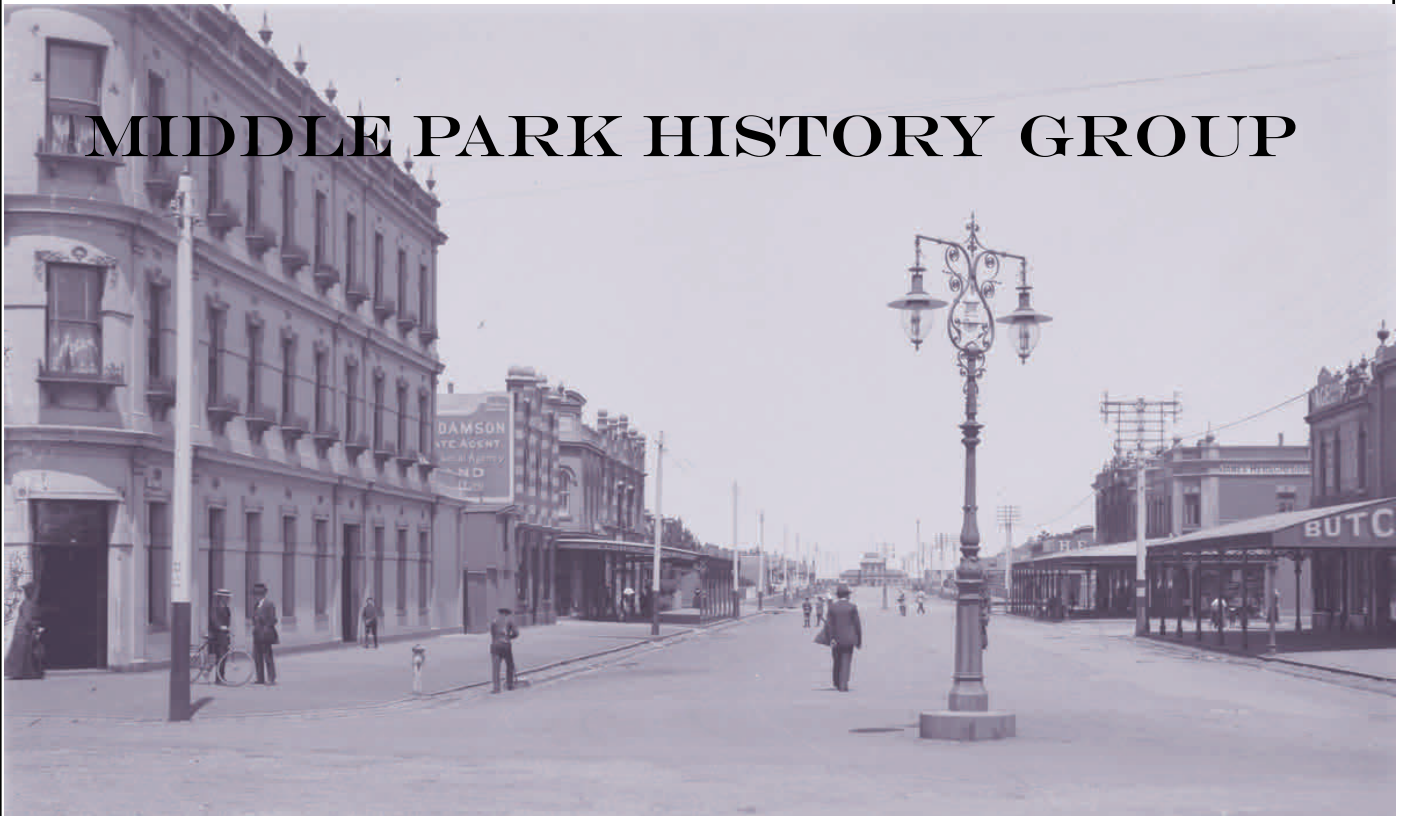


MIDDLE PARK HISTORY GROUP



Editorial

This issue contains articles by some of our regular contributors and by some we haven't heard from before. Two of the articles celebrate significant anniversaries.

At our meeting in December it was announced that our President, Max Nankervis, was standing down. On behalf of all members I thank him for his contributions to the success of the group over many years. He has contributed to each of our books, many articles on architecture, and town-planning, to the forthcoming self-guided walks brochures, to this newsletter, and to the committee and the organization that keeps a group like this running. Meyer Eidelson

has agreed to step into the President's role and submits his first report at the business end of this newsletter. But the committee more than ever needs more help.

The committee has been active, most evidently with the production of three brochures outlining self-guided walks through the suburb. The brochures will be freely available at a range of outlets throughout Middle Park.

The first of our four regular meetings in 2019 will be on Monday 4 March.

