

**The Melbourne Historical Research Group anticipates a lively weekend when its annual exhibition takes place in the Bill Shone Leisure Centre, High Street on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> July. Opening hours will be between 11am and 4.30pm both days, admission is free and all are warmly invited to come along. There will be plenty of new material to see, as this year's event features both a book launch and a film show as well as display and browsing material.**

The book "Condemned: A History of the Melbourne Clearance Areas" has been in the pipeline for several years and tells the story of the parts of Melbourne flattened for redevelopment between the 1950s and 1970s. At the time, Melbourne was widely considered to be dull, dowdy, and in need of a makeover: "we cannot be blind to the reality of its shapeless unattractiveness and apparent lack of character", said a 1960s local newspaper. Against this background, the public reaction to the dramatic changes was no more impassioned than a stoic resignation. Almost 160 houses were reduced to rubble and others were "blighted".

But the book is not just about buildings, and takes a variety of related topics into its scope. In its pages the reader will encounter stories of quarrying in Melbourne, the extravagances of the Earl of Moira, the early life of Thomas Cook, the Melbourne "Empire Cinema", the hanging of Earl Ferrers, the Melbourne wife murder of 1885 and the rumbustious row over the site of Melbourne's new secondary school in the 1890s. The books will be available to purchase over the weekend.

The film show consists of films made by the late Hugh F. Andrews, son of a Melbourne boot and shoe manufacturer. Hugh was a prominent member of the Photographic Society and his films span forty years from the late 1930s to the late 1970s. They include the Queen's Coronation and Silver Jubilee, the area now flooded by the Staunton Harold Reservoir, and events in the Melbourne year such as the Carnival and the Wakes. Hugh showed these films to various local organisations, in return for charitable donations.

Upon his death, the collection was split up. Some of the films are now in the hands of Richard Heath, and some in the hands of Henry Dunningcliff. The films have lain unseen for decades and were in danger of deterioration, so it was agreed that the Research Group could have their contents transferred to DVD. The transfer has the dual benefits of preserving the film contents and enabling them to be seen by a new generation. A successful bid was made to the National Lottery's "Awards for All" programme for the costs of the film transfer.



Come along and see who's on screen. To use the Lottery's phrase, it could be you!

Philip Heath

*(Left: Hugh Andrews)*