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The Newsletter

Moonee Ponds Courthouse Museum

768-770 Mt Alexander Rd, Moonee Ponds 3039



Issue No 256 October–November 2020

EHS is affiliated with the Royal Historical Society of Victoria

Telephone 9370 4607



North Park Mansion and Gardens (Spring 2020)

Photo by Bob Chalmers

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I apologise for the lateness of this issue of the Essendon Historical Society Newsletter, the reason being completely unexpected and out of my control. As if the COVID-19 virus, which has completely disrupted all our plans for 2020, was not enough, I received another setback when I woke up on 27 September and could not walk. When the numbness on the right side of my body persisted I realised that this was serious and called 000 for help.

I was taken to the Royal Melbourne Hospital and it was later confirmed that I had suffered a mild stroke. This resulted in five days at the RMH, sixteen days at Dorset Rehabilitation Centre and a week at Werribee with my brother and his wife while I recuperated.

I would like to sincerely thank all those members of the EHS who, after learning of my situation, sent me get well wishes via telephone calls, emails or cards. I greatly appreciate your kind thoughts.

I am now well on the road to recovery, but have been told that I need to take things quietly for a while.

It is good to see that we are now having a number of successive days where there are no new cases of the corona virus and hopefully things can start to return to some form of normality at last.

It has certainly been a difficult year in many respects.

I am sad to report that we recently lost Zelma Riddell, a much loved Life Member of the EHS, and Lindsay Braden a former member, who died at Arcadia Aged Care. Lindsay had spent many years living in Anglesea.

The Committee has only had the opportunity of meeting once over the past six months although members have been keeping in touch from time to time via emails and phone conversations.

Our Secretary, Hayden Williams, has been kept busy recording various queries that have been received through our website and allocating them to members of the research team to follow up.

Our Treasurer, Terry Scott, has been preparing reports each month to keep us up to date with the Society's financial position.

Mary Cahill and Hayden Williams participated in an online meeting conducted by Rosemary Cameron (Executive Officer of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria) to discuss how to go about setting up a Zoom Meeting.

The Meeting covered the following topics

Setting up an event

Different Views

Screen sharing

Using polls (voting, passing a financial report) - The Zoom Meeting permits a Yes/No Response or Multiple Choice

Sending out an Invitation.

Julia Marshall of the Sam Merrifield Library also ran a Zoom Meeting in late October for groups who have an interest in our local history, as an information forum..

Thanks again to Hayden and Mary who participated on our behalf.

Other participants were::

Lily Simovic—(Keilor Historical Society) who talked about Harrick's Cottage

Judy Maddigan—(Airport West Group) who talked about APW History, Patrick Phelan and Connecting with an APW Facebook Page

Roger Meyer—(Civil Aviation Historical Society) who drew attention to the webpage www.airwaysmuseum.com.

He reported that the Essendon Airport celebrates its Centenary in August 2021

OUR SECRETARY HAYDEN REPORTS

The most interesting recent request concerned the origin of the name of Vida Street, Essendon. Vida Street was originally known as Stanley Street when the subdivision was created in 1886. In 1906 changes were made to the names of some streets. There was another Stanley Street in Essendon off Leslie Road (named after a son of David Elder who subdivided the Riverview Estate) so the name of the West Essendon street was renamed Vida Street to avoid confusion. We cannot be certain, but it is highly likely that it was named after Vida Goldstein, a prominent suffragette and social reformer who was attempting to get elected to Parliament at this time.

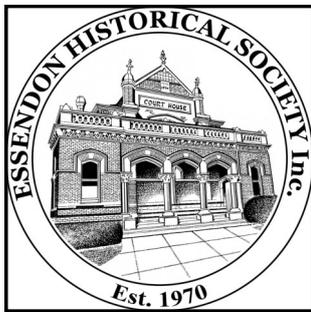
NEW BOOK ON E. W. COLE

Richard Bromowski has released a new book entitled "Under the Rainbow: The Life and Times of E. W. Cole"

It is being published through Melbourne University Press, 2020 ISBN 9780522876222

Edward W Cole (of Cole's Book Arcade), is of special interest to the people of Essendon because he spent the last seven years of his life (1911-1918) living at Earlsbrae Hall (Lowther Hall).

