

ANNUAL REPORT 2015
Mornington Peninsula Branch

I thought as this is my last report as President it would be good to recap on the last six years and what the branch has achieved in that time. When reviewing the last five annual reports for direction I was quite taken aback on just how much our small committee of nine has managed.

Our activities for Members number well over twenty individual events covering a multitude of topics: Architectural guide to restoration of **St John's Sorrento**, day trip to **Mooramong** homestead in Skipton, Liz Rushen – Free **Immigrant Women in the Colony**, Dr Ray Holmes – **Search for Burke & Wills' navigation equipment**, Open day at Michael **a'Beckett's garden**, Penny Carnaby's **Journey across the Sahara**, Ken Piesse, sporting writer with **memorable cricket stories**, Peter Greer's **Identification of British Silver Hallmarks**, Dr Bronwyn Hughes – **The Governor's Window** (La Trobe window in Switzerland) Fran Henke, former Peninsula journalist **Conversation with Fran**, Des Young – **Mapping Australia**, **The Magic Lantern show** at Coolart, Dr Bronwyn Hughes' guided tour of **Frankston's stained glass church windows**, Three separate journeys to **South Channel Fort**, Jill Phillips – **History of Red Hill**, DVD presentation of **Postcards from the Peninsula**. The branch also conducted workshops titled **Restoration of Monuments and Plaques** and Evan Thomas from Perth demonstrating the use of **Beckett's Wax**. David Harrison's talk **Anzac the necessary myth**, and Peter Holloway's talk **WWI and its effect on a Peninsula Village**. The Branch was also represented in the Balcombe Group assisting Winty Calder, well respected Peninsula environmentalist in producing a book titled **A journey along Balcombe Creek**, which was launched on 29 June by Dr Ursula de Jong. Not forgetting today's event, preceding the AGM – Napoleon's Picnic Platter with Anne Whitehead's book **The Emperor & Betsy** – relating to Betsy Balcombe who was on St Helena during Napoleon's tenancy there.

In addition to these events the Mornington Peninsula Heritage Awards – a partnership between the branch the Shire, have been introduced and run successfully for five years alongside the National Trust Heritage Festival. Sixty five awards have been presented in the categories of Restoration of a Heritage Place, Environmental Conservation, Creative Reuse of Heritage Places, Heritage Interpretive Signage and Professional & Trade Heritage Skills.

Successful classification nominations: Rosebud Sound Shell (also State listed), Greens Bush Road, Five Art Deco houses atop Arthurs Seat, Oak Tree in Flinders, Angophora Costata in Rosebud and Brachychiton populneus (Kurrajong) in Merricks. Current nomination under review – five commemorative cairns on Arthurs Seat Road.

Several submissions, often supporting the Council and the Trust, have included Pt Nepean, Police Point Shire Park, Demolition by Neglect paper, Heritage Act review, Mt Eliza Woodlands, on two separate occasions spanning five years. No 2 Erlandsen Street Sorrento (oldest extant building in area) for boundary protection, as well as supporting the Trust's objection to the Windsor Hotel extension, working with Parks Vic to retrieve artefacts resulting in the demolition of the Arthurs Seat Tower and attaining Heritage Overlay for former St Macartans School in Mornington.

Individual committee members have participated in heritage related workshops covering the topics of Significance, Oral History, Protecting Cultural Landscapes, Plan Melbourne, Environmental Heritage & History Studies and Deakin University's Sorrento v Queenscliff study titled 'Why is it so', Sorrento Commercial Precinct heritage guidelines. These workshops have increased our knowledge in a broad sense and are useful heritage advocacy tools.

In 2010 we commenced inspections for planning applications on significant landscape overlays within the Shire. That year we completed twelve inspections and reports. Since then we have completed 127 inspection reports and our (National Trust) views have been instrumental in bringing about good outcomes in several applications by working within the framework of heritage guidelines with the strategic planners.

Two Shire Heritage Reviews – Area 1 represented by Mt Eliza, Mornington & Mt Martha and Area 2 Safety Beach to Rye, currently reaching conclusion, have been conducted under the auspices of the

Heritage Planner, Dale Kelly and assisted by the branch. These reviews take an enormous amount of personal time and I especially thank Peter Holloway for his involvement in these reviews.