Gary Poore

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M e m o r i e s o f a M i d d l e P a r k
k i n d e r g a r t e n
M a r g a r e t R y d i n g (n é e J o n e s)

In the summer of 1950 I tightly held the hand of my darling mum, May Jones, as we strolled the usual route to my kindergarten. To get there we headed up Nimmo Street, took a left turn into Richardson Street and in a few blocks we found ourselves at the kindergarten hall at the rear of the Presbyterian Church, opposite Middle Park School. To get to the hall we usually went down a cobbled lane at the side of the church. Sadly, while the cobbled lane is still there, all traces of the church and the kinder hall have gone. The church was destroyed by a fire, and the site is now a park which does, at least, have children's play equipment.

This particular day was special for me as for the first time I was wearing a blue and white spotted dress identical to my mother's. These dresses were lovingly made by mum on her hand-cranked Singer sewing machine. Many attractive and much loved garments were produced from this temperamental machine perched on the end of our kitchen table, and I do recall much muttering as the needle continually broke, and the bobbin bobbed way too much.

Our kinder teacher was a youthful Joan Sarsfield who occasionally came for tea and made home-made fairy cakes at our Bedford Court flat which overlooked the beach in Nimmo Street. Interestingly we only recently realised that the spelling of her surname was the same as that of my great grandmother, Mary Ann Sarsfield, who married Charles Jones in Tasmania back in the 19th century. Mary Ann, we now know, arrived in Australia in 1850 as part of her 15 year punishment – for stealing a cow. Well, at least it was a bit more serious than the usual theft of a loaf of bread!

Kinder had a familiar routine and I looked forward to it, and mostly enjoyed being here. We had our own allocated hook for our cardigans and coats, and cosy grey sleeping bags identified

by personalised embroidered symbols, which in my case was a red block. We also had an allocated place to sit, cross legged, while we listened to stories.

One classmate I particularly recall was Robbie Johnson, the younger son of Ian Johnson, of cricket fame. Robbie's place was on my right hand side at nap time. The Johnson family lived in a two-storied house in Page Street close to my grandmother, Lorna Nugent, who worked as a carpet sewer in Middle Park. So I was sometimes around near their house. The Johnson brothers were pretty lively, and I still have a vivid recollection of them scaling from a second floor wrought-iron balcony using a "rope" devised from several of their dad's ties knotted together. They survived this feat!

I enjoyed kindergarten. But there were a couple of bad moments I can still remember vividly. Being painfully shy and a sensitive young girl I was horrified for being punished for innocently picking fluff from the fuzzy-wuzzy wool jumper of the unsuspecting girl next to me during story time. My punishment was being placed in a small store room at the end of the hall. It was bad enough being put in the dark and musty environment of the room, but it got worse. Those in charge forgot about me! I was only rescued much later as my howls became louder and more frantic. Imagine the repercussions if that happened today.

My two younger brothers also attended the kindergarten, though not at the same time. The younger one recalls painting the buttresses on the hall with a can of water and a paint brush. Sadly, he recalls little else.

Overall, I am sure the Jones children all benefitted from the social learning and interaction at kindergarten, which prepared us for entering Middle Park State School at "bubs" level.



The Johnson House and the balcony from which the boys shimmied down using their father's ties



Margaret Ryding as Margaret Jones outside Bedford Court



The Presbyterian Church in Richardson St behind



Bedford Court flats – the Jones flat was on the top floor (top lefthand corner of photo)

Mystery Object July 2018

The mystery object that I photographed for the July 2018 newsletter was in the pedestrian crossing of Richardson Street, near Wright Street. Nobody came forward with an explanation of what it was. Clearly, it is a cover hiding something important, underneath, probably a valve on a water pipe.

The Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works became Melbourne Water in 1992, a name we are familiar with now. What was "Melbourne Waterworks"? While an image of a similar valve cover, and many variants of similar things, can be found on the web I am not able to discover any detail about when covers like this were installed. Is there anyone out there who is



interested enough to follow this up. Can anyone help, please?

Gary Poore

Middle Park 100 years ago

Sonya Cameron

One hundred years ago the residents of Middle Park were very active, both socially and in the sporting arena. The newspapers of the day gave results of local tennis matches, lawn bowls matches, cricket and football matches, and the results of the many swimming carnivals. It is hard to imagine that once there were four swimming and life-saving clubs in Middle Park – those associated with the Middle Park Baths and the Albert Park Life-Saving Club, but also very active swimming and life-saving clubs at the end of Wright Street and McGregor Street. Socially, the newspapers of the time reported on card game evenings, concerts and plays at the Middle Park Theatre and the Carmelite Church. So it is interesting to read of an event in which both the sporting and the cultural meet. The following article appeared in *The Record*, on 7 December 1918 and describes an event at the Middle Park Hall where medals were awarded by the Royal Life Saving Society followed by a musical programme of great distinction.

MIDDLE PARK BATHS LIFE SAVING CLUB.

The awards gained by members of the Middle Park Baths Life Saving Club were presented by the Mayor (Cr. R. M. Cuthbertson) at a concert held in the Middle Park Hall on Thursday evening. The awards (bronze medallions) are given by the Royal Life Saving Society, and are issued to members of clubs who have passed a test in life-saving. The recipients were Messrs. J. Breen, R. Metzger, L. Solomon, T. Fogarty, W. Thompson, W. Wright, E. Craven, J. O'Neill, I. Price, A. Stewart, and T. Hayes.

