Essendon Historical Society Inc
Established 1970

Inc No A0017240P

ABN No

33 706 980 895

The Newsletter

Moonee Ponds Courthouse Museum

768-770 Mt Alexander Rd, Moonee Ponds 3039

Issue No 268 February—April 2024 **EHS is affiliated with the Royal Historical Society of Victoria** **Telephone 9370 4607**

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A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Members,
I hope that you have all had a happy, safe and relaxing rest over the Christmas—New Year Period and trust that you are looking forward to what 2024 has to offer.

I must apologise for the delay in putting this Newsletter together, but as the saying goes "Better late than never".

The Moonee Valley Festival was held on 24 February at Queens Park. The weather was perfect for the event and it was great to see so many local residents out and about throughout the day. It was the first time since February 2018 that the Moonee Valley Council selected Queens Park as the venue for the Festival and I am sure that the organisers will be pleased with the support they received from the public.

The Court House was open from 10.00 am to 5.00 pm and we were very pleased to welcome just on 300 visitors throughout the day. Thank you to all the EHS members who helped us in many different ways, and in particular our Vice President, Kelsey Collins, for setting up a number of activities to keep the children entertained.

President, Cate Hutchings and Secretary, Hayden Williams operating the Book Stall on the Court House

The Main Stage (Queens Park)

Our first General Meeting for 2024 was held on Tuesday evening, 27 February at the Moonee Ponds Court House and it was very pleasing to see twenty-seven members and friends in attendance. There were also seventeen apologies.

Darryn Hartnett, Julie Scott, Bob Chalmers and Jenny Macaffer presented items of interest in the "Show and Tell" segment following the general business.

This meeting also marked the launch of the new display "Unwrapping the Past—Children's Toys across the Years" put together by Lyndall Byrne and Elaine Brogan OAM with the help of other friends. Those who contributed items for the exhibition were invited to the meeting for the special occasion. Lyndall briefly spoke about several of the exhibits on display and thanked those who had provided items. The Exhibition will be open until June.
Following the launch the evening was concluded with drinks and nibbles.

The Next Exhibition

The Exhibition planned for the second half of 2024 will feature life in the 1920s. Lyndall and Elaine would be pleased to hear from any members or friends who have items relating to life one hundred years ago that they would be prepared to share with us.

EHS Heritage Walk (5 May 2024)

The EHS Committee decided, at its planning meeting in January, to conduct a Heritage Walk as part of Heritage Victoria's "Heritage Month". The walk "The Moonee Ponds Civic Triangle and Environs" will focus on the Moonee Ponds Junction and the area bounded by Mount Alexander Road, Pascoe Vale Road and Kellaway Avenue. It will be held on **Sunday, 5th May** commencing from Mount Alexander Road (Rotary Club Fountain site opposite the Town Hall) **at 2.30 pm** and concluding at the Court House. It is anticipated it will involve 60—75 minutes of easy walking. The walk will be limited to 25 participants. Cost $20.00 per head. **Booking is essential.** Bookings can be made through our website.

The Cataloguing Sub-committee

The Cataloguing Sub Committee resumed work at the Court House in January after a well earned rest. We are very pleased to welcome back Anna Maree Malmgren who has been working through the EHS Library Collection. Lyndall Byrne has been cataloguing and suitably boxing the objects such as medallions, ladies' and gentlemen's requisites, school memorabilia etc. Ensuring that items belonging to the EHS are recorded on *e*hive remains an important project for other members of the sub-committee.

Bob Chalmers (Editor)

KEEP IN TOUCH WITH EHS ACTIVITIES ON OUR WEBSITE

www.esshissoc.org.au

Email Address EHS@esshissoc.org.au

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CENTENARY OF NORTH ESSENDON UNITING CHURCH

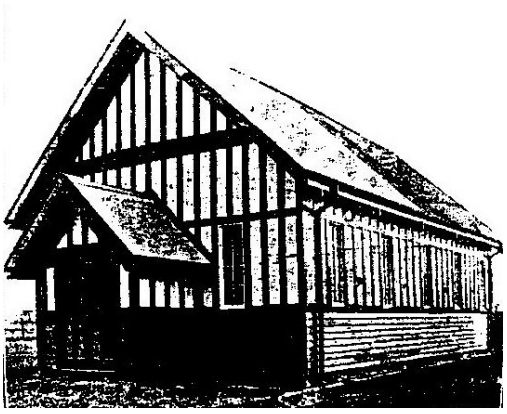
by Bob Chalmers

The members of North Essendon Uniting Church in Keilor Road North Essendon will be celebrating the Centenary of the erection of the original church building this year.

