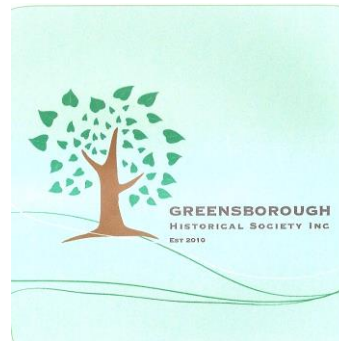


Greensborough Historical Society Inc.

Newsletter

Edition 42, June 2021

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



President's Report

Invariably when I take my camera to one of our meetings, I fail to take any photos, well this month when there was a good attendance, I did actually take some but of course everyone was wearing masks. However, in 50 or 100 years time people will come across the photos and say “why are they all wearing masks?” We aren’t back to normal as yet but it was so good to see familiar faces again, well part of them anyway and having Norm join us after a very difficult time over the past 6 months however he was his usual vocal and enthusiastic self, **but** he didn’t win the raffle which makes a change.

We recently lost Roland de Man who was an early member of our Society and as long time resident of Greensborough contributing to our collection of local history. Roland will be missed by all who knew him and our condolences go to his mother Truus and family.

As mentioned in my recent email Council is further investigating our application for funding to increase usable space at our History Resource Centre and I will let you know of the outcome as soon as I hear.

We have taken an interest in the Janefield, Blue Lake and Plenty Gorge area over recent years including a written submission by Anne Paul and Norm Colvin to Heritage Victoria and Parks Victoria regarding the historical importance of this region. The Society will be continuing to have input into the proposed Plenty River Trail where we particularly want the aqueduct bridge of around 1896 to be restored to accommodate a walkway linking both sides of the river.

It is always good to hear from our member in Latvia (just around the corner) who has contributed to this month’s newsletter, and who no doubt was saddened at the death of Prince Phillip especially not making his 100th year birthday when so close, enjoy Atis’s article.

Our resident photographer and regular Thursday attendee Marilyn Smith is currently unwell so we wish her a speedy recovery as we all miss her.

Best Wishes to you all and keep safe

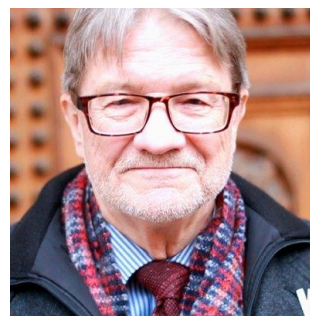
Noel

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.

Feature Article

[Editor's note: Atis Lejins is an honorary member of GHS and has contributed several stories to our Archives. Since 2011 he has been a member of the Latvian Saeima or parliament.

It is June in Melbourne and as we celebrate the Queen's Birthday public holiday, this story seems appropriate. Some of our readers may also have memories of the 1954 royal visit.]



Atis Lejins

Meeting the Queen

by **Atis Lejiņš**, Riga, January 2021

I have met Queen Elizabeth the Second twice. You could even say four times, because both times I met her twice. The first time was in Melbourne in 1954. The second time in Riga 2006.

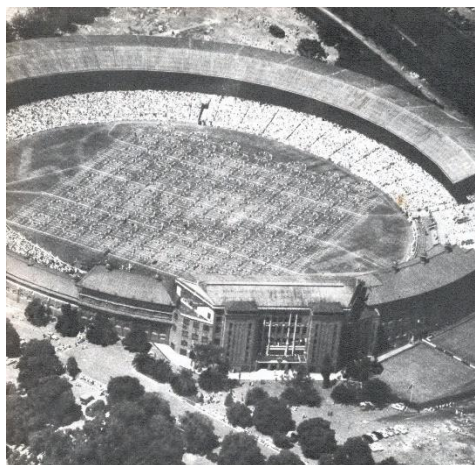
Melbourne

Queen Elizabeth came to Australia with her husband Prince Philip after her coronation in London. It was her duty as a Queen to see her subjects in all her dominions. The people of Australia received her with unparalleled joy and unity. For the first time in their history the reigning monarch had come for a visit!

I would say that the enthusiasm of the Australians can be likened to that of the Latvian peoples' outpouring of emotion during the Awakening leading to the regaining of independence in 1991.

I was twelve years old, when I met the beautiful and charming lady. To be sure from somewhat of a distance. I was attending primary school in the Melbourne suburb of Greensborough when we pupils were told that we were to be taken to the Melbourne Cricket Ground to greet her.

We were ecstatic!



Above, an air photo of the Melbourne Cricket Ground (March 4) when more than 100,000 people packed the stands and the centre of the oval for the magnificent children's display.

Figure 1 Aerial view of MCG 04/03/1954

We had seats in the stadium that was filled to capacity. But there were hundreds more on the arena itself where the royal couple circled, in an open top car.

