



# KU-RING-GAI HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

Including: Ku-ring-gai Family History Group • Patron: The Mayor of Ku-ring-gai  
Affiliated with the Royal Australian Historical Society, The National Trust of Australia (NSW),  
The Society of Australian Genealogists, and the NSW & ACT Association of Family History Societies, Inc.  
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## MARCH 2019 NEWSLETTER VOL. 37 NO. 2

### SATURDAY MARCH 2

#### FAMILY HISTORY MEETING

11.00am WORKSHOP: *Using the NSW BDMs*

Presenter: Jenny Joyce

Learn how to use the NSW Registry of Births Deaths & Marriages website to find records of vital events.

2.00pm FAMILY HISTORY MEETING,  
followed by *The History of Rookwood Cemetery*

Presenter: Mark Bundy

Rookwood's historic talks and tours are conducted by Mark Bundy, Operations General Manager. Mark commenced his career at Rookwood in 1992 and has held various roles within the business ranging from grounds maintenance, burials, and foreman, through to sales, grief counselling, and dispute handling. He is a wealth of knowledge when it comes to Rookwood's fascinating and sometimes quirky facts. Learn about the history of the final resting place of many of our ancestors.



Visitors Welcome Afternoon Tea Available

#### GERMAN SIG MEETING

The KHS German Special Interest Group met Feb. 11 with 18 members present. Items discussed were:

**GAGHA activities:** Tony gave an update on the latest developments with the German Australian Genealogy and History Alliance (GAGHA) activities. Items briefed included:

- GAGHA Heimat Adelaide Indexing Project,
- SAG German Focus Day to be held on 23 Mar,
- Facebook Brief Moments.

**German Ancestors of KHS Members:** No progress made on the second iteration of the publication since the last meeting.

**Q&A:** Several members provided snippets or advice gained through researching German ancestors recently.

**Show-and-Tell:** Frank Olivier gave an excellent and entertaining presentation on the design, layout logic and printing of his large family tree chart. The design was all done manually with no computer in sight.

**Next Meeting:** Planned for Monday 8 Apr. Christine Edwards volunteered to give a presentation on her recent discoveries about her "wayward ancestors" and their effect on her family history research. (Notes: Peter Stehn)

#### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

James TORR, Killara

Nell and Ray MOODY, Turramurra

### SATURDAY MARCH 16

2.00pm GENERAL MEETING: *The History of the Motor Car in Sydney*

Presenter: Richard Whitaker

This presentation reviews the transition from horses to cars in Sydney and the massive transformation this produced on our urban landscape. We look at the immense extent and pace of this revolution through a series of photographs that range from 1900 to 1970 – a time during which our streetscapes changed forever.



*A wet day at Railway Square in 1935. A horse and cart is flanked by two cars, a Morris Oxford on the right and a Ford Model A Roadster.*



After graduating from Monash University in Science in 1968, Dick was conscripted and served two years in the Army, ending his military career as an infantry junior officer with 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment. He joined the Bureau of Meteorology soon after and began a public service career that would last some thirty-one years. Dick left the Bureau in 2002, and later joined forces with The Weather Channel and later Sky News Weather where he was Chief Meteorologist up until 2016. He has been married for 48 years, has two children and five grandchildren.

Visitors Welcome Afternoon Tea Available

#### TREASURER'S REPORT

Our income for the 3 months to January amounted to \$6,820. Most of this income came from the launch of our 4<sup>th</sup> and final volume of Rallying the Troops at the end of November. Expenses for the same period were \$2,253 giving us a surplus for these months of \$4,567.

For members receiving printed copy who want to access the internet, enter [www.khsnx.com/Mar2019.htm](http://www.khsnx.com/Mar2019.htm) into a browser address bar to reach a menu which lists all the embedded electronic links in this Newsletter

## KHS VISIT TO NSW STATE LIBRARY

Tour 8a, Wednesday February 6

Twenty two members had a wonderful tour of the New Galleries at the State Library in Macquarie Street led by Patrick Dodd of KHS who is a Library Volunteer Guide and Public Speaker. The refurbished Mitchell Picture Galleries and the new exhibition floors in the Dixon Wing were opened last October at a cost of \$22 million - generously donated by Michael Crouch and his family and John Fairfax and his Foundation. They are now world-class exhibition spaces and enable the Library to bring out incredible treasures unseen for many years.