The first Meeting for the establishment of the North Essendon congregation was held at the North Essendon State School on 23 October 1923 and permission was granted by the Education Department to conduct Church Services and Sunday School classes in the school buildings until a church was built.

The family of the late Alexander Smith, a prominent Stock and Station Agent and land owner, had donated two blocks of land in the Devonshire Estate west of the school and with a combined frontage of 132 feet to Keilor Road from his estate which became the proposed site for the church. A third block on the corner of McCulloch street was added in 1947 at a cost of £10 per foot.

A tender from local builder, Mr James Coulthard, of Park Street, Moonee Ponds for £850 was received and accepted in April 1924 for the erection of a wooden church building to seat 200 parishioners to the design of Architect, William Kemp. The new church, originally known as the Alexander Smith Memorial Church, was completed in July 1924 and the first service was conducted by Rev J. T. Robertson on 3 August 1924.



The first three Elders, Norman G. Chalmers, Thomas Miller and Hepburn Leonard McNicol, were ordained and inducted by Rev W. Fraser on 12 November 1924. Norman Gordon Chalmers, my Grandfather, was elected as the first Session Clerk.

The first Minister, Rev H. E. Carey, was inducted on 30 April 1925.

A new Sunday School Hall was erected in 1925. The building, measuring 38 feet by 25 feet contained a kindergarten hall 25 feet by 25 feet and two classrooms each 12 feet square. It was dedicated on 22 August 1926.

The Brick Church

In November 1936 the Board of Management outlined a plan to erect a new brick church of modern design on their land. The foundation stone was laid on 17 July 1937. The new church, designed by architects, Scarborough, Robertson & Love and built by Norman Miller, was completed in October 1937.

As a result of the formation of the Uniting Church of Australia (UCA) in July 1977, the North Essendon Presbyterian Church was renamed the Keilor Road Uniting Church.

The Gannawarra Centre replaced the Sunday School hall. It was officially opened in February 2001 and further extensive renovations took place to the Church buildings in 2008-09.

GOLD IN ESSENDON

By Dr Anne Black

The Victorian goldfields of Ballarat, Castlemaine and Bendigo are celebrated, but few people are aware that Essendon, too, was once the site of a gold rush. Officially, gold was first discovered in the colony of Victoria at Clunes in 1851. First Nations people had undoubtedly noticed the shiny metal much earlier.

The surprising and overlooked story of the 1854 Essendon diggings comes to life in the pages of contemporary newspapers, accessible via the National Library of Australia's magnificent *Trove* online database.

The articles capture the gold fever then prevalent in the colony, at a time when the merest rumour of gold sparked a frantic rush to the new field. A flood of eager gold seekers streamed along Mount Alexander Road on the long routes to the goldfields. The colonial writer George Isaacs, in the language of his day, provided an eyewitness account of their diversity and common purpose:

> So they went forth, a motley throng. Never was seen such an incongruous assemblage of wayfarers, nor such variety of vehicles. Drays, carts, gigs – drawn by bullocks, by horses, by men; trucks and wheelbarrows – by men, by boys, by dogs. Even the one ancient donkey, who owned the distinction of being the sole representative of his patient race in the colony, was pressed into service. Some parties of foot passengers, boasting the joint possession of a horse, made him carry their pack; others, and their name was legion, less fortunate, toiled patiently along, sustaining burthens that a horse might stagger under; exposed to the inclemency of the season, traversing swamps, and wading creeks, the pale and effeminate martyrs of a sedentary life competing in the race with the athletic son of labour, and the *old hand*, inured to the colonial climate, and hardened to the roughest work. Thus, side by side, of divers [sic] races, of every degree, in one lengthened chain of many miles, their aim one goal, there went forth the worshippers of mammon.

Readers of the Melbourne *Argus* on 25 September 1854 may have noticed the initial report of the discovery of gold in Essendon. A gold field so close to the centre of Melbourne was welcome news for everyone, not least the traders who lined the route.