They were both standing and the Queen was smiling and graciously waving her hand – we were screaming and jumping up and down *en masse* without stopping. Those kids down below on the grass held little flags in their hands and these were being shaken so frantically that the scene resembled small waves on the surface of a sea whipped by a storm.



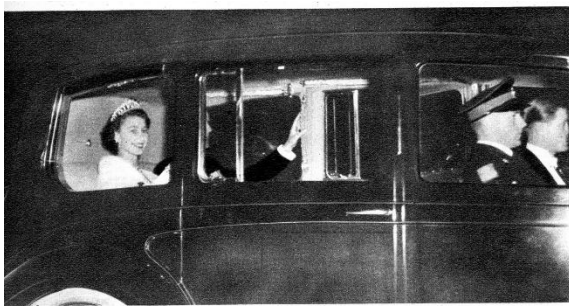
Figure 2 The Queen and Prince Philip at the MCG 1954

The second time our mother took us all three children to Melbourne in the evening. Scaffolding had been rigged on both sides of Swanston Street not far from Princes Bridge Station, where we had alighted with others from the packed train. The planks for seating were bolted down as in a stadium so that all could look down and see the street.



Figure 3 Scene outside Melbourne Town Hall, Royal visit 1954

It was already night when we heard the cheering in the distance. The decibel level was not much less than in the stadium. The two royals sat in a black limousine whose inside was brightly illuminated. The Queen sat on our side and her face could be clearly seen. She looked right at us and, smiling charmingly, waved her arm in a long white glove.



Above, eyes sparkling and jewels glistening, the Queen smiles happily from her lighted car as she and the Duke leave Government House, Melbourne, for the Royal Command performance at the Princess Theatre. So tightly packed was the crowd outside the theatre, the police allowed the children to pass through the barriers and sit near the carpet over which Her Majesty walked. Below, the audience rose as the Queen appeared in the Royal Box.

Figure 4 Royal visit, Melbourne 1954

My mother had nice memories of [pre-war] England. She had graduated from the Riga English Institute and, together with the other graduates, was given the opportunity to visit

London. Buckingham Palace, of course, was a must see. King George the Sixth lived there with his family and daughter Elizabeth. Mum wondered if the princess rode her bicycle along the corridors – they had to be long enough?

The war drums were still silent in Europe.

Riga

Our country was putting on a grand reception in honour of Queen Elizabeth in 2006. It was the first time in our history that a British monarch was visiting Latvia, and our sister Baltic republics Estonia and Lithuania to boot.



Figure 5 The Queen in Latvia 2006

As an NGO [non government organisation] representative I was also selected to attend and was put with my wife almost at the tail-end of the long reception line. When our turn came, I told the royal couple that I had already met them once. This seemed to wake them up.

Prince Philip exclaimed, “You have, where?”

“Australia!”

The Queen: “Oh – when?”

“Can’t quite remember, sometime in the early 1950s. It was on your coronation visit.”

But the next pair was already stepping on our heels and we had to move on.

In the evening the ambassador of Great Britain to Latvia His Excellency Ian Bond was giving a dinner at the *Mazā Ģilde*, the Small Guild with its elaborate woodwork and stained glass windows built in the 19th Century by the German artisans in Old Town Riga. I was invited



Figure 6 Maza Gilde, Riga, Latvia

because I had once been a subject of Her Majesty the Queen as an Australian citizen, but maybe also because I was the director of the Latvian Institute of International Affairs and had been active in the successful referendum on joining the European Union.

I was standing with my wife and the other guests at our table and were watching how the royals were being led by the ambassador from one table to the other introducing the guests.

When they approached us, the Prince caught my eye and said, "There you are! We remember! That was, of course, in 1954! We also visited New Zealand. Since then we have visited Australia on several occasions. That's why we were a little confused."

The Queen, smiling charmingly, offered her hand in a long, white glove.

[Photographs 1, 2 and 4 are from "The Royal Tour of Australia and New Zealand in pictures", published by the Herald and Weekly Times, 1954.]

Congratulations!

Jagajaga Community Volunteer Awards 2021

Presented by the Federal Member for Jagajaga, Kate Thwaites, we are delighted to announce that the following Greensborough Historical Society members were awarded a Jagajaga Community Volunteer Award for their contribution to local history:

- Norm Colvin
- Gary Partington
- Peter Van Eeken



L-R: Gary, Norm and Peter

Due to COVID restrictions, the Awards were made at the GHS June meeting.

Thanks to Rosie Bray for her ongoing enthusiasm for these awards and for publicising the work of the Society.

Further Congratulations

Congratulations to Dawn Bennetts whose article on "The Pictures in Greensborough" (GHS Newsletter #38, Part 1 (May) and Part 2 (June) 2020) is to be reprinted in the Cinema and Theatre Historical Society of Australia 's quarterly magazine *CinemaRecord*.

