

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 Sophie Torney

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

George Fernando

We are faced with an unprecedented attack on our heritage buildings and local culture and environment by the State Government's Activity Centres legislation. Boroondara Council has been active in their stance against this. Boroondara Council has published a draft Heritage Strategy.

Please respond to Boroondara's consultation opportunity by following the link below.



Have your say on our draft Heritage Strategy

Heritage is constantly evolving, and we need a vision that grows with it.

From now until 5 pm Tuesday 22 July, we are inviting all Boroondara residents to review and give feedback on our draft Heritage Strategy.

This strategy broadens our approach to heritage to include celebration and promotion. It builds on what you told us about heritage – from Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung cultural heritage and iconic architecture to oral histories, natural landscapes, and more.

Have your say on our draft Heritage Strategy in the survey and at our drop-in sessions:

[Draft Heritage Strategy consultation page](#)

Please see a summary of the Heritage Strategy in George Demetrios' article below.

BOROONDARA'S DRAFT HERITAGE STRATEGY OPEN FOR COMMUNITY CONSULTATION BETWEEN 10 JUNE TO 22 JULY 2025

George Demetrios

The City of Boroondara has released a Draft Heritage Strategy to address the challenges and opportunities related to our municipality's unique local heritage.

The strategy is divided into three separate parts:

- The Boroondara Heritage Strategy 2025-2041
- The Boroondara Heritage Action Plan 2025-29
- The Boroondara Historical Societies Background paper

1. Overview of the Boroondara Draft Heritage Strategy 2025–2041

The City of Boroondara's Draft Heritage Strategy 2025–2041 provides a comprehensive framework for protecting, preserving, celebrating, and promoting our municipality's unique local heritage. This includes the recognition of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung culture, heritage streetscapes, architecture, and broader cultural history.

2. Overview of the Draft Heritage Action Plan 2025–2029

The City of Boroondara's Draft Heritage Action Plan 2025–2029 outlines practical steps the Council will take over the next four years to identify, protect, manage, and promote Boroondara's heritage, translating the long-term vision of the Heritage Strategy into specific, time-bound actions for 2025–2029.

3. Overview of the Draft Historical Societies Background Paper

The City of Boroondara has also released a background paper on local historical societies as part of the public consultation for its Draft Heritage Strategy 2025–2041. This paper is intended to inform and support the broader strategy, highlighting the vital role that local historical societies play in preserving, promoting, and sharing Boroondara's heritage.

To learn more, members can attend one of the following Council drop-in sessions:

Monday 16 June 2025 – 3 pm to 6 pm

Location: Ashburton Library

Thursday 19 June 2025 – 4 pm to 7 pm

Location: Kew Library

Wednesday 25 June 2025 – 4 pm to 7 pm

Location: Balwyn Library

Sunday 6 July 2025 – 10 am to 2 pm

Location: Hawthorn Arts Centre

Sunday 13 July 2025 – 8 am to 11 am

Location: Camberwell Sunday Market

The timeline for the draft Heritage Strategy is set out below:

- **Timeline item 1 – complete - Community consultation**

492 community members shared their thoughts on what we should consider and include in a future heritage strategy.

27 May to 8 July 2024

- **Timeline item 2 – complete - Review community feedback**

Council staff reviewed the feedback and prepared a draft Heritage Strategy.

Late-2024

- **Timeline item 3 – active - Community consultation on draft strategy: Tuesday 10 June 2025 – 5 pm on Tuesday 22 July 2025**
- **Timeline item 4 – incomplete - Review community feedback and finalise Heritage Strategy**

All feedback reviewed, required updates made and the Heritage Strategy is presented for final adoption by Council.

From July 2025

Submissions must be made through the Council website, at: <https://yoursay.boroondara.vic.gov.au/heritage-strategy>
Once on the page, submitters must click the ‘Start Survey’ link, as shown below:



It is important that as many members as possible make a submission to the draft Heritage Strategy as it will be the only opportunity that the Boroondara community will have to have their say before the draft is finalised.

