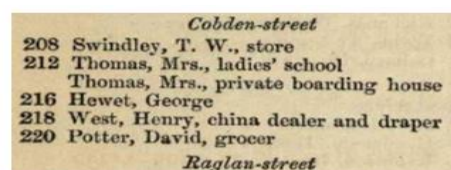


Peter also researched his maternal line, in particular his great-great grandmother – Francesca Helena Maria Katerina Karolina De Grandi (nee Dreher). Again, some basic information was available from Ancestry.com. She was born in 1824 in Wiesbaden in Germany and died in 1908 in Warrnambool in Victoria. Peter was greatly helped by two stories written by his forebears. One, written by his grandmother, was a history of the earlier generations. The other were the memoirs of Francesca De Grandi herself, written in about 1906 in the form of a poem. It starts:

Eighteen hundred twenty-four
 Brought me to my mother's door
 She in kindness took me in
 Though I was wretched, weak and thin
 Yet in time my limbs grew strong
 Never thought I'd live so long!
 God my mother took away
 When I barely left off play
 Five years more my father died
 I lost my house! Oh how I cried!



1867 – Moray St



1868 – Moray St

Professor Geoffrey Blainey's presentation earlier in 2021, reminded us about the importance of memoirs. Francesca's memoirs had never been seen by Peter or the Beer family in general.

Peter used another method to make major breakthroughs in this space, and 'find' these memoirs. The method involved Ancestry.com, Find-a-Grave, Google search and the telephone. Peter used Ancestry.com to flesh out this part of the family tree, piggybacking off other researchers' trees. He wanted to find current day descendants of Francesca, to see what useful information they might have about De Grandi family history. Ancestry doesn't show names and details of living people, so to find living descendants Peter used Find-a-Grave, and this tool luckily showed the names of children of a recently deceased De Grandi on his headstone. Information found in Trove showed that the family had long been involved in the cycling business. Using Google search, Peter found a bike shop in Geelong that appeared to be owned by De Grandi relatives. A phone call confirmed that the owners were Peter's relatives, and Peter was then linked with another relative, David. David had a treasure trove of information, stories, and photos, including Francesca's memoirs. This led to a second round of fleshing out the history of this side of the family tree and many more insights.

Peter concluded his presentation by summarising the key tools and methods he used to make these many family history breakthroughs.

	Source / Tool / Method	Comments
1	Ancestry.com	- Piggyback off other people's trees & research - DNA / Thrulines - Council rates records, electoral rolls, Census - Messaging
2	Trove (National Library newspapers etc. repository)	- BDM, articles, adverts, notices
3	Vic BDM (bdm.vic.gov.au)	- \$\$, but can get some information for free
4	Sands & McDougall (www.slv.vic.gov.au)	- And Melbourne University Sands & McDougall archives
5	Ryerson Index (www.ryersonindex.org)	- When and where people in Australia died
6	PROV (prov.vic.gov.au)	- Wills (some online), rates books, passenger records
7	BNA (www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk)	- Similar to Trove
8	National Archives	-Australia: AIF war records (some in Ancestry.com, too) -UK: Wills/Probate
9	Modern methods	- Google Maps, Facebook, LinkedIn, networking
10	Other	-Find My Past, Family Search, Find a Grave, Newspapers.com, US newspaper archives, Council +

Peter hopes that other members might like to do similar presentations in the future, so he and others can learn what methods, tools and processes others have used to make significant family history breakthroughs.

NEWS FROM THE BOROONDARA HERITAGE GROUP FOR ADVOCACY AND PROTECTION

Christina Branagan

A group of heritage-passionate Boroondara residents set up this new community heritage advocacy group in 2020. They each had some experience of saving heritage houses from demolition and in achieving first-time protection for other heritage places that have not been included in Boroondara Council's Heritage Overlay.



The group set itself some core objectives which include:

- supporting local people wishing to achieve protection for heritage grade places
- working with community and council to achieve effective, long-term protection of more of Boroondara's wonderful and important heritage; much of it of municipal significance to Melbourne and Victoria
- encouraging council to introduce a wide range of programs and activities that enable greater appreciation and education in the community about Boroondara's heritage architecture, its heritage places, and its history: Preservation through Participation

Demolition

It distressed many local people that during 2021 we continued to see the demolition of heritage-grade places in several parts of Boroondara.



6-8 Mangarra Road



5 Trumper Street.

Both 6-8 Mangarra Road and 5 Trumper Street have been demolished. Both houses were over 100 years old and were built in the early years of the Twentieth Century, just before World War I. Boroondara Council requested to be allowed to protect 5 Trumper Street as it met the grade for a Federation heritage building, but unfortunately because the house was not within a heritage precinct (i.e. a group or street of protected heritage buildings) the Planning Minister and Victorian State Planning Department refused the request and so it is now gone. Locals and BHGAP also lobbied to try to get protection for the house, but sadly lost.