The musical programme was pronounced best that had ever been given in the district, and all of the items rendered were greatly appreciated by those present. Mr. J. B. Mummery, a young tenor who is rapidly coming to the front, has a beautiful voice, and sings with delightful ease. His solos and duets with Miss Doris Pascoe were particularly well received. The programme consisted of:—Duet, "Golenne in Questora," Messrs. J. B. Mummery and Les Paul; song (selected), Miss Myrtle Thorne; arioso, "On With the Motley," Mr. J. B. Mummery; aria, "Le Saran Rose," Miss D. Pascoe; song, "From Oberon in Fairyland," Mr. Les Paul; humorous item, Messrs. Oliver and Lynch; duet, "Miserere," Miss D. Pascoe and Mr. J. B. Mummery; song (selected), Miss Thorne; ballata, "Questae Quella," Mr. J. B. Mummery; song (selected), Miss D. Pascoe; song, "Invictus," Mr. Les Paul; humorous item, Messrs. Oliver and Lynch. Accompaniste, Miss A. Craven.

Middle Park dolls return home

Meyer Eidelson

These porcelain dolls were dug up from excavated landfill in Middle Park in the Albert Park Reserve. Such small dolls c. 1850–1920 were a very popular toy in the Victorian era known as ‘Frozen Charlotte’ dolls’ or ‘penny dolls’ or ‘bathing babies’. Some were even put in Xmas puddings. They originated in response to a popular folk ballad and poem penned in 1843 about a young girl who froze to death when she went to the ball without wearing a coat as instructed by her mother. The Victorians clearly had some strange ideas about children although it remains good advice even today to always listen to your mother.

As recorded by Jill Barnard and Jenny Keating in *People’s Playground A History of the Albert Park*, South Melbourne Council established a supervised rubbish tip in Albert Park Reserve on the Middle Park side near Canterbury Road in 1896. Subsequently St Kilda and South Melbourne Councils used various other places in the park as garbage dumps as a cheap means of reclaiming low-lying swampland for subsequent tree plantings. There were many ongoing complaints about smell, health risks to the public and the bizarre use of a public park as a tip. Local governments however struggled to

find sufficient funds to manage the park and the practice continued to about 1950. In the 1920s South Melbourne Council was even selling sand from the Middle Park side of the lake for income and filling in the subsequent holes with refuse.

This former landfill is occasionally dug up during construction in the park. For example, a large Parks Victoria office and depot is currently being built on the east side of the golf driving range and a new primary school is being constructed north of the lake. Landfill containing artefacts is often temporarily stored in mounds north of the Middle Park bowling club on the Canterbury Road side of the lake. Over the years I have rescued many bottles and artefacts from these old refuse mounds. Parks Victoria is not keen on this collecting practice as the soil may be toxic. Such are the hazards of the historian treasure hunter.

On the 20 September 2018 I found the first of these penny dolls pictured. Digging occasionally over the next five weeks, I uncovered the rest of the family. Strangely enough I had never found a penny doll previously over several years. I am very fond of them, imagining they may have been the treasured playthings of Middle Park children a century ago.



Russell Mockridge: Life and legacy

Martin Curtis

Edward Russell Mockridge lived at 93 Page St Middle Park between 1956 and 1958 when he was killed on Dandenong Rd Clayton minutes into a professional cycling race. Irene Mockridge, widowed after just under five years of marriage, lived at the house until 1965 when she sold it and moved to St Kilda. Lindy Mockridge, who was three when her father was killed, went to kindergarten in Page Street and then Middle Park Primary School between 1960 and 1965.

Sixty years after his death Martin Curtis, a biographer of Russell Mockridge, discusses the life and legacy of one of Australia's greatest athletes. You can read an expanded version of this story in Russell Mockridge The Man In Front. Melbourne Books (2008).

Saturday 13 September 1958 was a fine spring morning. Collingwood was to play North Melbourne in the preliminary final at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. There were horse races at Flemington. At 10.15 am Dandenong Rd was busier than normal with additional traffic coming into the city.

At 10.10 am the fastest and most experienced riders in the 1958 Tour of Gippsland left from outside Kelly's Pub at the corner of Dandenong Rd and Atkinson St. The group of six – Russell Mockridge, Jim Taylor, Bill Neil, Peter Panton, George Goodwin and John Young – had a big job ahead of them. The front markers had an hour's start in the 140 mile (225 km) handicap race so there was no time to lose.

Five minutes later, travelling two abreast at about 35 km per hour, the race was over. A line of cars waiting to turn right into Clayton Rd obscured the riders' view of a suburban passenger bus entering the intersection on their right.

