



# Glen Eira Historical Society Newsletter

Number 1 March 2013

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## Profiling Felicitie Campbell



Each Newsletter will profile a local personality. We start this series with Felicitie Campbell who is the backbone of Glen Eira history.

Born in Beaufort, she came to *Glenmoore* the family mansion in St George's Road, Elsternwick when she was four years old and lived there until she married Jack (John) Campbell in 1955.

Felicitie and Jack moved to Sydney then back to Melbourne, and returned to *Glenmoore* with their five children in 1968 – where they still live.

Felicitie attended MLC Elsternwick, Fred J. Cato branch then went to Swinburne Technical College for a Commercial Art Course.

Her loyalty and devotion to her old school is enormous. She was secretary of the Old Collegians and on the School Council in that position for 20 years, until the merger with Wesley.

Although much of her childhood was spent at *Glenmoore*, time was also spent on her uncle's property at Beaufort, where the children rode horses, worked hard shifting

sheep from paddock to paddock and to the shearing sheds, and were particularly busy at lambing time.

*Glenmoore* was built by Hugh Moore in 1868 and has been almost continually lived in by the family, apart from a small break between 1882 and 1903. This was caused when Hugh built a group of shops in Glen Huntly Road – Moore's Stores – which in fact was built in the front garden of the house, as it faced Glen Huntly Road. Sophie, his wife, was so distressed at losing her garden that she refused to stay in the house.

When Hugh Moore died in 1903 his daughter Harriet Hall inherited, so continuing the chain of family occupancy.

Felicitie has always been an active tennis player at St John's Church, Elsternwick and at home where she regularly arranged tennis parties and catered for them.

Felicitie was also an original Caulfield Historical Society committee member, continuing on as President, and only handing over to John O'Callaghan in 2011.

She oversaw the change to Glen Eira Historical Society and the shift to the current premises. Twice a week she is on duty at the front desk.

Felicitie is also a long-term member of the National Trust and is a volunteer at *Labassa*, a particular love of hers.

Jack Campbell joined Caulfield Council in 1976 and became Mayor in 1986–1987 and 1987–1988. It was a time of great involvement for Felicitie as

Mayoress. This was her first involvement with *Labassa*.

Felicitie and Jack Campbell are Local Living Treasures for their dedication to history and the community over so many years.

Glen Eira Historical Society Inc  
Meeting and Presentation

Speaker Dr Gary Presland  
***Pre-European  
Aboriginal Culture  
in Glen Eira.***

Wednesday 27 March 2013  
at 7.30pm

Theatrette  
Glen Eira Town Hall  
Corner Hawthorn and  
Glen Eira Roads Caulfield

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Carol Stals and Geoffrey Paterson edited *Glen Eira Historical Newsletter*, Issue 1. We thank Felicitie Campbell, Mary Gurr, Ailsa Hunt, John O'Callaghan and Meryl Saynor for their assistance.

## President's Column



As the years pass it is not getting any easier to recruit and retain members and volunteers to support the Society's activities.

We are therefore encouraged by the success of our introduction in 2012 of meetings, open to the public, with a guest speaker.

We are particularly pleased with the increase in membership and in the interest in local history that these initiatives have generated.

In 2013 we plan to implement a variety of initiatives that capitalise on this success.

These include the introduction of this newsletter, the first for the Glen Eira Historical Society. We are particularly indebted to Carol Stals and Geoffrey Paterson for their work in getting this first edition to press.

Members activities will be expanded with events based on the topics covered by our guest speakers. These and other initiatives in the pipeline provide confidence of another successful year for the Society.

**John O'Callaghan**

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The next *Newsletter* will be published in September with a 15 July 2013 deadline.

We welcome all contributions.

## What is History Week?

History Week is celebrated in October across Victoria. It is sponsored and promoted by the Royal Historical Society of Victoria Inc, with a wide range of activities available.

In 2011, GEHS opened with a display, for the first time. We were delighted to see a small crowd waiting at the door at 10.30am on the Sunday. The attendance was steady and all were interested. Many had information to offer.

This inspired us to open two days on the Sunday and the Tuesday of History Week in 2012. We prepared a display featuring Thomas Watts, his now demolished home *Glen Huntly* in Glen Huntly Road, and family documents about this architect and pioneer of Glen Eira. Thomas Watts was an upright man of integrity. His generosity of spirit

in allowing various religions to use his living room for Sunday services, and his interest in Public Education, did him great credit.