This book should make interesting reading and would make an ideal Christmas gift



KEEP IN TOUCH WITH EHS ACTIVITIES ON
OUR WEBSITE

www.esshissoc.org.au

Email Address esshissoc@mail.com

SUPPORTERS OF THE EHS RESTORATION FUND

We thank the following local Businesses &
Organisations for their generous support

Paul McDonald Real Estate

Brad Teal Real Estate

Rotary Club of Essendon

Strathmore Theatrical Arts Group

Lions Club of Essendon Inc.

Rotary Club of Essendon North

Australia Day Breakfast Committee

REMEMBER THAT YOU CAN ALSO COMMUNICATE WITH US THROUGH FACEBOOK AND TWITTER

FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/EssendonHistoricalSociety

TWITTER: twitter.com/EssHisSoc

FAREWELL TO ZELMA RIDDELL

It with sadness that we record the death of our Life Member Ms Zelma Riddell.

Zelma was born on Australia Day in 1925 and died on the 1st October, this year.

Zelma was a great community person being involved in many voluntary committees including NRL, the 58th Battalion Association, and volunteered in a number of roles at Essendon, and later Moonee Valley Council.

She was a keen theatre person, and regularly attended the Heidelberg Theatre events, S.T.A.G and the Clocktower, even in her 95th year.

In her working life she was a Senior Nurse at Royal Children's Hospital, and earlier than that, worked for a short time at the Essendon and District Hospital.

She was a very social and entertaining member, and a good friend to many of us.

She has volunteered at the Essendon Historical Society and was a valued Member of the Catalogue Committee.

She will be sadly missed by many of us.
Vale Zelma

Judy Maddigan



Zelma enjoys a joke with Justin Madden at an EHS Meeting

ZELMA'S SERVICE TO THE E.H.S.

Zelma joined the Essendon Historical society in 1985 and was a member for 35 years. At the time of her death last month she was our oldest member.

She served on the EHS Committee as Assistant Secretary for six years from 1987-88 to 1992-93 and in 2014 became a member of the Cataloguing Sub-Committee.

Zelma was a regular attendee at our monthly meetings and volunteered to help us as a member of the Sunday Roster.

She was made a Life Member of the Essendon Historical Society on 26 September 2017 for her valued service to the Society.

COURT HOUSE RESTORATION REPORT

by Mary Cahill
(Restoration Manager)

As reported in the previous newsletter, COVID has hindered any progress towards addressing the remaining defects from the building program. However the builders have promised that the flooring, plasterwork, brickwork and painting will be resolved before Christmas (this year!).

The MVCC staff who maintain the Queens Park gardens have now taken the maintenance of the Court House grounds on an ongoing basis. This arrangement was negotiated as part of the licence agreement (which lasts for six years) between EHS and MVCC. Currently the Court House gardens are looking magnificent.

One of the difficulties we encountered in the Restoration was the lack of information (eg. drainage, paint colours) about works which had been previously undertaken at the Court House. During lockdown I spent many hours sorting through all the documentation arising from the fire and Restoration. I have written a summary with key points for easy reference in the future, plus Terry Scott has prepared folders giving details of the relevant tradespeople involved in the Restoration.

In the last Newsletter I reported that my article on the fire and restoration was featured in the RHSV *History News*. This article was then reprinted in the October 2020 edition of the Law Institute and apparently generated much interest. Newspaper reports and articles have been compiled in a *Restoration Media* file at the Court House.



A REPORT FROM THE SECRETARY

ENFORCED DELAY OF THE A.G.M.

As previously notified, the Annual General Meeting was to have been held on 25 August 2020. However, due to the COVID-19 virus and the current lock-down, this has had to be postponed. We are reluctant to hold the AGM as a virtual Zoom meeting and have applied for a time extension from the Department of Consumer Affairs. Should this extension be granted, the AGM will be held early in 2021 when it is hoped that the restrictions have eased, and a meeting can be held in the Court House.

