

The Newsletter

Moonee Ponds Court House Museum

768-770 Mt Alexander Rd, Moonee Ponds 3039



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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The following items of news relating to two members of the EHS Committee will be of interest to you

Bob Chalmers to Receive RHSV Award

We are very proud to announce that Mr Bob Chalmers was nominated by us and he will receive the RHSV Award of Merit for his amazing and sustained service to the Essendon Historical Society and to history in Victoria. In the application we identified that he has been a financial member of the society for 46 years and has held the positions of Treasurer, Secretary, Vice-President and President. As an office holder and especially as President for many years he has led the society in numerous community activities. He assisted in the restoration of the Moonee Ponds Court House after the disastrous fire of 2016 and continues to work at the Court House on Sundays, meeting visitors and answering research inquiries. He has been the author of and a contributor to many valuable books on the history of Essendon.

His Award of Merit nomination is now on the RHSV's website:

<https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Chalmers-Bob-Award-of-Merit.pdf>

Bob will be presented with his Award at the Annual Dinner on Tuesday, 22 October 2024.

Elaine Brogan OAM Resigns from the EHS Committee

It was with regret that we recently accepted the resignation of Elaine Brogan OAM from the EHS Committee. Elaine joined the EHS in 1986 and has acted in a variety of positions on the Committee over the years. She held the office of Secretary from 1986-1995, and Vice President in 1996 before serving as President from 1997 to 2001. After returning to Melbourne from Tatong, she served again as Vice President (2014-15) and as a general Committee member 2016-2024. She has recently been actively involved as a member of subcommittees preparing displays in the Museum and arranging the annual dinner. The EHS committee and the membership of EHS have benefited greatly from her contributions over the years and we hope that she enjoys her newly acquired free time.

Cate Hutchings (President)

VALE TOM AND DOREEN MORGAN



We were sad to learn of the recent death of Rev. Tom Morgan who passed away on 23 March 2024 at the age of 95. His wife, Doreen had died six months earlier, on 14 September 2023 just short of her 99th birthday.

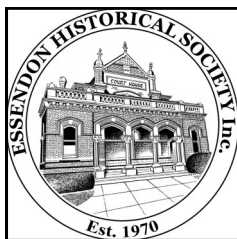
Although spending the latter years of their lives in Romsey Tom and Doreen regularly attended our Annual Dinners and were well loved members of the Society.

Rev. Thomas (Tom) Morgan was inducted as the Vicar of the St Thomas Church, Moonee Ponds on 7 February 1982 and remained at the Moonee Ponds Anglican Church until January 1995 when he was replaced by Rev Peter Horman. Tom's Funeral (Service of Thanksgiving) was conducted at St Mary's Anglican Church, Sunbury on 4 April 2024.

MOONEE PONDS HERITAGE WALK

Bob Chalmers and Darryn Hartnett led a Heritage Walk in Moonee Ponds on Sunday 5 May as part of "Heritage Month" which was advertised in the National Trust booklet. Those wishing to participate were required to make a booking and numbers were restricted. Twenty-one people accompanied us on the 75 minute walk which focussed on the Moonee Ponds Junction and the Municipal Triangle. Each participant received a 16 page booklet and were invited to join us at the Courthouse after the Walk for afternoon tea and to look at the Toy display. It was a very successful afternoon. Thanks to those who supported us.





KEEP IN TOUCH WITH EHS ACTIVITIES ON OUR WEBSITE

www.esshissoc.org.au

Email Address **EHS@esshissoc.org.au**

REMEMBER THAT YOU CAN ALSO COMMUNICATE WITH US THROUGH FACEBOOK.

FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/EssendonHistoricalSociety

**NOTIFICATION OF THE
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF ESSENDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

In accordance with the Rules of Incorporation of the Essendon Historical Society (Rule No 29), members are hereby notified that the Annual General Meeting of the Essendon Historical Society Inc. will be held

At the “Moonee Ponds Court House Museum” on
TUESDAY 27 AUGUST 2024 commencing at 7.30 pm

The Agenda shall include

- 1) The confirmation of the Minutes of the 2023 Annual General Meeting.
- 2) The reception of Reports.
- 3) The reception of the Financial Statement for the Year Ending 30 June 2024.
- 4) Ratification of Subscriptions for 2024/25.
- 5) The Election of Office Bearers and members of the Committee of Management for the ensuing year.
- 6) Other business of which notice has been given.

President

Vice President

Secretary

Treasurer

Ordinary Members (4)*

***Proposed new Rules of Incorporation if approved (5).**

Nominations for the above positions must be received in writing to the Secretary on the official nomination form by the close of business (4.00 pm) by Tuesday, 20 August 2024.

