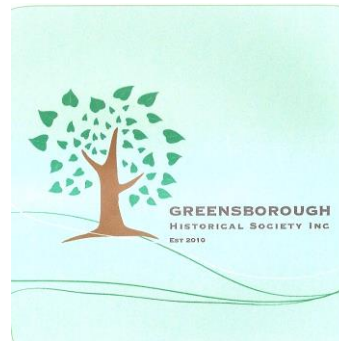


Greensborough Historical Society Inc.

Newsletter

Edition 47, September 2022

Incorporation No. **A0054430X**
ABN **64 318 435 402**



Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Elections for Executive and Committee were held at our AGM on Friday 16 September 2022 and the current Committee members will continue their work for Greensborough Historical Society in 2022-2023.

President	Norm Colvin
Vice President	Sue Ballantyne
Treasurer	John Gibson
Secretary	Peter Van Eeken
Ordinary Committee Members	Sue Brenkovich, Dianne Fox, Noel Withers

We have 2 vacancies on Committee, and welcome any member who would like to volunteer to join us. Please contact any Committee member for further details, you will be made most welcome. Please note in 2023 Committee will meet on 3rd Tuesday at 1.30pm.

Congratulations to all Committee members and we look forward to a productive year ahead.

On behalf of our members past and present, we thank Noel for having the fortitude to embark on creating a 'new' historical society in 2010, and leading us through the successes of the past 12 years.

Noel is keen for everyone to know that he is not 'going away' and will still take an active role in our Society. It is now time for him to relax just a little and pass on the mantle to our new President Norm Colvin.

What does Norm bring to the role of President? His knowledge of the area stems from growing up on Poulter Avenue and spending his youth exploring the wider area. His general knowledge and recall of information are amazing, as is his attention to detail and understanding of administrative practice in running a small society. We look forward to welcoming Norm back to our newly refurbished History Resource Centre in the near future.

Greensborough Historical Society acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as traditional custodians of the land and we pay respect to all Elders, past, present and emerging, who have resided in the area and been an integral part of the region's history.

A Message from our Outgoing President

Though this is my final report as President of Greensborough Historical Society I will still be on the Committee dedicated to researching local history and wish to thank you all, particularly my fellow Committee members and the Thursday research group for their support over the past 12 years.

We can all be proud of what we have achieved in that time with numerous grants, awards, production of three books, an ever increasing collection of historical memorabilia and a consistent membership.



When we held the public meeting all those years ago I had no idea what the future held for yet another historical society in the area however it has been an exciting and productive journey and I have confidence in the future of the Greensborough Historical Society.

Best Wishes to all

Noel Withers
President
2010-2022

New President's Report

I was sorry to miss the 2022 AGM on 16th September, but waking up with a suspected cold I decided the risk of spreading whatever infection I had was too great. Fortunately, our outgoing President Noel was able to collect my talk and I am told ably present it.

Just another reason to thank Noel; who had the initial inspiration to create GHS and serve as our inaugural President for a stunning 12 years during which time we have produced three books and several series of postcards on our local history. We have a home in Lower Plenty and a regular meeting schedule with a solid attendance of members and many more who are financial, but unable to attend.

So under Noel's stewardship we have come from being an idea, to a successful reality which is recognised by the Royal Historical Society of Victoria and our local sister historical societies.

A hard act to follow!

Thinking back, I remember the first time I met Noel and it was about a family history related matter. My neighbour at the time (and GHS member now), John Hooper was trying to mark the graves of his Roy ancestors in the Greensborough Cemetery. Noel came to John's one evening and we discussed the matter without resolution. However, Noel brought along information he had accrued on the Roy family and spoke of the need for a local Historical Society. This was in about the year 2000.

In the near future we hope to be able to recommence activities at our History Resource Centre in Lower Plenty. Currently, we are being delayed by an inability of two power retailers and the management of the adjoining Kindergarten to arrange moving the power board. This is a necessary final detail of the build.

Hopefully this will be resolved soon.

I would like to thank the Committee for re-nominating as your continuing input from near or afar is of importance. In particular, thanks to John Gibson for continuing in the very important role of Treasurer and Sue Ballantyne for returning to the position of Vice President, whilst remaining as our Archivist and ultimate controller of activities.

Finally, if any member identifies an area of our local history we are not covering well at the moment, please tell Sue Ballantyne or me and we will look into it.

Norm Colvin
President
2022-23

Members' Corner

Vale Brian Roberts

It is with sadness we report the passing of GHS member Brian Roberts. Our sincere condolences to June and the Roberts family.



June Hall



We are advised that June Hall has been unwell and recently in hospital. June was a foundation member of GHS and an active Committee member who led our Oral History team for several years. June contributed many oral histories to our archives, including an interview with Noel which appears later in this newsletter.

We wish June a speedy recovery.

From the Archives

We acknowledge the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II with some items from our archives at GHS, including books and newspaper cuttings from Royal Visits in the mid-20th century. We also have several personal memories from GHS members.



