

SPECIAL PUBLICATION

DECEMBER 2020

MIDDLE PARK HISTORY GROUP



Middle Park Primary School Local History Project

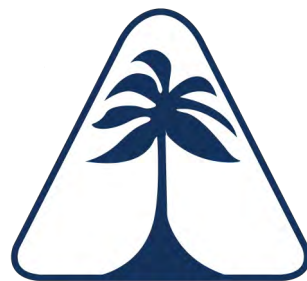


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Preface

The Middle Park History Group brings together local residents keen to promote the care of our beautiful suburb. We meet in normal times at the Middle Park Primary School. This year we began a partnership with the school assisting the students on several projects including a history museum and an essay competition. Students were asked to submit an illustrated essay about a place or person in Middle Park. Despite the severe disruption of the pandemic, we were delighted to receive the sixteen submissions which included every year level.

Congratulations to these students who will all receive a gift book voucher from us as a prize. The stories are entertaining, picturesque, informative, and very diverse. They include a turtle, a 'lanternist,' a neighbour, a house, a family, a school, a great-great-grandfather, a lake, a club, a shopkeeper, a sculpture, a secret path, and more! As for Ding Dong – well we will leave that to you to find out. We look forward to repeating this awards program in 2021 and encourage every student to contribute to our history by recording the important stories all around us.

Meyer Eidelson

President

Middle Park History Group

It has been such a wonderful experience to have our local Middle Park History Group working in partnership with our students at Middle Park Primary School. The project has inspired so many of our students and their families to investigate important aspects of their local history. We are grateful to the MPHG team for their support, encouragement and guidance in initiating such rich learning for our students.

Tim Newton

Principal

Middle Park Primary School

AG Gunn: Lanternist

By Sam Ward

Alexander Gunn

Born around 1860

Died circa 1940

Manufactured magic lanterns in Melbourne in late 19th and early 20th century.

He also produced slides to order

He ran his own magic lantern shows around Australia

And had a successful business based on Collins Street.

We think AG Gunn lived
At our house in
Middle Park 110 years
ago



Photo of Alexander Gunn in 1900

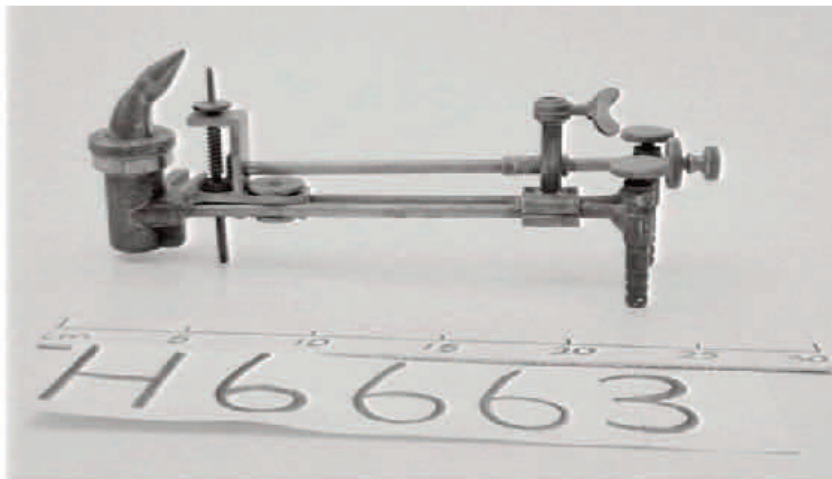
Image 8005785: Alexander Gunn in 1900

Image of person 6003346: GUNN, Alexander (? - before 1940)



Lucema Magic Lantern Web Resource, www.slides.uni.trier.de/person/index.php?id=6003346. Accessed 22 August 2020.