Mail to The Secretary (EHS)
PO Box 1070, Moonee Ponds 3039 or
email EHS@esshissoc.org.au

Nomination forms are available from the Secretary.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

Members are reminded that your Annual Subscriptions for the 2024-2025 year are now due. Thank you to those of you who have already renewed your subscription.

We decided at a recent Committee Meeting to give members an opportunity of paying for two years if they so desire.

Membership Fees are as follows

Single Membership	\$ 30.00
Single Membership (2 years)	\$ 60.00
Dual Membership	\$ 50.00
Dual Membership (2 years)	\$100.00
Student Concession—First Degree	\$ 20.00
Student Concession (2 years)	\$ 40.00

Payment can be made online through our website at

esshissoc.org.au

If preferred you may mail your subscription on a Renewal form obtained from the EHS website (cheques made out to Essendon Historical Society) to

The Treasurer (EHS)
PO Box 1070
Moonee Ponds 3039

SALMON RESERVE ESSENDON

A HISTORY

By Dr Anne Black

In August 2019, I gave a presentation to the EHS on Salmon Reserve and Five Mile Creek. Since then, I have often been asked about the park's history. I have lived beside the park for the past forty-five years so it is very special to me. Here is an abridged version of my talk and apologies to those who have heard it all before!

One afternoon in the late 1980s, I was walking in Salmon Reserve behind a group of Essendon Football Club supporters returning home from a game at Windy Hill. One of them remarked, "Isn't it great that they have named a park after Paul Salmon!" He was mistaken, for the reserve was named long before the Essendon footballer achieved fame.



Salmon Reserve 2013 Neil Munro

Salmon Reserve is a peaceful linear park in Essendon that stretches for about four hundred metres from Napier Street to Schofield Street. It is sandwiched between Dalene Street and Salmon Avenue and abuts the eastern end of Woodlands Park. Wright, Cooke and Crisp Streets lead down to the park from Glass Street. At just 1.9 hectares, the reserve is of modest size. You might think that a park as compact as this would have only a little history, yet its story is deep and wide, reflecting the major themes of Essendon's development.

Five Mile Creek

Few who stroll through Salmon Reserve are aware that Five Mile Creek trickles beneath their feet. The history of the park is intimately connected with the waterway, the only tributary of Moonee Ponds Creek in Moonee Valley. 'Five Mile Creek' is misleading, for it is fewer than five miles (eight kilometres) in length. However, at its junction

with the Moonee Ponds Creek, behind the former Lionsville in the little-known Five Mile Creek Reserve, it is roughly five miles from the city of Melbourne.

The creek, which now flows from Woodlands Park lake, once rose to the north-west of the Bulla Road/ Woodland Street intersection. It is not spring-fed, but derives from local rainfall and drainage. Five Mile Creek is augmented by an unnamed watercourse that once drained the Essendon Airport plateau. That stream runs underground through Strathmore along the 'Magdala' easement, before joining Five Mile Creek under Salmon Reserve.

Early history

Stone artefacts discovered along the creek are testament to the park's prehistory, for the Wurundjeri-willam people manufactured their stone tools beside the ephemeral stream. The byproducts of that process are silcrete flakes ('microliths') scattered throughout the local soil. It is a wonderful realization that First Peoples walked and lived along the present Salmon Reserve for thousands of years. Their past and continuing presence is commemorated in the stone circle named Babepal Paen-mirring ('Mother's tear') in Five Mile Creek Reserve.

A further reminder of pre-European life can be found in Salmon Reserve. A rather scruffy River Red Gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) grows on the corner of Salmon Avenue and Schofield Street. It is the only tree in Salmon Reserve (and Woodlands Park) that predates European arrival and it is listed in Moonee Valley's Significant Tree Register. Possums, storms and powerline pruning have taken their toll on its canopy but the old remnant tree is recovering. It is a survivor, like its compatriots in nearby Napier Park, from the time when the area was grassy woodland.

There is an evocative description of grassy woodland habitat along Mount Alexander Road in springtime, in Samuel Sidney's 1853 book *The Three Colonies of Australia*:

Left the camp ['just outside Melbourne'], passed through Flemington... A most beautiful country, as green as emerald, hills richly sloping, and dotted with umbrageous trees... The mimosa... being large and shady, appears scattered through the forest, and being now in full bloom, presents to the view a perfect mass of beautiful golden flowers. Travelled to-day only five miles...

Sidney's 'five miles' must have brought him to the environs of present-day Woodlands Park/ Salmon Reserve.