Under the tantalizing heading "NEW GOLD-FIELD" the paper announced:

> A very important discovery of gold has been made, on the high road to Keilor, *about six miles from Melbourne*. An intelligent gentleman, who passed yesterday, reports having seen a party of men who had picked out nearly a pound and a half of the precious metal with their pocket-knives.

The paragraph concluded with "we have no doubt that this notice will have the effect of causing a rush to the new diggings". Of course that was the result, and the *Argus* updated the exciting news the following day:

> A large number of people assembled yesterday upon the spot indicated as the new diggings at Essendon, and knives and picks were called freely into action. A considerable quantity of gold was found in portions varying from the size of a pin's head to that of nuggets of half an ounce or even ounce weight. Indeed, a report was current on the spot that a lump weighing ten ounces [283 grams] had been found.

That same day, the *Geelong Advertiser*'s informant observed:

> … about three hundred persons washing the soil at a creek about a mile and a half beyond Essendon, and all getting more than wages and finding gold wherever they worked. One person had four ounces of gold, among which was a nugget of two ounces weight.

Where, exactly, was this new El Dorado? Several clues pinpoint the site. The initial report stated that the gold was found "about a mile and a half past the Essendon Inn". The next day, the *Argus* slightly amended the location:

> The gold is found by the road side at a point where there has been a slight cutting, about two miles beyond Essendon, and seven and a half from Melbourne, on the high road to Keilor.

The inn mentioned was the Essendon Hotel, located on the eastern side of the present junction of Mount Alexander Road, Keilor Road and Bulla Road, Essendon. A modern hotel occupies the site.

The *Geelong Advertiser*'s article contained a further specific and very useful detail:

> The spot where the digging was carried on is of very small extent; it is on the left hand side of Mr Nicholson's fence.

'Mr Nicholson' was the influential politician William Nicholson. From humble beginnings as a grocer, he rose to become the Mayor of Melbourne (1850–1851) and later Premier of Victoria (1859–1860). By the time of the Essendon discovery in 1854, he had already played a significant role in the search for gold in the colony.

In June 1851, Nicholson was chairman of the Gold Discovery Committee, which offered a reward of two hundred guineas for the first workable gold field to be found within two hundred miles of Melbourne. The resulting saga of claim and counter claim for the reward dragged on for years, but the result was almost unimaginable wealth for the colony of Victoria.

Nicholson purchased just over one hundred and eighty-eight acres (Crown Allotments C and D of Section 17 in Doutta Galla) on the south side of Keilor Road in 1849. Hoffmans Road was the eastern boundary and Steele Creek, also known as Spring Creek or Rose Creek, trickled across the western and southern boundaries. The creek crossed Keilor Road in a gully just west of the farm. It was a fine spot to wash dirt from the diggings. Nicholson named the farm 'Fairview'. Christine Laskowski, in her excellent *Steele Creek and The Lady of the Lake*, notes that over the next fifty years, the property was owned by brothers William, John and Joseph Nicholson, and John Dick. The latter appears to have occupied 'Fairview' around the time of the gold discovery. Nicholson also owned land a little further along Keilor Road, Allotment B in Section 18, but its greater distance from Essendon precludes the possibility that it was the site of the diggings.

The newspaper accounts provide clues that clarify the location. Assuming that the distances given in the papers were accurate (that is, the site was one and a half to two miles along Keilor Road from the Essendon Hotel), the gold was found adjacent to Nicholson's Allotment D, to the east of Spring Gully Reserve. The site was in present-day Niddrie, between Keilor Road's intersection with Newman Street (just over one and a half miles from the Essendon Hotel) and the Hanson Street/The Avenue area (roughly two miles from the hotel). The mention of a road cutting suggests that the site was sloping. This would place the diggings closer to Hanson Street, perhaps on the gentle incline towards Steele Creek.

Gold attracted bureaucracy. The Essendon site was officially inspected by two extravagantly-named politicians, John Fitzgerald Leslie Vesey Foster (the order of whose names changed over time) and Hugh Culling Eardley Childers. J.F.L.V. Foster (dubbed "Alphabet Foster" by the satirical *Melbourne Punch*) was Colonial Secretary. His diverse duties included goldfields administration. Foster would have been most interested in the gold discovery as it was on his doorstep. His property 'Leslie Park' was nearby on Section 20, on the northern side of Keilor Road. Foster's companion, H.C.E. Childers, was the Collector of Customs.

