

ESSENDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC  
ANNUAL REPORT  
JULY 2023 - JUNE 2024



# Essendon Historical Society Inc Annual Report 2023-2024

Presented to the Annual General Meeting  
on Tuesday, 27<sup>th</sup> August 2024  
at the Moonee Ponds Court House Museum  
768-770 Mt Alexander Road, Moonee Ponds

## Committee of Management

<b>President</b>	Cate Hutchings
<b>Vice-President</b>	Kelsey Collins
<b>Secretary</b>	Hayden Williams
<b>Treasurer</b>	Terry Scott

**Committee** Darryn Hartnett, Bob Chalmers,  
Elaine Brogan OAM, Lyndall Byrne,  
Amanda Watson

**Cataloguing  
Sub-Committee** Rod McLennan, Bob Chalmers,  
Anna Denham, Anne Hillier,  
Anna Maree Malmgren

**IT Support** Hayden Williams, Kelsey Collins

**Newsletter Editor** Bob Chalmers

**Memory Lane Garden** Julie Scott

## Life Members

Alex Bragiola	Elaine Brogan OAM	Mary Cahill
Bob Chalmers	Rock Chote (d)	Kelsey Collins
Mary Costigan (d)	George Davison (d)	Lenore Frost
John Grant (d)	Marilyn Kenny	Dorothy King (d)
Ron Lambert (d)	Bob Mackay	Judy Maddigan
Eve Park	Zelma Riddell (d)	Terry Scott
Ted Smith (d)	Peter Willoughby	

**Essendon Historical Society**

## President's Report – Year Ending 30 June 2024

It gives me great pleasure to present to you my first President's Report for the 2023-2024 Year.

### HIGHLIGHTS

During a busy year there were many achievements by the Essendon Historical Society (EHS), but I would like to highlight the Award of Merit to Bob Chalmers that was announced by the Royal Historical Society of Victoria (RHSV) on Tuesday 28 May 2024. Bob's service to our Society over the last 25 years, has been extraordinary and very worthy of recognition. The Award is to be presented to Bob at our Annual Dinner in October 2024.

The two Court House exhibitions

*“Back in Time Wedding Dress Exhibition”* and *“Unwrapping the Past: Toys Across Time”* were outstanding and very popular.

EHS opened the Court House as our contribution to the Moonee Valley Festival.

301 visitors enjoyed the *Toys Exhibition* and many special attractions that we organised for the day.

The Annual General Meeting was held in the Court House on 22 August 2023, attended by twenty-three members with sixteen apologies. Members in attendance were given a copy of the EHS Annual Report covering the 2022-23 year prepared by Terry and Julie Scott. Thank you, Julie, and Terry, for compiling this for us.

Lastly, this successful year would not be possible without our many volunteers on our open days and volunteer members of our sub-committees. I have been so very well supported by the wonderful and talented people on the EHS Committee, without whose contribution we would not be able to continue to meet the EHS objectives.

I would like to thank all of you for your contribution.

### ELECTION OF THE 2023-2024 COMMITTEE

Nominations were received from all retiring members of the 2022-23 committee. As the nominations received equalled the number of vacant positions no elections were required, and the positions were filled as follows:-

**PRESIDENT** – Cate Hutchings

**VICE PRESIDENT** - Kelsey Collins

**SECRETARY** - Hayden Williams

**TREASURER** - Terry Scott

**COMMITTEE** - Elaine Brogan OAM,  
Lyndall Byrne, Bob Chalmers,  
Darryn Hartnett and Amanda Watson.

Retiring President, Bob Chalmers, thanked the members who served on the Committee over the past twelve months for their work during the past year.

Cate Hutchings was welcomed as the new President. Amanda Watson assumed the role of Assistant Treasurer.

Elaine Brogan OAM resigned from the EHS Committee on 11 June 2024.

This was accepted with thanks for Elaine's many years of service and her contribution to the Society.

## MEMBERSHIP

Our membership at the end of the financial year is 157, including 12 Life Members and we were pleased to welcome 18 new members during the year. We are grateful to all our members who continued to support us throughout the challenging years.

A new Honorary Service Acknowledgement Policy was agreed by the Committee. The recipients may be individuals who have or are providing EHS with services or expertise without charge. They do not have any voting rights, are reviewed annually and only benefit by way of being sent Newsletters digitally.