19th century developments

Following Eugene Bellairs' 1852 survey, land that would eventually become Salmon Reserve was sold at a Government land sale on 27 January 1853. Most properties for sale, with frontages to either Glass or Woodland Street, had Five Mile Creek as a boundary. Purchasers included Messrs. Skehan, Duncan and Callow who bought land to the north of the creek and Messrs. Montgomery, Lyon, Q. Dick and J. Dick, who purchased southern blocks. Just two years later, Montgomery placed his property (initially named 'Fernihirst', later 'Rosstrevor Hall') on the market. The rapid development of the land, a stone's throw from the present Salmon Reserve, can be gauged from the *Argus* advertisement of 16 February 1855:

14 acres of Land at Essendon, with Two Stone Houses built thereon. The land is all fenced in and has a frontage of 312 feet to Glass-street. Has been all under crop, and is bounded by Five-Mile Creek. The house contains six rooms, with cedar fittings and marble mantelpieces, &c., a detached brick kitchen, a four-stalled stable, with carriage-house, &c. and a brick cemented water-tank, capable of holding 7000 gallons; also about an acre of garden ground, well stocked with fruit trees. There is also on the land a two-roomed stone house, well fitted up, with enclosed yard, &c. On the whole, this is one of the best country residences that has been in the market for some time.

The homestead, in Schofield Street on the corner of Fuller Street, remains.

The history of Salmon Reserve is intimately linked to Lot 10 on the Woodland Street side of the creek. It was initially purchased by corn merchant and farmer David Duncan at the 1853 auction. Duncan built an eight-roomed brick homestead, 'Roseneath', on bluestone foundations. (Thomas Napier's earlier and similarly named 'Rosebank' was nearby, on the Woodland Street hill.) 'Roseneath', with an intricate iron lace verandah on three sides, was situated opposite the current Napier Park.

Following Duncan's ownership, the homestead was owned by the Clarke family for many years. By then, the property spanned twenty-three acres, and it extended along Five Mile Creek from Napier Street to the 'Water Reserve' in Woodlands Park. In 1870, William John Turner Clarke ('Big Jack Clarke'), described as "the richest man in Australia" by the *Argus*, moved to 'Roseneath'. He lived there with his nephew James Hearn until his death on 13 January 1874.

'Roseneath' was offered for sale or rental several times over the next twenty-five years. An 1874 advertisement boasts that "about 400 pounds worth of timber could be removed without injuring the property". 'Roseneath' was still for sale

later that year, with the added inducement that "villa allotments can be judiciously laid off the estate, the return from which, in addition to beautifying the property, will leave the buyer a magnificent freehold free of cost". Robert M. Ayre occupied 'Roseneath' in 1876. Clarke's nephew,



"Roseneath"

*Sears' Studios City of Essendon Memorial Walks and Children's Playgrounds,
H.Y [V] Fren, 1919, State Library of Victoria, PCLTAF, 1161*

James Hearn, was still there in 1882. Later, 'Roseneath' was occupied by F.G. Edmondson.

Tangible reminders of colonial settlers remain in the Salmon Reserve soil. Delicate shards of nineteenth-century European pottery and porcelain, black glass from goldfields-era beer bottles and even fragments of a later Edward William Cole (of 'Earlsbrae Hall' and 'Cole's Book Arcade') plate emerge from the earth after rain. The discarded detritus reminds us that there were no rubbish collections in those days!

Some artefacts have an Asian origin. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, market gardens ran from Glass Street down to the creek. Chinese tenants worked the fertile, sandy soil. Ah Yee, Len Ye and Shing Sang were among those listed as Glass Street residents in an 1898 directory. Newspaper reports suggest that local Chinese farmers faced significant discrimination, despite the welcome fresh vegetables that they produced. In 1899 for example, seven Chinese gardeners tending their market gardens beside Five Mile Creek were each fined five shillings for working on a Sunday. Their pleas - that they were only watering their produce - were rejected.

Viewing the gentle contours of Salmon Reserve and Woodlands Park, it is difficult to imagine a wilder aspect, yet the western end of the reserve (for Salmon Reserve originally extended into the eastern end of Woodlands Park) was once a dangerous place of eroded, yellow clay cliffs.

In January 1866, seventy-seven year old Jane Thompson disappeared while walking home to 'Mar Lodge', the property she shared with her nephew, Francis Robertson. Her body was found "lying in the bottom of a gully at the back of the Essendon Hotel". The inquest records that the gully was:

water-worn, and nineteen and a half feet deep [six metres] deep. It was only a few yards wide at the top and the sides nearly perpendicular. It was just outside private property, and was not fenced.

