



ST. KILDA "TIMES"

St Kilda Historical Society Newsletter Issue No 217 December 2015 www.stkildahistory.org.au

WHAT'S NEW...

Campaigns: The Espy Hotel, 1997-2003

About 18 months ago, the St Kilda Historical Society secured a grant from PROV Local History Grants Program 2013-2014, to collect, index and digitise documents relating to the community's efforts to save the Espy Hotel (1997-2003), and to write a story about the campaign.

The project is a new direction for SKHS collection, which has largely focussed on the built environment. In the last few decades, several high profile campaigns have helped define St Kilda by protecting its history. Through the 1980s, 1990s and the 2000s, St Kilda residents took to the streets on several occasions, to preserve places dear to them. In the 1980s it was the Espy Hotel and the Mandalay. In the 1990s it was the Espy (again) and charming Acland Court. And in 2008, thousands marched to stop the Triangle development – a development that proposed to destroy Catani's grass slopes between The Esplanade and Lower Esplanade.

The first story in the "Campaigns" collection, the six-year battle to save the Espy, is being uploaded to the SKHS website. The document archive contains 761 items, including press clippings, TV and radio tapes, publicity documents, minutes of meetings, correspondence and submissions. The story runs across 15 Chapters.

Members can access the content now – just log in and look under Campaigns. It's a timely read, given the Espy Hotel



Photo: Fairfax Media

stands closed since May; its live music, so passionately fought for and enshrined in the Port Phillip Planning Scheme, silenced for the time being.

I invite you to have a browse and to share your thoughts with me, ahead of the public launch in March/April, 2016. It's still a work in progress, albeit 99% finished. I need

to finalise links to the digitized documents, edit and review the story, upload the last chapter, and add more images. Your comments would be greatly appreciated, especially typos! You can reach me by email: krystyna@stkildahistory.org.au. ■

Krystyna Kynst

Publications: *Whose Image: Global restructuring and community politics in the inner city*

Professor Kate Shaw's 1999 master thesis, *Whose Image*, captures St Kilda's changing cultural and social landscape through the 1980s and 1990s – a change she herself witnessed as a resident, a community-housing worker and an articulate activist. It includes an excellent analysis of the 1980s campaign to save the Espy and the start of the 1997 campaign to do the same. You can find it under Publications, in eBooks (free). ■



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St Kilda Historical Society (SKHS)
Established 1970
*PRESERVING THE PAST TO
ENRICH THE FUTURE*



SKHS thanks Port Phillip City for its ongoing support and assistance

Sacred Heart Church, St Kilda West

By Anna Griffiths, 2015

Sacred Heart Church sits high on the St Kilda Hill. Its tall renaissance brick and render campanile, topped with a copper dome and statue of the open-armed Sacred Heart of Jesus, has commanded the views from many approaches since 1922. Only very recently has a bulky apartment block presented clumsy and graceless competition.

The first Catholic church in a newly designated parish south of the Yarra was a small building of 1853, which also served as a school, in Dandenong Road, East St Kilda.

Because this location was considered open country, a second site was sought in the rapidly developing bayside area for a new

mission, or parish. Several were proposed and rejected, one by the railway station as too noisy, another on the low side of Punt Road, yet another on the corner of Robe Street and the Upper Esplanade. That this one was considered too low is an indication that the new diocese of Melbourne would not settle for less than one of the highest spots, perhaps with an eye to where other denominations were laying their foundation stones.

So the fledgling parish retreated to Dandenong Road where, under the leadership of Father Corbett, St Mary's church was commenced in 1858. The plan to establish a mission church in the heart of St Kilda was revisited with increasing urgency, pushed along by the energy of 1880s building boom and the enthusiasm of Archbishop of Melbourne, Dr Carr. A block of land in Grey Street was purchased in 1883 for nine hundred and seventy five pounds. Remarkably, building commenced the following year, and the church, though uncompleted, was dedicated in December 1884.

St Kilda pioneer priest Fr Corbett, by now Dr Corbett and Bishop of Sale, stated his belief that there was no church in the archdiocese with a more beautiful interior than Sacred Heart. Such rich, sensual emphasis augmented the ceremonies, choirs, eloquent sermons and pageantry with were favoured in the early decades of the church in Melbourne

The architects Reed, Henderson and Smart had designed a church which broke with the prevailing gothic revival style, in an Italian renaissance style which was clearly embraced by the Archbishop of Melbourne Dr Carr as symbolic of his rapidly growing flock. The Italianate style, it was argued by some churchmen, allowed for bigger congregations and better views of larger and more spectacular events.