He was a generous supporter of the Common School, which became Caulfield State School No 773 in Glen Huntly Road.

Our display made this connection by linking the two and including a display of the school.

Children attending No 773 contributed their pictures.

Other items from our collection were displayed including some fragile books

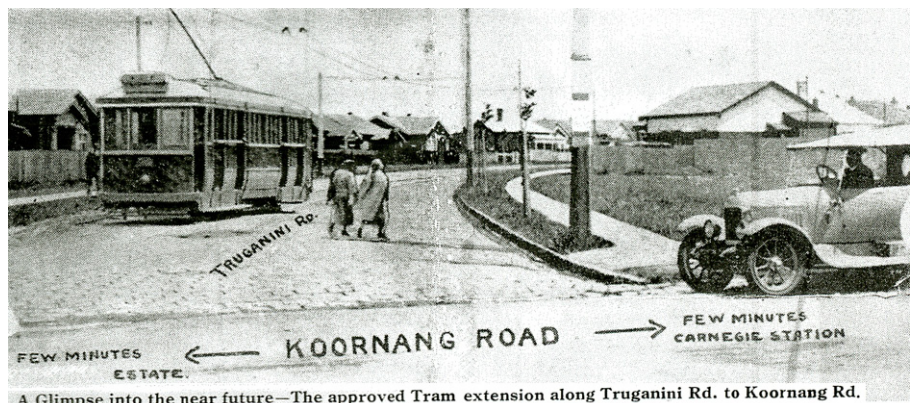
which needed gloves for viewing.

It was very satisfying to come into the room and find several young women sitting quietly, reading our material with avid interest.



## Then and now . . .

### *Carnegie tram terminus 1924 and 2013*



A Glimpse into the near future—The approved Tram extension along Truganini Rd. to Koornang Rd.





# GEHS Meeting Speakers in 2012

## Murrumbeena and the Boyds 23 May 2012

Colin Smith, local resident and author, spoke lovingly of the family and its generations of members, all involved in the Arts in a variety of ways. They built an Art Compound in Murrumbeena called *Open Country* and there Merric and Doris built their studios and their children ran free, gaining a wealth of artistic knowledge. They in turn worked in various studios around the property and raised their own children. It is a fascinating inter-generational art history. Their ceramic business was at 500 Neerim Road. Most of the family is buried at the Brighton Cemetery.

## Not Just A Load Of Old Bones, a History of the Brighton Cemetery 22 March 2012

Jan Rigby gave a very informative talk and PowerPoint presentation. For those unfamiliar with the *new* approach to cemeteries, they are now very welcoming and interesting places of local history. Jan's ancestors were local pioneers, convicts and farming folk who contributed greatly to the development of Glen Eira. The cemetery is a resting place of some fascinating people.

*See page 6 for Members Only follow up activity at Brighton Cemetery.*

## Grave Stories of the Victoria Market 25 July 2012

Dr Celestina Sagazio is an historian, author and Cultural Heritage Manager at Southern Cemeteries Trust.

Her presentation covered the history of the Old Melbourne Cemetery, now the Victoria Market. When it was closed about 9,000 bodies were left behind, as their graves were unmarked. They now lie beneath the market.

The people buried there were the Pioneers of early Melbourne, including John Batman. It contained the usual burial sections but had special sections for Jews, Quakers and the Aboriginal community. The first people hanged in Melbourne were buried just outside the cemetery walls. The old walls now form part of the market.

## Art Deco comes to Glen Eira

Talk on 28 November 2012 by Robyn Grow



Over fifty members and visitors were treated to Robyn Grow's informative whirlwind introduction to the many aspects of Art Deco with examples drawn from Glen Eira and wider Melbourne. Art Deco is a design movement which originated in Europe and occupied the period between 1910 and 1950. It was a reaction by young designers after World War I to previous Victorian and Edwardian designs. These designers were impatient to use new materials and techniques to produce simple and elegant buildings, clothing and appliances. Finances also encouraged Art Deco which used such new materials as terrazzo, glass for improved lighting, and white metals such as stainless steel, aluminium, and chrome to build quick and cheaper buildings.

