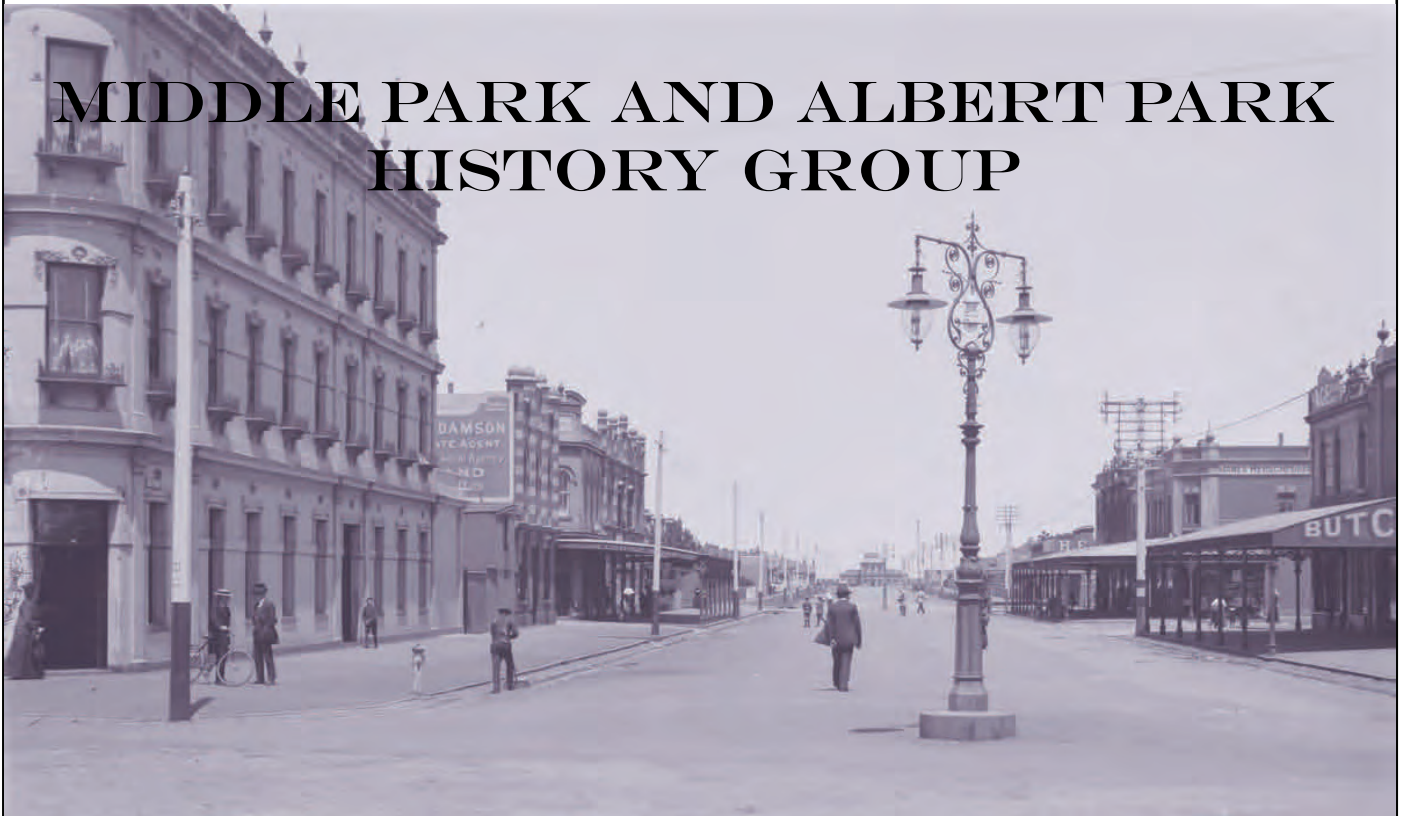


MIDDLE PARK AND ALBERT PARK HISTORY GROUP



Editorial

This is the first newsletter of the newly expanded and named Middle Park and Albert Park History Group. Our president, Meyer Eidelson, has more to report on this in his report. I am happy to record that our latest publication *Albert Park – Gardens to the Sea* is selling well at the Avenue Bookshop. It was a privilege to compile and edit the chapters. Two spin-offs as part of the City of Port Phillip community program are listed in MPAPHG activities for February and March.