If you have any questions about the draft Heritage Strategy, please contact Principal Heritage Planner **Marie Sheriff** on (03) 9278 4514 or via email at

Marie.Sheriff@boroondara.vic.gov.au

PRESERVING BOROONDARA'S BLUESTONE HERITAGE AND THE BOROONDARA DRAFT HERITAGE STRATEGY

George Demetrios

After the release of Boroondara Council's draft Road Materials Policy elicited a strong response from residents, in support of preserving our municipality's historic bluestone laneways, crossovers, kerb and channels, the Draft Boroondara Heritage Action Plan 2025-2029 has

acknowledged this community concern by including a proposal for a study of Boroondara's bluestone and concrete heritage, as outlined below:

1.2	Council's bluestone and concrete roads and laneways Investigate the heritage significance of Council-owned bluestone and concrete roads and laneways.
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When making a submission on Point 1.2 of the draft Boroondara Heritage Action Plan 2025-2029, in our feedback we must include the following:

- That we support a heritage study into the heritage significance of Council-owned bluestone and concrete roads and laneways, carried out by an expert heritage consultant, but that the best way forward with the heritage study would be to also include an analysis of our municipality's historic bluestone crossovers and brick laneways.
- Whilst we are supportive of the four-year timeframe, we want higher priority given to undertaking the heritage study as soon as possible within the 2025 – 2029 period to ensure that we can document and preserve as much of our remaining original bluestone heritage and historic intact concrete/brick infrastructure before it is lost forever.
- That we are supportive of Point 1.2 of the draft Boroondara Heritage Action Plan, but would like to see put on hold any reconstructions of original bluestone gutters and crossovers, and the discontinuance of any bluestone laneways until the heritage study has been completed, to avoid potentially losing, in the interim, Victorian, Edwardian or Interwar streetscape assets that the study may identify as historically significant.

The inclusion of Point 1.2 in the draft Heritage Action Plan highlights the significant impact of the Camberwell Historical Society's advocacy, particularly through member engagement with the draft Road Materials Policy. Point 1.2 directly acknowledges the Society's efforts in demonstrating to Council the vital importance of protecting local bluestone heritage, which is not only valued by CHS members but is also integral to preserving the broader history and character of the City of Boroondara.

The recognition of bluestone as a key heritage asset in the Action Plan reflects Council's awareness of the community's commitment and passion for safeguarding these unique historical features for future generations.

In conclusion, providing feedback on the three documents that form the draft Heritage Strategy during the consultation period is the most effective way for Camberwell Historical Society members to ensure their voices are heard and that their heritage values are reflected in the final strategy.

Active participation in this process allows the members of the Camberwell Historical Society to directly influence the direction and priorities of local heritage planning in Boroondara, helping us to safeguard our municipality's unique history for future generations.

DONATION TO CAMBERWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTION

A number of books on historical subjects were donated to the CHS collection by Dawn Lord from the collection of the late Peter Lord.

REPORT OF MEETINGS 2025

23 March 2025 **Major General Harold Edward 'Pompey' Elliott Commemorative Service Burwood Cemetery**

A commemorative service is held annually on 23 March for Major General Harold Edward 'Pompey' Elliott by the Friends of the 15th Brigade. Pompey Elliott was from Camberwell. Members of Camberwell Historical Society attended this service. George Fernando laid a wreath on behalf of CHS. Lambis Englazos was MC, Ross McMullan spoke of the appreciation Pompey's men had for him as a leader and commander. A talk was given by Ross McMullan at the Camberwell RSL, following the service.



25 March 2025 **Activity Centres and their implications - Christina Branagan Boroondara Heritage Group For Advocacy And Protection**

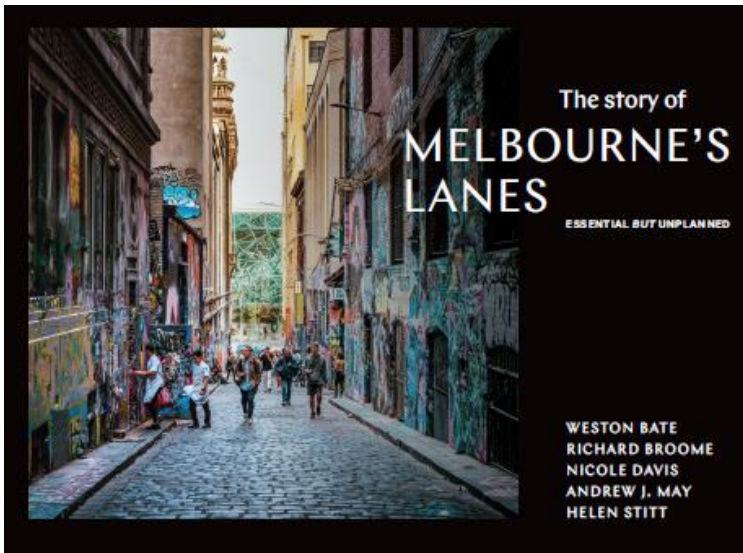


A presentation was given by Christina Branagan of the Boroondara Heritage Group For Advocacy And Protection about the State Governments Activity Centres. She asked members to write to the Planning Minister and other Members of Parliament about the issue. Christina raised the significant implications of the Activity Centres for Camberwell and the other suburbs of Boroondara.