In the unlikely event of an extension not being granted or restrictions lifted, the AGM is likely to be by Zoom or be a hybrid face-to-face / Zoom meeting. Zoom enables online meetings using computers and telephones.

All members will receive notification of the date of the AGM.

COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT NOMINATIONS

A new Committee will be elected at the AGM and members interested in nominating should contact the Secretary before the AGM date on 0417 559 086 or hwilliams@netspace.net.au.

MEMBERSHIP FEES

Members who have not already paid their Annual subscriptions are reminded that these are now due and our Treasurer, Terry Scott would be delighted to receive your payment as soon as possible. It would also be appreciated if the Subscription Renewal notice could be completed and returned with your payment so that our Membership records can be up-dated.



**NAPIER PARK ‘Where the Best Dogs Go’
Greyhound Racing At North Essendon-Strathmore
by Peter Willoughby**

On a cold, showery Monday night on 11 September 1933 out along Pascoe Vale Road in the suburb now called Strathmore (much to the dismay of many local residents who had staunchly opposed its establishment, and much to the joy of the shareholders in the company that developed it) the newly formed Essendon Speed Coursing Club officially opened its Napier Park greyhound speed coursing ground.

It was opened in fine style with a band in attendance and track officials decked out in smart uniforms. The starter wore full hunting attire of scarlet coat with all the trimmings and a trumpeter signalled the start of each race. The *Age* in its 12 September, 1933 issue reported that the attendance of approximately 3500 was the largest ever seen at a Victorian speed coursing meeting. Eight races were run on a 460 metre straight tan track.



*Sporting Globe
6 September 1933*

A circular track of 305 metres incorporating a section of the straight track to its finish line came into use in December 1933. The word circular meant that the track wasn't straight. Any resemblance of this running surface shaped like a distorted triangle with two rounded vertices to a circular shape was purely coincidental and a display of great imagination by the promoters.

The new grounds settled into a routine of scheduled night meetings with eight to ten races per meeting with up to eight dogs per race and dog trials two days a week. Flat and hurdle races were run on the straight track over distances of 270, 360 or 450 metres and of 305 metres in an anti-clockwise direction on the circular one. A feature greyhound race called the Melbourne Cup which was inaugurated in November 1933 remains an annual event in the Victorian greyhound racing calendar.

Most of the site of this former greyhound racing track is now occupied by the Strathmore Secondary College. When the track was established it was in the suburb of Essendon North, though usually called North Essendon and being north of the municipal boundary of Woodland Street was in the Shire of Broadmeadows. The part of the suburb to the east of Bulla Road became Strathmore in 1943-1944 and joined the City of Essendon in 1979. The activity once known as greyhound speed coursing is now called greyhound racing.

The local community was divided in its attitude towards the development of the coursing ground adjacent to a growing residential area. Councillor W H Henshall, President of the Broadmeadows Shire Council, strenuously opposed it for many reasons, including, 'a disturbance to residents resulting from the calling of the odds in the betting ring and to the undesirables, some of them worse for drink, who would be attracted to the district'. In an unexpected turn of events that would have rocked the convenors of a public meeting called by the North Essendon and South Broadmeadows Progress Association on 22 June 1933 to protest against the proposal to build the speed course, a resolution was passed urging the Broadmeadows Shire Council to assist the Craigieburn Speed Coursing Club to establish it. The Craigieburn Club/Essendon Club relationship is explained later.

Entry to the corrugated iron fence enclosed grounds was through turnstiles off a car-park at the southern end of the property. Over time three grandstands, including one relocated from Craigieburn were erected. There was a cafeteria below the seating deck of one, the course manager's residence and office beneath another and a standby electricity generator below the third. The betting ring operated behind the grandstands. An 80 dog kennel stood near the finishing line and a bandstand was built for the musicians who performed between races. The trackside amenities were considered to be of a high standard by those who followed the dogs.



