



## Annual Report: 2020

### **Section 1: President's Report Helen Halliday 27/09/2020**

The St Kilda Historical Society would like to welcome you to our 50th Annual General Meeting. We had a considerable list of potential celebrations some of which are in play, others have been deferred until next year.

With or without Covid-19, it has been an interesting and exciting 12 months since our last AGM.

### **Our Priorities**

#### **Priority 1: Our Accommodation**

Appropriate accommodation has been a major issue for the Society over the past 20 years. The floods in 2013 prevented the use of the basement for activities and the decision to take the Library's community off line in 2019, meant that alternative accommodation providing appropriate storage and meeting space became critical.



The Retired President, Jen Stone, worked tirelessly to present our case to the Council officers and an agreement was reached in December. To meet the terms of the agreement we reviewed all our memorabilia and clothing stored in the basement, sorting and disposing of items and finalising those items to be retained in line with our Collections policy.

In January work on our collections review hit fever pitch. Car loads and van loads of material which had been assessed, were taken from the basement storage and cupboards in the Community Room area and

relayed to various places. This activity was overseen by Liz Kelly and Maureen Walker who managed to spend half their lives in the basement for some months!

In March this year a license agreement was signed which gives us a meeting room and storage area at the St Kilda Library. We thank the City for this support and look forward to meeting there once Covid-19 restrictions are lifted! We are also mindful of the key part we could play in the future directions of the Library with proposals underway for the upgrading on the Library.

## **Priority 2: Our People**

We have 169 members and around 28 affiliated organisations, these being mainly other local and state level historical societies. We hope to serve our members by providing excellence in the way in which we approach leadership in the history of St Kilda.

Our most valuable resource for the work of the Society is the people on the Committee who contributed hundreds of hours of voluntary time. Through the year all eight committee members worked diligently in dealing with the collections, answering enquiries but also in attending meetings and, producing content for the Newsletter and taking responsibility for specific project areas.

Recognizing the need to work efficiently and effectively, we reviewed all the tasks and streamlined the procedures. This has been done with the assistance of Krystyna Kynst resulting in a clearly defined structure for our committee and its work. In the coming months this will be further documented with the updating of the 2000 St Kilda Historical Society Handbook.

We would like to thank the other community members who assist us including volunteers for our Collection project, those assisting with the Short Stories competition (guided by Committee member, Jennifer Bryce) and those involved in contributing to our Newsletters.

This year we acknowledge the input of Sheila Harris who was nominated by Maureen Walker, Committee Member, for our Life Membership Certificate:

*Sheila joined the Society in 1986, became both treasurer and secretary, as well as investing countless hours in the preservation of the collection. For a number of years Sheila assisted with the newsletter including coordinating its distribution by dedicated foot power! Sheila's ongoing interest in the Society has been confirmed in recent times with her donation of records and newspaper cuttings. As some records had previously been lost the material now available has been invaluable in the compilation of the Society's history.*

We also would like to acknowledge the significant contribution of Jen Stone who was the President to January this year. Her contributions included negotiating the License Agreement with the Council and initiating the Mirka Mora Project. We are sorry to see that Jennifer Bryce has not renominated due to ill health. We thank her for her work on updating our photographs for Collections Victoria and her initiative with the Short Stories Competition.

### **Priority 3: Identifying and Meeting our Goals**

Most organizations have a tendency to 'drift' over time and our 50 year anniversary reinforced to desire to review our performance in this regard. We have embarked on this task in several different ways:

Documenting the 50 year history of the Society including acknowledging our darker periods but celebrating our considerable achievements as well: This is underway with the opportunity for a 'book' and a celebration deferred until next year.

Reviewing our Collection With our primary purposes in mind the review of some parts of our Collection is complete as outlined in the Collections section of this report. We have identified our key strengths for the future as being the accumulation of photos and the written material in our cabinets and on websites. Scanning and documenting this has been an extensive exercise over years with contributions for volunteers and the substantial work done by Phillip Stewart, Janet Beeston and Jennifer Bryce. This rich source of maps, mansions and people is being collated and added to our Website with unique items being scanned or photographed and lodged on the Collections Victoria website. Updating our information onto this website has been delayed due to a website update. Our own Website is our most important way of collecting and distributing interesting and/or important information and is continuously improving.

