



ST. KILDA 'TIMES

St Kilda Historical Society Newsletter

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Photo: Simon Kosmer



The Esplanade Alliance 1997-2014

Back row l to r: Jack Halliday, Fook-Ling Khoo, John Spierings, Gillian Upton, Carmel Shute, David Brand, Peter Holland. Front row l to r: Helen Halliday, Brenda Forbath, Krystyna Kynst, Kate Shaw, Sue Pennicuik, Viviane Rouqueirol, Corinne Border.

The 24 July 2016 launch of the Society's latest publication *The Espy Campaign 1997-2003*, brought together key members of the Esplanade Alliance, one of St Kilda's most successful community lobby groups.

The Esplanade Alliance was formed in August 1997, when a major redeveloper, Becton Corporation, bought the Espy Hotel site, raising fears about the future of the much-loved pub and live music venue. But there were already other issues of concern brewing along The Esplanade's foreshore balcony. The Kennett State Government was proposing to sell foreshore crown land, known as the Triangle, including the Palais Theatre, to private developers. The new St Kilda Sea Baths project had stalled, and development pressures stalked the eclectic boulevard.

In its 17 years (the group folded in 2014), the Esplanade Alliance shaped the future of St Kilda's foreshore. It saved the Espy and introduced a new amendment to the Port Phillip Planning Scheme to protect its live music. It was instrumental in wresting control of the Triangle site from the State Government's privatisation agenda. The Triangle Act it lobbied for was successful and established the City of Port Phillip as the Committee of Management for the Triangle.

The Esplanade Alliance, and its elected Councillor, David

Brand (1999-2004) oversaw the new height and design overlay guidelines for St Kilda, including on The Esplanade (DDO6), influenced the vision of the St Kilda Foreshore Urban Design Framework 2002, and succeeded in getting major changes implemented at the Sea Baths.

The group was a major force, alongside the Community Alliance of Port Phillip and the newly formed unChain St Kilda, in fighting against the proposed Triangle development (2008) and in preparing the St Kilda Triangle Vision 2012 strategy. It had extensive input into protecting the views to the bay from The Esplanade, reviving the Palais as the featured cultural institution on the Triangle, and promoting cultural production (rather than shopping and cultural consumption) as the dominant use on the site.

Though the group de-registered in 2014, its members continue to be active in various issues across the City, such as Fishermans Bend, Triangle, Brookes Jetty, Climate Change, to name a few, as well as in the St Kilda Historical Society. Sue Pennicuik holds a seat for the Greens in the Southern Metropolitan region of the Victorian Legislative Council (2006 -). David Brand is returning to local government, standing as the candidate for Lake Ward in the forthcoming local Council elections, City of Port Phillip, 22 October 2016. ■

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Dorothy Lobert

COMMITTEE of MANAGEMENT 2016-2017

President: Elizabeth Burns
Vice President: Helen Halliday
Secretary: Dorothy Lobert
Treasurer: Janet Beeston

Ordinary Members:

Phillip Stewart
Peter Tapp
Ken Norling
Judith Buckrich



St Kilda Historical Society (SKHS)
Established 1970
PRESERVING THE PAST TO
ENRICH THE FUTURE



SKHS thanks Port Phillip City for its ongoing support and assistance

What's HAPPENING...

AGM REPORT

Our Annual General Meeting was held on Sunday 14 August 2016 at St Kilda Library. Our President Elizabeth Burns welcomed members to the meeting. The President's report and the Accounts were presented. Ken Norling has joined the committee filling the vacancy so we now have a full committee of eight members. After the meeting concluded David Willis gave a talk on his book *The Majestic – Early apartment living in St Kilda*.

NOVEMBER MEETING

Our November meeting is on Sunday 13 November at 3pm in the Community Room at St Kilda Library. The speaker will be Maureen Walker, a long-time member of the Society. Her talk will be about St Kilda in Scotland where she visited in 2015. In October Maureen will mount a display about St Kilda Scotland in the entry to the Library. Do come along and join us.

A NEW HOME FOR SKATING GIRL

The Society is giving the Skating Girl to the City of Port Phillip. Council will find an appropriate place to display her, possibly in the St Kilda Town Hall. Since she was given to the Society, in 2000, by the Novotel Hotel, she has been stored, for most of that time, in the basement of the Library. The Society had a case made to protect her and a transformer to light her up. Further news on her relocation when the details are finalised.



NELSON MANDELA DAY

On Saturday 16 July 2016 a Calodendrum Capense (Cape Chestnut) tree was planted in St Kilda Botanical Garden to commemorate Nelson Mandela. The South African Acting High Commissioner, Ray Sithole, members of the Mandela Commemoration Committee, Deputy Mayor Councillor Serge Thomann and Councillor Jane Touzeau, were present. The tree is planted on the Dickens Street side of the Gardens between the centre gates and the corner of Tennyson Street.

NEXT ISSUE...

Brenda Richards returns with a story about Uncle Ted.

Entry to all SKHS events is free to financial members and visitors are most welcome (\$5 donation to SKHS) or join SKHS at door \$20 per year.