It also justified classification by The National Trust of Victoria in 1994. Its citation reads:

"...a major church of 1884 which is of critical importance as the example in which Reed Henderson and Smart turned the Roman Catholics of Victoria



Sacred Heart figure in front of an arcade surmounted by a row of narrow arched openings. Photo: Anna Griffiths



Left: Christ entering Jerusalem on Palm Sunday: Figures arranged symmetrically within an elaborate arched gateway with heavily decorated bases and capitals. Photo: Anna Griffiths

away from the gothic revival style and towards renaissance and baroque designs carried out in red brick and cement dressings and is only a year or two later in date than the post-renaissance character of London, Paris and Dublin. A greater involvement rather than liturgical practices may also have called for the uncluttered space here provided by the large barrel vaulted nave and broad side arcading, consistent with the external style. The interior is decorated with a quantity of stencilled and painted decoration partly attributable to Ulysses Rizzi, the pioneer of the revival of classical decoration in Victorian churches”¹

In 1890 the church was finished minus the side aisles and with a low, square tower, then by 1922 and after a fire, which damaged the interior, the congregation’s size and affluence justified completing the aisles, dramatically raising the new campanile and elaborately decorating the interior. The designs were undertaken by architects Kempson and Conolly.

Although early parishioners included the wealthy, successful and socially prominent occupants of the handsome mansions and villas of St Kilda, the demography was mixed, as indicated by the small workers’ cottages in some of the nearby streets. Parish records of the time include storemen, domestic servants, and shop and hotel workers. St Kilda in the 1880s had the highest proportion of women to men in the state. One early record of 1889 showed that a local woman sponsored the baptism of a foundling child left at a doorstep in the parish; another baby’s parents were “unknown.”

Remarkable features of the church, which would have surprised those accustomed to the gothic revival style, include the light and airy interior; the barrel vaulted, light-

reflecting ceiling; the horizontal banding of brick and cement on the exterior and painted cornices and details on the interior walls; the light-hearted delicate wall stencilling, (which, though done in the 1940’s is thought to incorporate some of the 1901 scheme by G. and W. Dean); a handsome domed tower instead of a spire, decorative circles and round arches replacing points and finials.

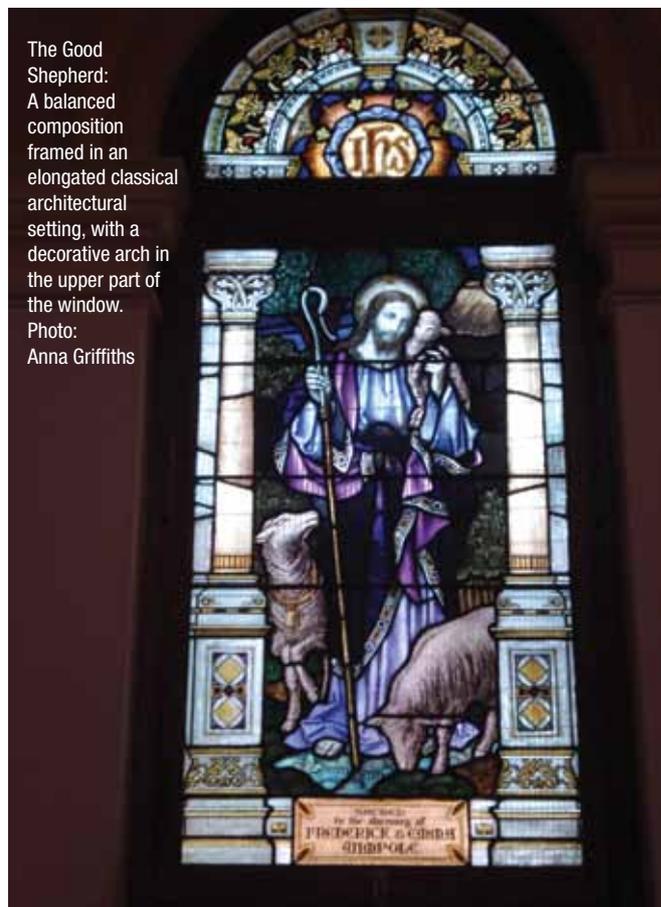
Gifts to the church included the fine Romanesque revival Carrara marble high altar, the 240-kilogram bell made in Dublin and the 11-stop 1910 organ made by George Fincham and Sons.

During renovations in 1991, the east-facing rose window was re-discovered, walled in to protect it from possible bomb damage during World War II – a treasure hidden and forgotten for nearly fifty years.