THE NOEL WITHERS STORY

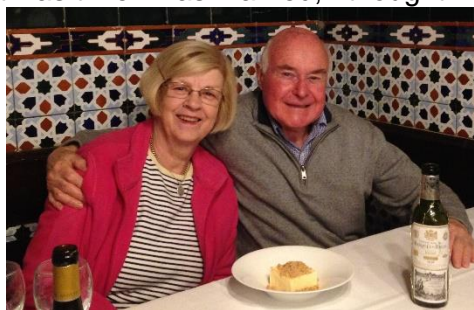
Interviewed by June Hall (nee Evans) at GHS Meeting December 2011

I moved from Devon, in the south west of the country, where I grew up as a child, to East London. While I was there I got into bad company - I met two Australians, one was from Queensland, rough as guts, the other was from Adelaide, a perfect gentleman, between the two of them, they persuaded me I should come to "God's own country" - Australia. I eventually did.

After rubbishing hell out of me about ten-pound poms, I found I could get a tramp steamer from Norway, and work my passage to Australia, they told me, in no uncertain terms, that I was an idiot, when you could go for 10 pounds. I came to Australia in 1964, just to look at the place and stay for about two years, and here I am 47 years later, still here, so there must have been something good about the place.

I met my wife here. When I was living London, we guys put our heads together and decided, that at 27, it was probably time to get married, even though most people in Australia were getting married at a much younger age. At 29, I thought it was time I was married, I thought jeepers, I had better do something about this, that was when Kath came along. She has kept me on the straight and narrow since.

We were married at Essendon, she was an Essendon girl, just downhill from Windy Hill, obviously a very religious Essendon fan she is. (I have to put up with that every winter). I met her in a theatre group, would you believe. This is a line she has heard many times, "and there has been drama ever since."



Kath and Noel in 2018

Question from Faye - Were you ever in the same play?

Noel: I don't think so, although I did sing to her once, and she still married me.

Question from Marilyn - What boat did you come out on? Noel: I didn't come out by boat, I came out by plane, there were 63 people on the plane and only three of us were not sick on the flight. Every time we landed the three of us would nick off somewhere and have a drink, because everyone else on the plane was "throwing up". I used to be really sick when travelling in a bus when I was a little boy, but I managed to survive for three days with a little boy sitting next to me throwing up all the way. It was terrible.

Question from June - When did you come to Greensborough? Noel: I had been over to see my brothers and my parents for Christmas 1969/70, and when I came back, I got a job selling audio equipment and electronics with Ensell Electronics until I got a job with Diamond Valley Council, that was really good. I gave Ensells away and just worked for them part time. That was when the Diamond Valley Council Office was in Main Street, the Engineers and Town Planning were in the old Methodist Church Hall which was freezing in the winter and stifling in the summer. If there was a breeding ground for mossies in Greensborough, it was that hall because, when it rained it seemed to come in under the door and wet all the carpet, the breeding ground was in the carpets.

Then they built the "Taj Mahal" up on the hill which Nillumbik now uses. I helped set out the roads there and saw the building of the place, and that was the best office I have ever worked in, the most comfortable office, so if Nillumbik don't think it's a good office, they should work in some of the offices I have worked in.



Nillumbik Shire Offices

The old Heidelberg offices are much like the ones up on the hill there.

Question from June - You have obviously been interested in the history of Greensborough for some time. Did you start researching when you first came here? Noel: My dad is responsible for my interest in history; he was interested in both history and religion, and was the only man I know who invited the Jehovah Witnesses in; I have to say half an hour later, they were anxious to get out.



Greensborough Cemetery

What happened when working up at the Diamond Valley Offices, I found the Greensborough Cemetery was in a bit of a state. Wally Butterworth was the only Trustee and he wasn't well, and hadn't been for quite some time, he had not done anything for a long time. There were originally three Trustees but the other two had died. The Health Commission was anxious that the Council take over the running of the cemetery, eventually they did but not for many years later.

In the mid-1970s, I got involved a bit and managed to get some money from Council to do a bit of work there, it was mainly done by APEX, the Bundoora Scouts and volunteers, we used to put it in the newspaper that there was going to be a working bee at the cemetery, and that was fantastic, you might have a dozen people up there, anymore and you would be in each other's way.

We laid crushed rock down for paths and managed to get some memorials tidied up and that sort of thing. As we know, these days it is all on the descendants to do the work. Eric Poulter is doing a fantastic job up there right now. I got to know the people within the cemetery, the pioneers, initially; we only had records up till 1933 and no plan at all.

I started measuring from the fence trying to find where the graves and monuments were, it was pretty hopeless to work out where anybody was, then in 1994 two exercise books, the old Koala exercise some of you will remember, were plonked on my desk, these records were from 1933 to 1963. Sent by someone, we don't know who. They had been sent to the Shire of Tallarook, fortunately, nobody threw them out, they were sent to the Health Commission and then to Diamond Valley, what was good is, from that, I was able to get a licensed surveyor to come out and we went out and did a proper survey and from that were able to place pretty well everybody that was up there.