## GENERAL MEETINGS

Ten General Meetings were held during the past year, and our Guest Speakers were as follows:

25 JULY 2023 –

Bob Chalmers  
*Joseph Raleigh*

22 AUGUST 2023 -  
Annual General Meeting

26 SEPTEMBER 2023 –  
Dr Graeme Dennerstein,  
*25 Years of Flying Gynaecology*

24 OCTOBER 2023 –  
Judy Maddigan  
*100 years since Parliamentary Elections  
(Women Candidates) passed in the State  
Parliament*

28 NOVEMBER 2023 –  
Lyndall Byrne & Elaine Brogan  
*“Back In Time” -  
Wedding Dress Exhibition report*

27 FEBRUARY 2024 - Bob Chalmers,  
Darryn Hartnett, Jenny Macaffer,  
Julie Scott:

*Members’ Show and Tell*  
Lyndall Byrne - *Launch of Children’s Toys  
across the Years*

26 MARCH 2024 - Chris Hawker  
*Harry George Hawker,  
Australian Pioneer Aviator*

23 APRIL 2024 - Damien Lewis  
*Nostalgique*

28 MAY 2024 - Gus Berger  
*Lost City of Melbourne and Brunswick  
Cinemas* (not a formal General Meeting)

25 JUNE 2024 - John Kavanagh OAM  
*The Moonee Ponds Creek and the Friends of  
Moonee Ponds Creek Inc.*

The Average attendance at the General Meetings over the past twelve months (10 Meetings) was 25.

## COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Eleven formal meetings were held as well as a Planning Meeting on 15 January.

Thank you to Kelsey Collins for taking the Minutes each month.

I would like to thank the members of the Committee for their continued support during what has been a very busy year. In particular, thanks to our Secretary, Hayden Williams, and our Treasurer, Terry Scott.

## E H S NEWSLETTERS

Bob Chalmers produced three twelve-page newsletters during the past year which were Issues 266 – 268.

Thank you to Anna Maree Malmgren for proof-reading the Newsletter copy before it went to print, and to Anna Denham for maintaining the subject index.

## COURTROOM EXHIBITIONS

There were two exhibitions in the Court House over the past twelve months, each of approximately six month's duration.

The Wedding Display was launched on Sunday, 23 July and went until Sunday, 17 December 2023.

The second exhibition, "Unwrapping the Past: Toys Across Time", was launched on Tuesday 27 February and closed on Sunday, 30 June 2024.

Special thanks to the Exhibitions Sub-Committee: Lyndall Byrne, Elaine Brogan OAM and Liz Benton for the wonderful work they have done in putting together these two Exhibitions. Their work has been greatly appreciated by all who have viewed them and has been largely responsible for the increase in weekly numbers.

## CATALOGUING SUB-COMMITTEE

Thank you to Bob Chalmers, Anna Denham, Anne Hillier, Anna Maree Malmgren, Rod McLennan and Judy Maddigan for their work each Monday morning. The task is challenging but their work is greatly appreciated. Judy Maddigan resigned from the Sub-Committee in October 2023 and Bob Chalmers then assisted the Sub-Committee.

Anna Maree Malmgren rejoined the Sub-Committee in December 2023.

Alex Bragiola and Lyndall Byrne have assisted with the cataloguing of house photos & plans and badges respectively. Anna Maree is reviewing the relevancy of books in the EHS Collection.

The Catalogue grew substantially in the year 2023-2024:

Year	Records	Images
2022/2023	6,000	4,000
2023/2024	9,000	8,600

## CONTACT WITH THE PUBLIC

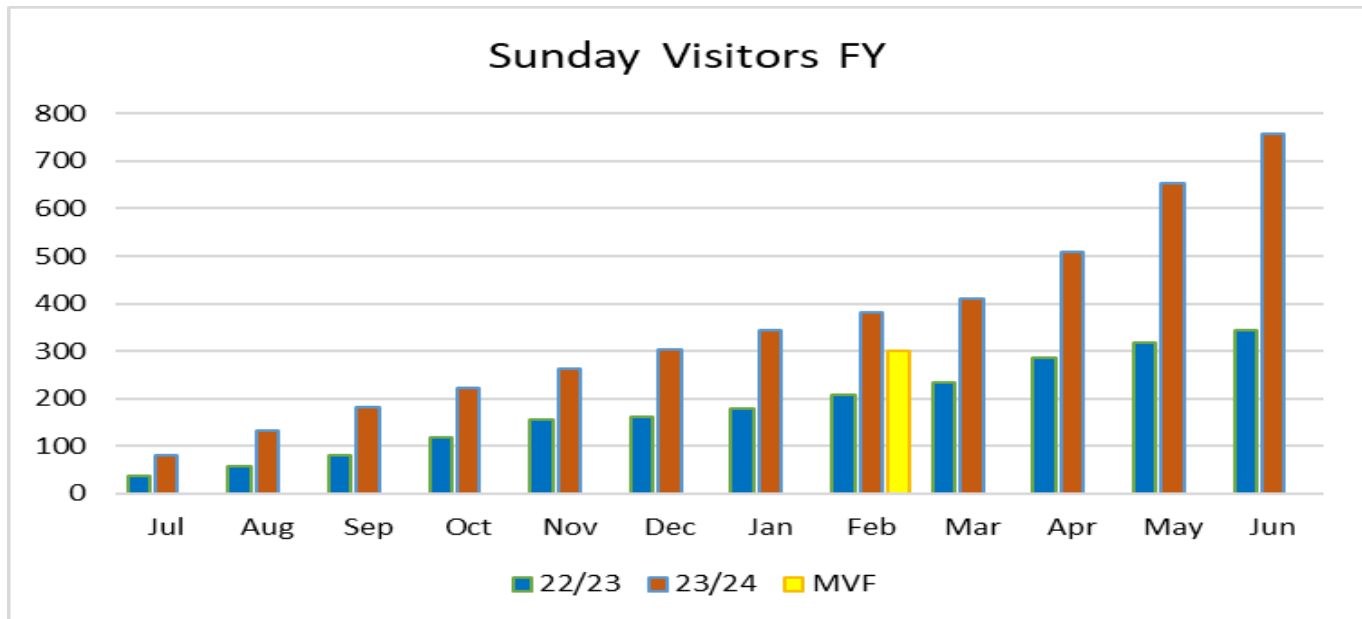
The Court House had 1,057 visitors during the year. It opened on 47 Sunday afternoons from 2 to 5pm as well as on Saturday 24 February 2024 as part of the Moonee Valley Festival. Sunday visitor attendance was 756 or an average 16.8 each Sunday.

This was 220% and 215% increases respectively and can be attributed to the success of the *Wedding Dress* and *Toys Across Time* displays supported by increased promotion.

Year	Visitors	Sundays	Average Visitor Numbers
2022/2023	344	44	7.8
2023/2024	756	47	16.1
<i>Moonee Valley Festival 2024</i>	301		

Special thanks to Bob Mackay and Alex Bragiola who attend on a regular basis.

The Roster of volunteers was managed by Kelsey Collins and the Society is grateful for all those members who supported the opening on Sundays and for the Moonee Valley Festival.



### MOONEE VALLEY FESTIVAL

Moonee Valley City Council requested EHS to be open on Saturday 24 February 2024 as part of the Moonee Valley Festival.

301 visitors attended from 9.30 am to 5 pm with EHS having many additional activities and many balloons. The day was planned by Kelsey Collins and received plaudits from visitors and volunteers alike.



## ENQUIRIES FROM THE PUBLIC

We receive many electronic enquiries relating to the local district, organisations and family histories. Alex Bragiola has handled many of the requests on our behalf, supported by Bob Chalmers and other members.

A summary of the requests indicates that we received 95 requests. These comprised 37 properties, 14 family history, 13 businesses, 4 schools, 4 sport, 4 MVCC and 19 other subjects. In addition, we receive additional requests when we open on Sundays.

## EDITORIAL & PUBLICATION SUB-COMMITTEE

Publications under development are;-  
“*Streets of Moonee Valley*” and  
“*Lost Moonee Valley*”.

“The Grand Mansions of Essendon and District” was reprinted in October 2023.

## LANDMARKS SUB-COMMITTEE

A sold out Moonee Ponds Heritage Walk was conducted on Sunday 5 May as part of the National Heritage Festival.

## AFFILIATED BODIES

Royal Historical Society of Victoria (RHSV) announced that an Award of Merit is to be awarded to Bob Chalmers for meritorious service to the

Essendon Historical Society, an affiliated Member Society of the RHSV. This award will be conferred on Bob at the Annual Dinner in October 2024.