In this newsletter, Sonya Cameron reminds what at

least one letter-writer 100 years ago, perhaps a local resident, was wishing for on the beach and lake. Some of us will be glad that our suburb is not competing with Manly or Coogee. Local Don Mountain has contributed an account of his illustrious great-grandfather who, among other things, gave his name to Albert Park streets.

The meeting program for 2023 is settled and can be found on the last page of this newsletter.

Gary Poore

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The Middle Park and Albert Park History Group
Supported by The City of Port Phillip



100 years ago

Now that summer has finally arrived, it is interesting to read suggestions from 100 years ago for improvements to our foreshore and beaches. Our recent book on Albert Park featured a chapter on the foreshore, but it was not possible to include every proposal made. The article below is about one such proposal from a local newspaper in 1922 (price: one penny). The previous week the newspaper had published another proposal for improvements – such as the provision of toilets (difficult to imagine there were none), more shower facilities, kiosks for the hiring of deck chairs and bathing costumes and

special trams that would run on Sunday mornings during the summer period. One wonders who “Vic.” was? The wished-for swimming pool was achieved eventually but not the concrete bottom to Albert Park Lake. What would they make of the Grand Prix?

Sonya Cameron

Article below from *The Record (Emerald Hill)*, Saturday 11 November 1922, page 1

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article162538613>

HOLIDAY RESORT PROPOSALS.

An Optimistic Contributor.

Thinks Councillors Should Do Something.

(By “Vic.”)

Has it ever occurred to citizens of Albert Park, in their cry for the development of business in this suburb, that the only way Albert Park may be made one of Melbourne's chief shopping centres is by the development of its natural advantages?

Has it ever occurred to them that we have one of the finest natural beaches in Victoria, and the most unique lake?

And, pray, has it ever occurred to those self-same people, that, although our beach and lake, in natural state, are of great beauty, it is not natural beauty, but artificial beauty, that appeals to the people of to-day?

“Beautification of beach and lake” should be the Council's slogan.

We should advertise our beach and lake. Who amongst us have not seen enticing advertisements—“Spend your holidays at Mount Buffalo,” “Gippsland Lakes for a pleasant holiday”?

Why shouldn't we advertise “Albert Park for a delightful holiday”?

No other holiday centre could equal the attractions of which we would be able to boast.

We have bathing, fishing, dancing, bowls, tennis, rowing, yachting, a fine park, and the very best healthful, fresh, invigorating air, and an excellent climate.

But before we can think of making Albert Park Victoria's holiday centre we must make our beach and lake unrivalled.

The Council should erect up-to-date bathing sheds, keep the beach somewhat clean, proper public conveniences, a public bathing pool, the beach should be made shark proof.

It requires enterprise to materialize any of these dreams, and enterprise as far as our Council, is concerned, seems a vague, unknown quantity.

Then take our lake. Why not a concrete bottom? Why not a depth of clean clear water? Why not a swimming pool? Why not co-operate with the other Councils concerned to have gardens and lawns laid round the entire circumference of the lake, and why cannot we have proper illumination?

It is in the Council's power to grant all these things that would make Albert Park and South Melbourne equal to Australia's best. Improvements could and should be undertaken to such an extent that Manly and Coogee would pall into insignificance when compared with Albert Park, Victoria's future holiday resort.

William John Mountain — a pioneer of the South Melbourne community

Don Mountain

You may have wondered why two streets in South Melbourne, called Mountain Street and Little Mountain Street, are so named. There was also a Mountain Street in the Victoria Dock area (no longer existing), a street at Kerrie in the Macedon Ranges and one in the suburb of Calwell in the Nation's Capital called Mountain Circuit. These streets are all named after my great-grandfather, William John Mountain.