Reviewing our constitution. The last time our Constitution was reviewed was in 2000. Since then the Associations Act was updated in 2012 and many other practices within the Society and in the community at large, have changed. In recognition of these facts we are presenting a revised Constitution to the AGM today for your endorsement. The key components have been to review our key objectives, to consider and include our current practices and a code of conduct. These documents stood outside the Constitution and now sit within.

We have a clear statement of purpose which is aligned with an understanding of the need to review historical practices to include the aboriginal history of the area as our starting point.

**We aim to provide excellence in recording the history and cultural heritage of St Kilda  
from the indigenous owners to the present time.**

### **Priority 4: Key directions**

2019 to 2020 has been a year of consolidation. As you will see from the project reports, the work behind the scenes has been considerable.

We are particularly proud however of the delivery of the Mirka Mora Project. It has been a mammoth effort by all but especially Janine Burke and Krystyna Kynst.

This year our aim is:

To develop a 5 year plan for future projects

To continue working in the following key area:

- Making information accessible and interesting to our members and others
- Updating our web based information and developing information to assist understanding of our history
- Developing our research capacity to ensure excellence in the delivery of our projects.
- Increase the delivery of events and other ways of engaging with our community.
- Deliver a maps based understanding of the history of St Kilda from the earliest maps to current times
- Have a really nice celebration of our 50 year history and its documentation!

## **Project Reports**

### **1. Collections objects images information audio/visual**

#### *The Collection Report: Liz Kelly*

In the twelve months before lockdown, the Committee spent hundreds of hours evaluating collection items which had been stored in the St Kilda Library basement for many years. They comprised twenty boxes of vintage clothing, linen and fabrics as well as a number of other quirky goods. Sadly, only a few provenance or donor details were recorded when the items were catalogued long ago. Years of basement storage meant that the clothing and fabrics in particular were damaged, soiled, water-stained and falling apart. Old fabrics have specialist preservation requirements, which the Society can't provide, so the decision was made to de-access all clothing which didn't have a clear St Kilda connection. The better items went to the Brighton Historical Society and the City of Port Phillip while the others were donated to the Sacred Heart vintage shop.

We were in the process of de-accessioning many of the other non-clothing items when the virus arrived, so sorting the artefacts is a task awaiting us when the Library reopens. As with the clothing, few provenance details were ever recorded and as most of these items are non-unique and low value, we will dispose of them appropriately.

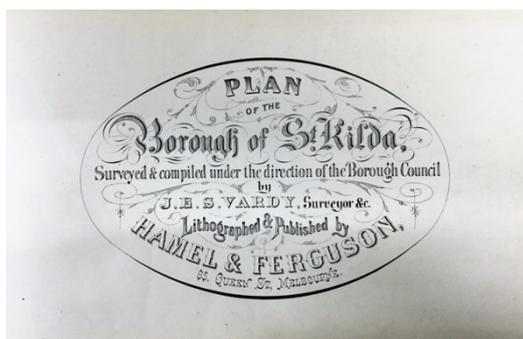
Once the remaining Collection items are properly recorded and catalogued, we can get on with the job of digitising photos, documents, pamphlets and other ephemera. The Society has compiled one of Victoria's best assortments of World War 1 documents and memorabilia and our long-term plan is to record them so they can be accessible to all.

### The Map Report: Liz Kelly

The Vardy Maps are commonly considered some of the most beautiful maps ever but have only been available in low resolution and affected by a disastrous fire in the St Kilda Town Hall. The newly scanned and now complete lithographed maps were found in the Society's basement.

They record the period in St Kilda's history where houses were mansions and blocks were estates and were done for the Borough of St Kilda by John Edward Vardy in 1873. They consist of an amazing series of 42 colour-coded maps complete with an index of owners. They are currently featured on the Society's website. For those tracing the history of their 19th century St Kilda house or ancestor, it is a fabulous resource.

The State Library of Victoria has digitised Kearney's 1855 map of St Kilda and the 1866 Cox survey, both of which plot mid 1800s St Kilda housing development. The SLV has also digitised the amazingly comprehensive 1890s and 1940s MMBW maps of Melbourne.



In 2021 we hope to launch an interactive exhibition of important St Kilda maps enabling members to track the history of our area from its aboriginal history to the current time.