On 14 September 2023, Essendon Historical Society was presented with a fifty year membership certificate by Richard Broome, the RHSV President.



EHS had a booth at the Prahan Mechanics Institute Victorian History Library  
*History Showcase* on 26 August 2023

## **OTHER SOCIETY ACTIVITIES**

A Christmas Street stall was held in Puckle Street on Friday, 15 December 2023.

EHS provided speakers at many community group meetings including Probus clubs and schools (Ascot Vale West and St. Monica's).

EHS assisted with the book launch of *My Grandfather's Clock* at the Sam Merrifield Library on 14 September 2024.

Assistance was provided to The Age, ABC Radio, Inner Northwest Press and Storytowns Metro Project.

The Society had input into the Ryman Lionsville project; Rail Network Alliance Hobsons Rd Kensington;.2 Grice Crescent; and Keilor Road & North Essendon Community Reference Group.

The closure of Maribyrnong Park Bowls Club has contributed items for the EHS Collection.

## **COURT HOUSE MAINTENANCE**

Flashing on the upper north wall above the kitchen windows was repaired (possibly wind damage).

Security cameras were installed in the Court House on 6 June 2024.

## **USE OF THE COURT HOUSE BY MOONEE VALLEY COUNCIL**

A six-year agreement with the City of Moonee Valley commenced on 2 January 2020. The Court House Sub-Committee (comprising three members of the MVCC and three EHS representatives) met on 9 November 2023.

The Council has not used the courtroom in 2024 and the Society will explore what can

be done to address this. The Licence fee is the Society's major source of revenue and is essential for our viability.

Moonee Valley Libraries have promoted the *Toys Across Time* exhibition on its slide shows and through pamphlet distribution.

## **REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT**

The Department of Government Services introduced revised Associations Incorporation Reform Regulations in 2023. EHS is proposing to adopt new Rules of Incorporation as a result.

As a result of ATO annual self-reporting obligation, the Australian Business Number 84 189 654 164 was cancelled on 7 May 2024. Our primary ABN 33 706 980 895 remains.



## THE ANNUAL DINNER

The EHS Annual Dinner was held on Tuesday 27 June 2023. It was decided to

hold the 2024 Annual Dinner in October to take advantage of better weather.

## IN CLOSING

It is important to build on the successful 2023-2024 year. To maintain this momentum, we require additional volunteers across a range of activities.

Suggested volunteer roles include assisting Bob Chalmers with the Newsletter, assisting with scanning of documents, attending the open Courthouse on Sundays.

One of our goals for the next 12 months is to develop up historical information and material relating to our Italian Community.

Please contact us by email at [EHS@esshissoc.org.au](mailto:EHS@esshissoc.org.au) if you would like to participate in any of these projects.

Cate Hutchings (President EHS)



## Memory Lane Garden

EHS received orders for 3 memorial tiles (double size) this financial year.

(Julie Scott MLG Convenor)



# EXHIBITION REPORTS by Lyndall Byrne

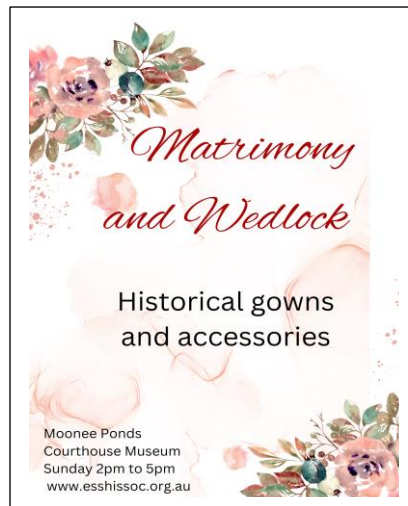
## “Back in Time” Wedding Dress Exhibition

July – December 2023

### Introduction:

#### Main entrance - Mount Alexander Road

A sign was prepared for the entrance foyer as well as a poster displaying photographs of weddings found in the EHS collection.



Included in the new display cabinet was a wedding dress dating back to 1939, as well as an embroidered wedding cake on loan from Mrs Mandy Ginsberg from the Victorian Embroiderer's Guild. The wedding cake was a highlight of the wedding display.