25 March 2025 **Laneways of Melbourne - Emeritus Professor Richard Broome**

The story of Melbourne's laneways is the story of place. People are good at telling stories about people and place. Our First Nations people are very good storytellers. The stories passed down in an oral tradition. They always told stories about place and the great ancestors.

The missionaries who came thought Aboriginal people had no religion at first but later realized that they were deeply spiritual with a deep connection to place. Western society has told stories about place for a very long time. Herodotus (484 – 425 BCE) told of the Greco-Persian war, of people and place.



Deeds that Won the Empire by W. H. Fitchett, an historical account written in the late 19th century was read by many. The work captures significant battles and events that shaped the British Empire, emphasizing the valor and heroism displayed during these monumental struggles. This book influenced the attitudes of men who went to WWI.

Sir Simon Schama, British historian and television presenter, wrote the book, *Landscape and Memory* (1995), which focused on

the relationship between physical environment and folk memory, expressed in myth and story. Thus, any landscape has layers of meaning. Richard used Merrijig Creek as an example. People remembering a place, will tell stories about shops, buildings, events and people.

The Story of Melbourne's Lanes: Essential but Unplanned by Weston Bate, Richard Broome, Nicole Davis, Andrew J. May, Helen Stitt is the latest of The Royal Historical Society of Melbourne's publications. It follows *Remembering Melbourne* and *Melbourne's Twenty Decades*.

Originally Hoddle planned large city blocks and wide main streets. The lanes were not on Hoddle's Grid. After the land boom of the 1830s and the subsequent subdivision of land, alleys and laneways were developed in 1840s. Melbourne developed from the South-West first as it was near the docks. This was followed by the government and entertainment precincts and then the doctors in the Collins Street area. Chinatown came in the 1850s.



In 1856 there were 192 lanes of which 80 had names. In the 1850s the suburbs of East and South Melbourne developed. It was a walking city. Residences could not be too far from places of work. The rich lived alongside the poor. By the 1880s the lanes were becoming disreputable, people started moving to the suburbs. Rental properties were poorly maintained.

In 1895 there were 264 lanes of which 158 were named. They were unsavoury and

unhealthy. Churches created missions to help the poor. Slum clearances started and pathing and drains were installed. There were no open spaces. There was a fear of letting people congregate and a distrust of meeting places where the right to vote and other social issues could be raised. There were once about 1000 laneways which has now been reduced to about 500.

Weston Bate wrote the original book on Melbourne's lanes *Essential But Unplanned: The Story of Melbourne's Lanes* in 1994. It continues to be well borrowed from the State Library. It has long been out of print. In 2024, when *The Story of Melbourne's Lanes: Essential but Unplanned* was released, it was 30 years after the original book and 100 years after Weston Bate was born.

Unfortunately, when the RHSV came to update and extend the original book, there were no files for it still in existence. The authors had to recreate the original and find the source of the pictures from the original book again. The original images in the book did not always identify where they had come from. All original copyright holders were contacted and permission gained for all images, old and new. The Hawthorn U3A camera group helped by systematically photographing the lanes and the RHSV now has over 3000 contemporary images from the laneways of the city. 150 of these were used in the book. Producing the book strengthened and increased the RHSV group of volunteers. The book was launched in October 2024 by Rob Adams, the Town Planner of the City of Melbourne.

29 April 2025

Vince Lazzaro

Recollections: a story of three women of Eolian descent



Bartolina Virgona with eldest daughter Mary in her garden.