We were able to identify from the rubble after the demolition that the house was built from locally made Hawthorn bricks, manufactured just down the road. The bricks came from the Fritsch Holzer Brickworks which were an historically important, famous local brick-making business, located near Camberwell Road and Roseberry Street. It operated at the same site for about 100 years from the 1880s to just before 1970. Much of Victorian-era Melbourne was built using their bricks. The old clay pits became Fritsch Holzer Park.

Community Heritage Campaign

Many residents from Roseberry Street and BHGAP are currently trying to achieve protection for about fifty heritage-grade houses on Roseberry Street, Hawthorn East, which is an original nineteenth-century worker cottage street with many weatherboard and brick cottages. The street is historically linked to the local brickworks, as are several of the streets nearby. Boroondara Council has recently created a new heritage precinct called the Brickfields Environs Precinct. Sadly, several nineteenth-century houses on Roseberry Street were demolished in 2021.



Some images of typical heritage-grade houses on Roseberry Street are shown at left. We are hoping that an ongoing council heritage review of new historical and architectural evidence provided by the community, heritage experts and the Hawthorn Historical Society might bring some good news.

Local Camberwell residents and BHGAP were also involved this year along with Boroondara Council in trying to achieve protection for some mid-century flats in Camberwell. Despite a huge amount of local activity, two heritage reports by heritage experts and Council proposing to the Planning Minister that the flats should be protected, this was refused. The flats were designed by highly regarded architects Mackay and Potter in the 1950s. They were developed as affordable rental homes by a local business figure, Mr Stanley Gilmour, who lived in Camberwell for many years.

These are some of the mid-century flats and original stairways at Kaydon Court, 1 Coloongatta Road, Camberwell.



Heritage protection success

In 2021, Boroondara Council managed to achieve protection for an important, early Robin Boyd house in Balwyn North that otherwise may have been demolished. The Robin Boyd Foundation, BHGAP, local people and many others from across Melbourne and the architectural world asked Council to try to protect the house when it was threatened with demolition during 2021.



Above: Wood House, 12-14 Tannock Street, North Balwyn, built in the 1940s at an important early stage of Boyd's career. Now graded Individually Significant.

BHGAP welcomes contact by anyone in the local community who wishes to find out more about heritage protection, and the group is keen for new members.

Contact us at: boroondaraheritageGAP@gmail.com

Christina Branagan & Nerida Muirden. (BHGAP Committee members)

REPORT OF MEETINGS 2021

28 September 2021 via Zoom

Stories from Members



John Maidment – James Bishop pipe organ

John showed us pictures of his beautiful mahogany pipe organ which was created by the James Bishop's firm in 1828. The organ is unusual as there is a well-documented provenance for it.



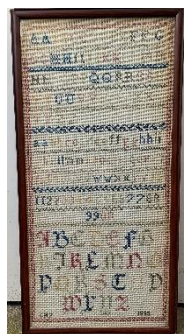
Barbara Alderton – Family tea setting 1898

Barbara shared with us the story of her paternal grandmother who purchased the fine porcelain tea service in India. It has delicate Japanese figures painted on it.



Volkhard Wehner – Maiden with a lute (painting)

Volkhard shared with us the story of the picture shown here. It is an original painting in watercolour, gouache and ink. It is signed E. Turck.



Wendy Baden Powell – Cecily Hilda Farmer embroidery / Tapestry

Wendy shared her aunt's fine embroidery work on the tapestry she created in 1895. The tapestry is quite large and the embroidery very detailed.



Liz Burton – Sir Joseph Banks

It was this portrait of Banks by Sir Joshua Reynolds (1771 - 1773) which Liz saw in the National Portrait Gallery, Canberra which sparked her interest in Sir Joseph Banks.

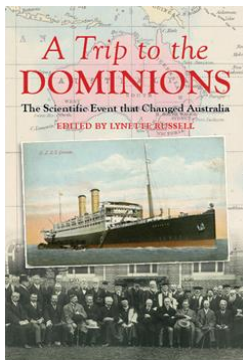
Robin Kelly – Balwyn Park

Robin talked about the Balwyn Park upper oval's majestic view of Mount Macedon at sunset, and the profound historic nature of the site.

Robin read to us a poem she wrote in appreciation of the park.

26 October 2021 via Zoom

Professor Lynette Russell - *A Trip to the Dominions: The Scientific Event that Changed Australia*



On the eve of the Great War, in 1914 the Australian Federal Government sponsored the British Association for the Advancement of Science (BAAS) to travel to Australia for their annual conference. Over 150 scientists were fully funded by the Australian Commonwealth Government. They travelled on three ships especially commanded for this purpose.

The logistics of organising such an event were enormous and started several years before the event. Archives store thousands of telegrams, notable because the government made telegrams relating to the conference free of charge.