## Southern entrance foyer (ramp entrance)

The smaller display cabinets were lined with cream felt. In this entrance foyer cabinet, we placed wedding accessories and memorabilia, mainly on loan from EHS committee member, Elaine Brogan.

Another sign, “Matrimony and Wedlock”, was prepared and placed on top of this cabinet.

## The Courtroom



Eleven photos were hung on three walls of the Courtroom. These photos were found in the EHS collection as well as private photos belonging to EHS members. They were enhanced and then enlarged and printed at Officeworks. EHS black frames were used to display these photos.

## The Wedding Gowns



A wedding gown from 1870 was donated to the Essendon Historical Society by the Liddell, Sands and Landgren families. This gown was the inspiration to create a display of wedding gowns. There were two wedding gowns and two flower girl dresses in our collection so we needed to ask our members if we could borrow any gown they might have for the display.

- Elaine and Lyndall visited Mr Peter Bottomley who ran a café in Castlemaine called Run Rabbit Run. Upstairs in that café, Peter was the curator of The Castlemaine Costume Gallery. We were able to take many photos of his collection which was a great help in the planning of our display.
- **Peter kindly loaned** EHS a gown worn by Essendon bride, Joyce Candy in 1950.



- EHS borrowed 7 gowns from various EHS members. Some were washed and all were lightly ironed for presentation. Six gowns were displayed on mannequins and specially built wooden display stands. Two gowns and the flower girl dress were hung from a rod suspended from the picture rail in the courthouse. A special silk dress dating back to 1876 was put in the display cabinet as it was in a very fragile state. A net undergarment was made to emphasise the fullness of the skirt to this outfit.



One of the smaller display cabinets in the Courtroom

- The main feature of the display, the dress donated by the Liddell, Sands and Landgren families was centred at the southern end of the courthouse with accompanying accessories. The fragile veil that came with this gown was displayed in one of the display cabinets. A hoop petticoat needed to be put under the dress to show it at its best.
- Signs were prepared describing each gown. They were placed as near as possible to the relevant gown. Where possible, a photo from the actual wedding was also placed near each gown.
- Barriers were purchased to prevent people touching or standing on the costumes. Artificial ivy was strung between each barrier post.

### **Two display cabinets in the court house**

These two cabinets held wedding accessories, some of which were found in our collection, others were purchased from various Opportunity Shops. EHS purchased artificial flowers, ivy leaves and feathers, imitation pearls and lots of net to add interest to each display.

## Wedding dress display launch

A special launch of the wedding dress display was arranged for Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> July. Invitations were extended to EHS members as well as being posted or emailed to people who had kindly loaned EHS their wedding dresses.

Details of the display were posted on the EHS Facebook page. Hayden Williams prepared a power point presentation to be shown on the large screen in the Court House acknowledging people who had loaned us their gowns.



EHS is very grateful to the following who donated or loaned items for display:

- Gown worn by Matilda Jane Coombes 1870 (Liddell, Sands and Landgren families - Glenys and John Liddell and Jenny and Alan Landgren).
- Gown worn by Isabella Cameron 1876 (Alison and Malcolm McNab).
- Gown worn by Amelia May Boseley 1935 and Dress worn by Marleene Rose Barling 1960 (Marleene Hebden).
- Gown worn by Veronica Ellen Kelly 1944 (Elaine Brogan OAM).
- Gown worn by Rosa Isabelle Butler 1947 (Peter Bromley).
- Gown worn by Joyce Isabel Candy 1950 (Peter Bottomley, Castlemaine Costume Gallery).
- Silk Wedding Cake (Mandy Ginsberg, Embroiderers Guild of Victoria).
- Other gowns are from the EHS Buckland and Hampson Collections.

# Unwrapping the past: Children's Toys across the Years

Dates: 21 January – 30 June 2024

It was thanks to Essendon Historical Society members and friends that we were able to put this display together. Requests went out at meetings and by word of mouth to see if we could borrow precious toys and games for our display and the response was amazing.

## Introduction:

### Main entrance

#### Mount Alexander Road

The black display board was set up at the entrance showing an introductory poster and the large letters 'T O Y S'. Four more posters showing vintage toys were added to the board. A child's rocking horse added interest to the entrance area. Two large posters were also prepared for the sandwich board which sits on the steps to the Court House.