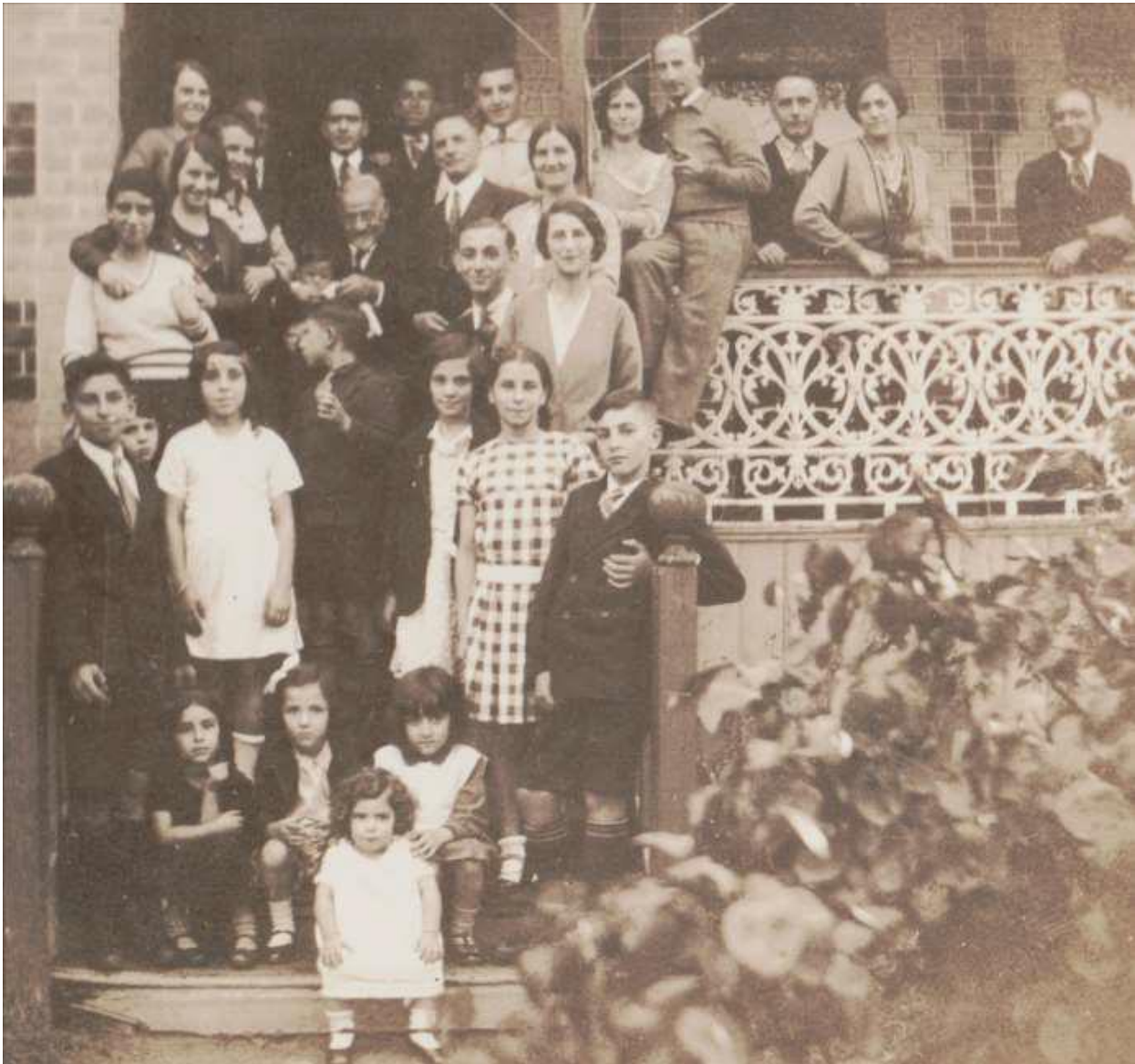
Bartolina Virgona.

A descendant of Eolian grandparents on both sides of his family, Vincent Lazzaro is the second eldest of 9 children. Vince has been actively researching his Eolian history over recent years- he has been to Salina on 3 occasions. Vince compiled the book, "Recollections – Le memorie di tre Donne Eoliane", so that his family, especially the younger members, would have an understanding of the special role women played in the family's immigration experience, and their Eolian heritage. Eolian women are often overlooked, yet a closer examination reveals their profound impact on their families and communities.

Vince's talk is largely based on the recollections of three women, his mother, her mother and her mother all in their 90s at the time of his interviews with them. These three Eolian women, whose resilience and contributions were pivotal to their families' success and their flourishing during Melbourne's early days.

Vince Started his talk saying that he had decided to research and provide a historical record for his family, which over the generations, has become very removed from their eolian origins.