Course in distance from over Pascoe Vale. Grandstands top left. c 1948. Coburg Historical Society



Course layout 1945.
Melbourne University. 1945 Aerial

This proprietary, or company operated speed coursing venue, was the brainchild of Murrumburrah, NSW born T J (Thomas Jeremiah) Confoy. He was described in *The Advocate* as an active Catholic layman and a person of charitable disposition. He was the founder of the Southern Cross Assurance Company in Melbourne, an enthusiastic racehorse owner, billiards player, cycling supporter, greyhound coursing enthusiast and director of several Victorian speed coursing clubs.

He had previously formed the proprietary Melbourne Coursing Club and the Craigieburn Speed Coursing Club which operated on a combined ground at Craigieburn. The first greyhound speed coursing meeting to use a live hare lure in Victoria was held on these grounds on 11 October 1928. Due to its remoteness from Melbourne and poor public transport service at a time when private motor car ownership was low the Craigieburn undertaking did not attract large attendances. It was not the business success Mr Confoy had hoped for so it was decided to re-establish a speed coursing ground closer to the large population centre of Melbourne.

The site chosen of approximately six hectares of irregularly shaped, flattish farmland sandwiched between the Moonee Ponds Creek and the railway line on its eastern boundary and Pascoe Vale Road on its west suited the promoters admirably. Situated on a major road at the edge of the expanding metropolis it was serviced by a regular public transport rail and bus system with the North Essendon train station close by. It also had mains electricity

and a town water supply. Most importantly, for an activity that has always relied heavily on gambling for its existence, it was in a local government area proclaimed a Shire where oncourse betting on greyhound racing was permitted.

At that time betting on greyhound racing in a local government area defined as a City or a Town was prohibited. Therefore while betting on the dogs at a race meeting at this track in the Shire of Broadmeadows was legal, 400 metres to the south in the City of Essendon it was an offence. Bookmakers attended every meeting at Napier Park.

Mary Josephine Kernan of 'Merai', Pascoe Vale Road, Pascoe Vale, transferred this land to the Essendon Speed Coursing Club in July 1936.

In what was to be the last meeting held by the Craigieburn Speed Coursing Club and the first to be conducted at the unnamed, unfinished course in Pascoe Vale Road, a free, (because the fencing was not complete) introductory 'picnic meeting' was arranged for Tuesday, 18 July 1933. It was reported that 1200 spectators and 20 bookmakers rolled up for the afternoon event. It is of interest to note that the Broadmeadows Council approved the plans for the course development two days after this meeting.

The name of Napier Park for the grounds was announced on 30 August 1933. The name of this early district settler family of Napier was also in local use at that time in Napier Street, Napier Park Cricket Club and the Napier Park Estate by sales agents selling land in the vicinity of Carnarvon Road and Hayes Road.

Mr Keith W Raecke, the former secretary of the now defunct Craigieburn Club, became secretary of the newly formed Essendon Speed Coursing Club and except for absence on war service with the Royal Australian Air Force retained that position until the club ceased operating.



T J Confoy
Australasian
20 April 1940



K W Raecke
Sporting Globe
11 November 1933

A mechanical lure or 'tin hare' was never used here. A 1927 Victorian Government prohibition of gambling on dog racing employing a mechanical lure was not removed until 1956 by which time Napier Park had come and gone.

During WWII operations were greatly reduced. All forms of weekday racing (with the exception of the Melbourne Cup horse race) were banned, the blackout prevented night racing and the pre-war 78 annual meetings were reduced in stages to 26. These were run on Saturday afternoon or as twilight meetings to be concluded by 8.30pm. When the White City speed coursing ground at Tottenham was requisitioned for military purposes in 1942 their 26 allowed annual meetings were held here on alternate Saturdays.



Age, 19 December 1949

Post war it was business as usual with the newspaper advertising reading: 'NAPIER PARK Where the Best Dogs Go'. T J Confoy died in 1947. In that year his son Leo, who was resident course manager, had photo finish equipment installed. This pleased the followers of the 'dishlickers' who at times had threatened violence on the judges for their decisions and close finish race calls.