Buildings were plain, streamlined, functional and long, often anchored by a semi-circular feature. Nautical themes featured and vertical fins and neon

lights on the facades attracted customers. Houses may feature waterfall designs, sculptured chimneys, terrazzo steps and used materials that made the inside and outside of houses appealing. Housing estates produced houses with different designs. Cars, planes and trains were sleek with minimum ornamentation while industrial designers used such new materials as Bakelite to produce simpler and cheaper home appliances.

Local Art Deco buildings include the Percy Everett designed building and circular tower at Monash University Caulfield (pictured), houses at 195 and 197 Hawthorn Road, a 1930s Caulfield Town Hall extension, houses and shops designed by AV Jennings including the Beauville Estate in Murrumbeena, Acland Street shops, and the Dendy Theatre in Brighton.

Wider Melbourne buildings include the Heidelberg Town Hall, Manchester Unity Building, the former Russell Street police headquarters, Foy and Gibson, Myers and former Buckley and Nunn buildings in Bourke Street, Glenferrie Oval grandstand with its nautical theme, Melford Motors in Queensberry Street, and flats and apartments in Elwood, St Kilda and South Yarra.

**Robyn Grow is President of the Art Deco and Modernism Society.**  
**The Society's website is [www.artdeco.org.au](http://www.artdeco.org.au)**

## Theatres and Cinemas in Glen Eira 26 September 2012

Gerry Kennedy is President and Archivist at the Cinema and Theatre Society of Victoria (CATHS). His talk and visual presentation had the audience gasping with recognition and memory of places they had attended years ago. Most of these have now gone.

In the heyday of *the movies* there were large cinemas in every area and these were very well attended. Gerry explained how the film reels were often rushed from one cinema to another during interval.

People attended regularly and often more than once a week. It was sometimes a whole family outing. Movie magazines were collected and read with glee. Remember the *Crying Room* at the back for people with babies? Many people would like to hear this talk again, something for consideration.

**The next Newsletter will be published in September 2013.**  
**We invite contributions and assistance in production from our members.**  
**Please contact the GEHS office if you can assist in any way.**

# Cinemas in Glen Eira

*Cinemas were central to Glen Eira social life. While most cinemas have closed, Meryl Saynor's article shows that fond memories remain. We also look at Elsternwick's Classic Cinema which still entertains people of all ages in Glen Eira.*

## Memories of Glen Eira's Cinemas

by Meryl Saynor, Carnegie

The 26 September 2012 talk was very interesting – and brought back memories of growing up and going regularly to local cinemas.

My family lived in Caulfield North until I was 18. As a family we would go the *Astor* in Windsor most Friday nights. Sitting upstairs always in the lounge, we got there by tram along Dandenong Road to Chapel Street, as we didn't have a car.

Thank heavens the *Astor* has been saved and restored to its Art Deco beauty.

There would be a newsreel, then a black and white "B" film, interval, and then the main film – sometimes a musical in colour!

The theatre was always full Friday and Saturday nights. We had to book seats and an usherette would show us to them.

On Saturday afternoons my sister and I would walk to the *New Malvern* cinema (Hoyts), corner Dandenong and Glenferrie Roads – cartoons, a serial, sometimes an exciting Western!

There was another cinema further along Glenferrie Road, *The Embassy*, later on re-named *Metro Malvern*. My mother played piano for Community singing there once a month and in school holidays I would go with her by tram and join in singing along.

Those two Malvern theatres are long gone – demolished for commercial buildings!

When we moved to Elsternwick in the 1950s, we went to the *Renown* in Glen Huntly Road, now an apartment complex with

shops below, and the *Esquire* near Elsternwick Station, now the *Classic*.

For many years, we used these cinemas, which showed current films with great success. Television came in 1956 with the Olympic Games, so movies, radio and local dances were our entertainment.

I have always been a keen movie fan from quite a young age and as a young girl would make scrapbooks of movie stars and their stories from loads of magazines.

I am so glad there are still just a few of those older cinemas saved and restored on both sides of Melbourne. My favourite examples are the *Astor* and the fabulous Art Deco *Rivoli* in Camberwell.

People still love going to the movies despite technology and other sources of entertainment.

PS Meryl has a fantastic memory for film details, the cast and story of each one.