As you all know, Val Wilson has done a tremendous amount of research (she is related to most of the people in the cemetery anyway). We keep finding additional people, mainly children, there are almost 360 people there. The earliest burials we know of were in 1861, including two children, Mary Lima aged 7 and one of George Chapman's children I think his name was Joseph, they were probably popped in graves with other people.

From that, I have been collecting information for the last 35 years or so. Every time I walk along the Plenty River, if you don't look behind you or block out the sound of barking dogs, you could be in the bush, one side of the river is pristine still, and the other side is totally developed, but wonderful history the more you look the more there is.

If you go into Trove, we are so lucky these days to have so much information, it is like Charles Buck, who I thought was a fine upstanding man, and I thought he would have been a member of Rotary or the Chamber of Commerce, that sort of thing, then we find out he was jailed for two years for embezzlement. It is wonderful to find that sort of thing, the life they must have led, Faye and Gary have some idea of what it must have been like to not have running water, electricity, a flush toilet and the night man used to come and that sort of thing, what it must have been like in the 1850s and 60s.

A photographic memory of Noel's activities as President of Greensborough Historical Society 2010-2022



1 First GHS Greensborough Walk 2010



2 Another walk and talk - this time at Greensborough Cemetery 2011



3 Banyule Grant ceremony 2010



4 Noel and Banyule Mayor Peter McKenna cut the ribbon to open the History Resource Centre at Glenauburn Road 2011



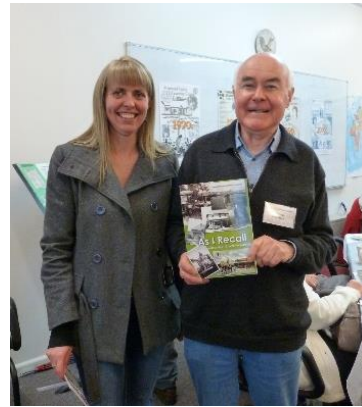
5 Noel and GHS members at the opening of History Resource Centre



6 Faye and Noel become GHS's first Life Members 2015



7 Noel accepts a PROV grant from Bruce Atkinson MP – and Treasurer John is definitely smiling.



8 Noel and our publisher, the late Blaise Van Hecke, at the launch of GHS's first book "As I Recall" 2014



9 A long held dream comes to fruition - Main Street Plaques installed. Noel with Chris Foster



10 A man enjoying his work - thanks for the past 12 years Noel

Upcoming activities

- **Saturday 29 October 2022** – Join us for our annual **Heritage Meeting** – this time a walk around the Poulter Precinct. Meet at the Poulter Reserve at 1.15pm. The walk is not rigorous, about 1 km, starting and ending at the Reserve. Followed by afternoon tea at the Poulter Reserve (we had hoped to invite you all to the refurbished Resource Centre, but completion is unlikely by this date).
- **Tuesday 8 November 2022** – Social morning tea/coffee at Greensborough Plaza. 10am, top floor near the previous Muffin Break outlet
- **Friday 25 November 2022** – our Christmas meeting with a photo show by Norm Colvin and our official vote of thanks to Noel. We hope you are able to join us for a celebration of Noel's work as President of Greensborough Historical Society. Venue: Greenhills Neighbourhood House at 1.15pm.
- **Tuesday 13 December** – our final Social morning tea/coffee for this year at Greensborough Plaza. 10am, top floor near the previous Muffin Break outlet

DATES FOR 2023 WILL BE ATTACHED TO THE DECEMBER 2022 NEWSLETTER

Committee 2022-2023

President	Norm Colvin 0409 815 246	Vice President	Sue Ballantyne 0402 289 982
Secretary	Peter Van Eeken pve101@yahoo.com.au	Treasurer	John Gibson 94350097

Committee Members: Sue Brenkovich, Dianne Fox, Noel Withers

Contact the Greensborough Historical Society

Web Site: www.greensboroughhistorical.org.au
Email: info@greensboroughhistorical.org.au

By Post: Greensborough Historical Society Inc.
4 Jenna Close, Greensborough 3088.

In Person: **Resource Centre**
34 Glenauburn Road (off Para Road), Lower Plenty
Open Thursdays from 10.00am to 3.00pm

Meeting dates and times for 2022

New members and visitors are most welcome to join us at our meetings.

In 2022 Committee meetings are held at 7.00pm on the third Wednesday of each month. In 2023, this time will change to 1.30pm on the third Tuesday of the month.

The Resource Centre will be open on selected weekends for research into your family or the local area.

Date	Day	Start Time	Meeting/Activity	Venue
11-10-22	Tuesday	10am	Morning Tea	See website for details
19-10-22	Wednesday	7pm	Committee Meeting	Banksia Club Lounge
29-10-22	Saturday	1:15pm	Heritage Day	Walk around Poulter Precinct followed by afternoon tea at the Poulter Reserve
08-11-22	Tuesday	10am	Morning Tea	See website for details
16-11-22	Wednesday	7pm	Committee Meeting	Banksia Club Lounge
25-11-22	Friday	1:15pm	Christmas Meeting	Greenhills Neighbourhood House
13-12-22	Tuesday	10am	Morning Tea	See website for details

Printing of this Newsletter supplied courtesy of Colin Brooks MP.