At the Broadmeadows Council elections in August 1954 the ratepayers' response to a referendum question regarding the future of the race track was 3154 votes for closure and 1593 votes against closure.

However, it was the passing of the 'Dog Racing Act 1954' that rang the death knell for Napier Park. This Act prohibited the conduct of greyhound racing in Victoria by proprietary clubs after 31 December 1955 and set a limit of two not-for-profit or non-proprietary clubs to operate greyhound racing tracks in metropolitan Melbourne. It also required the use of a mechanical lure for all greyhound racing after that date.

At the conclusion of a nine race program on 10 October 1955 the grounds that had long been the domain of the frantic, pulsating energy of punters and pooches arrived at its own finish line. The yelps of the dogs, the bookmakers' calls and the crowds' urging roar that had echoed in the valley at every meeting since 1933 fell silent, the lights were switched off and the gates were closed on Napier Park.

Footnote.

The name of Napier Park returned to the district when the Essendon City Council renamed Northern Park at the corner of Woodland Street and Napier Street, Strathmore as Napier Park. Theodore Napier donated this parkland to Essendon in 1920.

Thank you to Renn Barker, Greyhound Racing Victoria, for providing a pre-publication copy of *Chasing Dreams*.

Sources.

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Lemon A. 1982. *Broadmeadows. A Forgotten History*, City of Broadmeadows and Hargreen. Melbourne

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Sporting Globe Melbourne

Victorian Government. *Dog Racing Act. 1954*.

PASSING OF CR JOHN WILLIAMS

John Williams, a former Mayor of the City of Essendon, passed away in Queensland on 16 August, 2020 aged 82. John was born in 1938 and grew up in Essendon. He was educated at Essendon High School and worked for Chartered Accountants, Flack & Flack before commencing his own retail shoe store at North Essendon. He was elected to represent the Essendon Ward of the Essendon City Council at the 1961 Council Elections—the Council's Centenary Year. At the age of 23 he was the youngest man ever to be elected on to the Essendon Council and defeated four other candidates.

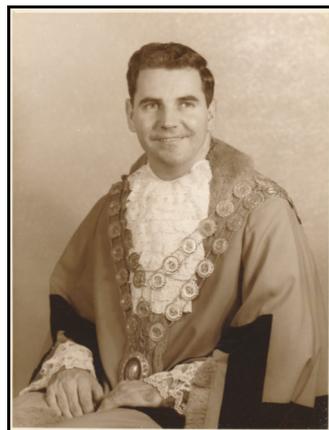
Cr John Williams was elected as the Mayor of the City of Essendon in September 1966—again, at the age of 28, the youngest Councillor to hold that high office. He was still single at this time and was well supported by his mother who acted as the Mayoress.

John served a double year as Mayor (1966-67 and 1967-68).

During these years there were many highlights, among them the opening of the City of Essendon Public Library (now the Sam Merrifield Library) and the Official Opening of the Essendon & District Memorial Hospital. He was

also involved with the opening of the Essendon District Nursing Service Headquarters in Grice Crescent in 1967. John Williams was a devout Christian and he introduced the Thanksgiving Breakfast during his Mayoral Term. In 1972, after serving the Essendon Ward for 10 years he resigned to take up a position in Queensland with the British and Foreign Bible Society. He and his wife Kaye, who he married in March 1969, were farewelled at a Presentation Dinner held in their honour which was attended by 350 guests.

Although spending the remainder of his life in Queensland, John never lost the love for Essendon and its people



John Williams, at the time of his death, was the earliest surviving Mayor of the City of Essendon

NORTH PARK DEVELOPMENT PLANS

In the previous issue of the Essendon Historical Society Newsletter (No 255), great concerns were expressed for the future of the North Park mansion site in Woodland Street, Strathmore.