Further, seven troopers were dispatched to maintain order:

> A few police were sent out yesterday to prevent persons from prospecting with such energy as to destroy the road. But if the gold is a natural deposit, it must extend over much of the adjacent land, which is private property and cultivated; and we dare say that the neighboring green crops will not be held inviolably sacred if a fair offer is made for a few claims of the usual eight feet square.

News of the discovery spread rapidly. Within four days of the initial report, the *Adelaide Times* alerted its readers. The *Empire* in Sydney, the *Cornwall Chronicle* in Launceston and the *Colonial Times* in Hobart all quickly commented on the new gold field.

From the outset, some were not convinced of the Essendon site's authenticity. One journalist rather warily outlined some possible origins for the precious metal, but still offered his readers encouragement:

> Whether it has been placed there originally, or whether some one has lost it, and it has been tramped into the ground during wet weather, we cannot say, but from a personal examination we fancy that the ground is really auriferous [gold-bearing].

The *Geelong Advertiser* attempted to quell the excitement. Was the find a hoax?

Under the heading, "THE RUMOURED ESSENDON DIGGINGS", the paper assumed a pessimistic stance:

> This report, like many other auriferous ones, turns out to be all humbug. Whether some adventurous publican has "peppered" the wayside, or whether some bacchanalian has given way to some inward fit of generosity, we know not; but one thing is certain, that these diggings turn out all moonshine.

Evidently that journalist, or his informant, had experienced the field at first hand:

> The whole digging space consists of the mere side bank of the road, and here adventurous new chums might be seen all yesterday hard at work with table knife and fork. We were shown some specimens weighing about 1 dwt. [pennyweight – less than 1.6 grams] But as to whether they were really procured from these "diggings" we do not know.

> We also met on going, and overtook on returning, hordes of misled unfortunates; we, therefore, in all sincerity, warn our readers against the Essendon diggings.

The *Argus*, realizing that its initial announcement may have been over-optimistic, published an article by 'Our Own Correspondent' in Sandhurst (later Bendigo) on 5 October 1854. This old hand suggested a more plausible account of the Essendon gold's origin:

> …there is not the slightest indication of the gold formation in the vicinity of Essendon, and I am surprised that there should be any doubt as to the origin of gold-dust lying on the roadside – the highway from Mount Alexander and Bendigo, along which thousands of ounces have been conveyed by diggers, and on which it is very well known that hundreds of ounces have been lost.

To strengthen his case, the writer invoked the science of geology to counteract Essendon's claim as a gold-bearing locality:

> People in Victoria seem to think that nature has violated her usual laws in favor of this colony, and that the ground teems with a plethora of mineral treasures. Hence we have gold discoveries at Keilor Plains among basaltic and lava rocks…

The writing was on the wall – or at least, in the papers – and journalists were right to be sceptical.

Within days, the finds petered out.

The short-lived Essendon gold rush appeared to be over.

Almost.

Eight years later, on 25 May 1863, the Melbourne *Age* newspaper announced:

> It is not improbable we may have to announce a second suburban gold-field in the neighborhood of Essendon some of these days. Gold in various homœopathic quantities have for some years past been found in this locality; but a veritable "lead," which yields to plodding industry something approaching to boy's wages has at length been discovered, and all Essendon (in the secret) and the secretary to the Railway Company, are in a violent state of commotion. It appears that Messrs. Clarke and Sons, gold-brokers, Elizabeth street, purchased some fifteen pennyweights of gold, obtained from this neighborhood, on Saturday last. The gold was heavy and waterworn, and the locality where it was found is a gully somewhere between the Essendon Hotel and the [Essendon] railway station. Some years ago there was a rush to a spot a mile or two beyond this, a cutting on the Mount Alexander road, where some gold had been found, but it was supposed at the time it must have been left there by accident.

The papers remain silent on any further developments. If more precious metal was found in the area, it did not become general knowledge.