Expecting a steward to be posted at the corner, the riders took a look and powered on. Jim Taylor and Russell Mockridge, at the head of the bunch, hit the side of the bus simultaneously. Taylor found himself under the bus in shocking pain from a broken collarbone. He could see Mockridge on the bitumen next to him and with the rear wheels of the bus about to crush his head. He tried to pull him clear but the busted shoulder restricted his movements. Jim Taylor survived. Russell Mockridge, Australia's pre-eminent cyclist didn't.

A wall of the Middle Park Hotel in Canterbury Rd is dedicated to the men and women who lifted Australia's reputation and aspirations in the 1950s – Australia's fastest



Mockridge out on his own in the 125 mile Victorian road championship, 1958 (Herald and Weekly Times).

decade – as the journalist and Olympic historian Harry Gordon dubbed it.

The familiar photos celebrate the successes of the decorated sportsmen and women of the Friendly Games, the 1956 Melbourne Olympics: Betty Cuthbert, John Landy, Murray Rose, Dawn Fraser, Lorraine Crapp, John Henricks, Shirley Strickland and many more. Australia won 13 gold medals and 35 medals in total, and finished third in the medal count behind the Soviet Union and the USA.

Australia's fastest cyclist in 1956, Russell Mockridge, is not part of that collection.

Mockridge had fallen out with Olympic cycling officials in 1952, only agreeing to terms and conditions four days before cycling events started at Helsinki. The row was over Mockridge's refusal to remain an amateur for two years after the Helsinki Games.

The hard-line demarcation between amateur and professional was a sore point for athletes, particularly cyclists and runners, who had to choose between an idealised "pure" world of amateur sport and the world of professional sport where, in the purist's opinion, athletes had sold out high ideals for the filthy lucre.

Many cyclists hardly noticed an amateur division. Professional events were held all over country and metropolitan Victoria. Jim Taylor's fate was decided early in his life when he accepted a one-pound prize at a Stratford cycle club event.

So although he had won two gold medals for Australia in one day at the 1952 Helsinki Games, and although he was the fastest Australian on two wheels in 1956, Mockridge's decision to turn professional after Helsinki excluded him from the Australian team for the Melbourne Games.

A lasting legacy of Russell Mockridge is the part he played in challenging the rules of the Olympic colossus. By the 1980s reality had checked the idea of a moral pecking order in



sport and professionals were allowed in to the Olympic circle.

The run-in with Olympic officials confirmed Mockridge's reputation as an outsider, one who wouldn't cooperate with officials or for that matter other riders in dividing up winnings between colluding members of a peloton.

He didn't fit the struggle-street model of most cyclists and footballers of the time. He was educated at Geelong Grammar, his father Bob Mockridge managed the Cheetham salt works at Geelong, and at one stage he studied theology at Melbourne University with the aim of becoming an Anglican priest.

He wrote an autobiography, *My World on Wheels*, published posthumously, where he gave insights on the world of professional cycling that are relevant to this day. In his punishing, stoic ride in the 1955 Tour de France he saw a French rider, Jean Mallejac, collapse on Mont Ventoux, the 1912 metre high Giant of Provence, from amphetamine-induced dehydration.

Those who raced against Russell Mockridge knew how good he was – they were almost invariably beaten.

Russell Mockridge's cycling career began in 1946 when, aged 17, he entered a 24 mile (38.6 km) Geelong Cycling Club "out and back" to Drysdale. Off a start of 11 minutes, he was never overtaken and beat club officials back to the start.

Within a year he was Australian amateur road champion and in 1948 part of the Australian team at the London Olympic Games. In 1950 he won two gold and one silver medal at the Auckland Empire Games.

In 1951 he was placed second to Enzo Sacchi in the world amateur sprint championships in Italy and in 1952 created a storm in Paris, the epicentre of cycling, by beating the reigning world professional champion, Briton Reg Harris, in the Paris Open Grand Prix, riding as an amateur. Later that summer he won two gold medals at the Helsinki Games (1000 metre time trial and tandem sprint) to become Australia's first dual gold-medal cyclist.

In 1955, riding as a professional, he teamed up with Sid Patterson and Roger Arnold for victory in the Paris Six Day Race, an extraordinary achievement for three rookies from Australia. Injured and ill he rode the 1955 Tour de France with a Luxembourg team, helping the team's star rider, Charly Gaul, to third overall place.

In 1956, 1957 and 1958 he was the Australian road champion and in 1956 and 1957 the fastest time winner in the Warrnambool to Melbourne road race. He also won multiple Australian track

championships.

The 1958 Tour of Gippsland was planned to be Mockridge's last race in Australia before he returned to Europe for the 1959 season. Fate would decree that it was the 30-year-old's last race ever.

Russell Mockridge's home two blocks from the water in Page St, Middle Park, gave Mockridge access to the beach and Melbourne's gift to cycling, the ribbon of road that hugs the shoreline of Port Phillip Bay all the way to Portsea – a favourite training ride for Mockridge and colleagues.

On the morning of Saturday 13 September 1958, Mockridge removed the front wheel of his Melbourne-made Healing racing bike so that it fitted in the boot of the family's Austin A40 hatchback. Irene Mockridge drove her husband and three-year-old Lindy to the start of the race in Oakleigh and then followed with Lindy in the car. The plan was to follow the race to Warragul and then back to its finish in Wellington Rd, Mount Waverley. Fate would decree a different outcome.