Poor Jane died of a broken neck, and her death was recorded as accidental. A photo of the area, taken fifty years afterwards in 1919, clearly shows the eroded gullies behind the Essendon Hotel.

William Salmon



Mr and Mrs W F Salmon

Willetts 1905

State Library of Victoria

PCLTA, 1373, Box 4

The name 'Salmon Reserve' honours English-born William Frederick (born Frederic) Salmon (1853–1923). Salmon was twenty-four and a labourer when he arrived in Melbourne aboard the *Durham* on 11 October 1877. He married Catherine Mary Holmes ('Kitty') while farming in Gippsland in 1883. Salmon prospered, and he purchased 'Roseneath' in 1898. He lived there with Kitty and their four children – May, Percy, Muriel ('Daphne') and Marjorie ('Madge'). Salmon was an astute Fellow of the Incorporated Institute of Accountants, a valuer, a grazier and sheep breeder of Border Leicester and Southdown sheep. He kept an office in the city and owned several rural properties.

Salmon was a far-sighted individual, and an early opponent of the clearing of native vegetation. From 1898, he planted his own forest along Five Mile Creek. His Oaks, Planes, Poplars and Elms were reminders of his English birthplace. He embraced Australian flora, adding Silky Oaks (*Grevillea robusta*) and South Australian Sugar Gums (*Eucalyptus cladocalyx*) to the banks of the little creek. Many of Salmon's original trees remain. Some are listed in Moonee Valley's Significant Tree Register, including some Sugar Gums plus the magnificent English Oak at the base of Cooke Street.

A family tragedy appears to have been the catalyst for the creation of Salmon Reserve. Salmon's only son Percy William ('Sam'), an accountant and grazier like his father, enlisted in the AIF in January 1916, aged thirty. He embarked overseas on 11 May 1917, leaving behind his wife Lily and young daughter Dorothy. In England, Percy suffered from pneumonia and pleurisy, then influenza. He was then sent to France in July 1918. Six weeks later, on 1 September, he was killed during the battle to retake Mont Saint Quentin on the Somme River. William Salmon received the tragic news on 11 September. In his diary he wrote the poignant words, "Such is life in 1918".

Two months later, in November 1918, William Salmon offered eight acres of 'Roseneath' to the Essendon Council. Salmon envisaged a park along the creek with playgrounds and shady walks. He was prepared to donate further land for a caretaker's cottage. His generous gift was valued at two thousand pounds. *Punch* commended Salmon for his stand on the conservation of trees, "He has had foresight where Governments were content to talk". That article referred to the land as 'Woodlands Reserve'. The *Leader* reported that Salmon had chosen 'Memorial-walks and Children's Play Grounds' as its name. A real estate advertisement later referred to the new park as 'Shady Path Reserve'. By 1930, it was referred to as 'Salmon Avenue Park'.



Salmon Reserve at the time of donation

"City of Essendon Memorial Walks & Children's Playgrounds"
H.Y.[V] Frew, 1919, State Library of Victoria PCLTAF, 1161

State Library of Victoria holds an evocative photograph album titled *City of Essendon Memorial Walks & Children's Playgrounds*. It does not bear Salmon's name, but it was surely his doing. Dated 1919, it was compiled by Harry Vernon Frew, a draughtsman and later architect whose Melbourne workplace was adjacent to Salmon's office in Queen Street in the city. The album sets out Salmon's vision for the park, contains a map of the proposed paths and playgrounds and preserves wonderful photos of the vicinity at the time of the donation. It also includes a loose photograph of 'Roseneath'. The introduction confirms that

Salmon intended the trees of the Reserve to serve as a memorial to those who had fought in the First World War. Coincidentally, not long after Salmon's donation, Theodore Napier of 'Magdala', on the opposite side of Woodland Street, gave ten acres of his land to Essendon Council – now Napier Park.

William Salmon's final years were marred by illness.

Following his wife's death in 1907, Salmon remained at 'Roseneath' with his daughter Madge. By 1918, he suffered from kidney and heart disease. Then Annie Laing Reid Sutherland, aged thirty-nine, the sister of Salmon's doctor Bertram Sutherland, entered his life. According to newspaper reports, the couple had met only once in the preceding six months. Annie appeared at 'Roseneath' on 4 May 1920, popped him into his car (propped up on pillows), and they were driven to his commercial orchard in Werribee. On their return, they were engaged. On 3 June 1920, Salmon became gravely ill. Two days later, Annie arrived at 'Roseneath' 'to help nurse him'. The following day, Dr Sutherland brought his sister's suitcase to 'Roseneath', with a letter from her mother asking that she might be married that afternoon. Annie arranged for local Presbyterian minister, Reverend William Fraser to attend 'Roseneath' and a wedding ceremony took place on 9 June 1920. Salmon was bedridden. His three adult daughters – having just heard of the impending nuptials the previous evening – chose not to attend the ceremony. Two weeks later Salmon made a will, leaving his new bride the modest sum of three hundred pounds, plus an annuity of one hundred and fifty pounds.