We anticipate using these key maps on the PROV Mapwarper site,<sup>1</sup> so any St Kilda resident can explore the built form history of St Kilda overlaid over a current map of the area.

## **2. Historical Research:**

### The Mirka Mora Project: Janine Burke

Our Seaside Angel Project will be launched at the conclusion of the AGM 2020. The website pages will go live and will include the video launch interviews with City of Port Phillip Mayor Bernadene Voss and with Mirka's son and art gallery owner, William Mora.

In 2017 the St Kilda Historical Society decided to seek support for a project to capture the impact Mirka had on St Kilda through the eyes of friends, family and colleagues.



<sup>1</sup> <https://mapwarper.prov.vic.gov.au/>

We were able to start the research phase in 2018 with funding from the Cultural Development Fund of the City of Port Phillip. Janine Burke's extensive historical research and the interviews she conducted proved so rich and diverse, we decided to fund a second stage - to present this inspiring legacy in a way that would do justice to the stories, paintings, art work and sheer *joie de vie* that was Mirka's contribution to St Kilda.

The outcome is a beautiful website, with Mirka's unfolding story told by Janine Burke through her essay *Seaside Angel* and interviews with family, colleagues and friends in *Remembering Mirka*.

We intend to follow up the Mirka project by contributing to the Jewish Museum exhibition starting in December 2020.

We would also like to work on a much smaller project but nonetheless important project the life of artist and St Kilda activist: Ailsa O'Connor.

### **3. Making the Society's work Accessible**

#### *St Kilda Army and Navy Club Centenary: Maureen Walker*

Immediately prior to Christmas 2019 the St Kilda Army and Navy Club/RSL approached the St Kilda Historical Society for assistance with its 2020 centenary. The Society accepted the challenge of producing a short written history and a static historical display – in time for the Club's major celebration scheduled for late February!

Three committee members, Anne Thompson, Jennifer Bryce and Maureen Walker committed to the task. They perused Club records, drew on the Society's resources and called on favours from friends and family. Cooperation from the Club's personnel enabled a booklet featuring, in particular, the origins of the Club, to be produced.

The Club gave a copy to all attendees at its gala dinner on 22 February. The Society members (who were guests at the dinner) were pleased to be able to contribute. The dinner was held in the iconic MEMO building which, in 2024, will also celebrate one hundred years.





We also send copies of our newsletter to the City of Port Phillip councillors and council staff and other historical societies. This is an ongoing project for the Society.

Social Media: Sally Moore

Although there have been no events to post about due to Covid-19 restrictions, we have had a major increase in our Facebook following over the last few months and hope to make social media a major part of our communication. I also intend to contribute to research projects for our newsletters.

**4. Working with other Groups**

Council Liaison Cultural Heritage Reference Committee: Phillip Stewart

I have been on the CHRC for three years. The Committee meets four times a year, is currently chaired by Councillor David Brand, and has representatives from local Historical Societies, heritage officers and heritage architects. We discuss CoPP heritage proposals, and decide on heritage initiatives. We also request action on, and contribute to, local Heritage surveys of parts of the CoPP. A proper Heritage Survey of the St Kilda area is expected to be done soon.

The SKHS was instrumental in initiating more work on heritage surveys to protect buildings and places in the city, and especially in St Kilda where we recently lost the significant and historically important Greyhound Hotel, and also making sure that stronger heritage rules are in place to protect such buildings in the future.



Recently I have been working, on behalf of SKHS, with the CHRC to have repairs done to the important O'Donnell fountain beside Luna Park. We have had some success with this, but more work needs to be done to have it properly restored to full functioning.

We contribute to the Living Heritage records for the CoPP by proposing the documenting of the lives of older local residents. SKHS has recently proposed Joan Charlton from St Kilda; interviews with her are underway.

SKHS has also been working through the CHRC, to make CoPP historical building plans accessible to the general public as is the case in many other municipalities. We are also mindful of the difficulties people face in understanding overlays and individual citations on building they may wish to purchase or currently own. The CoPP should be updating its Vic Plan information to be readily accessible especially for citations as is done by Heritage Victoria.

We were recently advised of a proposal to record the names of the early indigenous owners on the walls of the vaults. We will press for this to include art work to make the presentation more compelling.

Work has commenced with the CoPP on the World War 2 commemorations anticipated in 2022. Maureen is on the committee set up by the council on this issue.