Gunn's Magic Lantern

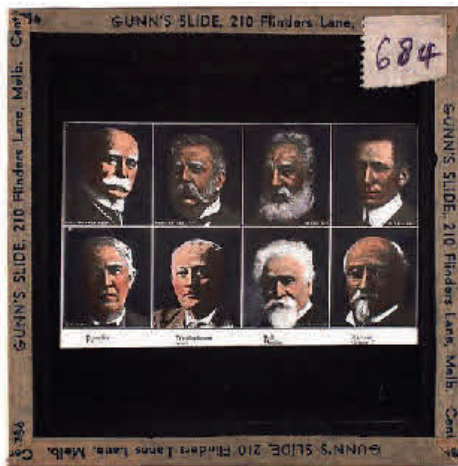


Before electric lighting came into common use, limelight burners provided bright light for entertainment, both for projecting images onto a screen and for lighting the stages of theatres. The latter use led to the metaphor 'to be in the limelight', which is still in use today and retains its original meaning, to be the subject of popular attention. This example was probably used in a magic lantern show, as it is named for Alexander Gunn, who conducted lantern shows in Melbourne and Adelaide between 1891 and 1906 and possibly longer.

Two gases, typically hydrogen and oxygen, were fed to the burner, where they mixed and were set alight. The tip of the burner was directed at a cylinder or ball of lime (calcium oxide) that was impaled on a spike built into the burner, causing the lime to emit a very bright light (luminescence). Lime was selected for this purpose as it can reach 'white heat' without melting.

Debbie Rudder, Curator, 2014

Lantern Slide - Portraits of Eight Famous Engineers & Inventors, 1880s-1900s



<https://cdhr-projects.anu.edu.au/limeight/>



Princess Betty aka Queen Elizabeth II



About this object

Glass lantern slide of a newspaper article, predicting Princess Elizabeth's personality on the basis of her face. Made by Alex. Gunn & Sons, Melbourne, Victoria, circa 1930s.

One of a set of over 420 lantern slides, used by lecturer Walter S. Binks, a popular psychology and vocational guidance lecturer based in Melbourne, Victoria. Binks gave lectures throughout Australia in the 1930s and 1940s. Binks advertised his lectures as associated with the Australasian Opportunity League or Universal Opportunity League.

Purchased by the donor at an opportunity shop. The collection was stored in three wooden trays (two compartments in each tray), and 95 slides stored separately. Many of the slides were produced in Melbourne from images and cuttings presumably supplied by Binks.

Gunn Island on Albert Park Lake Named after him...?????



REG JONES

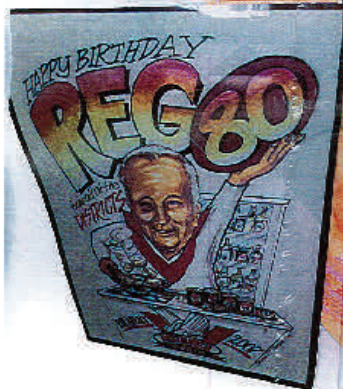
Reg is our
neighbour



Reg has lived in
Middle Park for 71 yrs.

Reg follows Sydney Swans +
S.M. district.

Reg has a room named after
him in the Clarke Shields
Mavilion because of his fundraising
efforts over 56 years



120 Lenny
PA 5 TELLY



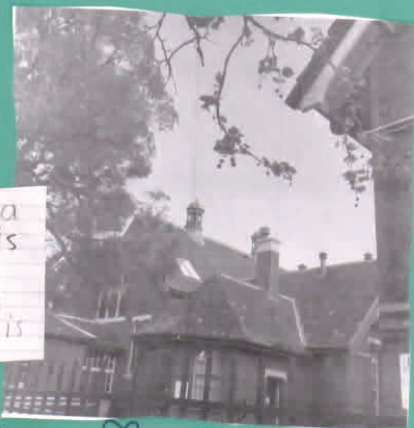
133 years.

it was built 1887

600 students.

by Matilda Jackson 1/29

A school is an important part of a local community. It is a place where children learn and grow. It is a place where we can all help each other and make a difference. Our school is a special place and we are proud to be a part of it. We are still getting stronger.



Guess who came
to our beach?

by Caeterz Garcia

Ready Grade 1/2D

Guess who came to our beach?