The Library has a collection of almost 1,600 pictures and the Mitchell Galleries are now able to show 300 of them in a dazzling display of our artistic heritage. They are documentary, and range from the history of Sydney to our early Governors and family portraits. Patrick told us interesting stories about the lives of those pictured, such as Joseph Banks, Lachlan Macquarie, David Scott Mitchell, Captain John Piper, Caroline Chisholm, Tryphena Dibbs, Quong Tart and many more.

Adjacent to the picture galleries is the Amaze Gallery where we saw many items from the collections including Miles Franklin's notebooks which she carried everywhere, the Treaty of Waitangi, proclamations by Governor Fitzroy, the earliest known sketches of aboriginal people, and the first map showing the Southern Cross made by Andrea Corsali in 1520 which the Library recently purchased for \$1.1 million.

We also saw an exhibition called Sydney Elders about the lives of four aboriginal people from different Sydney clans which was most enlightening - from the north the Gai-marigal, the south the Bidjigal, the east the Gadigal and the west the Dharug,

We wandered along Macquarie Street for a very pleasant lunch at Da Capo Café in the courtyard of the old hospital, after which we returned to the Dixon Wing via some Library 'odd corners' as Patrick called them where we saw gold rush and convict displays, as well as some of the Matthew Flinders collection and the Main Mitchell Reading Room - a glorious space for reflection and study.

The new Dixon Wing Galleries are breathtaking and will need several visits to properly explore. The Library has six collections registered with the UNESCO World Memory List and you can see them here all beautifully displayed as 'The Magnificent Six'. They are the WWI diaries, the First Fleet Diaries, the Internee Papers, the Holtermann goldfields photos, and the giant glass plates, and Dorothea Mackellar's poem 'Core of my Heart'. There is much more - too much to record here - you will just have to go and see for yourself.

A second tour took place in late February and Patrick has kindly offered to do another. This is our heritage on display as never seen before, and is a tribute to all those collectors past and present who left us this great legacy.

## WHO WAS THIS RESIDENT? Feb. 2019

**Harriet Eliza BIFFIN MBE. MB. Ch.M.**

Dr Harriet Eliza Biffin's birth was registered in Sydney in 1867. Her parents, James Biffin and Eliza nee Humfrey, were both born in England and married in Sydney in 1863. James became a fruit-grower in Eastern Road, Turramurra.

Harriet graduated from Sydney University in 1898, one of the first women graduates in medicine in NSW. She was unable to obtain a hospital appointment in NSW and moved to South Australia for a position at the Adelaide Hospital

Returning from Adelaide, Dr Biffin first went into general practice in Elizabeth Street, Sydney, in partnership with the late Dr Ellen Wood. By 1904 she became the first woman to practise medicine in Ku-ring-gai, establishing her own general practice from her home, *Stoneholm*, on the Pacific Highway at Lindfield, which she operated for 25 years. She assisted younger medical women wherever possible, and always insisted on a female anaesthetist for her surgical work.

For many years she was honorary physician at the Mater Misericordiae Hospital, and during WWI undertook a large part of that hospital's medical work. She was one of the founders of the Rachel Forster Hospital for Women and Children, and served as its treasurer from 1922. She was awarded the MBE in 1937. Harriet died at Lindfield on 22 September 1939, unmarried, and is buried at Gore Hill Cemetery.

The KHS publication "*Focus on Ku-ring-gai*" says of her: '*She is remembered as upright, industrious, wise and kind, one who wore tailored suits, a straw boater hat, and was driven in a small dog cart by a groom in uniform*'.

Helen Malcher in "*Women of Ku-ring-gai*" indicates: '*Her success in practice at Lindfield, due much to her personal qualities of integrity and sympathy, did a great deal to overcome the early prejudice against women in medicine.*'

### Further Reading

"This Mad Folly - The Story of Australia's Pioneer Women Doctors" by M. Hutton Neve

"Focus on Ku-ring-gai - The story of Ku-ring-gai's growth and development" KHS 1996

"Women of Ku-ring-gai - A Tribute" KHS 1999

"One Hundred Years Ago" by Ian Ramage

"Gore Hill Memorial Cemetery, Biographies Vol.1"

Various Internet Sites.