William John Mountain was born in Woolwich, England in May 1836. His father, Sergeant William Mountain, who died in 1847, had been a long-serving member of the Royal Sappers and Miners, later known as the Royal Engineers. He joined as a Drummer and Bugler on 4 June 1813 at the age of 8 years. His mother Sarah had remarried in 1849. The family arrived in Hobsons Bay in February 1852¹. Accompanied by his stepfather George Andrews, the pair, after finding suitable accommodation in Port Melbourne for the rest of the family, immediately left for the Mount Alexander goldfields, returning to Melbourne after six months. Upon their return they purchased the schooner/lighter *Caroline* for \$1000². Lighters were used to transport cargo from ships anchored in the Bay to the wharves.

In 1857 he again “got the fever” and returned to the Ballarat goldfields. When he returned to Melbourne in 1858 he came with 18 ounces of gold². On 12 November 1861 William married Margaret Watson Fraser, a recent arrival in Melbourne from Fortrose in the Scottish Highlands “at his residence, Ivy Cottage, Yarra Bank, Melbourne”³. Between 1862–1864 we find the couple living in West Melbourne and in the city.

By 1866 they were living in Station Place, Sandridge⁴. By this time William had purchased Throckmorton's timber business in partnership with Mr Gibbs. He is listed as the owner of a vacant brick house with four rooms and a slate roof at 14 Sandridge Road⁵ in the South Melbourne Rate Book. He called the house *Fortrose Cottage*⁶. They continued to live in Sandridge Road, Emerald Hill⁴ for a number of years. The 1867 Victorian Directory lists Gibbs and Mountain, timber measurers and commission agents, Australian Storage Yard, Australian Wharf.

On the 1873 Rate Rolls two brick double-storey



This large oil painting was commissioned by the South Melbourne Council and presented to William John on his retirement from Council in 1905.



Enderby, the home of William John Mountain, located in Queens Terrace (later Queens Road), was built in 1884.

houses with 12 rooms each were built at 43 and 44 St Vincent Place, Albert Park. These are known as *Fortrose Terrace* and both were owned by William⁶. Henry Francis, the well-known Melbourne Chemist, was at number 43. Then living at 44 St Vincent Place⁴, William was elected to Emerald Hill Town Council in 1875. Sale of part of the Albert Park parklands, including the area along what is now Queens Road (then Queens Terrace) and St Kilda Road, William purchased blocks fronting both roads. Average prices were £6 per foot. He later built Enderby on the block in Queens Road⁷. At the time he was Vice President of South Melbourne Permanent Building Society and Deposit Institute⁸.

Re-elected to South Melbourne Council in 1878, he was President of the South Melbourne Bowling Club where he was also Treasurer and a Team Captain⁹ and was a member the South Melbourne Cricket Club. During 1880 the Victorian Government exchanged the site owned by Gibbs & Mountain near Batmans Hill for a 12-acre site on the south side of the Yarra within the Town of Emerald Hill, to allow for expansion of Spencer Street Railway Station and adjoining rail yards².

William John started his first term as Mayor of Emerald Hill in 1880. At that time he was Vice-president of the South Melbourne Cricket Club. In

1882 he was made a Justice of Peace, elected as a Trustee of Albert Park Trust, President of the Emerald Hill Mechanics' Institute and Chairman of the Transit of Venus Gold and Quartz Mining Company¹⁰. Mrs Mountain was the President of the Emerald Hill Ladies' Benevolent Society. On 21 September 1883 Emerald Hill was proclaimed a City. On 23 September of that year the City of Emerald Hill became the City of South Melbourne. In March 1883 William had been elected to the Melbourne Harbor Trust. William was also a Member of the Committee of Management of that part of Albert Park permissively occupied by South Melbourne City Council¹¹.