At our beach, at Middle Park Beach, there is shimmering sea, haunting ships on the horizon, and crunching sand with broken shells. One day I was in the water splashing around when I saw a green round figure. I realised it was a turtle and I gently picked it up. Its neck was sticking out like a snake and its clawed, webbed

feet almost scratched me.
I lowered it down and
watched it swim away.
I found out from the Eco
Centre that it was a
Long-neck Eastern Turtle,
which can live up to
50 year old. It can travel
very long distances in
search of a new home.
I wonder if it was
washed down the
Yarra River?

119 Harold Street

By: Navy Wibholm, Prep A

My history project is about my house

House

In 1935 our house was apartments. Then it became a house. Sir Rupert Murdoch's nephew owned the house until 1989. The house was a mixture of styles. In 2001 our landlords made the house all squares and triangles. That is called Art Deco.

Stable


The stable used to have horses but now it is where we watch TV, Giardino Pasquale is an artist. He lived above the TV room. He has art at the NGV. You can still see the square in the stable from the alley way. The square is where the hay for the horses was delivered. They used a gantry.

1932


SUBURBAN POSTAL DISTRICTS SECTION
ALBERT PARK - S.C.6. Postal District

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119 Harold Street



1970



1980

NAVY PREP

2020



1989



STABLE




2020

119 HAROLD STREET

NAVY PREP

My name is Gavin and I'm in grade 2 at Middle Park Primary. I love my school but one of the most special things about it is that my Grandma who I call Ding Dong went to this school too! Her name is Donna but I've called her Ding Dong since I was really little.

I asked Ding Dong about what it was like at Middle Park when she was there and she told me lots of interesting things.

I've worked out that it was 64 years between her being in prep and me being in prep, but back then prep was called 'bubs' which I think is really funny. The other name that's different is the schools name, back then it was called Middle Park Central School.

Back in Ding Dongs time they lined up at the start of school, just like we do, but they had to march into class to a fife and drum band! The girls played the fife and the boys played the drum. I think if we still did that now the girls and boys could play whatever they liked.

Ding Dong also remembers that they had a school dance that even the preps went to. Madame Bindley taught them all how to dance properly with a partner, which would have been really fun! Back in the 1950's they didn't have as many specialist classes like we do. There was no library, music or french. Poor Ding Dong, she would have loved learning french with Madame Fifi!

The older kids did have swimming lessons, but there was no MSAC, so they had to swim at the beach! Ding Dong still swims at the beach every morning now!

She says the biggest change to the school is the playground area. There was no play equipment like monkey bars and slides or anything and where the footy grass is now was called the Flat and it only had dirt and gravel. She said the boys played on the Flat and the girls played on the asphalt near the school building.

When I'm in class I find it funny to think that little Ding Dong sat in the same classroom as me. She's very clever and likes learning a lot. She still learns things now and even goes to class to learn Latin and German. Her favourite part of school was a book called a reader which they got every month and kept in a special brown folder. I like reading too and I think the books we get now sound a lot more interesting than Ding Dongs ones. She had to read ones like John and Betty and the School Paper.

I'm so happy to be at the same school as Dong Dong because she's very special to me.

By Gavin Hazelwood 1/2F



Photo of Ding Dong in 'bubs'

Middle Park's Evolution

By Brian.H
Grade 4

Middle Park Primary School (MPPS) is a wonderful school. Did you notice how old our school is? It's More than 100 years old! Opening from 1887 to now! This school is home to many of the smartest people in Australia.

Middle park primary school became the first ever central school in 1916 to 1968 in 1968 it was converted into a primary school. If you didn't know already Middle Park has its own suburb!



As you can see MPPS has some of the oldest buildings in victoria architecture proving that this school is VERY old Middle park is very big and is almost 200 years old. Did you know that somebody wrote a book about MPPS?? Here's the link! His name is George Morris; he even wrote a total of 106 pages! Here's the link again [click here for the book](#) if you're not interested you don't have to read it as it is very long but he solely did this in honour of the school and also if you didn't know our current principal is Tim Newton Thanks for coming with me into this history adventure!