The accompanying illustrations show how the renaissance theme was carried through into the fine stained glass windows. ■

References:

Maloney, D. 1987. *From Mission to Mission, The History of the Sacred Heart Parish, West St Kilda, 1887 - 1987*, T & V James Offset Printing, Vic.
 Bomford, M.J. 2003. *The Spirit of Worship: Places of Worship in St Kilda, Balaclava, Vic*, The Kilda Historical Society Inc.
 Ebsworth, Rev Walter, Pioneer Catholic Victoria.
 Bomford M.J. 2003



The Good Shepherd: A balanced composition framed in an elongated classical architectural setting, with a decorative arch in the upper part of the window. Photo: Anna Griffiths

The sun sets on Brooke's Jetty c1911 - 2015



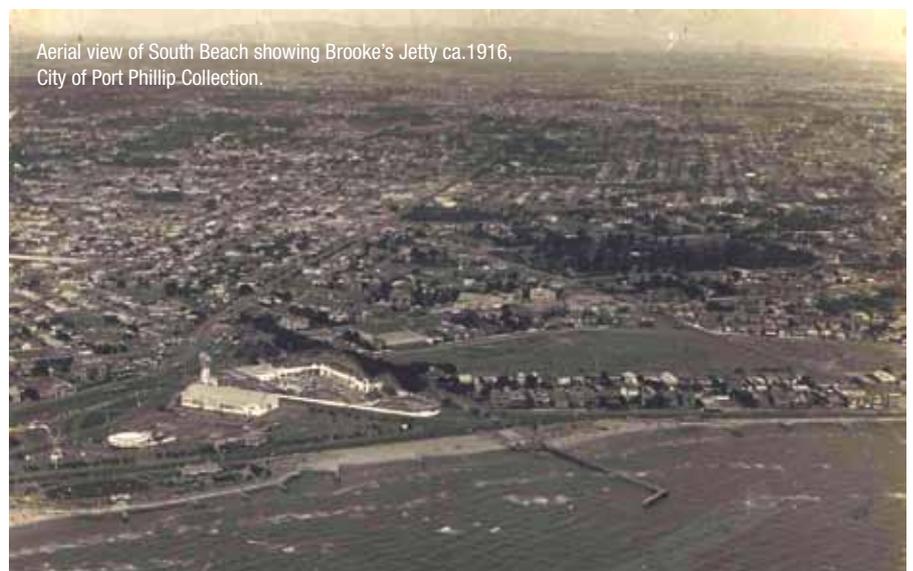
Sunset overlooking Brookes
Jetty from St Kilda beach –
Photo by Peter Johnson

The demolition of Brooke's Jetty started on Monday, 12 October 2015, without warning – except for a small A4 sign pinned to hastily erected fence. Despite the community mobilising quickly to halt the destructive works, Parks Victoria (under police guard), continued as planned until all the timber posts had been removed. On Friday morning, 30 October 2015, Parks Victoria removed the last timbers of Brookes Jetty, leaving only the concrete drain, jutting into the sea.

The 70-metre-long, L-shaped timber jetty, was built at end of the Shakespeare Grove main drain around 1911, and extended in 1913 from funds raised by the St Kilda Dinghy club. Until then, the drain, initially timber and later replaced with concrete, had served as a quasi pier.

The Argus, reported the jetty extension on 10 February 1913: *“As a result of a second successful entertainment in aid of the fund to extend the dinghy pier at St Kilda, the local dinghy club now has £50 in hand. It is intended to ask the Government to supplement this with another £100, and to approach the St Kilda council and foreshore trust for contributions. The idea is to extend the pier 30 feet, and to whale the southern side of it, and half deck it, so that it may be used both as a promenade and breakwater.”*

The jetty seems to have been known by two names, *Dinghy Pier* and



Aerial view of South Beach showing Brooke's Jetty ca.1916,
City of Port Phillip Collection.

Brooke's Pier, the latter, no doubt, referencing the Brooke family who built the nearby boathouse. Frederick Brooke had been granted a permit from the council, in June 1884, to build a boathouse shelter. The architect was Arthur Lewis (c.1842-1890) of High Street St Kilda. In December of the same year, just three months after the boathouse was completed, two fishermen drowned in Hobson's Bay during a heavy storm, one of whom was Frederick. His death was recorded on the 10th December 1884 and the boathouse was listed amongst his assets as worth £100. He left a wife, Alice and six young children.

Brooke's Jetty was severely damaged by a storm, in June 2014, losing part of its structure to wild seas. It had been partially closed and, according

to Parks Victoria, *“engineering reports had deemed the structure unsafe for public use.”* Parks Victoria, who looks after the Foreshore, has no plans to rebuild the structure. The jetty had been off-limits to boats since 2010, following the creation of a no boating zone on St Kilda beach to protect swimmers. And, it claimed, the jetty posed a danger to people diving off the end into relatively shallow waters, quoting past injuries and deaths.