One hundred and seventy years after the initial find, the ephemeral Essendon gold rush has been long-forgotten, but the 1854 newspaper accounts bring to life the gold fever that once, very briefly, gripped Moonee Valley. Perhaps small traces of gold remain in the local soil, inadvertently scattered along the well-trodden route from the goldfields by careless diggers, deliberately placed there by avaricious innkeepers, or much less likely, as natural deposits. What is certain is that the wealth in the area now lies in the land's intrinsic value, not in its potential to yield golden nuggets. Most importantly, the brief story of the Essendon diggings reminds us of the rich vein of history still to be found in our local area.

Sources:

Robyn Annear. *Nothing but Gold: The Diggers of 1852*. Melbourne, Victoria: Text Publishing, 1999.

Christine Laskowski. *Steele Creek and The Lady of the Lake. The early history of Niddrie, Airport West, Keilor East, Avondale Heights, Keilor Park, West Essendon and Tullamarine*. Essendon, Victoria: Christine Laskowski, Revised edition, 2017.

A. Pendragon (George Isaacs). *The Queen of the South: A Colonial Romance. Being Pictures of Life in Victoria in the Early Days of the Diggings*. Gawler, South Australia: W. Barnet, 1858.

Various Australian newspapers, 1850 – 1870. Courtesy of *Trove*, National Library of Australia.

A BOOK REVIEW

SAM PENNISI—An Autobiography

By Sam Pennisi in conjunction with Alan Murphy (OAM)

This Review has been written for the Essendon Historical Society by Alan Murphy who edited the book.

Our long term member, real estate agent, Sam Pennisi, has released his autobiography coinciding with his retirement from the real estate business he founded in January 1973.

The autobiography is 65,00 words, with 120 photographs spread over 236 pages. Sam has presented two books to our library. He wrote the book to help his own children, his grandchildren, and in time, their children, to better understand how he succeeded in building a highly successful real estate business in a spectacular career spanning 67 years. Sam's son, Andrew became Managing Director in July last year.

Sam's father migrated to Australia in 1927 and built a successful cane- cutting business in Koumala, Northern Queensland. Sam was born in 1940. His brother Mario and he had an opportunity to eventually take over the farm but had little interest. The family moved to Melbourne and made their home in Raleigh Street Essendon.

Sam's book reveals he started as the office boy in John Keam and Son in 1956, leaving school at just 16. He joined two other firms to complete a 17-year apprentice-ship before starting his own business. When Andrew wanted to join the business in the late 1980s, Sam insisted that Andrew gain experience with other agents before joining Pennisi Real Estate.

The idea to work for himself emerged when he was working for L. J. Hooker. In 1972 an unlicensed real estate agent offered him $2,000 annually to "borrow" Sam's real estate license. Sam dismissed the invitation immediately because while the money was attractive, it was against the law to sell in this manner. But Sam thought here was an unlicensed agent, able to offer what then was a significant amount of money even before he sold any houses. "Maybe that's what I should do", Sam pondered. He and his late wife Di headed off to a Manchester Unity flat in Rosebud for a week. They talked about how he could make a business work at a time when he felt that local agents were lazy and at times pathetic, with abysmal standards of customer service. It took a lot of courage to go out on his own, given he had a hefty mortgage on his East Keilor home - and a young family.

Sam doesn't hide from his shortcomings and demanded we tell it to readers, "warts and all". So, we did. He talks candidly of his chain smoking as a teenager in Italy, driving an unlicensed truck on roads in North Queensland at 12 years of age. And the challenges he and his wife had encountered in the days when the Catholics and Protestants didn't get on. Mixed marriage didn't work as the Churches said at that time. Sam's marriage to Di was one made in heaven.

Sam successfully built his business in the first two decades but was unaware of the drama which lay ahead in the late 1990s. He met Neil Jenman, a Sydney real estate agent, who attracted huge publicity nationally arguing the only people who made money out of auctions were the real estate agents. Rarely the purchaser or vendor. He attracted huge coverage about the dirty tricks of many real estate agents during the auction process. It was a tough call for Sam who had successfully auctioned more than 6,000 homes in his then 42 years in the industry. He saw merit in the Jenman Approved concept, which required selling by private treaty, but accreditation to Jenman, meant he had to abandon selling by auction. Though he had helped to establish the First National group of agents, and served two terms as their National President, he was told he could not remain a First National member if he abandoned selling by auction. He reluctantly was left no alternative but to resign from First National. The Jenman system provides vendors with the highest professional standards through which they obtain the best possible prices for their properties.