This is home, Bubs



It is baby Melinda Mockridge's first glimpse of her homeland. Daughter of Australian cycling champion, Russell Mockridge, she was born in Belgium just one year ago, and arrived here last night with her parents.

Russell Mockridge arriving back in Australia with Irene and one-year-old Lindy after riding the 1955 Tour de France and winning the Paris Six Day (The Argus, 3 December 1955)



Book review

Max Nankervis

By the Community, for the Community
The story of the Napier Street Aged Care Services

Adair Bunnett

Napier Street Aged Care Services, 2018

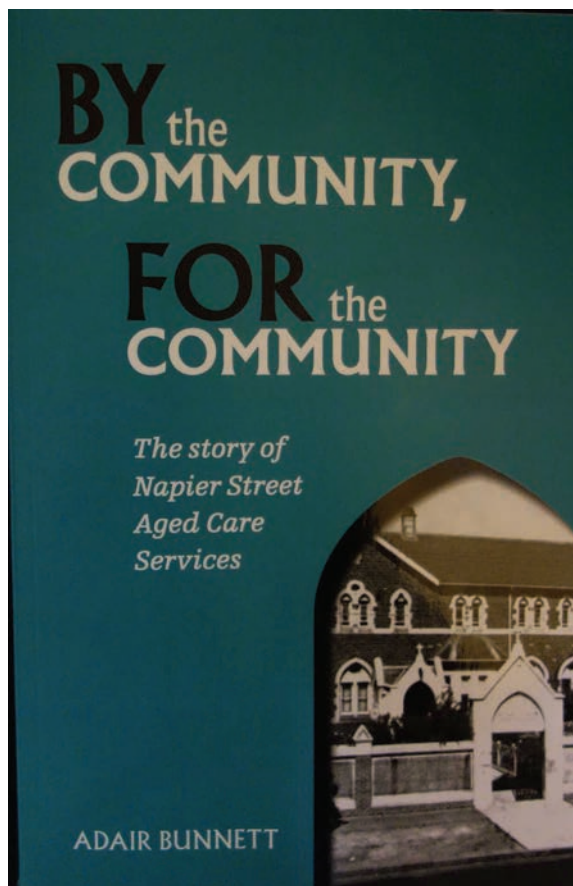
One of the issues for those of us interested in history and preserving our past is the reuse of old buildings which are no longer compatible with their original use and current social mores, or physical design arrangements. Often the buildings are poorly located, or lack facilities which we assume as necessary in today's society. One building complex in Port Phillip which suffered this fate is the large orphanages site in South Melbourne surrounded by Clarendon, Napier, Raglan and Cecil Streets. This complex, developed on a site set aside by Crown Grants in the 1850s was ceded to the Catholic Church, and specifically designated for an orphanage. It "matched" a slightly earlier nearby grant to the Anglican Church for a similar purpose. That site is now covered by the South Melbourne Town Hall (now largely ANAM) and the "Emerald Hill Estate".

The initial orphanage was for both boys and girls, but later restricted to just boys, and eventually administered by the Christian Brothers. A further grant enabled a matching Girls Orphanage to be established further east, to be administered by the Sisters of Mercy. However, by the end of the 20th century the concept of large institutions housing groups of children was out of fashion, and indeed gaining ill-repute. Thus the two sites were more or less abandoned and various moves were made by the government and others to reclaim these well-located sites for other uses. While the historic buildings of the Boys' section became the centre for Catholic Welfare –The McKillop Family

Centre – the more easterly section, formerly the girls' orphanage (and later part of a primary school) eventually was put to use as a centre for the ageing under the Administration of Napier Street Aged Care Services.

The author, local historian Adair Bunnett, has chronicled the development of this site from its earliest days as an orphanage until recent years as a variety of aged care services which provides a variety of services in this field – hostel living of various levels of dependency, respite care and other associated activities. This is Ms Bunnett's second volume dealing with local aged care families. Her earlier work, *Take Me Home to South*, focuses on the nearby Claremont Homes.

By the Community, for the Community begins by noting the long standing use of the land by the local indigenous group, the Boonwurrung, a



section of a clan of the Kulin Nation, the inhabitants of a large part of south central Victoria. Sadly, she gives data to show that between 1838 and 1863 (about the time of the founding of the orphanage) the indigenous group's numbers declined from about 87 to 11, though this earlier figure probably was already a reduced number due to earlier incursions of European sealers and whalers in Bass Strait.

While *By the Community, for the Community* focuses on the girls' orphanage, its early formative years cannot be appreciated without reference to the initial St Vincent's de Paul establishment in 1855. This evolved from the work of Fr Gerard Ward, but following a few chaotic years, came to be administered by the Sisters of Mercy following a request to the order from Archbishop Goold. The gender segregation soon followed in 1862 when the Christian Brothers were asked to take over the Boys' section.