#### South Metro History Group: Maureen Walker

The group meets three times a year to exchange information and ideas. Hosting a meeting is difficult for the Society because its 'home', St Kilda Library, has restricted opening hours.

St Kilda Historical Society was instrumental in forming the group back in 1982 and in its resurrection in 2002 after the group had lapsed for a couple of years.

Participants in 2020 are Brighton Cemeterians, Brighton HS, City Of Moorabbin (Box Cottage) HS, Friends of SK Cemetery, Glen Eira HS, Malvern HS, Middle Park History Group, History Monash, Port Melbourne HPS, Prahran Mechanics Inst., Sandringham HS, Scout Heritage Victoria, St Kilda HS.

### **5. Special Projects**

#### Short Story Competition: Jennifer Bryce

To commemorate our 50th anniversary, the Society ran a short story competition. Entrants were invited to write on any theme, in any genre and in any time period, providing that the story is inspired by or set in St Kilda. There were two categories - open and junior. Announced in February, entries closed on 7 August.



The competition attracted widespread interest, including from overseas, with 100 entries to the Open section and 34 to the Junior section. The shortlist will be posted on the website on Friday 23 October and the winners' names announced, online, on Friday 30 October. Winners will be selected by local writer Lee Koffman.

The winner of the open section will be awarded \$1,000. The second placed entrant will receive \$500 and the third \$250. The winner of the junior section will be awarded \$500. The second placed entrant will receive \$250 and the third \$100.

## **Section 2: Treasurer's Report for the Financial Year 1.7.2019 to 30.6.2020**

The Society's healthy financial position has enabled it to undertake a range of important projects, improve its governance standards and administration procedures, and deliver for our membership and the wider St Kilda community. However, the unfortunate circumstances imposed by the Covid-19 virus has meant that a number of budgeted activities have had to be postponed. Expenditure on these projects and activities will be undertaken when the pandemic has passed.

The Committee took a number of actions to improve the financial management of the Society.

- Consolidation of accounts into one Westpac Business Account. The balance of the ING Business Optimiser account and the amount held in a little used PayPal account were transferred to the Westpac Business Account. This will improve efficiency and transparency.
- Continuing the practice of two signatures for any transaction relating to this account and capacity to overview our financial position at any time via internet transaction reports.
- Monthly financial reports on each project. Committee oversight of all expenditure with clear lines of authority relating to projects. E.g. Mirka Mora project; Vardy maps, website upgrade and assistance with administrative management.

Financial support for the Society has come from membership subscriptions, the generosity of the donations over the past two years from a member and enthusiastic supporter Steve Cappadona, and the welcome grant from Port Phillip City Council.

Thanks must go to Liz Kelly, Executive Member who had the role of Treasurer for the most of this financial year. Her work for the Society was greatly appreciated.

Anne Thompson

Treasurer

St Kilda Historical Society

**St Kilda Historical Society - Financial Report for year ending 30 June 2020**

	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>Balance at 1 July</b>	<b>21,694.94</b>	<b>6,480.37</b>
<b>Income</b>		
Membership	1,620.00	1,352.00
Events	774.82	748.70
Port Phillip City Council grant	5,400.00	15,400.00
Donation	5,050.00	10,000.00
Miscellaneous	350.00	
Interest	21.79	303.53
Transfer from ING account	19,659.14	
Paypal transfer	717.15	
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>33,592.90</b>	<b>27,804.23</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Westnet	479.40	479.40
Website host	238.00	
Website development	3,067.43	4,079.50
Mirka Mora project	5,487.35	5,152.45
Insurance	406.41	868.00
Administration expenses	925.46	724.31
AGM expenses	1,120.20	
Planning	870.00	
Collection	268.40	
Vardy maps	495.00	1,286.00
Logo development	737.00	
Furniture	2,055.00	
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>16,149.65</b>	<b>12,589.66</b>
<b>Balance</b>	<b>39,138.19</b>	<b>21,694.94</b>
<b>Balance Sheet</b>		
<b>Assets</b>		
Westpac Bank	39,138.19	21,694.94
ING Bank		19,659.14
PayPal		717.15
	<b>39,138.19</b>	<b>42,071.23</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>	-	-
<b>Balance</b>	<b>39,138.19</b>	<b>42,071.23</b>