This was a massive change to how he ran the business, but within a short time, the changeover was a huge success from which Sam has never looked back.

Sam credits much of his success through joining the Essendon Jaycees in 1960. Jaycees were a service group which shook tins in busy streets on button days, chopped up and delivered firewood to elderly citizens and took pensioner groups regularly to see live theatre in the city. He became President in 1966. Along the journey he learnt about public speaking, developed organizational, motivational and management skills all of which helped him in his commercial career. In 1989 more than 600 delegates attended the First National annual conference in Perth, successfully chairing and controlling meetings of this number, largely because of what he had learned about meeting procedure in the Jaycees.

He became an inaugural member of the Rotary Club of Essendon North when it was formed in 1976 and became Club President in 1977-78.

He was appointed a Paul Harris Fellow for his services to Rotary after the Jaycees had earlier appointed him a Senator of Junior Chamber International.

Sam has recorded 39 pages as an appendix listing hundreds of properties and the prices achieved in Essendon and surrounding districts showing the strength of the local property market since he started in business.

He lists the fifty most important things he had learnt in business since 1973 all of which make for good reading. He takes readers through his fifty years working for himself and establishing the Pennisi brand across the local community.

The autobiography is available to EHS members at no cost. Members should call the Pennisi office on 9379 5616.

EDITOR'S NOTE

I had the pleasure and privilege of meeting with Sam Pennisi and Alan Murphy over coffee in Moonee Ponds shortly after the book was launched late last year. Both gentlemen are well known and well respected in our local community and it was great to catch up for a chat.

Thank to Sam for donating two copies of his book to the EHS Library collection and to Alan for writing the above report for our Newsletter.

Bob Chalmers

YOUTHFUL PURSUITS

By Anne Hillier

The current Toy Display in the Court House triggered thoughts in the direction of my youthful pursuits.

My first five years were spent during the Second World War when the war effort and the poverty of the Depression meant that children didn't have much choice of pastimes. I remember wondering at the search lights sweeping the night sky, and going to the air raid shelter in our paddock (built into the hillside) when the booming sounds came up the valley of the midget submarines being found entering Sydney Harbour. My mother made me a huge rag doll out of old clothes as a companion because we had so few neighbours where we lived. After the war we moved further into the country and I knew there were fairies living in the trees. I made little gardens and pathways for them. They never repaid my efforts so I made up other games, climbing trees, making up stories about the creek and the old willow tree that crossed it. We rode horses bare back, and walked in the bush, sitting on a log to read mystery stories. Moving into town, we lived on a hill, and of course I built a billy-cart. Fortunately my father put a brake on it or we might have had some serious accidents. At about ten years of age, we played Monopoly, Snakes and Ladders and wooden Draughts. The draughts, when turned over, became chess pieces.

We also had knucklebones or Jacks which came out of the Sunday roast - you can't buy these any more because butchers don't have them. It seems that we had a pretty carefree time when I think of what my great, great, grandmother was doing when she was ten. We have a sampler in the Family archives created by her in 1830 as a precursor to her necessary skills as an adult.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Anne supplied an image of her G-G– Grandmother's poem but it was too dark to publish. However, her work—"**The Pleasures of Religion**" read as follows

The Religion that can give
Sweetest pleasure while we live
Tis Religion must supply
Solid comfort when we die
After death its joys will be
Lasting as Eternity
Let me then make God my friend
And in all His ways attend

Elizabeth Hills Work - 1830

OUR NEW EXHIBITION

Lyndall Byrne and Elaine Brogan OAM dismantled the Wedding Gown Display over the Christmas/New Year break and have set up a new display in the Courtroom featuring children's toys and past-times from times past. Entitled "Unwrapping the Past: - Children's Toys Across the Years", the display will be launched at the EHS General Meeting on 27 February.

Some items that are on display are from our EHS collection, but most are on loan from various members and friends who responded to requests for assistance in putting this display together.

It features collections of dolls and teddy bears, tea-sets, a rocking horse, an antique musical chair, lead soldiers, board games, model train sets, match-box cars, Meccano and Bayko sets and many other toys—some dating back to the 1930s.

OUR NEW PICTURE THEATRE

Local members who frequent the Puckle Street precinct regularly will no doubt be aware of the Picture Theatre complex that has been built on the south side of the street in what used to be a furniture warehouse.