Sign on Court House steps



Entrance Foyer



Large Display Cabinet

### Large display cabinet main entrance

With the help of Peter Willoughby, a trains, cars and aeroplane display was set up in this large display cabinet. Glass shelves were inserted to display items on different levels. It was very effective when the lights were turned on.

### Southern entrance ramp area

This area displayed a handmade wooden toy fortress on loan from the Benton family. Also on show were small lead soldiers, field artillery, field hospital and Irish Guards pipes and drums. There was room for a small farm scene with more lead figures. A fully assembled Bayco building (one of the earliest plastic toys to be manufactured) was included in this cabinet as well as a building constructed from Build-a-Bix from the early 1950's.



## Courtroom

Fabric bunting was hung around the walls of the courtroom instead of framed photos. Bunting decorated a display table and was also threaded through our safety barriers. The main areas in the courtroom were the two display cabinets, the space between the two, the tall display cabinet, fireplace area and the witness stand area.

A selection of toys and games was displayed in the display cases covering early toys and games to the present era. In between these display cases we set up a table to show a selection of collectable cards and comics.

The tall display cabinet held a wide selection of dolls. Two extra glass shelves were fitted inside so that we had three levels to work with. A wicker pram, on loan from Elaine Brogan, was placed in the cabinet to add impact.

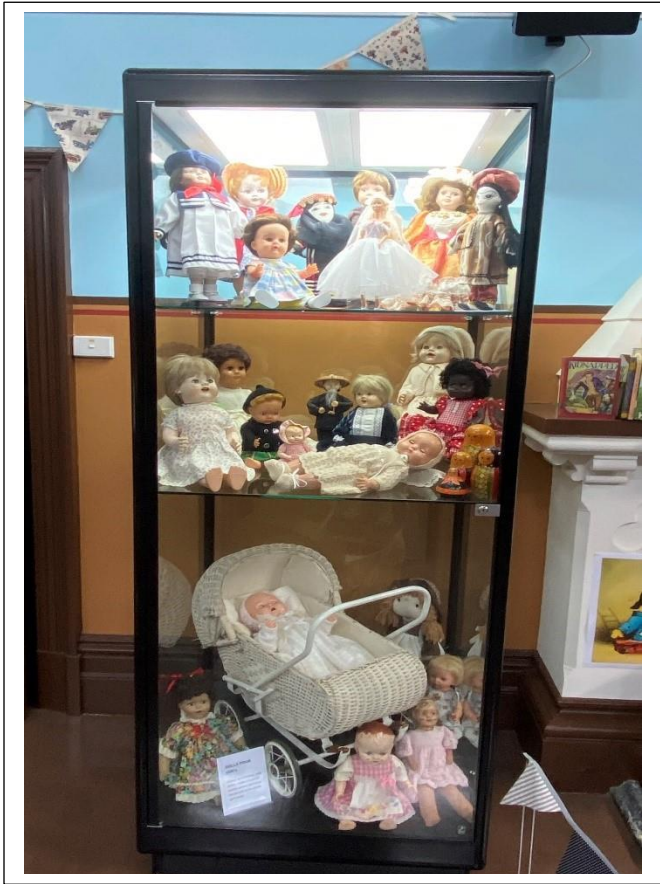
A display of bears, sitting in old suitcases, was prepared for the fireplace area. A quiz, “Which one is the real bear?”, was placed amongst the bears sitting on the mantelpiece. Peter Willoughby’s rocking horse was included here, and we used the witness stand again to show a beautifully carved “musical chair” on loan from Liz Benton.



The handmade fortress displayed in the ramp entrance foyer



## EHS Doll and Teddy Display Main Courtroom



The Toy exhibition was advertised in the E.H.S. newsletter and on Facebook. Pamphlets were made to be distributed at libraries, Probus meetings and schools. The exhibition was launched with a PowerPoint presentation at the first

EHS meeting for 2024 (27 February) in the Court House where the display was on show.

It was thanks to the people, listed below, who generously loaned us their precious toys, that the display was a success.

Judy Anderson  
Liz & Rob Benton  
Elaine Brogan OAM  
Bob Chalmers  
Elizabeth Cook  
Rosalie Coutts  
Denise Finn

Cate Hutchings  
Janet Kearney  
Diane McCall  
Alison & Malcolm McNab  
Terry Scott  
Lesley Uren  
Peter Willoughby

**Essendon Historical Society**

**August 2024**

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**EHS 2024**

**Editor – Julie Scott**