To the amazement of his doctors, Salmon lived for three more years, before dying at 'Roseneath' on 12 September 1923. He was a wealthy man and left an enormous estate of seventy thousand pounds before costs. Fifty-one thousand pounds were eventually divided between his daughters, sons-in-law, grand-daughter and other members of his family. Additional bequests went to his farm manager, his orchard manager, 'Roseneath's housekeeper and gardener, and even his old nurse in England who received fifty pounds.

Unfortunately, at the time of Salmon's demise, the transfer of his land to Essendon Council had not been completed. Salmon's two executors, his sons-in-law, the architect Daniel Robert Dossetor (married to Salmon's daughter May and the brother of Percy's widow Lily) and Herbert George Howe Colclough (married to Salmon's daughter Muriel) were delegated to oversee the transfer. The executors auctioned 'Roseneath's contents in May 1924. The remaining tables, chairs, beds, kitchen utensils, prints on the walls, carpets, linoleum, telephone, "splendid ice-chest", cutlery and even the "verandah seats" were sold.

The next, rather sad instalment took place in the Third Civil Court in the city. In August 1924, widowed Annie Salmon took legal action, arguing that she could not live on Salmon's annuity of one hundred and fifty pounds per year. Instead, she requested eight hundred pounds per year from the estate. This was fiercely contested by Salmon's family.

Lurid newspaper headlines such as "Old Man's Marriage" (Salmon had been sixty-six), "Strange Will Dispute" and "Dramatic Wedding Ceremony" grabbed the public's attention. Salacious details emerged. Under oath, Annie Salmon was asked if, prior to her marriage, "Did he ever kiss you, or had he taken you on his knee or anything like that? What had he ever done which indicated that he wanted you as his wife?" Annie replied, "I cannot remember." The papers noted that the wedding had been organized with such haste that there was no wedding ring. It was further alleged that Salmon did not remember his wedding day. In her defence, Annie portrayed herself as a compassionate woman who was prepared to care for a lonely old man. She stated that Salmon intended to leave her 'Roseneath' for life – but it was not in the will. The judge ordered that Annie's allowance be increased to 250 pounds per year.

The executors next subdivided the 'Roseneath' property, and created forty-four blocks fronting Woodland Street, Napier Street and the northern side of the newly-formed Salmon Avenue. 'Roseneath Estate' was advertised as "the beauty spot of Essendon North" and was auctioned by J.D. Graham on 11 October 1924. The aging homestead 'Roseneath' in Woodland Street, now reduced to a block measuring '150 by 156 feet', was purchased by Mr. E.A. Rocke of 'Yamba' in Ascot Vale Road.

By 1930, the future of the promised reserve was in real jeopardy. The Essendon Council had insisted that Salmon's executors pay twelve hundred pounds for roadworks. The executors refused, and retaliated by submitting plans for the subdivision of the proposed Reserve. In May 1930, one hundred and fifty local residents attended a Council meeting to protest against the proposed subdivision. They stated that they had purchased land in the 'Roseneath Estate' on the understanding that a park would be created along Five Mile Creek. They also noted that, as the Council had already spent money on fencing and gates, it had obviously accepted the gift. The Council retorted that the transfer had not yet happened. Following further legal arguments the matter was resolved and the park was created. The resulting reserve was smaller than envisioned by Salmon, as the executors subdivided the southern side of Salmon Avenue that was originally marked as parkland.

20th century changes

In 1930, as the Depression raged and flooding along the creek increased, the Board of Works restricted Five Mile Creek to an open bluestone channel that stretched from Salmon Reserve to Pascoe Vale Road. A heritage-listed section of this open channel remains near Glenbervie Station. Wonderful photos of Salmon Reserve in that period may be seen in a Board of Works album at Public Records Office Victoria, enticingly titled “Main Drains”. A white wooden bridge, typical of the ones that once crossed the creek at the bases of Wright, Cooke and Crisp Streets, is just visible in one image.