This is fitting recognition of Dawn's meticulous research into the history of the various picture theatres in Greensborough.

Coming Event – Book Launch

Greensborough Historical Society will launch its next book at the meeting to be held on **Friday 30th July 2021** at Greenhills Neighbourhood House.

Project leader and GHS Vice-President **Peter Van Eeken** has given us a sneak preview of the book and its contents:

The Society is pleased to announce the launch of a new book *'Early Days – Greensborough and St Helena'* in late July 2021.

The book will open the reader to the very earliest days and people who were behind the establishment of the Melbourne suburbs of Greensborough (to 1860) and St Helena (to circa 1900).

It captures what is known of the lives and activities of the very earliest residents of the area, revealing the successes and difficulties they faced.

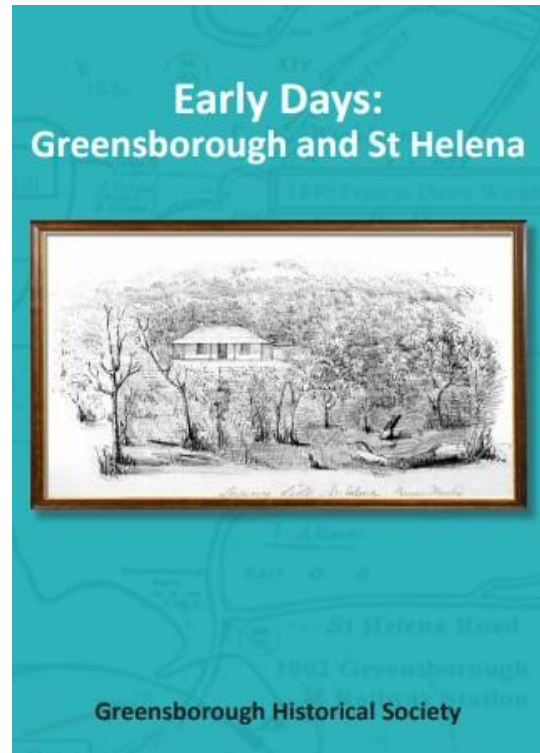
Henry Smyth was the original purchaser of Crown Portion 18 which Edward Green purchased from him to establish the early township of Greensborough.

Anthony Beale purchased his St Helena property in 1840. His neighbours included John Greaves and a number of immigrants from Germany, including Jacob Grietzner, Frederick Grutzner, Wilhelm Rouy and Johann Schuster.

To the north, Edward and Frederick Flintoff established their mark along the future Diamond Creek Road. The lives of their children and neighbours give light to how the early days of Greensborough evolved.

The book will be available from the Society, from late July, for \$25.

Members' price \$20.



Vale Roland de Man

Roland was born in Geelong in 1956; his parents had migrated from Holland after World War 2. In about 1959 the family moved from Geelong to Eltham and later to Greensborough, where they lived on the corner of Vermont Parade and Adeline Street opposite Deloraine Hospital. Roland's dad Martin worked in the elevator industry and later oversaw the building of the lifts in Greensborough Plaza in the 1970s. His mum Truus worked both at Deloraine and DVCH. The family had four sons, older brother Henry, then Roland and non-identical younger twin brothers Paul and Lex. All are well known in the district.



Truus with her sons, Henry, Roland, Lex and Paul in 2017

I met Roland in 1960 the first year that the Ester Street Kindergarten was opened. Roland and I were then in the same class at Greensborough State School from 1961 to 1967. Then we attended Watsonia High School where Roland matriculated in 1973.

He was good at accounting type work and eventually ended up working at the Ford Australia Head Office in Campbellfield where our paths crossed again in the late 1970s. Roland had married Nadine by then and had a daughter Candice. He was living in St Helena. Roland had a successful career at Ford Australia, and eventually applied for the Ford International team. He worked in China, Thailand and India on new plants. His specialty was the costing and accounting areas. He also did work in the United States and Europe and was also in Hong Kong when British rule ended.

While working in Chennai, India he met his second wife Rajani. They married in India and when he decided to retire early, returned to live in Diamond Creek where they purchased several blocks, built a home and developed a large garden.

In late 1991 he asked me to reference his joining Freemasonry, which I happily did. He became Master of Bendigo Re-Union Lodge in 2012. Roland's interests were many: after purchasing an old tractor, he joined the Ford Historical Vehicle Club and ended up as its Treasurer; he joined GHS in 2011 and served on Committee for a year; he bought a country block in Heathcote and set about renovating the shack on it. We had many adventures scouring Victorian clearing sales for building supplies.

