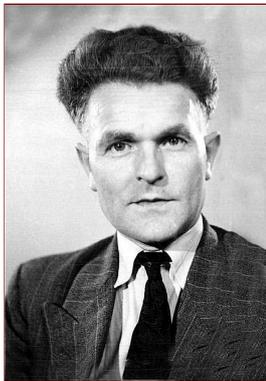


## ALIE MISSEN: OFFICE STAFF 1970-1971, LOCAL HISTORIAN



Alie Missen was born in 1936 in The Netherlands as Aaltje de Vries - her parents were Jan and Tjitske de Vries. Alie was aged sixteen when the family emigrated, so she had attained the school leaving age of the time and did not have to enrol for further education. The family had been learning English prior to migration which would have aided their early settlement.

Jan (John) de Vries was born in 1913 in The Netherlands and was the youngest of nine children. Jan's mother had a grocery store which she ran with the assistance of her children; the father was seldom home, he was a property assessor and they lived in the dwelling on top of the shop premises. After leaving school Jan began to work in a flour mill, a trade he followed throughout his working life. He was a volunteer organizer of youth groups and used to encourage the young people to come to him or his wife if they were in need of assistance. He was a friendly person, a good orator, and able to assess other people's needs.



Jan had completed a course at the Groningen University in Agricultural Science, had a Commercial Business Diploma, and was experienced in cereal, oat, flour milling, and dry pet food manufacturing. He was a plant manager in the Nederland Graanproduction N.V. at Rotterdam (a subsidiary of Quaker Oats Ltd.) and had been a police constable, had been an employee of Koopmans Factories at Leeuwarden. His activities and interests were listed as a committee member of a youth club, a long distance walking club, music, reading, fives-ball, sailing, fishing, swimming and mention was made that he had been a resistance fighter during World War Two, where he assisted with the provision of food, visas, ausweissen, travel opportunities from Holland to England.

However, it appears that he was over-skilled for Australia's preferences as they were prioritising labourers and factory workers. Consequently, Jan's final 'unskilled' application stated that he was a factory worker in a flourmill, loved playing cards and was interested in youth work.



Jan de Vries married Tjitske (Kitty) Landstra who was also born in 1913. They did not marry until they were 21 years old which was the age they could get married with their parents' consent. Without their parents' consent they would have had to wait until they reached the age of twenty-five. Jan and Kitty married in 1935 at the local Town Hall and, as was the custom, sought the church's blessing after the formalities at the Town Hall had been fulfilled. In time they became the parents of four children, Aaltje (Alie), Jan (John), Albert (who died at a very young age) and another Albert.

In 1952 Jan and his family migrated to Australia and it was on the 3rd September when they said goodbye to The Netherlands, their family members and friends. It had taken two years of the filling in of forms, physical examinations, listening to advice, loads of correspondence, brushing up on the English language and not least of all with very many tears, the family embarked on the S.S. Fairsea at the Dutch-America Line Quay in Rotterdam. Their initial settlement in Victoria was at the Bonegilla Migrant Centre.

After looking for work in Sydney and Adelaide, Jan finally secured a job with the John Darling & Son flourmill in Sunshine. They found accommodation at Lot 62 Adelaide Street, St Albans, opposite the old house that was the first primary school in the 1890s. They later built their new home in East Esplanade, across the railway line from the second primary school that was built in

1901. The de Vries family established a local Dutch Social Club with gatherings held with stage plays, singing groups, a soccer Club, a billiard club. Gatherings were held in houses, garages, the Mechanics Institute hall, and the Anglican Church.



De Vries family in Adelaide Street 1950s.

Alie would later write about their first impressions:

"When we arrived at the St. Albans Railway Station the family looked around quite eagerly. It was at this time we experienced a huge culture shock - this was supposed to be the destination after so much travel - the comparison between the harbour City of Rotterdam and the quiet isolated country-life setting of St. Albans was vast.

"Apart from the small railway station, a few weatherboard houses were visible, as was a triangular-shaped barber shop on the corner of West Esplanade and Main Road West and a bank building was spotted a few yards down the unmade road. Whilst we were walking to Adelaide Street we passed a couple of shops; one had a dwelling house on the side. There were some trees; one was a palm tree with lots of little birds in them, tall yellow grasses, green thistles, soil and more soil. After settling in, the young people of the family went exploring the next few days. We discovered two churches, one paddock named a reserve, a few railway houses, a shed named a fire station, another shed named a police station, and a weatherboard hall named a mechanics' institute. The peace was ear shattering."

Alie was an eager starter in her new life. In 1953 she was a debutante at the first annual ball of Sunshine Community Hospital, accompanied by Doug McLachlan. She was also joined the beauty parade as part of St Albans Community Youth Club's carnival, and her photo appeared in the paper. There was another photo of her receiving an award from Councillor Bert Moffat of Sunshine Council, with Alie in formal dress, white gloves and sash.

She must have had a connection with the H V McKay factory in Sunshine as there was a photo of her published in 1954 admiring the craftwork of a retired employee. Alie recalls: "It was taken when an exhibition was held by H.V. McKay. Sir Robert Menzies gave a speech standing on the back of a truck with H.V. McKay and the rest of the male members of the company near him. Menzies was a good speaker, with funny anecdotes."



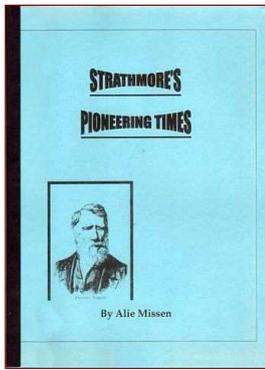
Alie Missen (left) at party with Kon Haumann and friends 1950s.