I have seen the Endeavour Fern Gully slopes go from bare paddocks to woodland in the time I have been in the Chair. The extraordinary work under the guidance of committee member Gillian Tolley cannot be explained in simple terms. Her determination and environmental knowledge have combined to fulfil a vision and her ability to attract such willing volunteers with the Franklyn Scholar team from Frankston and the Green Army together with the regular band of local volunteers is quite astounding and their achievements are admirable. The Hon Greg Hunt recently included a stop off at the gully while 'walking for autism'.

Our conservation team started off after we raised the money necessary to have the Minnie a'Beckett hand painted doors in the Edwardian Room professionally cleaned. I must acknowledge the generous donation by Mrs Sue a'Beckett in assisting our fund raising efforts for this project which cost \$4,500.00. It certainly meant we didn't have to do any more Bunnings Sausage Sizzles, for which the committee was extremely grateful. We have continued on with our conservation workshops, on a monthly basis, addressing conservation of furniture and artefacts in the Briars Homestead and at Mulberry Hill and to date have recorded 1,254 hours. We are also grateful for the additional help of some of the Briars' guides Ilma Hackett, Shirley Murley, Val White, Jacqui Woodward who join our regular team of Peter Greer, Victor Sullivan, Elizabeth Saunders, Carol Anderson and Penny Carnaby. We refer to these days as our 'fun' days.

The highlight of this year for me was the Branch's 30th Anniversary held at the splendid NT associated property *Beleura* in Mornington. The branch is indebted to director Anthony Knight OAM for so generously and lavishly hosting the event. It was a wonderful opportunity to invite those in the community who have supported our branch, representatives from head office and also to invite Professor Simon Molesworth AO to propose the official toast. Professor Molesworth launched the branch at the Briars on 16 June 1985.

Recapping on our activities it occurred to me that in all the different aspects of heritage that the branch either advocates or exercises it comes in contact with some very special people. Working with the Heritage Awards it is a real joy to work with the Strategic Heritage Planning Team at the Shire: Rosalyn Franklin, Helen Bishop, Liam Renaut and Nicholas Robinson, in tandem at times with Allan Cowley and Frank Mangan. We have worked with former Heritage Planner Simon Lloyd and now with current Heritage Planner, Dale Kelly. Lorraine Huddle, Heritage Adviser to the Shire is a tower of strength and always so willing to impart her extensive heritage knowledge and expertise. The Councillors are also to be acknowledged, although often we are not all on the 'same side of the fence' when it comes to heritage matters I do appreciate the respect that is always shown towards the National Trust and its mission. Working with the team at The Briars is always a pleasure and the committee has also had the opportunity to meet with the new Shire CEO, Carl Cowie and appreciated his frankness and willingness to listen the Branch's views on Peninsula Heritage. Likewise the assistance and warm relationship that exists with our head office from the Chairman of the Board Dr Graeme Blackman OAM, CEO Martin Purslow, Conservation Manager Paul Roser, Community Advocate Felicity Watson, Senior Environmental Heritage Advocate, Anna Foley, Heritage Festival Programmer Rosalind Mearns, together with Regional Property Manager Cara-Ann Simpson, is deeply valued.

My own team of course played a critical role in the success that I have outlined and only with such willing cooperation and wonderful team spirit am I able to deliver such a dynamic report covering my six year Chairmanship. Whilst I am looking forward to a slightly less hectic lifestyle I leave the Chair confident that the team will continue to support my replacement, Peter Holloway, who comes with highly credible experience. And so I thank my committee, Penny Carnaby (Membership) Peter Greer (Treasurer) Adrienne Herring (Secretary) Peter Holloway, Elizabeth Saunders, Victor Sullivan (Secretary), Adrienne Smith (Environmental Classification) Gillian Tolley (Endeavour Fern Gully), co-opted members Val White and Carol Anderson, Newsletter Editor, Noel Tolley and the Conservation Team, for their splendid contribution to the Branch and its successful place in all things heritage on the Mornington Peninsula.

I do hope that the Peninsula Trust Members appreciate the enormous input the branch makes on their behalf in carrying out the mission of the National Trust – to conserve today what we want to remain for our children tomorrow and respect for those who have gone before us, for their great foresight.

Judy Walsh

President 18/10/2015