Salmon Reserve changed little over the next thirty years. Californian Bungalows and timber and brick villas sprouted along its boundaries. No playgrounds were built, despite Salmon’s wish, and a caretaker’s cottage did not eventuate (though one did appear in Woodlands Park). Proposed park extensions were not followed up, save for a linear park along the Magdala tributary.

Salmon Reserve experienced a major change in the 1960s. As housing development increased, so did flooding and erosion along Five Mile Creek. The Magdala tributary to the north of Salmon Reserve was placed underground in 1948. In 1966, the MMBW decided to convert the above-ground Five Mile Creek in Salmon Reserve to an underground drain. In 1967 the creek was placed in a ‘6 foot 6 inch’ reinforced concrete pipe that roughly followed the route of the previous bluestone channel. Only metal grates, spaced at intervals along the Reserve, now marked the creek’s path. In 1966, the ‘Roseneath’ homestead, now over a century old, was demolished and replaced by cream brick units.

Floods have always been a feature of the area. In August 1863, for example, it was reported that the bridge crossing Five Mile Creek at the Napier Street end of what is now Salmon Reserve, was washed away. The new underground pipe was also unable to contain flooding. Although the creek is now invisible under Salmon Reserve, its presence is occasionally and dramatically revealed following heavy downpours. As Woodlands Park lake overflows, the Salmon Reserve drain fills with stormwater, fountains gush from the grates, water rushes down nearby roads and Five Mile Creek briefly re-emerges on the surface of the Reserve. We are reminded that the park is the lowest point in the surrounding landscape.

Recent developments

William Salmon’s aging trees are carefully watched by Council arborists. In 1998, residents were dismayed when the Council, following a tree safety audit, removed thirteen

of Salmon’s majestic Sugar Gums. This event was closely followed by the long drought that killed more of Salmon’s trees, especially the exotic Oaks and Elms. No longer did we walk on carpets of acorns in late summer. For many years, local residents had watered the old trees from a Council-installed water line in dry weather, but the practice stopped during the millennial drought.

In the early 2000s, the Moonee Valley Council with the assistance of the Essendon Historical Society produced a “Woodlands Park Walking Trail” leaflet, in conjunction with an information panel that featured the history of Salmon Reserve.



(1) *Salmon Reserve (looking west)*

(2) *Salmon Reserve Oak (May 2024)*

(Photos by Anne Black)

In 2003, the Council consulted the community regarding a Master Plan for Woodlands Park and “JT [sic] Salmon Reserve”. Issues included litter, mowing, maintenance, tree removals, tree replacements, paths and dog walkers. Council proposed ‘improvements’ such as modern lighting, hard paths and more bins for Salmon Reserve. Residents fought successfully to retain the park’s natural path and bush-like appearance and campaigned for more, preferably native, trees. Residents supported several community tree plantings over the following years.

In 2016, the Council called for a second Master Plan for Woodlands Park and Salmon Reserve. Once again, presumably for convenience, the two parks with quite distinct characters were lumped together for consideration. Again, residents hoped for improved maintenance and less, rather than more development in Salmon Reserve. The current Master Plan was approved in 2017.

Salmon Reserve’s trees are its jewels. They support an important wildlife corridor linking the ponds of Woodlands Park to Napier Park and the Moonee Ponds Creek. Parrots breed in the hollows of William Salmon’s old trees and insectivorous Gould’s Wattle Bats and Marbled Geckoes rest under their bark.

The elusive Yellow-bellied Sheath-tail Bat, a mammal rarely seen in Victoria, has been recorded in Salmon Reserve. Grey-headed Flying Foxes feed on our flowering Sugar Gums – and the fruit trees in adjacent gardens. Brush-tailed and Ring-tailed Possums make the park and its surroundings their home. We are blessed with birdsong. We cherish our local Magpies, Grey Butcherbirds and parrots, including Cockatoos, Galahs, Corellas, Eastern Rosellas and Lorikeet species. Our Tawny Frogmouth chicks are a fluffy delight each spring, as their parents raise them on Salmon Reserve's diverse insect life. Though the park supports many wonderful creatures their habitat has diminished in recent years, as adjacent old houses with their wildlife-friendly bungalows, sheds, accessible roof spaces and inviting overgrown gardens have been replaced by modern homes with small gardens.

For more than one hundred years, Salmon Reserve has provided a valuable oasis for many creatures, especially humans. During Covid lockdowns, many people rediscovered the simple beauty of our park. We stroll, walk dogs, pick up litter, plant and water trees, alert the Council to problems – and conduct terrific street parties in our little park. Salmon Reserve is William Salmon's impressive legacy, a haven in a small area. It enriches the spirit, encourages community and succours wildlife. Residents, houses and Master Plans come and go, but our little piece of bushland remains, thanks to Salmon's foresight and generosity.