## History of the Classic Theatre

The original building was completed in 1889 and established as a picture theatre called *The Elsternwick Theatre* in 1911. It is of historical significance as the longest continuously operating cinema in Victoria.

The Gordon Street premises near Elsternwick Station were originally intended as a skating rink and public hall. It was used for many years as a public hall but eventually gave way to the growing popularity of films.

A canvas screen was stretched across the back of the stage and lit by two gas lamps while the projection equipment was erected

inside the foyer on a scaffold.

In 1911, Frank Richardson bought the building and added it to his list of cinemas. It was renovated to a seating capacity of 664 and this was gradually increased over the years.

The Elsternwick Theatre closed in August 1929 and became a dance hall from 1931 to 1946, first as *The Astor* then the *Dorchester Dance Hall*. In 1946, it was reopened as the *Esquire Theatre*. In 1969, under the name of the *Sharon Cinema* it was badly damaged by fire.

The *Classic Cinema* has been operating since 1971 and changed ownership in 1999 to Eddie Tama, with Readings Cinemas, to bring it to new life and add extra screen space. In 2011, they changed from 35mm projection to digital presentation.

## Leo Rosner and the Classic

Leo Rosner, an Elsternwick resident, was born in Poland in 1918. He met his wife through music and the night they were married, 17.1.1943, he was taken to concentration camp. His wife Helen was deported to the camp eight weeks later. They were eventually reunited and settled in Melbourne.

His story was interwoven into *Schindler's Ark* by Tom Keneally and later Steven Spielberg's film *Schindler's List*. Schindler, a German, twice intervened to save Leo's life,

When the film premiered at the *Classic* in 1993, Leo Rosner was a vital part of the wonderful evening, which closed off the street outside the cinema. He gave generously of his musical talent and history all of his life and died in 2008.

## Book review



### ***1835: the founding of Melbourne and the conquest of Australia.***

Black Inc, Collingwood, 2011.

ISBN 9781863955683 paper 257 pages.

Reviewer: Mary Gurr is a GEHS member and former teacher librarian.

We thank the publisher for supplying a review copy.

1835 is a familiar tale of private and political greed, favours for mates, short term solutions, insufficient help and funding for the powerless, some muddled good intentions, ineffectual government, regret for possibilities lost and the inevitable triumph of the rich and powerful.

James Boyce manages to weave and elaborate on these threads to tell a compelling story of what was originally an illegal settlement, not only from the point of view of the Aboriginal people but also in the eyes of the British government and their representatives in Sydney.

What does 1835 celebrate? White settlement did not begin in and around Melbourne with Batman and his treaty. Sealers and sailors, wattle barkers, convicts and ex-convicts had arrived over the years and seem to have more or less got on with the indigenous population to the point where Batman could in 1835, have discussions with them on apparently amiable terms. Such accord was of course of short duration, whatever intentions of goodwill and co-existence Batman may have had. The progress of the Kulin people through starvation, disease and slaughter to near extinction was inexorable.

The story of Melbourne and its surroundings could not be properly told without the background history of the involvement of Britain, Sydney and of course, Van Diemen's Land, from where most of the original white settlers came. Boyce shows how the taking up of all the suitable land in Tasmania was the main impetus for Batman and his fellow settlers to cross Bass Strait and colonise the mainland. He gives a detailed account of the major players like Governor Arthur and Governor Bourke and of their declared and possible intentions. He also demonstrates how ultimately, the de facto recognition of squatting provided the incentive for the expansion and development of the colonies through private owners taking over Crown land.

We are taken through the erratic and often hypocritical policies of protecting the Aborigines who had no understanding of the concept of the land grab taking place around them. Boyce argues that the rapid and virtually uncontrolled expansion of settlement in Victoria, which led to the decimation of the Aboriginal population, was not inevitable and could have been controlled by firm government action.

This is complex history which needs and deserves close reading.

## Why is it called . . . *Carnegie*?

Explaining Glen Eira suburb and street names

Carnegie was originally called Rosstown, after developer William Murray Ross, one of the early pioneers of the area. The original name lives on in the name of the local hotel, and Rosstown Road.

**Leila Road** is named after Mr Ross's wife, and **Grange Road** is named after Ross's estate, *The Grange*, in Grange Road, near North road, which is now suburban housing.