Following his divorce, the Diamond Creek property was sold and he moved to Heathcote. Roland was first diagnosed with cancer in 2009; after a long period of treatment, he was declared well in 2018. Working alone as he rebuilt the Heathcote property, he injured himself a few times, resulting in the occasional hospital stay. He joined the Heathcote Lodge in 2015 and then the Heathcote Football/Netball Club which needed a new Treasurer.

In 2021 he was diagnosed with thyroid cancer and it was deemed inoperable. This disease claimed Roland at 5.00pm on Wednesday 16th June 2021 at the Heathcote Hospital. Roland directed that there be no funeral and that his ashes be spread over the Heathcote property.



Norm and Roland, GHS Trivia Night 2012

Norm Colvin
June 2021

[Editor's note: This tribute to Roland was edited from a longer article by GHS Secretary Norm Colvin. The original version is available at GHS]

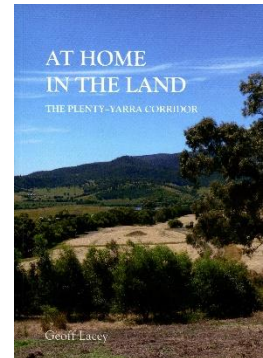
At Home in the Land: The Plenty –Yarra Corridor by Dr Geoff Lacey

Book review by Anne Paul, June 2021

Several years ago I had the pleasure of meeting Dr Geoff Lacey while attending a Friends of the Plenty River working bee at the River. Geoff lives in the region, teaches environmental engineering and is an honorary fellow at the University of Melbourne. He talked about his plans to write a book about the Plenty River and was keen to hear about our work and history. The Friends have been an active group for over 20 years, focused on weeding and revegetation along the Yallambie section of the Plenty River. From this my knowledge of the areas Indigenous and early-European history has grown, as it is so intertwined with the River.

Accordingly, it was great to see *At Home in the Land: The Plenty –Yarra Corridor* published and launched in 2021.

I found the book absorbing and a refreshing way of viewing our relationship with the environment. At the outset Geoff articulates that we are facing an environmental crisis with climate change, pollution and species extinction and that if we are to live sustainably, we need to know the landscapes and ecosystems – starting with our local places.



He takes the reader on a journey along the Plenty River and into the Yarra, providing an engaging narrative about the geological, ecological and historical features of the waterway we all know and care for. In this it was great to see his affirmation of the value of the work of Friends groups, organisations and individuals in their leadership in caring for our ecological corridors and ecosystems.

He discusses how these corridors and green spaces give meaning to our living in the land and the broad range of benefits including improved urban amenity, health and social cohesion.

Many older residents recall a healthy Plenty River, popular swimming pools in the River, fish and wildlife. During the Covid lockdowns the Plenty and Yarra River parklands were crowded, as vital oases to recreate and escape the confines of home. The recent fires in the Plenty Gorge Park were a stark reminder of our vulnerability, in the face of climate change.

The book offers hope, in that with these challenges more people are seeing the world differently and discovering the importance of localisation and engagement with nature, and that by exploring our relationship with the land, people will increasingly embark on sustainable and equitable lifestyles.

A copy of the book is available at the GHS Resource Centre. The book is on sale for \$24 at Readings Carlton. It is also available by post from the author for \$25, including postage (Phone: 9489 4784; Email: glacey@unimelb.edu.au)

If you have a story to publish, or an idea for an article, please contact the Editor, Sue Ballantyne sueballantyne2010@hotmail.com

Committee 2020-2021

President Noel Withers 94354513

Vice President Peter Van Eeken
pve101@yahoo.com.au

Secretary Norm Colvin 94352903

Treasurer John Gibson 94350097

Committee Members: Sue Brenkovich, Anne Paul, Dianne Fox, Sue Ballantyne, Chris Foster

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 2021

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

Committee meetings are generally held at 7.00pm on the third Wednesday of each month. Venue: Resource Centre.

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

Editor's note: Once again, COVID is causing havoc with our calendar, and government regulations may change at any time. Please check our website for late changes, and follow any current rules.

Date	Day	Start Time	Meeting
30/07/2021	Friday	1.15 pm	SGM – GHNH
08/08/2021	Sunday	1.00 pm	Open day HRC
10/08/2021	Tuesday	10.00 am	Morning Tea – See website for details
28/08/2021	Saturday	1.15 pm	Forum GHNH
24/09/2021	Friday	1.15 pm	AGM – GHNH
09/10/2021	Saturday	1.00 pm	Open day HRC
12/10/2021	Tuesday	10.00 am	Morning Tea – See website for details
30/10/2021	Saturday	1.15 pm	Heritage meeting TBA
26/11/2021	Friday	1.15 pm	SGM Christmas Meeting – GHNH
07/12/2021	Tuesday	10.00 am	Morning Tea – See website for details

Printing of this Newsletter supplied courtesy of Colin Brooks MP.