I acknowledge the previous research of Essendon Historical Society members Elaine Brogan, Bob Chalmers and Lenore Frost. State Library of Victoria staff kindly allowed me to examine the Frew album and associated Salmon material. Thanks, also, to Dr Marcus Lancaster for alerting me to PROV's MMBW photographs. Finally, I express my gratitude to the many dedicated Council staff who have maintained Salmon Reserve across the years.



*"City of Essendon Memorial Walks & Children's Playgrounds" H.Y. [V] Frew 1919
State Library of Victoria, PCLTAF, 1161*

OUR NEW DISPLAY OUR SPORTING LEGACY

Lyndall Byrne, Elaine Brogan and Liz Benton recently dismantled our very successful "Toys" Exhibition and have replaced it with a new display focussing on local sporting activities. Our subcommittee members have been very grateful to several local sporting organisations who have agreed to lend us of a number of interesting items from their collections. The Essendon Football Club and the Essendon Rowing Club, in particular, have been very supportive.

We have also been able to feature a number of less well known sports, such as Trugo and Croquet. in our display.

The exhibition was open to the public for the first time on Sunday, 14 July, and will be officially launched at our July General Meeting at which former champion Essendon Football Club rover and Coach, John Birt, will be Guest Speaker.



TRUE BLUE—TRUGO

by Anne Hillier

The sport of Trugo began in the western suburbs of Melbourne near stations along the railway line from Newport. This unique sport hardly ever cuts mainstream media but it is part of Melbourne's sporting culture and is still found in our neck of the woods. It appeared in 2009 on Anthony Bourdain's travel show *No Reservations*, and *The Age* made a video report in 2020 describing it as "Melbourne's own working class sport".

It was one of a number of games invented by the railway workers in the 1920's during their "smoko" or lunch breaks. One story is that the men hit a rubber buffer ring from the decommissioned railway carriages along the lines with a mallet. Another story is that it occurred along the carriage aisle and out the door at the end. As the game is now a hundred years old the stories are lost in time and have become sporting myths and legends.

When the railway workers retired and moved away from the workshops they took the game with them. The first were Thomas Henry Grieves, a migrant of Scottish heritage, and his friend, Claus Ebeling, an Australian of German extraction who was born in the gold fields. They began clubs at Yarraville and Footscray in 1937.

As the game became more popular and more railway men retired, clubs in Williamstown (1938) and Newport (1939) sprang up. The four clubs joined forces in 1940 to form the Victorian Trugo Association.

As most of the players were over 60 years of age, the sport continued in the war years. It was recommended by Dr. A. Scholes the Victorian Fitness director as a sport for the recreation of senior citizens in 1940. The Lord Mayor of Melbourne Frank Beaurepaire was enthused enough to promote a demonstration in the Carlton Gardens for the National Fitness Council which resulted in the establishment of a Carlton Club.

Women started their own clubs in the 1950's and teams started in Shepparton, Echuca and Wagga Wagga. The 1960's brought clubs to Coburg, Prahran, Preston, South Melbourne, Port Melbourne, Moonee Ponds, and it is understood Ascot Vale. Women joined men's clubs to boost numbers and provide support. In the 1990's the age range was extended and Trugo is now open to all ages and abilities. However, the sport has continued to decline and some of those early clubs no longer exist.

In 2022 there were nine teams in the Victorian Trugo Association (VTA): Ascot Vale, Brunswick, Brunswick City, Footscray Doughnuts, Footscray Gumnuts, Port Melbourne, Sandridge, South Melbourne and Yarraville, the original team. Membership is \$15 per year and the sport is played during the summer months with teams vying for top place in the Grand Finals.



Mallets and rings.

Photo courtesy of Victorian Trugo Association.

The game is played on a grass court similar to a lawn bowls or croquet court. The court is 27 metres long and 1.75 metres wide. Goals are scored by striking a rubber ring with a mallet through a pair of goal posts at the opposite end of the court where the player's opponent catches the ring in a canvas bag. The rings are struck from a thick rubber plate and the goal posts are hinged in the event of the ring hitting them. Players generally strike the ball facing away from the goal posts through their legs, a move called 'tunnelling'. Sometimes they strike from a sideways position when a longer handled mallet is required.



Player ready to strike ring.

Photo courtesy of Victorian Trugo Association.

Games are played in singles, doubles, fours or eights. In the VTA premiership eights are played with four playing in the first half, and four in the second half. Each player has three innings of four shots and they swap ends at the end of a quarter to play an additional three innings for a total of 24 shots. Games generally take about an hour and a half to play. It is a relatively gentle sport, but active enough to suit all ages.

