



Balwyn Historical Society Newsletter

August 2014

Meetings

Thursday 14 August – 8pm

Speaker: David Jellie

David Jellie, former Adjunct Professor at RMIT University, is an engineer with 30 years experience in planning, designing and constructing roads, bridges and highway infrastructure.

Topic: The History of VicRoads

Venue: Balwyn Library, 336 Whitehorse Road, Balwyn

Thursday 11 September – 8pm

Speaker: Robin Grow

Topic: Dairies of Boroondara

Mr. Robin Grow is the President of the Art Deco and Moderne Society.

Thursday 9 October – 8pm – Annual General Meeting

Speaker: Ralph Stavelly

Topic: The 1923 Police Strike

Venue: Balwyn Library, 336 Whitehorse Road, Balwyn

Please note our new email address which is below.

Email: balwynhistory@gmail.com website: www.vicnet.net.au/~balwynhs

Recent Speaker – Ken James

Ken James, author of *The Career of William Swan Urquhart (1843-1864)*, began his most interesting talk with a little of Urquhart's background and with Ken's search for information about his career. Born in Scotland in 1818, Urquhart arrived in Sydney in 1840. By 1843 he was working as a contract surveyor in Victoria surveying County boundaries.

With the discovery of gold in Victoria, Urquhart was appointed Chief Government Surveyor of the Central Goldfields. In the first year of his appointment he travelled 8,050 kilometres establishing the sites for towns, villages and main roads. Among the

settlements he laid out were Ballarat, Castlemaine, Malmsbury, Taradale, Sunbury and Elphinstone.

Often nine months of the year would be spent under canvas in very harsh conditions with meagre rations and sometimes unreliable assistants. As a result of these conditions, ill health brought on Urquhart's retirement in 1864 at the early age of 46.

Ken's talk was illustrated with some of the beautiful coloured survey maps and plans drawn up by Urquhart.

BHS Membership 2011-2012 - Reminder

Membership fees were due on July 1. The fees will remain the same for the 2011-2012 financial year.

\$25 - single membership

\$35 - joint membership i.e. 2 adults at the same address.

A renewal form accompanies this newsletter.

You may renew your membership at the next meeting. Payment may be made by cash or cheque (payable to *Balwyn Historical Society*). It would be helpful if you could place your payment in an envelope marked with your name(s). Otherwise please send the completed renewal form together with a cheque to **The Treasurer, BHS, 45 Talbot Ave, Balwyn 3103.**

For membership enquires contact Marilyn Poole 9857-7565

Balwyn Historical Society - Contact details

Balwyn Historical Society a program of the Balwyn Evergreen Centre.

Phone – 9836 9681

President	Martin Barrett	
Secretary	Pat O'Dwyer	9817 3758
Treasurer/	Marilyn Poole	9857 7565
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Speakers/	Robin Kelly	9836 6589

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Balwyn High School's Sixtieth Anniversary

The end of WW2 saw a great demand for new housing and parts of Balwyn, to the south of Belmore Road, and North Balwyn which had already been sub-divided in the 1920s proved extremely popular for young families.

There was also a massive shortage of schools, driven by the birth of baby-boomers after 1945 and the number of students continuing with their education beyond the official school leaving age of 14.

In 1948 the Education Department considered 33 acres near the corner of Balwyn and Belmore roads as a possible site for a new school. However, due to Glass Creek running through the site, it was not considered viable. By 1949 the Education Department started buying up land which was on higher ground north of Myrtle Park (now Macleay Park) and the creek.

North Balwyn Primary School was operating by 1950 and work began on Balwyn High School in 1953 with the expectation that the school would open for the new school year in

February 1954. Balwyn High School was just one of ten new high schools planned to open that year. 237 students were enrolled (4 classes of Form 1 and 2 of Form 2). However, come February students were informed that the school wasn't ready and that instead of going to their new school, they would share East Kew Central School with the Central School pupils. Balwyn High School students were to attend in the morning and East Kew students in the afternoon – an arrangement that greatly pleased the students who were only too happy to have their mornings or afternoons free.

This arrangement continued until June when at last Balwyn High students could move into their own school in Buchanan Avenue. While one new building of eight classrooms was complete it was surrounded with a sea of mud. Over the following years building continued almost ceaselessly as new wings were added to the original building to cater for the rapidly growing numbers as a new form level was added each year.



1954 – Form 1D

The Form 8 foundation students were unfortunately not able to go on to Matriculation (Form 6) at Balwyn as the numbers were unviable in terms of offering a range of subjects. However, the following year there were 30 students (15 boys and 15 girls) from those who had begun in Form 1 who wished to continue. In 1959 they became the first matriculation class.

As one of those 30 students I remember the year well. Lack of space was a problem as ever. It was decided that the small flat attached to the domestic science wing for the purpose of teaching house-keeping skills to the domestic arts students would be the home of the 'Matric' humanities students.

The small lounge with its comfortable easy chairs became the History and Geography room. The kitchen alcove became the private study area. Consequently those doing History learnt quite a lot of Geography and Geography students could tune in to British or Modern History lessons.

German had only six students. The wooden seats outside the flat were used on warm days, the bedroom on cold wet days. With six of us seated on the single bed and the teacher occupying the only chair, German classes were a cosy affair. Literature scored the Art room or more often the laundry. The trick on laundry days was to be early if you wanted a seat at the table – latecomers spent the lesson perched on a washing machine.

Given the conditions under which we were taught, it was a tribute to the teaching staff that they managed to engage, encourage and engender in us a real love of learning.

This year marks the school's sixtieth anniversary. An open day is to be held on Sunday 14 August. For details see the school's website – www.balwynhs.vic.edu.au. A history of Balwyn High School "Our

Tribute to our High School” edited by Peter

C. Murray was published by the school in 2004.

(Patricia O’Dwyer)



1959 – Matriculation Class

Back Row: R. Wightman, R. Jacobson, S. Edgley, A. Fuller, I. Cook, G. Waugh, K. Kennedy

Second Back Row: R. Collins, W. Trompf, J. Morgan, L. Hackett, R. Fleming, R. Male, M. Finn, B. Farrell

Second Front Row: S. Skutezky, H. Peart, J. Sutton, S. Larsson, D. Simpson, S. Loughman, H. Mitchell, M. Senior, K. Henderson

Front Row: M. Kennedy, Y. Gretgrix, S. Jelbart, Mr. H. Brittain (Headmaster), Mr. A. Norman (Form Master), P. O’Dwyer, A. Roberts, L. Wood