Across five major cities (Perth 28 July – 4 August, Adelaide 8 - 12 August, Melbourne 13 – 19 August, Sydney 20 – 26 August and Brisbane 27 August – 1 September) public talks, demonstrations and excursions familiarised the visiting scientists with Australian natural and hard sciences, geology, botany as well as anthropology. In terms of anthropology, the congress presented a unique opportunity to showcase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. The Association, deeply impressed by this, urged the Federal Government to support a chair in anthropology to be based at an Australian university. The visit was intended to continue to Tasmania and New Zealand but the arrival of the scientists in Perth coincided with the outbreak of World War I.

The visit was an enormous investment in the culture of Australia. Outcomes included the Association's recommendations to establish a Commonwealth Scientific Institute (later CSIRO) and to develop a national telescope at Mount Stromlo in the ACT. Although these were delayed by the outbreak of war, the visit left a legacy we are still beneficiaries of today.

23 November 2021 via Zoom

Peter Beer – Digging into Family History



Peter Beer gave a presentation about his family history journey. The presentation had an emphasis on the many online sources he leveraged, and methods and processes used to make significant family history breakthroughs, and how his family history journey is relevant to Camberwell Historical Society members, both from a process perspective and from a Camberwell, Boroondara and Melbourne perspective in general. There was so much interest in

this topic that Peter has kindly written out the text of his talk in the main article in this newsletter.

VALE Phyllis Esme Calvert 11/1/1923 - 8/11/2021

Wendy Baden-Powell

I knew Phyllis for 38 years. Our friendship began in 1983, meeting on a tram together with Pauline Emery, the three of us going into Melbourne to attend our places of work. Phyllis was a keen gardener and loved her roses. She loved reading books. She loved cats and had many as pets.

Phyllis Esme Calvert was born on 11 January 1923 in the small country town of Lismore, about 170 kilometres west of Melbourne. She was the first child of Dorothy and James Calvert and had four brothers and a sister. Phyllis's childhood was spent on a farm called 'Calmurra' at Mount Bute. Phyllis attended the small single classroom of Mount Bute School. She moved to Melbourne to continue her education.



In November 1942, Phyllis moved to South Yarra and worked as a dental assistant but at the tender age of 19 she joined the Red Cross Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD). Following her training, she was posted to the Heidelberg Military Repatriation Hospital General Hospital and served there for the rest of the war with the Australian Army Medical Women's Service (AAMWS). She spent much of her time treating soldiers returning from the battlefields of New Guinea. Following the cessation of war, Phyllis stayed on at the hospital as a nursing orderly until July 1947.

Phyllis was always very interested in family history and genealogy, particularly with the Calvert, Murray (Phyllis' mother's maiden name was Gordon Murray) and Savage families. When the hospital was paid a visit by the distinguished Lieutenant General Sir Stanley Savage, Phyllis had to fight the temptation to step forward and introducing herself as a possible long-lost cousin!

For her wartime service, Phyllis was eligible for the General Service Medal, Australian Service Medal, and 1939-1945 War Medal but wasn't awarded those medals until January 2013. Both Phyllis and her brother Jim (who served with the artillery in the 9th Division) have their names gracing the Roll of Honour at the Mount Bute School.

Phyllis was very proud of her Scottish heritage, and firmly insisted that the family were descendants of Rob Roy McGregor, despite historians insisting that nobody can claim such ancestry! Phyllis was an active member of various Scottish Heraldry and Clans societies and travelled to Scotland in 1976 to visit the land of her ancestors in Montrose. She was a member of the Camberwell Historical Society for many years and held the position as archivist. She was also a very keen member of the Hawthorn Glen Combined Probus Club. She enjoyed all the activities run by these two organisations.

When Phyllis became very frail, she moved from her home in Riversdale Road to Camberwell Manor and then onto Shenley Manor, where she died peacefully in her sleep on 8 November 2021. Phyllis will be sadly missed by all her family and friends.



DATES FOR MEETINGS 2022

Meetings will be held in the Ashburton Library Meeting Room on the 4th Tuesdays at 8pm.

Tuesday 22 February 8pm	Bruce Watson - Early Sound Recordings
Tuesday 22 March 8pm	Professor Jenny Hocking – The Palace Letters
Tuesday 26 April 8pm	Jennifer McArthur - The sinking of the SS <i>Montevideo Maru</i>
Tuesday 24 May 8pm	Leigh Norton – Boroondara Reconciliation Plan

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 2021

Camberwell Historical Society's financial year operates from 1 July to 30 June. Subscriptions for the 2021 – 2022 financial year are due and payable from 1 July 2021. 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

ABN 79 935 200 741 Incorporation No A0041541 Y
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President — George Fernando; Secretary - Adèle Fernando-Swart; Treasurer – Roy Alderton

Committee members — Bryony Cosgrove, Alister Bennie and Jennifer McArthur

Camberwell History: Editor — Adèle Fernando-Swart

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