### FUTURE TOUR DATES

**March: Thursday 14<sup>th</sup>** - Tour 9: HARS Aviation Museum, Illawara Regional Airport.

**April: Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup>** - Tour 10: Rookwood Cemetery Tour. Bookings open General Meeting Sat 16<sup>th</sup> March

## **GENERAL MEETING Saturday Jan 19**

### **Australian Inventions and Enhancements**

At our first General Meeting for 2019 a large gathering of 46 enjoyed a lively and informative presentation by Ian Thompson on Australian inventions and discoveries. An early invention — maybe ten thousand years ago — was the boomerang! Ian then described, roughly in chronological order, a surprisingly diverse range of innovations and inventions. Those inventions have greatly benefitted Australians and many others around the world in health, commerce and daily living. Space only allows a selection of Ian's topics to be noted here. As early as 1838 James Raymond, NSW Postmaster-General, introduced the concept of paid-in-advance postage (as an embossed envelope), paid by the sender. Prepaid postage stamps were introduced in the United Kingdom a few years later and then in NSW in 1850.

Some of the inventions can be grouped. In agriculture, Richard and Clarence Smith invented the stump jump plough in 1876, a major advance in ploughing for crops. In 1882 Hugh MacKay, a Victorian farmhand, developed the combine harvester, a more efficient collector of those crops. In 1909 David Unaipon, a shearer illustrated on the \$50 note, invented a mechanical sheep-shearing handpiece, much more efficient than hand clippers or shears. In 1934 there was the "ute" or utility, especially for farmers and their families, designed by Louis Brandt for Ford, followed in 1951 by Holden's ute.

In food and drink, Thomas Angove's invention of the wine cask, or flexible bladder, in 1965 was of immense value to the wine industry. Cyril Collister invented Vegemite in 1922, the name adopted in 1923. He was working at Fred Walker Cheese Co. at the time and used spent brewer's yeast as a source for the spread.

Many health and medical inventions, discoveries and developments were mentioned by Ian. These included Aspro, developed and enhanced by George Nicholas, based on a product of Bayer; the cardiac pacemaker; penicillin, developed by Florey and Chain, based on Fleming's work, spray-on skin for burns by Dr Fiona Wood; and Graeme Clark's bionic ear.

Technical and safety development inventions included Lawrence Hargraves' box kites as a precursor to "flying machines"; black-box flight recorders, actually red or orange!, by Dr David Warren; the winged keel; Interscan Landing System; and Wifi.

Around the home we now have the Hills Hoist by Lance Hill and Harold Ling, especially the winding mechanism, in 1956; a Victa mower, Mervyn Richardson and Max Joplin; the Esky, Francis Malley, 1952; and Mortein, designed by J Hagemann as an insect dusting powder in the 1870s, then as a spray in a flit gun 1929, and as an aerosol/pressure pack in 1953, first advertised by "Louie the Fly" in 1956.

Warm appreciation of Ian's talk followed Noel Blake's vote of thanks. (Notes: Richard Facer)

## **FAMILY HISTORY MEETINGS Saturday Feb 2**

In the morning, 33 people attended a session on Scottish genealogy research by Jenny Joyce. The main focus was on learning to use the Scotland's People website (<https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>), but she also showed us the wonderful maps hosted by the National Archives of Scotland (<https://maps.nls.uk/>), which cover Scotland, but also England and Wales.

In the afternoon Frank Olivier delighted us with "*Nine Serendipitous Meetings That Joined My German Family With My Wife's Australian Family*". He told how he was born in Germany to Marianne and Josef Feist. Josef joined the German Army in the 1930s, and his wife and family lived in an Army base in Wünsdorf. As the war moved to its close, Marianne and her children were part of a convoy to West Germany to avoid being captured by the Soviets. Josef was killed just over a month after the family left in the convoy. Marianne and Josef's hopes to emigrate to Canada after the war obviously didn't happen.

When she was at school, Marianne and an Australian girl, Nellie Baker, had become pen pals, though they lost touch during the war. Marianne wrote to Nell who had married and moved since then. However, a diligent postman recognised who the letter was intended for and delivered it. Nell and her husband agreed to sponsor Frank's family to emigrate to Australia. At this time, the Australian government was not admitting Germans, especially those with no skilled breadwinner. Nell battled for about two years until the Head of the Immigration Department in Sydney used discretionary powers and let the family move to Australia under certain conditions: Marianne had to pay for the passage and Nell and her husband had to take responsibility for food and accommodation for the family.