The St Columbans Mission Society who have owned the mansion and grounds for nearly 100 years, had planned to subdivide the property into four allotments, demolish the 1960s administration building, construct a new three level residential and administration building and construct 25 two or three storey dwellings in the grounds.

On learning of the proposal and the devastating effect it would have on the magnificent heritage listed mansion and its surrounds, local residents formed a “Save North Park” Action Group to fight the development.

A Petition was created, which, by mid August, contained 7,700 names. Newspapers were approached and social media was used to full effect. Legal assistance was also sought and a fighting fund was established to enable the group to produce flyers, posters and meet other expenses as they arose.

I, on behalf of the Essendon Historical Society Committee of Management, contacted EHS members via email alerting them to the plans and I thank all those members who wrote letters to the Moonee Valley Council and Heritage Victoria opposing the plan. The EHS also contributed to the Fighting Fund in support of the Save North Park Action Fund.



For the Development to proceed as planned, approval was required from both the City of Moonee Valley and Heritage Victoria.

I am pleased to report that in mid September Heritage Victoria announced that the permit had been refused.

A document downloaded from the Internet refers to the Permit Application P29647 for the proposed development of the Heritage listed former North Park property (H1286) and outlines the main points for the refusal of the application.

The report states, in part:

On 16 September 2020, the Executive Director refused the permit application for the following reasons:

If the application were approved it would result in unacceptable and irreversible detrimental impact on the cultural heritage significance of the registered place.

The subdivision and development would adversely affect the cultural heritage significance and setting of the registered place by:

- physically and legally dividing the site, leaving the mansion separated from its wider landscape setting.
- Erasing the legibility of the place through intensive townhouse development, with associated fencing on separate lots, and separating the mansion from the coach house by subdivision and construction of accessways and fencing.
- Adopting an architectural design that is at odds with the setting and architecture of the mansion, and is visually dominant in relation to the existing buildings and site, due to its scale, bulk and materiality.
- Erasing the appreciation of the Gardenesque style of the garden and jeopardising the remaining trees and vegetation.

Refusal of the permit application will prevent the works as proposed from being realised. Heritage Victoria accepts that providing for the contemporary needs of the St Columbans Mission Society on the site may be appropriate. However, it has not been sufficiently demonstrated that the requirements of the society could not be met without having such a significant and irreversible impact on the registered place.

The negative impacts of the proposal are not outweighed by the benefits, including the economic benefits.

The applicants have been given a period of 60 days to request a review of the Executive Director’s decision.



By Bob Chalmers

**THE CONNOR FAMILY IN ESSENDON
(FIVE GENERATIONS FROM 1857 TO 2020)**

James Connor was born in Westmeath, Ireland on 7 April 1832. On 29 July 1857 he married Eliza (Elizabeth) Austin and the young couple departed Ireland shortly afterwards on the ship “Invincible”, arriving in Melbourne on 24 December 1857.

James and Eliza settled firstly in Flemington, but by 1860 had moved to Moonee Ponds where he opened a boot-makers shop in Mount Alexander Road near the Moonee Ponds Junction.

James and Eliza raised a family of six sons and a daughter who all grew up in the Essendon district.

James became a prominent citizen—a Justice of the Peace and a Verger at St Thomas’ Church of England for a period of 38 years.

The children attended the local State School.

The following letter was written by the third eldest son, Joseph (born 1862), who was born in a house in Moonee Ponds. The letter was published in The Age Newspaper, 20 June 1936, reflecting on his school days at Essendon State School (Raleigh Street)

“I have been greatly interested in the letters of old school days in your paper of Saturdays and fully expected to see something of our old school, Essendon State School No 483 which I attended from 1867 to 1872. Mr R. G. Taylor was head teacher and Miss Boyne the girls’ teacher. Mr Taylor afterwards joined the Scotch church and ministered at Smeaton where he married Miss Boyne. I don’t know if he pounded ethics into his flock with his black ruler as he used to do with the lads.