1884 saw tenders called for construction of Enderby at 20 Queens Terrace (later renamed Queens Road)¹². Enderby was designed by noted Melbourne architect Harry Gibbs, who also designed The George Hotel in St Kilda. It was described in newspaper articles as "a notable Mansion standing on 1.5 acres facing Queens Terrace"^{3,7}. The Foundation Stone for the South Melbourne & Albert Park Coffee Palace, 152 Bridport Street, South Melbourne (now The Biltmore apartments) was laid by William in November 1887¹³. In that same year he was elected President and Life Member of the South Melbourne Cricket Club.

William was elected to the Legislative Assembly of the 14th Victorian Parliament (MLA) in 1889. He remained an MLA until April 1892. During this time he was appointed Chairman, Relief and Distress Committee, South Melbourne during a severe depression. He was elected as the 8th Chairman of the Melbourne Harbor Trust, a position he held from 1891 until 1893. The 1893 edition of Victorian Directories shows William as a farmer at Kerrie in the Macedon Ranges. This was where William had built his holiday retreat, a large mansion which still stands today, although no longer in the ownership of the Mountain family. The property is still known by the name given to it by William, *Cragie Lea*, once again reflecting his wife's Scottish heritage.

1893 also saw William as Chairman of liquidators of the South Melbourne Building Society. This was the era known as the Great Land Boom. Unfortunately for the Building Society this was eventually a land bust, helped along by a dishonest manager, Matthias Larkin, who reportedly absconded with £55,000. He received six years gaol. When he was released from gaol in 1900 after remissions for good conduct, two liquidators WJ Mountain and John Danks (the hardware merchant) were ready for him with bankruptcy proceedings. By 1910 he had paid precisely 2d in the £1 to the surviving creditors¹⁴. William laid the foundation stone of the new Melbourne Harbor Trust building in Flinders Street West. He also received an illuminated address on the completion of two years as Chairman of Melbourne Harbor Trust in 1895.

William John's first wife, Margaret, died of a stroke at the age of 54 on 21 April 1896.

In 1898 he was re-elected to South Melbourne Council, Queen's Ward¹⁵. He was again living at 81 St Vincent Place, South Melbourne. March 1900 saw him elected as a member of the Royal Commission on Unemployment. In December of that year he married Isabella Bertha Mackay at St Matthews, Cheltenham. He was elected for his second term as Mayor in 1901¹⁶. That same year he was the South Melbourne representative of the Melbourne &



William John Mountain Snr (left), Mayor of South Melbourne and his son, William John Mountain Jnr, Mayor of Essendon, concurrently 1901–1902.

Metropolitan Board of Works¹⁷ and an active member of the Council of The Old Colonists Association of Victoria²⁰.

1904 was a mixed year in William John's journey. He was appointed a Trustee of South Melbourne Mechanics' Institute¹⁸, elected as Melbourne Harbor Trust representative on the Melbourne Sailors' Home Committee¹⁹, Commissioner of the Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works, Commissioner of the Melbourne Harbor Trust and a South Melbourne City Councillor. He also lost his beloved daughter Ethel to tuberculosis at the age of 27 years. In 1905 he was a Trustee of the Wesleyan Church in Cecil Street, South Melbourne and Chairman of the Melbourne Sailor's Home¹⁷. He retired from South Melbourne Council that same year thus ending over 30 years service to the people of Emerald Hill/South Melbourne.



Left and centre: medal issued to schoolchildren in the Municipality to commemorate the Coronation of Edward VII and Alexandra in 1908;(front and rear views); right: Life Membership medallion presented to W J Mountain by the South Melbourne Cricket Club in 1887

William John Mountain died on 28 July 1906 from stomach cancer. He was laid to rest in the Melbourne General Cemetery.

As a footnote, my research suggests a unique record: that William John Mountain (my grandfather) and his eldest son, also William John Mountain (my great uncle), were mayors of two Melbourne Municipalities concurrently. In the period 1901–1902 William John Senior was the Mayor of South Melbourne; William John Junior was at the same time Mayor of Essendon.

⁷ People's Playground: A History of the Albert Park, p 43.

⁸ South Melbourne: A History, Susan Priestley, Melbourne University Press 1995, ISBN 0 522 84664 5

⁹ Albert Park Bowls Club records.

¹⁰ *The Argus*, 15 April 1882, page 11.