In 1909, **Carnegie** was chosen in an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to secure funds for a library from the philanthropist Andrew Carnegie.



## Heritage Watch

History, and consequently local history, covers all eras and is not only *old stuff and mansions*. 1980 is as important as 1880.

We need to value and preserve it all. Each generation has their own set of memories. You can help by being aware of impending negative alterations to streetscapes, buildings etc.

Demolitions can be a concern and also the loss of *Street Jewellery* the advertising signs and displays with which we are all familiar. Some trees are also a great loss. Each loss is significant.

We have records of trees and buildings in the area, but there are others of value for many reasons. **You** can be our eyes and ears on the ground. Act quickly. Please be ready with your camera to record them and add the date and address. However don't stop there, contact us or the Town Hall, for assistance.

Gone is forever. You may make the difference and help protect our heritage.



# Local historians' corner

including news and resources from GEHS and other historical societies

## GEHS Office and opening hours

Our office at 965 Glen Huntly Road Caulfield South is open and staffed on Tuesday and Friday from 9.00 am to 12 noon. If you ring after hours your call will be responded to when we collect the message. You may ring and make an appointment at other times, if it is possible for somebody to be there.

Most people work on cataloguing, a very important task, to get the material up to standard and onto the data base, where it can be accessed generally. A small group, who are mostly university students, works on data entry. We are very grateful for their dedication. We also really enjoy their youthful company and views. Research is constantly being done from requests and visitors are attended to on the spot.

## GEHS Members Only activities

To follow up on several of our recent talks, and to enhance your membership, it has been decided to offer occasional extra activities related to the talks, *for members only*. Here are the first two activities.

### *History Day Tour on Thursday 18 April 2013*

This is a FREE activity but a donation to the Koorie Heritage Trust would be really appreciated. A day trip has been arranged to the city to visit the Koorie Heritage Trust (KHT), Flagstaff Park and the Royal Historical Society of Victoria.

#### Itinerary

- **10.00–12.00: Koorie Heritage Trust tour**  
*Meet at 10.00am outside KHT, 295 King Street, Melbourne, corner of Little Lonsdale Street.*  
*We will have a short briefing before we enter the building.*  
We will have a tour of the custom-fitted building, museum, galleries, library and shop. We will have access to some special items in the library and several items from the collections archive will be there for us. If he is still available, one of the Elders will talk to us and answer our questions.
- **12.00: Lunch**  
Make our own arrangements in a local cafe or have a picnic in Flagstaff Gardens.
- **12.45: Flagstaff Gardens**  
A general talk about the history of Flagstaff Gardens.
- **1.30–3.00: Royal Historical Society of Victoria visit**  
*Meet outside the Royal Historical Society of Victoria (RHSV),*  
*239 A'Beckett Street, corner of William Street, opposite Flagstaff Gardens.*  
We will be taken through their collections and see the display of HMAS Melbourne.  
As GEHS members, you are affiliated members of RHSV and can attend their activities and talks.

#### Travel

Travel is easiest to Flagstaff Station then walk down Little Lonsdale to the Koorie Heritage Trust, and later return to Flagstaff Station. Short distances and easy walking.

#### RSVP essential

Numbers are limited. Please ring 9077 5395 or email [gehs@optusnet.com.au](mailto:gehs@optusnet.com.au)

### *GEHS Brighton Cemetery Walk on Sunday 26 May 2013*

GEHS is holding a walk and afternoon tea in the Brighton Cemetery, cnr North and Hawthorn Roads, on Sunday 26 May 2013 for \$10 per head, including afternoon tea. This will be a specially designed tour relating to people of interest to Glen Eira. As numbers are limited it is an RSVP event.

Please wear sturdy shoes as you will be walking on brick paths and if the weather is doubtful bring appropriate protection. Details will be provided when you ring 9077 5395 or email [gehs@optusnet.com.au](mailto:gehs@optusnet.com.au)

## Journals received

*Museums Australia Magazine;*  
Newsletters from Brighton Cemetery, Malvern Historical Society, Moorabbin Historical Society, Port Melbourne Historical Society, and Prahran Mechanics Institute

## What is it?

This wooden box is part of our collection.  
What is it and how was it used?  
Send your answer to the GEHS. .

Do you have an item for future *What is it?* columns?  
Please let us know by contacting the GEHS office.