The campaign to rebuild the jetty continues on the Facebook group *Bring Back Brookes Jetty*.

Media Reports

Planned demolition of Brooks (sic) Jetty saddens St Kilda locals, *The Age*, 14 October 2015

Heritage architect, Mr Brand said the jetty had formed an integral part of

the St Kilda beach promenade. "It's a very beautiful and charming mini-pier. It's narrow and it's sweet and it's a beautiful experience just walking on it."

Rob Lechmere is a descendant of the family that had built the existing pier (itself a replacement for an earlier structure on the site). He said it would be a sad result if it was demolished this week. "It should stay," Mr Lechmere said. "It's not the original pier, so it has been rebuilt before."

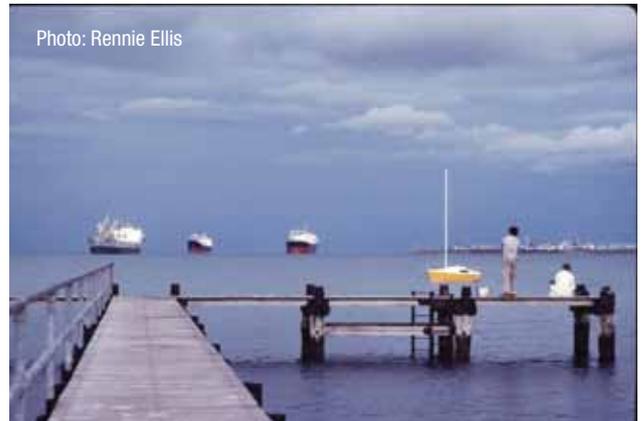
Demolition of Brooks (sic) Jetty at St Kilda Beach sparks ire, *Herald Sun* 27 October 2015

A crowd of 50-60 people met at the jetty last week to protest the

removal, said local playwright and historian Bill Garner. He said people were "ready to get into the water" to take direct action if the work continued.

Mr Garner said a *Save Brooks Jetty* Facebook page was active and there was an email campaign directed at the State Government and City of Port Phillip councillors, who had not acted in defence of the jetty.

Former Port Phillip mayor Dick Gross said he was ropeable over the loss of the jetty and dredging around it could have helped reduce the risks



of injury. "It should be saved and it should be made safe," he said.

St Kilda Lifesaving Club backed the demolition based on the risk posed by the wooden jetty, which has seen one fatality and other serious injuries from people diving into shallow water. ■

St Kilda Racecourse

By Jenny Delaforce

Flemington Racecourse and the Melbourne Cup are widely known throughout Australia.

However, few people realise that St Kilda also had its own racecourse, and from 1847–1868 thousands of racegoers would traverse the boggy swampland to see their favourite race in the annual St Kilda Cup.

The course was situated at the southern end of Peanut Farm near Blessington Street offering the opportunity to combine a day at the races with a picnic at the beach. The nearby Village Belle Hotel was closely associated with the racecourse and the Village Belle Races were held there from the 1860s. The sale of alcoholic drinks was allowed at the St Kilda Racecourse from 1849, between ten o'clock in the morning and half past six in the evening. However, by 1852 due to bad behaviour (one fight involving over fifty horsemen clashing with mounted policemen and 'the barbarous practice' of people attempting to gallop alongside the horses as they raced, obscuring the view of spectators) the decision was made to ban alcohol and an 'abundance' of water was provided instead, at one penny the glass or one shilling the bucket. ■



What's On...

Community Christmas Tree Festival

3-6 December, Holy Trinity Church, Balaclava (cnr Chapel St and Brighton Rd)

This year the Society will have a Christmas tree at Holy Trinity Church, alongside the many local schools, churches and businesses, which take part with varied trees and innovative decorations. It's a delightful sight. Come along. The trees are open for viewing on: Thursday 3 December 10am – 4pm; Friday 4 December 10am – 8pm; Saturday 5 December 10am – 4pm; Sunday 6 December 12noon – 4pm. A gold coin donation is appreciated.

WALK: St Kilda Hill

Friday 12 February 2016, 5:00pm

Our first event of 2016 is a walk around St Kilda Hill with Phillip Stewart, Society committee member. Phillip will identify many of the architectural characteristics of houses dating from 1843 to 1860. It is reassuring that quite a large number, most of which are terraced, still exist – although some have been, and continue to be, modified to varying degrees. The walk is restricted to 25 people so please book early at: secretary@stkildahistory.org.au or telephone 0405 510 799. ■

Entry to all SKHS events is free to financial members and visitors are most welcome (\$5 donation to SKHS) or join SKHS at door \$20 per year. To book please email: info@stkildahistory.org.au

Tilman Gloystein 1816-1894

By Patricia Convery

Although largely unknown, it is thanks to Tilman Gloystein that residents and visitors alike enjoy the broad paths and beautiful central planting of the St Kilda Botanical Gardens.