The complex, which features eleven screens and a rooftop cinema, was officially opened on 21 December 2023. Entry is gained through Penny Lane Arcade which connects Puckle Street with Young Street, crossing Penny Lane.

The modern complex at 17 Puckle Street also includes a new Italian food emporium, Brunetti Classico Café and Function Centre, an Ice Cream Bar and the Guzman Y Gomez Mexican Kitchen.

The new development has been very cleverly designed so that the street façade has been largely retained but the height of the building increases to five levels at the rear.

The Palace Cinemas have been built immediately west of and adjoining the old Moonee Ponds Theatre which opened in 1911 on the site previously occupied by the Melbourne Tramway and Omnibus Company.

The Moonee Ponds Picture Theatre was the earliest to be built in the Essendon district spcifically for the screening of films. It closed on 1 December 1965 and was, until recent times, occupied as a bicycle shop.

The Original Moonee Ponds Picture Theatre

The Ice-cream Bar (Penny Lane Arcade)

Brunetti Classico Cafe

The former Moonee Ponds Picture Theatre in Puckle Street

CHANGING THE BOUNDARIES

Following a Local Council Electoral Structure Review conducted late last year the structure of the City of Moonee Valley has been altered considerably.

The three existing Wards (Rose Hill, Buckley and Myrnong), currently served by three elected Councillors, will, from 9 October 2024, be replaced by nine Wards— Canning Ward, Milleara Ward and Steele Creek Ward (all west of Hoffmans Road), Airport Ward, Buckley Ward and Queens Park Ward (basically the suburbs of Airport West, Strathmore, Essendon and Aberfeldie) and Woodlands Ward, Fairbairn Ward and Myrnong Ward covering Moonee Ponds, Ascot Vale, Flemington and Travancore).

In line with instructions from the Electoral Commission each of the nine wards will be represented by ONE elected Councillor who will be responsible for looking after the interests of its constituents.

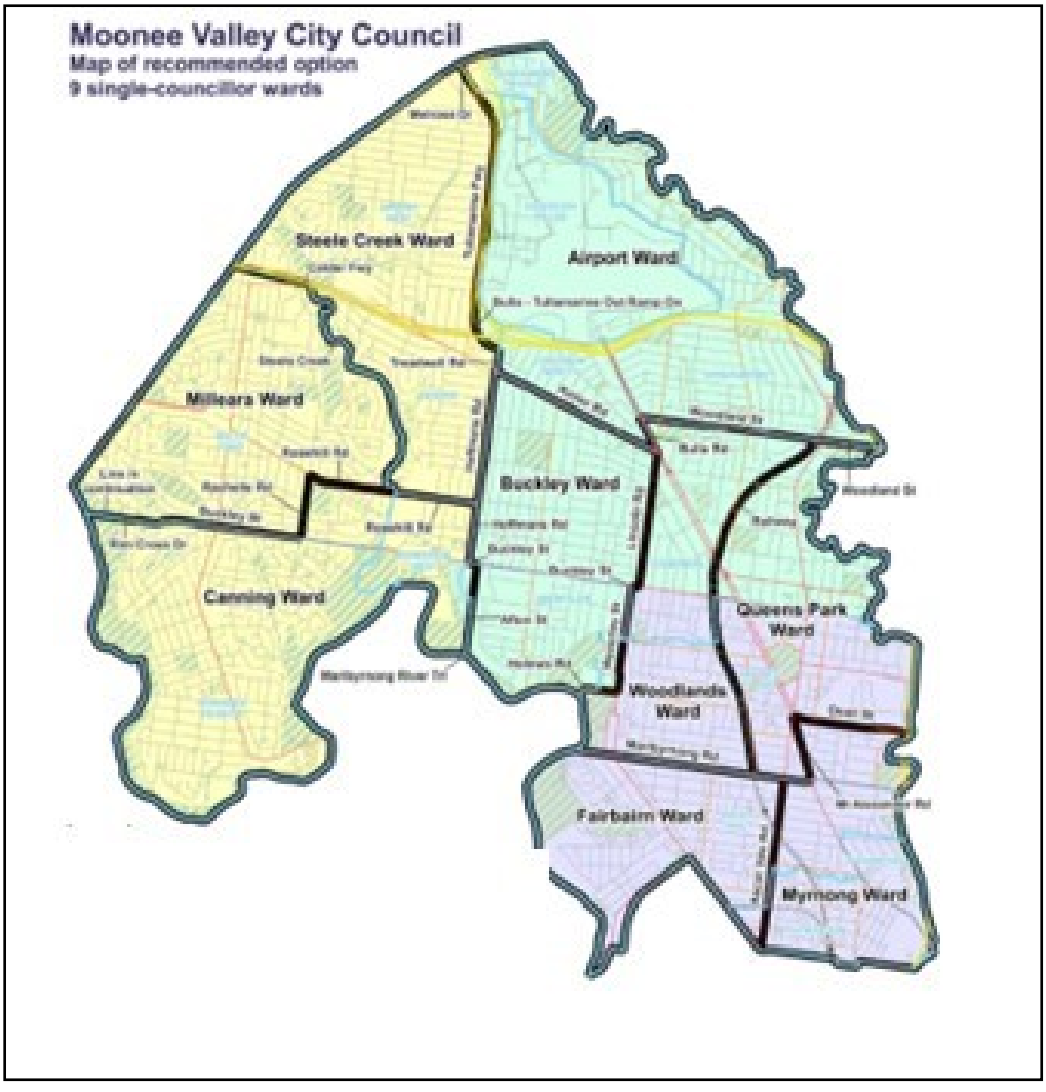
The boundaries of the Wards were chosen to make each, as much as possible, contain an equal number of residents.