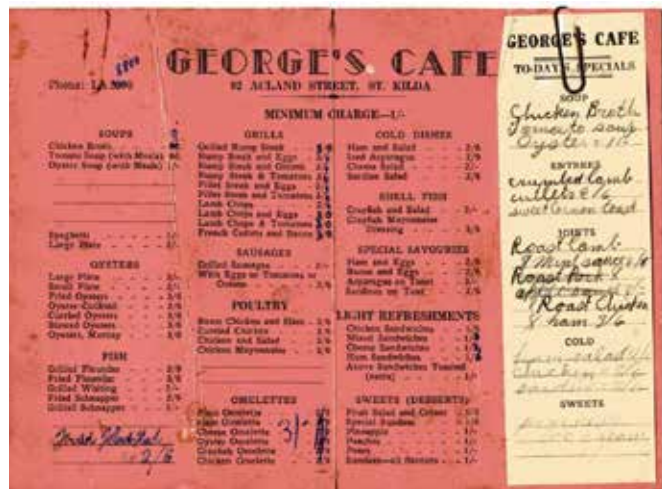
To book please email: info@stkildahistory.org.au

COMING UP: Acland Street 1840-2017

By Judith Buckrich

Perhaps the most exciting project I have ever worked on during my 25 years of writing books about Melbourne places and people is a history of Acland Street since its inception to the present day – from Fitzroy to Barkly Street.

With the support of the Historical Society I have been researching the project since January this year. There is so much to explore, from the early mansions of the 1870s and 1880s when St Kilda was the most exclusive area of Melbourne, to the 1930s when it became one of the most down at heel. The street has been host to artists, criminals, sex workers, musicians, gamblers, entertainers of all kinds, the LGBTI community, and always migrants from everywhere. Its combination of glamour and entertainment, happiness and misery and always an openness to everyone and everything has made it one of Melbourne's most important streets and its most heterogeneous.



The research so far has revealed the street's early development showing the combination of resort and residence that made it a magnet to some of the most creative and most dubious kinds of people in Melbourne, a trend that has remained and sheltered a breathtaking variety of people.

Research will continue for the rest of this year with creative development, writing and formation continuing through 2017.

We anticipate the result being a lavishly illustrated coffee table book with sections of everything from architecture to music to the counterculture and the street's heyday as a centre of European food culture.

We hope to hear from any members who have stories or images that could be useful for the project. ■



A majestic history

David Willis, author of a new local history *The Majestic, Early Apartment Living in St Kilda* attended the 2016 SKHS Annual General Meeting to share some of the stories he uncovered about one of Melbourne's earliest surviving apartment buildings, a building of particular significance in the architectural and social history of St Kilda. An owner of an apartment in the building, David was intrigued by the history of the Fitzroy Street apartment and began reading local histories, old newspapers, searching archives and talking with people who had known the building in the past. His book is the result of this work.

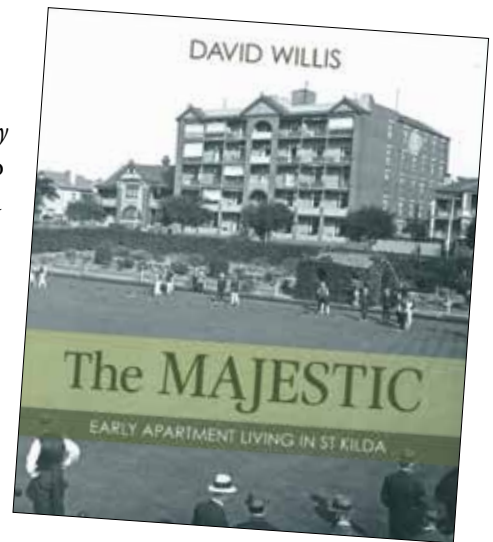
The book tells the story of the development of the flat form in Melbourne. While people around the world had embraced flat living it was slow to catch on in Australia. Some reasons include availability of land, stigma related to tenement living, restrictive planning laws and social ideals of home ownership some describe as "The Australian Dream".

Another story David's work uncovers is the history of one of a suburban property developer and builder, John Robert Daley. John and his wife Jesse were ambitious business people from Bendigo, who saw new opportunities in Melbourne. Besides numerous Fitzroy Street buildings, the Daleys established commercial buildings in Ripponlea and speculated streets of weatherboard and brick villas in Elwood.

The Majestic, Early Apartment Living in St Kilda also contributes to what we know about the way in which people lived, worked and played in the suburb. Early on, people of privilege called the Majestic home, including offspring of Victorian State Premiers, an Australian international cricket star, moneyed widows and Salvi Cleve, a wealthy landowner and businessman whose name was given to gardens at the end of Fitzroy Street.

In a wider sense, *The Majestic, Early Apartment Living in St Kilda* also captures the spirit of St Kilda: a stoic acceptance of difference, change, and an insistence on a fair go. When the Majestic, Waldorf and Regal were closed in 1989 and over one hundred and sixty vulnerable residents were moved on. The St Kilda community encouraged Councillors to balance the challenges of gentrification and a compromise was reached: the rear of the Regal would provide social housing managed by a community housing group while the front section, the Majestic and the Waldorf would be a mix of private apartments and commercial premises.

David's presentation explored these stories in detail. Copies of his book are available for purchase at Readings St Kilda, Scout House on Fitzroy Street and online at the Royal Historical Society of Victoria. ■



NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following as new members of the Society:

John Gertzel

Pauline Georgelin

Jacqueline Walker

Philip Anderson

Kylie Laurie

Alison Bramley

Gerry McLoughlin

Sue Pennicuik

Ken Norling

John Spierings

Lee Streeton

Claire Barton

Corinne Border

The Alex Theatre

Academy of Music

We hope to see you at some of our meetings and that you will enjoy our newsletters.