The family prospered, and Marianne managed to get a mortgage to buy a house in Wentworthville. In 1954 she applied for a War Widow's pension from the German government, but it was refused. She took on the fight saying she deserved a pension as she lost her husband, brother and parents in the war. Eventually, she won the fight and the rules were changed, but there were conditions attached to her pension. She had to remain a German citizen, she wasn't allowed to marry, as she'd no longer be a widow, and she wasn't allowed to work. Until then she had been working as a dressmaker and still had large loans owing, so she decided to create a new identity to enable her to get her pension and to still work. The family moved from Wentworthville to Artarmon and changed their name to Olivier. The children were never to let anyone know about their background.

In 1967 Frank met his future wife, Carol, but it took four decades for them to discover the connection between their families. In 2007 when Frank was researching his family tree, he discovered that the Head of the Immigration Department who had used his discretion to allow Frank's family to immigrate to Australia, was Bertie Clyde Wall, Carol's grandfather.

## DIARY DATES

### MARCH

- Saturday 2 11:00am Family History Workshop  
**How to use the NSW BDMs**  
Presenter: Jenny Joyce
- Saturday 2 2:00pm Family History Meeting:  
**The History of Rookwood Cemetery**  
Presenter: Mark Bundy
- Thursday 14 Tour 9: **HARS Aviation Museum, Illawara Regional Airport**
- Saturday 16 2:00pm General Meeting: **The History of the Motor Car in Sydney**  
Presenter: Richard Whitaker

### APRIL

- Saturday 6 11:00am Family History Workshop  
**How to use other places' BDMs**  
Presenter: Jenny Joyce
- Saturday 6 2:00pm Family History Meeting:  
**Forum: What did your grandfather do?**
- Monday 8 German SIG meeting
- Tuesday 9 Tour 10: **Rookwood Cemetery**
- Saturday 20 2:00pm General Meeting: **The Life and Legacy of Lt. Joseph Maxwell, VC, 1<sup>st</sup> AIF**  
Presenter: Em. Prof. John Ramsland OAM

### MAY

- Saturday 4 11:00am Family History Workshop  
**Mapping story-lines of families**  
Presenter: Fran Everingham
- Saturday 4 2:00pm Family History Meeting:  
**What's new and news at State Archives**  
Presenter: Martyn Killion
- Saturday 18 2:00pm General Meeting: **Honeysuckle Creek: The Story of Tom Reid, a Little Dish, and Neil Armstrong**  
Presenter: Andrew Tink AM

### How to book a tour

The tour booking table opens at 1:30pm before the start of the KHS General Meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month (except December). Bookings can also be made for a short period following the meeting. Payment on the day is by cash or cheque. If you are unable to attend at that time then please contact Yvette **after the weekend of the booking** at [yreeve@optusnet.com.au](mailto:yreeve@optusnet.com.au) or phone 9987 0904 or 0414 249 737 to check on any vacancies. If there are none, you could list on the Expression of Interest form in case of future vacancies. If there is a vacancy, payment can be made by EFT, details: BSB 032-083, KHS Account No. 248971, indicating your name and tour number. Yvette will note your booking and send you an important Tour Information Sheet.

**WHO WAS THIS  
KU-RING-GAI  
RESIDENT?**

**MARCH 2019**



## ADMINISTRATION

President	Jenny Joyce	9440 2131
Vice President	Lorna Watt	9440 8010
Treasurer	Annet Latham	9440 3998
Secretary	Beth Facer	9988 0823
Immediate Past President		
	Graham Lewis	9416 5818
Committee Member	Richard Facer	9988 0823
Family History	Lorraine Henshaw,	
Group Committee	(Leader)	0418 221354
	Jenny Joyce	
	(ex officio)	9440 2131
	Yvette Reeve	9987 0904
	Jean Smith	9498 4468
	Elaine Turnidge	9899 2635

### Appointees

Accessions	Jennifer Wallin	9983 1871
Book Sales	Margaret Holland	9488 5452
Catering	Margaret Holland	9488 5452
	Vicki Williams	9415 8833
Computer Systems	Peter Stehn	9489 9488
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Speakers Programme	Beverley Dunstan	9419 8526
Volunteers Coordinator	Geoff Little	9449 3131
Webmaster	Andy Joyce	9440 2131
Welfare Officer	Jill Nicholson	9144 6948

### Research Centre Hours

The Society's Research Centre is at 799 Pacific Highway, Gordon, adjacent to the Ku-ring-gai Library. The Centre is open to the public from 10.00 am to 2.00 pm on Monday, Tuesday, Friday and Saturday (except the first Saturday of each month when members have a Family History meeting).

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### Newsletter Deadline

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