The Wards have been named after an identifiable landmark - Canning Reserve, Steele Creek, Buckley, Fairbairn, Woodlands and Queens Parks, and Milleara and Myrnong, after main roads running through them.

It is interesting to note that when the City of Moonee Valley was first formed by the Kennett Government in 1994 there were seven wards— Deakin, Phelan, Hicks, McCracken, Napier, Ramsay and Debney (seven prominent and influential citizens). The Council comprised of seven members, each representing a Ward.

In 2009 the decision was made to replace the seven Wards with three larger ones, to increase the size of the Council to nine members and to have three Councillors representing each Ward. These were called West Ward, Central Ward and South Ward. These names, while practical, were deemed, apparently, to be unimaginative, and were replaced in 2013 with Rose Hill, Buckley and Myrnong.

Council Elections are held every four years. The current Councillors will be required to retire later this year. Council Elections will be conducted across the State of Victoria on 9 October 2024.



NEW MEMBERS

It is a great pleasure to be able to welcome the following members who have joined the Essendon Historical Society in the past couple of months.

New Members

Val Barbary (Meadow Heights)

Sharyn Sully (Essendon West)

Bill Russell (Moonee Ponds)

Pat McKay (Strathmore)

Cathy Fasciale

We hope that you all enjoy your membership of the EHS and look forward to meeting up with you at our General Meetings or other activities in the future.

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.

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

EHS Postal Address

Please note that all correspondence should be addressed to:

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Essendon, 3040

Meetings

The Society meets February to November at the Moonee Ponds Court House Museum (770 Mt Alexander Road, Moonee Ponds) on the fourth Tuesday of the month unless otherwise notified.

Court House Museum

The Moonee Ponds Court House Museum is open each Sunday afternoon (2.00—5.00 pm) or by special arrangement.

The Newsletter

The deadline for the next EHS N/letter is Friday 26 April 2024

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

RECENT EVENTS

SATURDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2024

MOONEE VALLEY FESTIVAL
(at Queens Park, Moonee Ponds)

****

GENERAL MEETINGS

TUESDAY 27 FEBRUARY, 2024
7.30 pm at the
Moonee Ponds Court House Museum
Launch of New Exhibition

****

COMING EVENTS

TUESDAY 26 MARCH, 2024
7.30 pm at the
Moonee Ponds Court House Museum

Guest Speaker: Chris Hawker
Topic: Harry Hawker (Aviator)

****

TUESDAY 23 APRIL, 2024
7.30pm at the
Moonee Ponds Court House Museum

Guest Speaker: John Kavanagh

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SUNDAY 5 MAY, 2024
2.00 pm
Opposite Moonee Ponds Town Hall
HERITAGE WALK
Moonee Ponds Civic Triangle & Environs
(Booking Essential)

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