Alie de Vries married Kevin Lindsay Missen in 1960. The Missen brothers were Colin, Mervyn, and Kevin, who moved with their parents from Rockbank to St Albans in the early 1940s. Their parents were Roy Missen and Jean McRae. They lived on the Macrae family farm named 'Lynalban', on St Albans Road (now renamed Green Gully Road). Jean's parents were Farquhar Macrae and Annie Ritchie who were St Albans pioneers from the early 1900s. Another close relative was Mrs Catherine Gibson who was a sister of Farquhar McRae and lived near the St Albans Mechanics Institute Hall in East Esplanade. Kevin Missen would be remembered by many people as the manager of the liquor section of the former Self Brothers and Goddard supermarket in East Esplanade.

Alie Missen has been researching local history in the public domain over the last four decades.

She has been active with the St Albans Historical Society and the Sydenham Historical Society, with whom she collaborated to research the book "Sydenham Memorial Moments." Her other community activities included contributing to the Friends of Horsehoe Bend Farm, the Keilor Plains Heritage Family Genealogical Group, the West

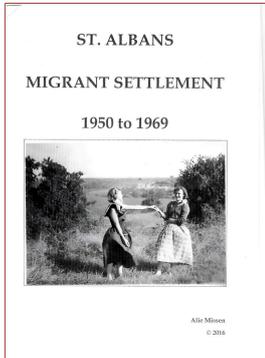


Bourke Heritage Association, and she was thinking of joining the Sunshine Historical Society.

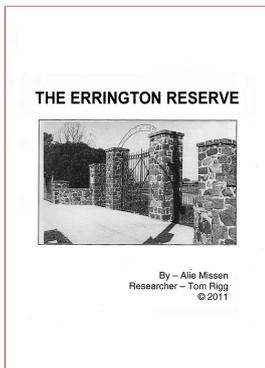
Several of her books have been published, while shorter manuscripts have circulated locally amongst local history buffs. She became interested in history during the 1980s when some district history groups were formed. Initially, she joined as an observer and then she started writing, becoming active with the St Albans and Sydenham historical societies.

Her other community work included membership of Friends of Horseshoe Bend Farm, the Keilor Plains Heritage Family Genealogical Group, and the West Bourke Heritage Association. In recent years she has been active with Brimbank Council networks.

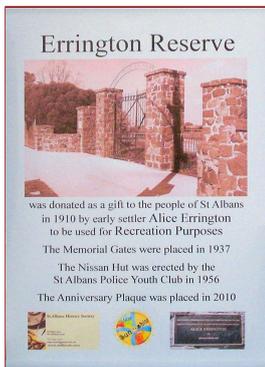
Alie has written articles about her family and some other local residents that have been included in local history collections. Her works include:



- **St Albans: The Way It Was And The Way We Were 1939-1950.** Transcript of a talk by Colin Missen to the St Albans Historical Society. Manuscript, 6 pages, 2005.



- **Places Of Historic Interest In And Around the St Albans Area.** A manuscript which identifies 19 local sites and encourages readers to "Drive Walk Ride your Bike and see these Places". Manuscript, 5 pages 2010.



- **Kealba: Just A Little History.** Manuscript prepared for talk to students about the history of Kealba. Good background to the area and interesting characters. Manuscript, 13 pages, 2009.



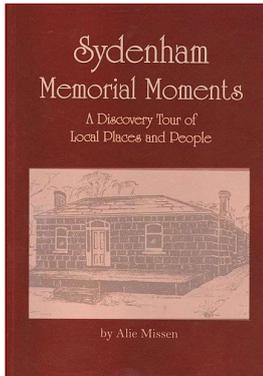
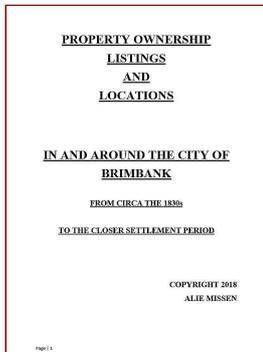
- **The Errington Reserve.** Researched by Tom Rigg and written by Alie Missen to celebrate the centenary of Alice Errington donating land in central St Albans to establish a recreation reserve. Published by St Albans Historical Society, 67 pages, 2011.

- **Strathmore's Pioneering Times: A Meeting Place of Pioneers, Their Stories and Properties.** Includes photographs and articles about 30 pioneering families from the 1830s and later. Published by Alie Missen and Friends of Horseshoe Bend Farm, 152 pages, 2008.

- **Sydenham Memorial Moments: A Discovery Tour of Local Places and People** The chapters include original occupiers, explorers, squatters and pastrolists, primary schools, railway buildings and historic sites, people, and community services and organistations. It is probably the first substantive book about the heritage of Sydenham. Published by Sydenham Historical Society, 173 pages, 2008.

- **Property Ownership Listings in and Around the City of Brimbank.**

The properties listed are west of the Maribyrnong River in the County of West Bourke from 1830s to 1880s. Includes details and sizes of properties, date when titles were transferred, the owners'



names, and also the markings used to distinguish each allotment of land have been shown. 50 pages, 2018.

- **A St Albans' Migrant's Story.**  
Personal reflections of the de Vries family settling in St Albans in the 1950s. Article included in "People of 1950s' St Albans" by J Ribarow, 2019.
- **Nathan's Story: A Biography.**  
Written by Nathan Wright and edited by Alie Missen, includes biographical material about Nathan Wright, the story of Sydenham, and the story of Sunshine. Published by Sydenham and District Historical Society, 80 pages, 2010.



Kevin Missen at Self Brothers and Goddard supermarket.

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Alie Missen, Lorna Cameron, Kon Haumann, Errington Centenary 2010.

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Article based on "A St Albans' Migrant's Story" by Alie Missen and augmented by Joseph Ribarow.  
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