My Middle Park Family History

My name is Ellie Sanders. I live in Danks Street, Middle Park. I am in Grade 4 at Middle Park Primary School.

My great great Grandfather was George Mulchinock. He was born in Deptford, County Kent, England on 22 November 1867.

When he was 22 years old he travelled on a ship called "Blairgowrie" to Port Melbourne in 1890. He came to Australia to live and work.

He got a job as an office boy, then as a news reporter and journalist with the Herald and Weekly Times in Melbourne. He worked here for 43 years and he was the editor of The Weekly Times newspaper for 35 years.

When he was 33 years old he married Agnes Reid from Albert Park in 1901. The church was St Anselm's Anglican Church on Park Road & Langridge Street, Middle Park. Back then their church was wooden but later in 1922 it was rebuilt with brick.

They first lived at "Vesta" 50 Armstrong Street, Middle Park. Then they lived in a house at 87 Harold Street, Middle Park. Their 3 children were all born in this house including my great Grandmother. The children went to Middle Park Primary School before they moved to Glen Iris.

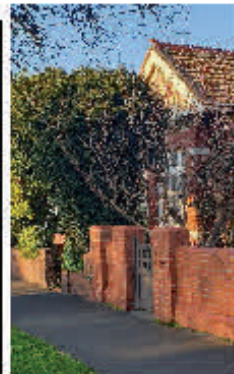
My great great Grandfather was a founding member of the Middle Park Bowling Club. In 1903 he went to a public meeting about setting up a recreation reserve for the people that lived in Middle Park. The meeting was in Honeybone's Hall, a hat factory in Neville Street, Middle Park. Here he became company secretary and later played in lots of matches for the club.

Here is a picture of him and his family. My great Grandmother is the little girl in the photograph. I have also made some more pictures on the next page.





Blairgowrie ship, Vic State Library



87 Harold Street, my photo



Middle Park bowling club, my photo



My great great grandfather, Vic State Library



'Vesta' 50 Armstrong Street, my photo



MPPS class 1B photo 1910, our family photo



St Anselm's church, my photo



Honeybone's hat factory, my photo



Carmelite Tennis Club

Every club has a competitive side. Including Carmelite Tennis Club. With thanks to current club president Victor Blitsas and long serving member Angela Mildenhall, they help explain how the club has changed over the years.

Carmelite opened in 1918. The tennis courts and clubhouse were built by Carmelite Order of the Church. The first clubhouse was built at the same time as the courts. It was located next to the railway. It was only a wooden shed and was used to store the tennis nets. Back then they had to bring the nets out every time the courts were used. Initially there were only three entoucas courts. Male and female bathrooms were added to the clubhouse in the mid 80s. Two more entoucas courts were added in 1994. Then, in 2001, they rebuilt the clubhouse and moved it to where it is today.

Currently Carmelite has 260 members. At one point Carmelite had over 400 members! 95% of the 260 members are local residents but not all of the members play.

Victor Blitsas has been the president of Carmelite Tennis Club since 2007. He lets 'Metro Tennis' use the courts to teach lessons. He also lets guests and non-members in to play for a small fee.

Carmelite Tennis Club is known for exercise, enjoyment and competitions. Some of the major events include the annual Club Championships and weekend competition for juniors and adults. Angela Millenhall remembers other past social events such as the social round robin tournaments held each year at Albert Ground in St Kilda Rd and at Werribee which both had grass courts, and the annual Christmas party with Santa, presents for all of the kids and a fabulous barbeque lunch.



By: Elise D 3/4C Middle Park Primary School

Hello My Name is
Bella Cheevers 129 MPPS.
This is a story about
my Great-Great Grandfather
Thomas Cheevers
He lived in south Melbourne
and middle Park.
He worked for the council
with 20 Clydesdale Horses
They cleaned the Middle
Park beach and streets.
In the 1930's they cleared
air strips near the Govt Air
craft Factory at
Fishermans Bend where
Beacon Cove is now. The
Horses worked until the early 1960's



THOMAS CHEEVERS WITH SISSIE, JOHNNY, ALFIE

The Victor Blitsas story BY Jocelyn D 56D

Everyone has a story. About their life, their history. This story is about a man who has lived and worked in Middle Park most of his life. His name is Victor Blitsas.