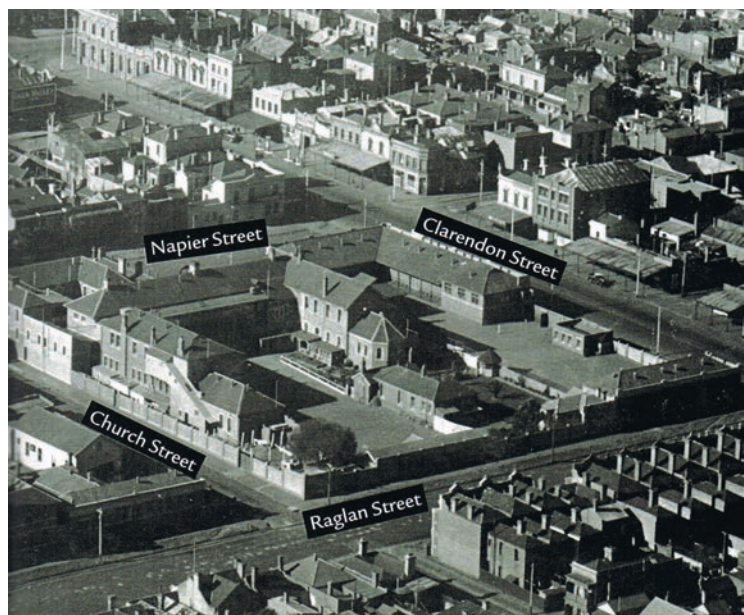
Life for the resident girls (and boys) during the next half century, by today's standards, was harsh. Siblings were separated and unable to meet or mingle, and finance was a constant issue. In reality, in a society which cared little for children who, for various reasons ended up in these institutions. Generally the only way these institutions survived was by the more or less unpaid work of the nuns (and brothers). The reasons for admission to the orphanages were various. Death and disease were common reasons, though unemployment (especially for single mothers sometimes abandoned with several children) was an underlying catalyst for many of the residents.

By the late 20th century a more humane approach to these issues was emerging, leading to the demise of the orphanages. Ms Bunnett explores the various approaches to the use of the girls' site, ranging from an ambulance station, a morgue or an educational focus hostel, and – worst

of all – demolition and redevelopment. But thanks to a dedicated group of locals, some of whom still play a part on the management of the initiative, in 1992, following a 1988 statutory reassignment of the Crown Grant deed, the site was secured for "community use" as an aged care facility under the management of Napier Street Aged Care Services Association.

The second half of the book discusses the various trials and tribulations of managing such an organization, especially a shifting focus as society's needs changed, especially the issue of a burgeoning cohort of the elderly, and the associated problems of living longer. These changes are set in the context of shifting Government regulations, some of which are clearly for the better, but which impose considerable extra demands on staff. The author wryly notes that one regulation change which necessitated a massive increase in detailed reporting emerging as a "score", gave no points for "tenderness, compassion or a kindly word"!

Ms Bunnett's book is an important local history document for the way it tells the story of our local past. But it is also informative for us all in giving an understanding of the general issues in ageing in our wider society. It has been produced to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the services' inauguration.



A brief history of the Carmelite Hall

Ann Rochford

The Carmelites purchased the land at the corner of Richardson and Wright St in 1890. They had owned two earlier sites in the area prior to this but this was their most substantial tract of land. The Carmelites new site stood in fields, with only a few houses to be seen around it.

In November 1891 the first Church on the site, was blessed by Bishop Crane, of Sandhurst. It was a beautiful Gothic red brick building; which seated 500. We have only one photograph of this church. In 1895, Archbishop Carr blessed the first Hall. We have a partial photograph of it, showing a white building of timber construction. It was a busy place as reports in the Advocate show us. By 1912 the Parish had outgrown the old Church and plans for the current church were drawn up. There were insufficient funds to go ahead with the project so building was put on hold for another decade. By 1914 the Parish had clearly outgrown the old hall. A concert for Irish Home Rule in that year drew an enormous crowd, which was barely accommodated. In 1917, Augustus Fritsch, who had designed the new Church, was also employed to design the new Hall. Fredrick Farr, a local craftsman of notable reputation was the builder. It was to be a grand hall, one of the finest in Melbourne at that time. It had a sloping stage for live theatre, and was also intended for the showing of movie pictures. There were two grand rooms upstairs, one of which held three full sized billiard tables. I was told by one of the priests that the billiard room was intended to keep young men off the streets and out of the pubs. This must have been reasonably successful because the tables remained in the hall until the late 1980s.

In the front of downstairs there were clubrooms to accommodate the many sporting organizations connected to the parish. (There were many clubs, tennis, football, cricket, and

dramatics. Catholics prayed and played together.) There were also numerous sodalities that held their committee meetings in the Hall meeting rooms. Middle Park seemed to have formed every possible Catholic sodality in the first part of the last century.