Tilman Gloystein, (born in Bremen, December 3rd, 1816,) left Germany, where he had qualified as an architect, for Australia, arriving in Adelaide on 31st January 1850. In 1856 Gloystein moved to Melbourne.

St Kilda Botanical Gardens Design Competition

The St Kilda Council meeting of September 28th 1859, affirmed "... the desirability of the reserve, bounded by Tennyson, Blessington and Dickens Streets, being granted by the Government for the purposes of a botanical gardens..." The Council "decided... to offer a premium of Ten Pounds for the best plan for the laying out of the gardens."

Tilman Gloystein entered the competition and won, against ten other entrants.

Gloystein expressed his thanks, then sent another letter, whereby:

"I agree herewith to lay out the botanical gardens St. Kilda according to the plan prepared by me ...for the sum of twenty pounds British Sterling.

The Municipal Council will be so good to provide for me the necessary tools, pegs as required, and to engage a man fit to assist me at the work."

With the work completed, *The Herald* newspaper considered that "... Mr Gloystein has made the most of the material to his hand, and wisely discarding merely formal geometric lines, has produced a most elaborate and tasteful design, presenting indubitable evidence of an intimate and correct acquaintance with the true principles of landscape gardening..."

The Argus newspaper reported: "Mr Goldstein's [sic] design, although

somewhat elaborate, is not marked by the formality that so frequently characterizes plans of a similar kind, and, whilst avoiding the mistake of dividing the ground into small plots, for plants, &c., lays out ample space both for promenade and riding or driving, interspersed by numerous shrubberies. The only approach to formality is immediately in the centre of the gardens, where he proposes to place a pavilion for a band and which is surrounded by circular walks and beds. Mr Goldstein[sic] has adorned the place by a couple of fountains, and has selected spots for the erection of hot-houses, a lodge, a superintendent's residence and other buildings, which it will probably be too costly to carry out at present."

Court Appearances

However Gloystein's triumph was rather marred by his court appearances: "... Tillman Gloystein ... was again charged with habitual intoxication... The bench cautioned and discharged him."

In September 1860, portrayed as an "incorrigible vagrant and drunkard", Gloystein was sentenced to three months imprisonment.

In 1864, "... Gloystein, described as an architect, was charged with having been found begging in the streets. On promising not so to offend again, he was discharged."

Tilman applied for space at the Melbourne-held 1866 Inter-colonial Exhibition, there displaying his architectural drawings. Whatever success this garnered him is unknown.

Later that year, at the St Kilda Police Court, Tilman was charged with lunacy, but "the magistrate did not think the facts alleged sufficient to warrant his detention and he was discharged."

The next year, "... accused of insulting behaviour, he was discharged with a caution." Another charge of habitual drunkenness resulted in two months goal.

By the 1870s he was residing at 18 Clarendon St Emerald Hill.

In 1874 "... Tilman Gloystein,... was charged with having no lawful visible means of support." [He was] "found ... sleeping on a door-step in High-street; he had apparently no place to go to... the prisoner, who is evidently a well-educated man, said he had been working on some very superior drawings for Mr Browne, architect and in consequence of not being paid the balance due... was in financial difficulties ... He was very unfortunate in not being able to find employment. The bench sentenced him to one week's imprisonment, without hard labour, for which they were thanked by the prisoner."

Throughout his working life Tilman had a number of court cases in which he sought payment for work undertaken.

In November 1877, Tilman, aged 61, was admitted to the Kew Asylum for mental disorder. Transferred to the Sunbury Asylum in 1878, Tilman, aged 77, died of here of "uremic poisoning ...of a syphilitic origin." and was buried, on the 24th January 1894, in an unmarked grave in the Church of England Section of the Sunbury Cemetery.

Two initiatives of The Friends Of The St Kilda Botanical Gardens have deservedly rescued Tilman from obscurity. The Friends unveiled a headstone on his grave on 22 January 2014, the 120th anniversary of his death. In 2015 a plaque was placed in the centre of the St Kilda Botanical Gardens. Both commemorate him as the designer of the Gardens. And his legacy to St Kilda is still extant in the central core of the Gardens, the north-south axis, leading to the formal central garden beds, the hub of the Gardens. ■