The *Community and Real Estate News* (24/11/1992) quoted in the *Annals of Essendon Book 4* reported that the Ascot Vale Trugo team was "desperately seeking new members

so as to enter a side in the competition". The *Essendon Gazette* (21/10/1996) reported that the Ascot Vale Club "was still able to field a side after the age restrictions were removed". There was a resurgence of interest in 2012.

Steve Chandler, unofficial historian of the Rotary Club of Essendon, records how the Ascot Vale Club clubhouse began. The Essendon Rotary Club built the building on the eastern bank of the Maribyrnong River around 1937 as a Pioneers Retreat. It was the first of a number of such retreats for men who were often returned servicemen. Many of the men had been spending time on the banks of the river in all sorts of weather and the Pioneers Retreat offered them a place to shelter.



*Original Pioneers Retreat in Maribyrnong Park.
Photo courtesy of Rotary Club of Essendon.*

It became one of the first "Mens Sheds" where men could gather, share memories and chat about old times. The building was extended two years later and a large checker-board was built for them to play chess or checkers. The land is owned by Parks Victoria and administered by Moonee Valley City Council.

The Ascot Vale Trugo Club occupies the original building built by the Rotary Club. The building also houses gym equipment for other purposes. Another shelter for the players beside the greens is situated near the original building. The greens are cared for by Michael Greenway. The Captain of the team is Dave Nadel. They play on Thursdays at mid-day. Dave was pleased to report a number of new members this year and they are looking forward to an enhanced team next year. If you would like to join their happy group you would enjoy good exercise and pleasant company.

Paul Thomas concludes, "Giving it a True Go in the neighbourhood may be a little parochial but it is also a celebration of the West's unique living heritage".

References:

Annals of Essendon Volume 4, by Bob Chalmers
thewestsider.com.au article by Paul Thomas - *The West's Own Trugo*
Trove Newspapers NLA - 688 references
Victorian Trugo Association website
Wikipedia

Many Thanks to Steve Chandler, unofficial Historian of the Rotary Club of Essendon, Dave Nadel (Captain) and Michael Greenway of the Ascot Vale Trugo Club.

SPECIAL NOTICE ABOUT THE SEPTEMBER MEETING

We wish to draw your attention to the arrangements for the September General Meeting.

This Meeting which will be held on Tuesday 24 September will be held at the old E.S. & A. Bank Building on the corner of Mount Alexander Road and Bank Street, Ascot Vale. This prominent building, built in 1885, which has undergone considerable internal renovation, is the headquarters of the English Speaking Union (ESU).

Our Meeting will be conducted as usual and will be followed by a talk by Robert Furlan, President of the ESU and a member of the Essendon Historical Society. who will tell us of the important work of the ESU and the work involved in the restoration of the old bank building (which led to the naming of Bank Street).



A photo of the E.S. & A. Bank (Ascot Vale) taken in 1974



A Recent photo of the ESU Building

The Centenary of the North Essendon Uniting Church (originally known as the Alexander Smith Memorial Church and later, the North Essendon Presbyterian Church) in Keilor Road, North Essendon, will be celebrated on **Sunday 4 August**

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

David Robertson (Moonee Ponds)

Alastair Lamont (Hillside)

Bob Garbutt (Kensington)

Julie Vulin (Moonee Ponds)

Tianna De Silva (Moonee Ponds)

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.

*****COMING EVENTS*******GENERAL METINGS**

TUESDAY, 23 JULY 2024

7.30 pm

Moonee Ponds Court House Museum

Launch of Exhibition

OUR SPORTING LEGACY

Guest Speaker: John Birt

TUESDAY 27 AUGUST 2024

7.30 pm

Moonee Ponds Court House Museum

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Guest Speakers

Rom & Paul Kucera

Topic Backyard Bee Keepers

TUESDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2024

7.30 pm

E.S. & A BANK

(cnr Mt Alexander Rd & Bank St

(Ascot Vale)

Guest Speaker: Robert Furlan

(English Speaking Union)

TUESDAY 22 OCTOBER 2024

ANNUAL DINNER

(Gannawarra Centre, Nth Essendon)

Guest Speaker; Gary Presland

& RHSV Award Presentation

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APPEAL FOR ITEMS

The EHS Newsletter 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:

**The Secretary, (EHS)
P.O. Box 1070
Moonee Ponds, 3039**

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 Newsletter is Friday 6 September 2024

Material forwarded before this date would be greatly appreciated.

Members are encouraged to provide items of local interest.

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