Mr J. J. Culbeth was next head teacher. He had a very fine way of giving geography lessons. Take for instance, the Shire of Talbot. In a tall boot four Cs were put—Castlemaine, Carisbrook, Creswick and Clunes.

It was in my time Mr John Delaney came to teach at my school from St Monicas. He could apply the cane, especially if we mimicked him. He carried on a night school which I attended but I don’t think we learnt much. One night Bill McCarty put a 3/4” tack on the seat and when I sat down I “plugged” him. A general “box-on” ensued. He worked for Prosser, the builder.

After night school we used to go “tick tocking”. We knew Constable Jones was home with his family and the mounted man was down at Mrs Casson’s billiard room. Only two policemen were in the district from Keilor to Flemington.

No 483 was right in the bush at that time. We had scholars from Box Forest, Pascoe Vale, Glenroy, Tullamarine, Keilor and Bolingbroke. Mr C. M. Dyer had a grammar school in the school behind the Church of England at Moonee Ponds where the aristocratic young folk went. There were no picture shows then. But I have seen some raids on their ponies that would have made a good film. A lot of their scholars used to ride to school on ponies. We used to sneak them then there was a fight to a finish.”

When James Connor died in 1894 his son, Joseph, took over the business.

In 1896 Joseph married Miss Amelia Nash and they had three children— Austin James (who died in early childhood), Gordon and Olive.

When Joseph died on 17 January 1942, aged 80, he was one of the oldest residents of Moonee Ponds. He was a staunch adherent of the St Thomas Church and a keen follower of the Essendon football team. He had attended every Royal Melbourne Show and was an early member, committeeman and past President of the Essendon State School Old Boys Association..

The boot-maker’s shop, established by his father over eighty years ago, had been moved to Hall Street.

Gordon Connor, the eldest surviving son of Joseph and Amelia, was born in Essendon on 17 July 1899. Like his father, Gordon was educated at Essendon State School and was a foundation student of Essendon High School which opened in 1913 as the Aberfeldie Higher Elementary School. After leaving school, Gordon took up employment with the Victorian Railways, continuing to work for them until he retired from the workforce at the age of 60 in 1959.

On 1 October 1927 he married Catherine May Harris. The marriage took place at St Johns Presbyterian Church and was conducted by Rev Dr S. F. Hunter. They were the last couple to be married in the old bluestone church. They set up their home at 1 Glen Street after a short time living in Strathmore. They attended the South Essendon Methodist Church until the Uniting Church was formed in 1977, and then became involved with the St. Johns Uniting Church. Gordon’s wife, May, passed away in 1986 and in 1993 he moved to Lionsville.

Gordon celebrated his 100th Birthday on 17 July 1999 and died two months later, on 16 September.

John Joseph (Jack) Connor was born in the Strathayre Hospital in Napier Street on 6 July 1926, a son of Gordon and May Connor. He became the third generation of Connors to attend Essendon State School and completed his Education at Essendon Technical School and the RMIT, where he completed a metallurgy diploma. He took up employment with Extruded Metals (EM), later becoming Chief Metallurgist for the firm.

In 1956 he married Phyl Cliff and the couple settled at a residence in Cranwell Avenue, Strathmore and where they raised three children—Peter, Bruce and Jenny.

Jack and Phyl attended the South Essendon Methodist Church but became actively involved at St. Johns Uniting Church when the two churches amalgamated in 1977.

Jack, also a diehard Essendon Football Club supporter, died on 11 March 2012.

Thus five Generations of the Connor family have been connected with the Essendon district for over 160 years since James Connor and his wife Eliza arrived in 1857.

By Bob Chalmers.

ACTIVITY AT WOODLANDS PARK

Members living in the Strathmore area have no doubt noticed that during late 2019 and 2020 there have been considerable changes taking place at Woodlands Park.



The Settler's Cottage, originally erected at 1070 Mount Alexander Road, Essendon in 1859, was relocated and restored at the south end of the reserve adjacent to the Caretakers Cottage.