The floor space of the main hall was large. At the back there was a kitchen area and under the Hall was a large storage area, which soon became a gymnasium. The hall gives a big nod to the Irish Heritage of the area with Shamrocks on the outside of the Building and Irish bagpipes and an Irish Harp decorating the framing of the stage. The plasterwork was done by Hatherley and Horsfall and is eclectic but quite beautiful. The actual architectural style of the Hall is not clear; it gives a nod to Victoriana and Romanesque in different places. The cost was 7000 pounds and, half the money was in hand prior to the commencement of building.

On November the 4th 1918, thirteen days after the Armistice, a crowd of 5000 attended to see Archbishop Mannix, lay the foundation stone. The week before The Advocate had given notice of the event, and told readers how to get to Middle Park. *The Advocate, Argus and Tribune* covered the actual laying of the Foundation stone. Why such a big turnout? It was likely more about Mannix than our Hall. Mannix was outrageously popular with Melbourne's Catholic community of the time. He was a leader of the anticonscription debates, and the end of the war rather vindicated his position. Mannix, himself, knew that he could always draw a big crowd. He was keen to attend building openings etc. because the Parish in question always got a big collection to defray their debt. Over a thousand pounds was raised on this occasion. A year later the completed Hall was blessed (June 29th 1919). This time interest was muted and it only

rated a small paragraph in *The Advocate*.

The Hall was immediately put into action. In 1920 the Federation players performed a new play. They seem to be a group of travelling players who played in a number of Parish Halls around Melbourne at that time. There was a Carmelite Queen competition held in the old Hall in 1917 but in 1921, The Carmelite Queen contest was enormous and gathered a lot of inches in *The Advocate* across a number of editions. Each of the nominated Queens vied to see how much they could raise to go towards Carmelite activities. These activities went on for six months and most were held in the Hall. Each Queen strove to outdo the others. The one who raised the most money was crowned the Queen

of Queens. In 1921 Mr E Alien Brindley, the Conductor of the Middle Park choir arranged a Musical Comedy called "The Flapper" on behalf of one of the contestants. It had 50 trained voices and well-known artists. Tickets at 1 and 2 shillings were available from the Catholic booksellers. There were fetes, afternoon Children's fetes, masked balls, and concerts.

By 1927, Queen contestants had branched out further. One prospective Queen had some notable wrestlers come along for a demonstration and also included Vaudeville and boxing on the program. Not to be outdone the following week another candidate gave us more wrestlers and weightlifters. These pugilists almost certainly came to us via John Wren, who ran boxing and



wrestling troops at the time. By 1935 the Queens had become Princes and Princesses but the six-month routine remained the same. The Advocate's description of the Coronation of the winning couple in 1935 makes the British Royals seem boring. There were attendants, thrones, processions, prizes, and the most beautiful evening clothes all in matching colour themes. Later, but we are not sure when, the Queens competition became the Miss Whitefriars Competition and was held at the Palais, St Kilda, not the Carmelite Hall.

As well as the activities of Queen Competition, there were any number of concerts, Grand Balls, Masked Balls, Fetes, Holy Name Breakfasts, Wedding Breakfasts, Fancy Dress Balls, Euchre nights, First Communion celebrations and plays. Moving pictures were shown. In the late 20s and 30s the Parish had its own dramatic society who performed in the Hall. While all of the activities were happening in the main hall, the Billiard room remained prodigiously popular with the locals, especially the young men.

Our research gives us a clear picture of a growing catholic community, many of Irish extraction, whose social life was very much centered in the Parish, around the Church and equally, the Hall. If you were a Catholic the local parish supplied all of your needs both spiritual and social. It is also impossible to ignore the fact that so many of the activities were about raising funds to pay off parish debt. I think this was the way in most Catholic parishes.

By the 1950s things seem to be changing. The big Balls are now held in the South Melbourne

town hall. The Miss Whitefriars fundraising had moved to the Palais, St Kilda. Perhaps the Parish outgrew its own Hall and needed bigger spaces, or perhaps very little of the funds raised in the Hall were actually spent on its maintenance. We have more contemporary evidence that by the 1970s the hall was in very poor condition. The toilets were terrible and the whole place was shabby. The Parish was becoming smaller and older. Catholics looked into the wider community for much of their social interactions.

The Hall became the home of the Middle Park Players who performed a yearly program there. A local scout group used it for a number of years and left several Fleming Hides behind in the basement. A local lady remembers going to girl guides there. The Basement continued as a gymnasium for some time. At one point it was home to a Golden Gloves Champion. Regular boxing bouts were held in the Hall. The West Coast Eagles used the space for their banner making when they were playing Melbourne games.

By 2000 the Carmelites needed a new home for their Spiritual Library. The Carmelite Hall then began a new chapter in its life. It has been refurbished back to its former glory. Fortunately all of its original features are still intact. It now houses an extensive library and is the home of the Carmelite Spirituality Centre.

Reproduced with permission from "Carmelite Hall Centenary 1918-2018", booklet published by The Carmelites, 75 Wright Street, Middle Park.