Vince's paternal grandfather (Vincenzo Giuseppe Lazzaro) was born in Malfa, Salina in 1898 and came to Australia in 1905. His maternal grandfather (Luigi Rodriquez) came to Australia in 1903 from Naples, Italy and Malfa, Salina. His maternal grandmother Mary's parents (Bartolomeo and Bartolina Virgona/Pirera) came to Australia from Salina in late 1880s.



Above: Carmel (small child) at Nonno Lorenzo Rodriquez's birthday celeb (1930s) at 26 Denmark Hill Rd, Hawthorn East

Instead of telling the story of the men, this is a story of three women of Eolian descent: Bartolina (Bartolomea) Pirera, married to Bartolomeo Virgona, Bartolina's daughter Mary (Maria Concetta) Virgona, married to Luigi Rodriquez, Mary's daughter Carmel Rose Rodriquez, married to (Joseph) Vincent Lazzaro.

What is it about these three particular Eolian women?

- They each took on the traditional or archetypal head-of-family role. Predominantly seen as the 'male's role', incl before and after their male partner's passing.
- Their sense of drive and entrepreneurship to better support their families.
- An ability to establish themselves in a new community, incl breaking through language barriers, and other adversities.
- An exceptional attitude and ability to support those less fortunate.
- An ability to educate and grow large families in difficult circumstances.
- An ability to maintain and nourish the connections within their immediate and extended families, despite the ever-changing dynamics and expectations.
- Helped many other migrants to settle in

Life in Melbourne in the late 1880s and early 1900s when the first eolian families came, was difficult. Australia was post-depression. The families faced significant housing, employment and health issues. Illiteracy in Italy was close to 80%, higher in the islands.

Vince finished his talk with the following quote:

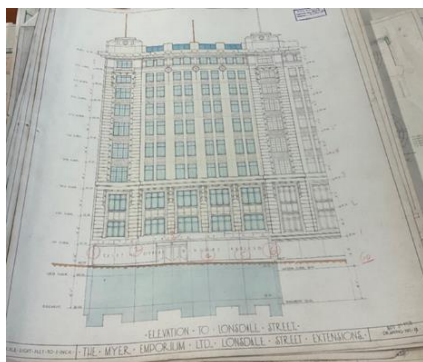
“Aeolian women traditionally accept and support their husband’s occupation..... Who have only had a year or two of education..... They seem to have the wisdom of ages.....’centuries of civilization” (“Italians in Australia (3 men, 2 women), from the Eolian Islands”, by Maria Triaca (Santospirito) circa 1977)



This quote beautifully captures the remarkable resilience and spirit of these multi-generational Aeolian women, whose tireless contributions allowed the community and its people to flourish in those early days in Melbourne.

Left: Bishop Re (Lipari) with the then Dr Mannix’s Italian Relief Committee circa 1951. Please note Vince’s grandmother Mary on the right. Her sister Lina, beside her, was awarded the Star of Liberty by Italy for her work.

NEXT CHS MEETING



Clements Langford: From Cottages to Colosseums - A Melbourne Master Builder’s Lasting Legacy

Peter Beer

Saturday 21 June 2025 2pm

25 Inglesby Road, Camberwell 3124

Clements Langford was a well-known master builder in the early 20th Century. 70 plus buildings, warehouses, factories, shops, cottages, houses, halls and spires built by Clements Langford across Melbourne from 1880 to 1930 that are still standing, including Myer Lonsdale Street, the Herald Sun Building, St. Paul’s Cathedral Spires and many more. Many old photos and architectural drawings from the University of Melbourne Archives will be shown during Peter Beer’s presentation.

DATES FOR MEETINGS 2025

Saturday June 21 2pm Peter Beer Clements Langford: From Cottages to Colosseums - A Melbourne Master Builder's Lasting Legacy.
Peter's most recent project has been to catalogue buildings erected around Melbourne by his great grandfather, Clements Langford, a well-known master builder in the early 20th Century.

Saturday July 19 2pm Dr Zac Gorman The Menzies Ascendancy: Fortune, Stability, Progress 1954–1961 On 30 November 1954, Robert Menzies became Australia's longest serving prime minister, a record he has held ever since.

Saturday August 23 2pm AGM AGM and Show and Tell from the members

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 2025 - 2026

Camberwell Historical Society's financial year operates from 1 July to 30 June. Subscriptions for the 2025 – 2026 financial year were due and payable from 1 July 2025. 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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