Back in 1973 when Middle Park wasn't so popular, Victor started prep at Middle Park Primary School. 70% of the students were Greek, including him. "The Greeks were known as Wogs and the Aussies, Skips." Victor remembers. There were no school uniforms and over 30 students were in each class. Victor finished grade six in 1979.

Victor worked as an agent for Master Dry Cleaners on Armstrong Street from 1988 - 1990. Back then some of the shops included Nancarrow's, a milk bar, a second hand shop and a hardware store. Then on July 1st, 1991, he opened his own dry cleaning shop, Victor's Dry Cleaners. He has been working there ever since. In 1999, Victor moved to East Benteigh where he currently lives. But he comes to Middle Park every day to work.

Today Middle Park is very expensive. Victor believes it's because it's close to the beach and the city. It has the most expensive real estate per square foot and many different nationalities. Currently IGA, Hector's Cafe, Sweat gym, Hot Honey Cafe, a clothes shop and Gum Tree (Organic goods) replace the old shops on Armstrong Street.

Middle Park is described as the little village where everyone seems to know each other. Victor says, "I always thought this was because you've got the beach on one end and the park at the other, it therefore feels like you're enclosed within."

Victor plans to continue working at Victor's Dry Cleaners and enjoy the village feel of Middle Park for many years to come.



Victor Blitsas (circled) in grade 5 at MPPS



Victor Blitsas under the sign of his Dry Cleaners shop

Middle Park Primary School 1944

By Ella Strangward Grade 6 Middle Park Primary School
With contribution from Josephine Smith (grandma)

Most people say the past was the past and we should just forget it. But do they actually know what the past was like? Back in 1944 my grandma went to Middle Park Central School or Middle Park Primary School as we know it today at the age of 5 and most alike to now back then they were also a multi gender school. Although you might think it was all the same they actually had separated the school into 2 different sections- infant school and junior school- with two different principals. The principal for the infant school was Miss Jennings and she used to strap the students if they behaved badly. When the kids sat down in their normal classrooms they had their own desk that was lined up in rows with a fireplace in the corner where the teacher sat so the teacher was warm while the students were cold with about 40 students in one class. Let's just say it was not luxurious back then. My Grandma said that most of the girls looked like a young actress, Shirley Temple, as they curled their hair and the school did not have a uniform. Their lessons were set by the education department so they were doing the same thing as everyone else in Victoria. When they all went out to play, girls were not allowed to play with the boys and instead were in a separate area and sat on the benches and chatted. Like today when kids reached grade 3 they moved into junior school and got to write in ink pens which has always been exciting. So I think overall we can tell that from my Grandma's experience that middle park primary school is a lot better now and I am sure most people would agree.



The shiny bronze boots glisten in the sun atop the sand. This artwork is named Tommy's Story. A famous bronze sculpture made by Bill Perrin.

The amazing sculpture is based off of a man who lived in the 1930's. He was a local bloke named Tommy who used to work across the bay on the wharves as a wharfie. It cost money to take a bath and get public transport to work. So Tom my would strip off his clothes, leave them on the beach and then swim across to the other side, where he would put on his work clothes. After a full day's physical work, he'd take off his work clothes and swim all the way back home.

Perrin was so inspired by this that he got straight to work. He started by getting some 1930's clothes, made by a professional tailor. The work put into the clothing was immaculate. the details so precise that it took weeks to have the finalised design. Molds were then made of the garments and boots and molten bronze was poured to create the finished piece. As he expected. all the beautifully made clothing perished during this process.

When Perrin originally created the sculpture he patinated the bronze with subtle colours. An early photograph shows the leather boots to be a deep polished tan. the corduroy pants a rich brown and the neb cap, shirt and waistcoat had been patinated in various shades of silver-grey.