Chatterley's retreads

Bruce Armstrong

Our regular contributor, Bruce Armstrong, continues to send me small "vignettes" that he has recalled and put to paper. Here's another.

GP

Motoring in the 1930s and 1940s was for those who could afford a new car, expensive. With the declaration of war in September 1939, many people owning new cars had to surrender them, with token compensation, to the Commonwealth Government. Re-painted in drab-olive for the army, blue for the air force and off-white for the navy, they were mostly used as 'staff cars'. Once handed over, they never saw their original owners again. Apart from old 'flivvers' or 'jalopies' as vintage cars were unkindly called, it was virtually impossible to buy a car, consequently replacement parts, tyres in particular, were unobtainable, unless the owner was deemed essential, such as doctors.

Also, draconian petrol rationing was introduced and a private owner received ration tickets, four gallons per month. One of my brothers had a clapped-out Whippet and he used to dope his ration with mineral turpentine which extended his mileage, but from the exhaust pipe came lots of white smoke. Some owners fitted charcoal 'gas producers'- huge, ugly contraptions fitted to the back of vehicles. Drivers started up on petrol and switched to gas from the smouldering charcoal.

There were no replacement tyres, Dunlop and Olympic confined production to Government specification. Solution came with retreading worn tyres. Retreaders were popular and Middle Park had its own – Jock Chatterley. This wiry slightly bow-legged man with bushy moustache lived on Paterson Street opposite the asbestos factory. His retreading operation detracted from the general amenity of the locality, rubber heated in the vulcanising process produces vile smelling smoke. Jock erected a prominent sign on his front lawn, an old tyre painted white with details

informing of his service. Like that other wiry Middle Park Scot 'Zak' (mentioned in another piece in this series) he was thought by some to be quite eccentric. Regardless of weather, we rarely saw him wearing other than shirt/shorts/sandals and munching a bent-stem pipe. That pipe was unusual, it had a detachable spit-bowl which he unscrewed and flipped to empty.

Veteran motorist Bill Mayberry tells of tyre problems of the depression years and into the 1940s when because of wartime shortages, due to government restrictions, some private motorists availed themselves of a product by Swan Street, Richmond company RE-NU.

Their 'do -it-yourself' kit was a quantity of tiny black-rubber pellets and a fast-drying latex rubber solution. To obtain a 5 mm or more thickness of tread, the worn tread was first scarified then plastered with the mix and allowed to cure or dry for several hours. Unlike the traditional vulcanising process, it didn't require a lot of applied heat, thus, no smell or smoke. Motorists were able to use the tyre for one short journey before the stuff began to break up and peel off.



WALKS IN MIDDLE PARK: 1

WOODCRAFT

IN MIDDLE PARK ARCHITECTURE



Middle Park History Group

WALKS IN MIDDLE PARK: 2

CHURCHES

PAST AND PRESENT



Middle Park History Group

WALKS IN MIDDLE PARK: 3

FROM SHOPS TO CAFES

THE ARMSTRONG STREET SHOPPING PRECINCT



Middle Park History Group

Covers of three brochures providing information for self-guided walks through Middle Park. The brochures will be launched in the Middle Park Shopping Centre, outside Victor's Dry Cleaning, on Saturday 2 February 2019 10 am until 12 noon.

Vice President's report

At the last members meeting, I publicly thanked many who contributed to the fine design and Max Nankervis who resigned recently from the content of these publications. committee as President. Max has made a Our committee lacks members and we significant contribution to the Society as encourage Society members to put their hand up President in administration, research, for this very worthwhile and fun role which 'gives representation and initiating projects. The back' to our community. Committee has also written to Max expressing Our last speaker Ann Rochford on the our appreciation. history of the Carmelites in Middle Park was

Our free set of three beautifully designed BRILLIANT! We have four more talks coming walks flyers is being launched in the Armstrong up this year and I look forward to seeing you at Street shopping centre on the morning of future meetings if you can make it. It is also Saturday 2 February and will then become chance for members to socially share ideas and available at our general meetings, from City of learn from each other around a coffee and biscuit. Port Phillip Libraries and from Victor's Dry Regards Cleaners, 9 Armstrong street. My thanks to the Meyer Eidelson

MPHG meeting schedule 2019

Monday 4 March 2109 – Lynsey Poore, History of the St Kilda Botanic Gardens

Monday 6 May 2019 – Adair Bunnett

Monday 2 September 2019 – Janet Bolitho and Margaret Bride

Monday 4 November 2019 (AGM) – Maurita Harney

All meetings are at 7:30 pm at the Albert Park Baptist Church Hall, corner Kerferd Road and Richardson Street (entry through OFFICE door in Richardson Street) and are followed by supper.

Your MPHG committee

President:	Meyer Eidelson (acting)
Vice-President:	Meyer Eidelson
Secretary:	Vacant
Treasurer:	Sonya Cameron
Liaison officer:	Diana Phoenix
Committee member:	Annette Robinson, Tony Liston
Oral history:	Annette Robinson