¹¹ *The Record*, Friday 5 September 1884.

¹² *The Argus*, 5 July 1884.

¹³ Silver Trowel held by family member.

¹⁴ *The Land Boomers*, Michael Cannon 1976, ISBN 017 005105 6

¹⁵ *The Argus*, Friday 26 August 1898, page 1.

¹⁶ *The Record*, South Melbourne, 31 August 1900.

¹⁷ *The Argus*, Tuesday 13 March, 1906, page 7.

¹⁸ *Victorian Government Gazette*, Wednesday 10 February 1904.

¹⁹ *The Argus*, Saturday 10 November 1900.

²⁰ Letter from The Old Colonists Association of Victoria, 26 April 1993.

¹ Victoria Coastal Passenger Lists 1852-1924 (PROV) (findmypast.com.au)

² Victorian Men of the Time, 1882, p123 (findmypast.com.au)

³ 1860 Sands & McDougall Directory, Melbourne.

⁴ Victorian Directories.

⁵ Sandridge Road is now known as City Road.

⁶ Kay Rowan, City of Port Phillip Local History Librarian.

President's Report

Hope you are enjoying our New Year's fine weather after what seemed an endless winter. Our latest book is doing well and I look forward to this year's four meetings 6 February, 1 May, 4 September and 13 November 2023.

For myself December and January is a break from the ongoing harvesting of bushtucker that I collect during each year to supply school and adult excursions.

The park, reserves, nature strips, gardens and foreshore of Middle Park and Albert Park are a rich source of the Indigenous food, tools and medicine described in books like Bruce Pascoe's *Dark Emu* and *Koorie Plants and Koorie People* by the brilliant Beth Gott.

Common local plants that I forage when in season include matrush (nets and basket making), pigface (water, vegetable, fruit, medicine), banksia flowers (sugar), warrigal greens

(spinach), purslane (salad), paperbark (paper, mattress, housing), lemon gum (welcome to country, citronella), wattle gum (chewing gum, protein), she-oak (fishing), raspberry saltbush (dye), lilly pilly (fruit) and grey saltbush (vegetable, salt).

I do get strange looks while collecting 'weeds' amongst the bushes, but console myself that I am engaging in an activity thousands of years old.

If you would like to learn more about this eccentric pastime, I will be leading a free tour for the COPP Walks Program called '*Foraging Wild in St Kilda*'. We will circulate the booking details when released by COPP later this year.

Regards
Meyer Eidelson



MPAPHG/City of Port Phillip Special Activities

Tuesday 28 February 2023 at 6:30–8:00 pm

Gary Poore : Introducing the book, *Albert Park – Gardens to the Sea*
At Emerald Hill Library and Heritage Centre, 195 Bank Street, South Melbourne
Book at <https://www.trybooking.com/CFOGI>

Sunday 5 March 2023 at 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Lynsey Poore : Fabulous St Vincent Gardens, a guided walk through these fabulous 1860s gardens to discover its plants and history (meet at the children's playground)

MPAPHG General Meetings

At Middle Park Primary School (enter from Richardson Street)

6 February 2023, 7.30 pm

Meyer Eidelson : Downtown Abbey to Dunny Lanes – a journey through the Victorian class system of Middle Park and Albert Park

1 May 2023, 7.30 pm

Amy Hidge (Senior Engagement Officer, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning) : Shrine to Sea Masterplan

4 September 2023, 7.30 pm

Jenny Sinclair (author) : *A Walking Shadow*. Edward Oxford, well known resident of Albert Park with a secret past as an attempted assassin of Queen Victoria

13 November 2023, 7.30 pm (AGM)

John Stirling : Middle Park Primary School in the 1970s and a proposal for a mega soccer stadium in Albert Park Reserve

Your MPAPHG committee

President:	Meyer Eidelson
Vice-President:	Vacant
Secretary:	Vacant
Treasurer:	Sonya Cameron
Liaison Officer	Diana Phoenix
Committee members:	Melanie Eagle, Abramo Ierardo, Gary Poore