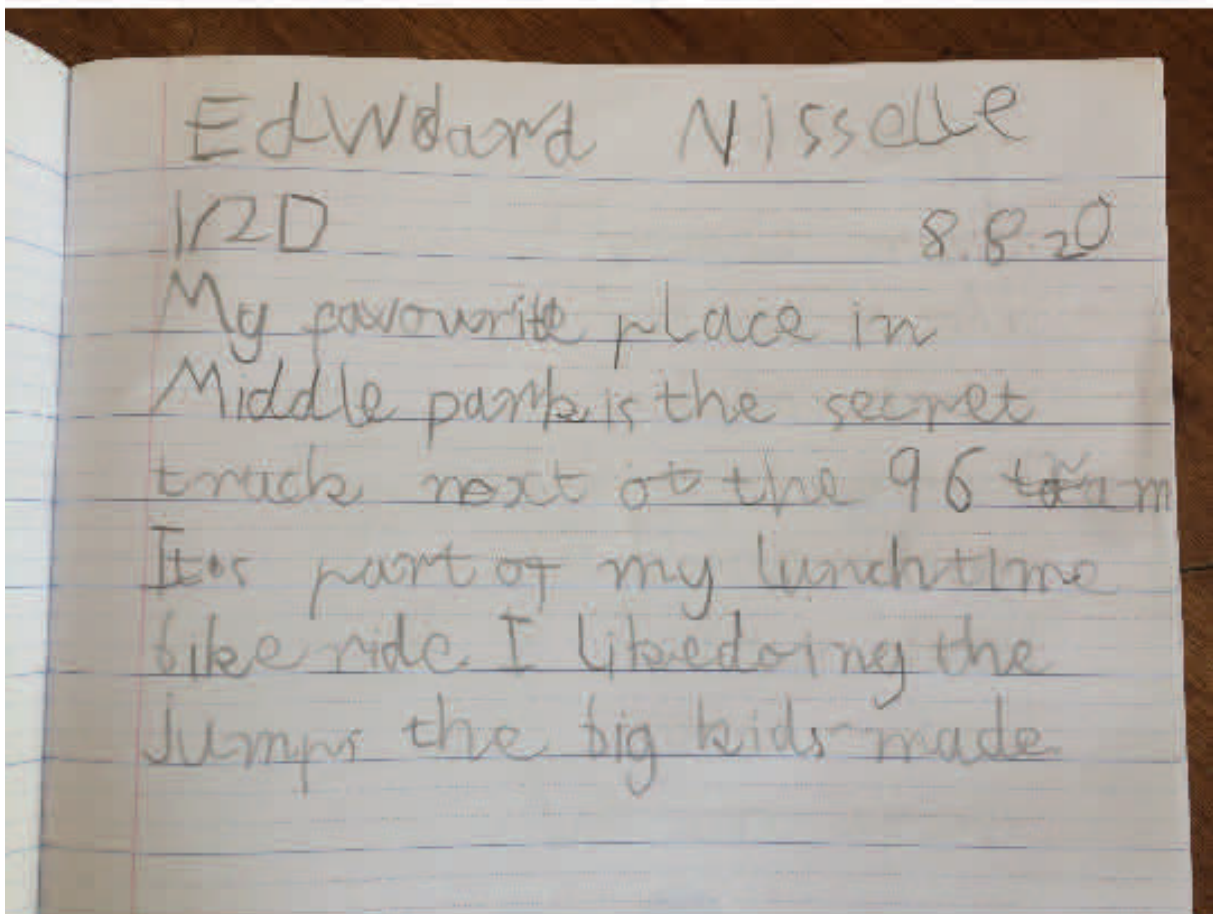
Time and sea air has broken down the wax sealant and now the sculpture is a mellow bronze colour all over.

All that work has shaped an amazing part of Middle Park's history and the story of Tom my will live on forever.

Elise Carron 5/6E



Middle Park History Group My Special Place



Edward Nisselle, Grade 1/2D,
Middle Park Primary School

Albert Park lake.

The Albert Park lake is a lake
Where many ducks live.
When I joined swimming
I also went there.

My brother was like playing
with the ducks. And I had a lot
of fun. Bye see you soon





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