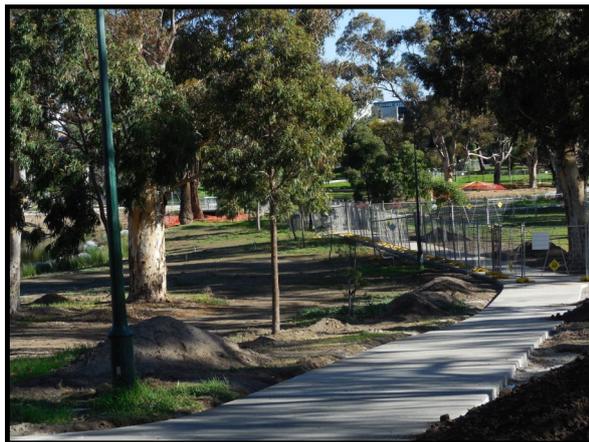
When I visited Woodlands Park early in 2020, the lake was completely fenced off as part of Stage 2 Works as set out in the Master Plan.

Stage 2 included

- Upgrade of all existing pathways
- Extension of the playground with additional new play equipment
- An additional rotunda
- Additional planting
- Upgrade and increased seating, BBQs, picnic tables, drinking fountains, bins and bicycle hoops.
- Custom seating walls



Netting was used to protect young water plants



When I returned in May 2020 new concrete pathways had been laid throughout the park



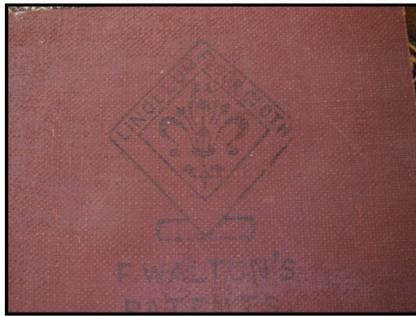
The existing Bunyip Sculptural Garden is to be retained in its current location. Council will continue to work with the artist who originally installed the art work to uplift and repair damage as required.



The Caretakers Cottage at Woodlands Park

By Bob Chalmers

A COURT HOUSE SURPRISE



When Michele Summerton and I were preparing the display for the for the “History Reclaimed” Exhibition late last year, and Michele was cleaning a sample of linoleum that had been taken up from the Magistrate’s Room, she made an amazing discovery. The trademark on the underside revealed that it was manufactured by Frederick Walton. On investigating further, she discovered that Frederick Walton was the inventor of linoleum and the first to manufacture the product in 1860. Well done Michele!

The colours used and the pattern of the tiles clearly demonstrate that this was the original floor covering that was laid by the Public Works Department when the Court House was furnished in 1890.

Samples of the attractive linoleum are currently displayed in one of our display cases in the main courtroom.

*****COMING EVENTS*****

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic all General Meetings and EHS Activities have been postponed until we are advised that it is safe to resume operations.

The Annual General Meeting will be held at the earliest opportunity of which members will be given due notice

The EHS Committee reserves the right to determine the content and circulation of its Newsletter.

The EHS Committee has agreed that copies of the EHS Newsletter from previous years may eventually be published on the Essendon Historical Society website.

The editor of the EHS Newsletter will at all times ensure that the material which is presented for publication is credited to the author, and that major changes will not be made to the material without the permission of the author.

Contributors who submit articles do so on the understanding of the terms stated above.

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APPEAL FOR ITEMS

The EHS Newsletter, produced five times each year, is an important vehicle for keeping members up to date with events and activities which are being organised by the Society. However, it is also important that it contains interesting material relating to the district and its rich history, of which each of you is a part. I urge you to seriously consider composing an article for our next publication. It will be gratefully received.

The Editor

Meetings

The Monthly General Meetings, usually held at the Moonee Ponds Court House Museum on the fourth Tuesday of each month, have been cancelled until further notice

Court House Museum

The Court House Museum is closed to members and the public until further notice due to the coronavirus.

The Newsletter

The deadline for the next EHS Newsletter is Friday 15 January 2021.

Material forwarded before this date would be greatly appreciated. Members are encouraged to provide items of local interest.

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