



Surrey Hills Historical Society Newsletter: July 2021

Meetings of the Surrey Hills Historical Society are held on the 3rd Tuesday of the month (February to November) at 8pm.

Venue: Maitland Room of The Cottage of the Surrey Hills Neighbourhood Centre at 1 Bedford Avenue, Surrey Hills.

Entry is from the rear of the building, accessed from Zeplins Lane, which runs beside the building. There is plenty of parking in the adjacent railway car park, which is well-lit at night. Supper follows the presentation; a contribution of \$4.50 goes to the Neighbourhood Centre.

COVID-19 restrictions re numbers apply. Please RSVP to Sue on 0417 368990.

Members of the Society and others are committed to documenting the history of the area of Mont Albert and Surrey Hills through the Surrey Hills Neighbourhood Centre Heritage Collection. We meet most Mondays, 10am-3pm. The collection is open to the public at this time. For further details email: heritage@surreyhillsnc.org.au

Items and stories from the collection appear on the Surrey Hills History Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/Surrey-Hills-History-887879524593056/> and on Victorian Collections at <https://victoriancollections.net.au>

Surrey Hills Historical Society committee:

President / newsletter: Sue Barnett

Vice-President: Euan Walmsley

Secretary: Max Beaton

Treasurer: Jon Agar

General Committee: Dorothy Duncan

Ex-Officio: Arthur Tonkin

Newsletter editor: Sue Barnett

Address for postage: C/o Surrey Hills

Neighbourhood Centre

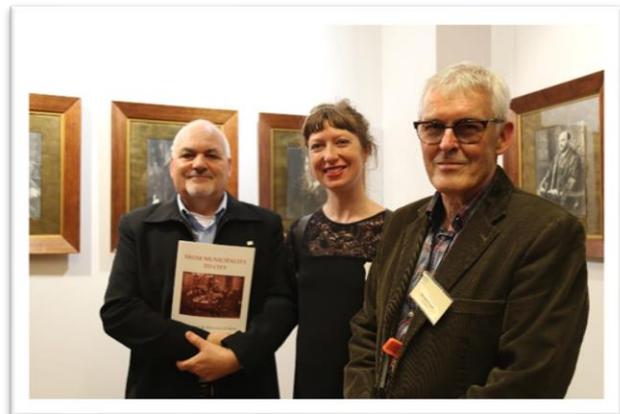
157 Union Road, Surrey Hills, 3127

NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY 20 JULY at 8pm

Panel presentation – “Along the research journey: experiences of some ‘amateur’ historians”

In almost every newsletter of groups like our own, there are articles researched by dedicated members – ‘amateur’ historians. Our members Ken James and Keith Wilson have both published histories. They will be joined by Kew Historical Society’s Archivist, Robert Baker to examine aspects of the role, frustrations, joys and achievements encountered by the ‘amateur historian’.

Robert Baker - “They say a picture tells a thousand words but this isn’t always true. Our collection was given 83 framed portraits of past mayors of Kew in 1989. The problem was in matching a face to an unknown past. The story about how we discovered the history of each of these mayors took a number of amateur researchers on a journey of discovery. Robert Baker, the KHS Archivist, will talk about some of the opportunities and challenges of this project.”



L to R: David Taylor and Anna Nottle of the Public Record Office Victoria and Robert Baker at the launch of Kew Historical Society’s recent publication and accompanying exhibition on 16 Oct 2019 at Kew Court House.

Ken James: As regular attendees well know, for retired secondary school teacher, Ken James, books and history have always held great importance. With over 30 publications or joint publications to his name, Ken is well known by staff at the Public Records Office of Victoria and the State Library, as well as many historical societies, particularly through those scattered through Central Victoria, where he grew up. His histories focus on some of the ‘building blocks’ of community - including schools, lodges, fire brigades and mechanics institutes. Included in his body of work

are 5 publications on aspects of Surrey Hills history. Ken will touch on some of the highlights, surprises, resources, and moving moments encountered in researching his books.



Keith Wilson: "When I was collating the Surrey Hills History Society's collection of Rechabite records I became interested in the Rechabites' involvement in World War 1. As I probed deeply into the written and photographic records, I discovered that the Great War had a layered meaning for the Surrey Hills Rechabites. My talk will be about the way historians can use archives to explore group and community identity. I will focus on V. C. winner, Albert Jacka, to explain how the actions of one individual can symbolically represent and shape the identity of others."

Left: Albert Jacka – Source: Virtual Australian War Memorial

Mrs Mary Long of 1 Delta Street: a war bride's story



The following account is the result of my endeavour to better document this photo (SHP0579). Described as Delta Street area, it was lent for copying by a Mrs Long in the 1980s. Alan Holt's property register records that what was to become No 1 Delta Street was built c1920 and was variously named: 'Westward Ho', 'Pembroke' and 'The Oaks'. The first owner from 1920 was Eric Rowland H Long, a salesman. Ownership / occupancy transferred to Mrs Mary Hay Long, then to Mr James Long and back to Mary Hay Long. Part of the undeveloped land in the photo was to become part of South Surrey Park.

Turning to Ancestry.com.au I was fortunate to find a family tree belonging to Agnes Mary Hay Long's granddaughter, Barbara Long. Barbara has readily shared elements of her grandmother's story and scanned a collection of wonderful photos for us.

Agnes Mary Hay Murray was born in 1894 in Devon, one of 5 children. She loved the Devon countryside and with artistic talent sketched the animals and birds she observed.



Above: Mary Murray aged c 20 in 1915.
Left: Rabbit and wild goat sketched in 1909.

Barbara remembers her grandmother’s garden well – “My grandmother transformed her Surrey Hills vacant paddock into a ‘Devonshire garden’ and forever grieved her beloved England.” She called the property ‘Westward Ho’ after the village she was born in. Mary wrote emotionally of her birthplace many years later when her hopes for life in Australia had somewhat soured. She was one of 5,626 English war brides who came to Australia with or following men of the AIF.

Mary’s husband-to-be was Eric Rowland Handasyde Long (SERN 3046), who was born in Launceston in 1892, one of four surviving children. Aged 22 and a salesman, he enlisted in the AIF in Clifton Hill on 12 July 1915. Assigned to the 14th battalion, 10th reinforcement, he embarked on HMAT A17 *Port Lincoln* on 16 October 1915. As a gunner he served in France, was gassed on a number of occasions, wounded in action and hospitalised on several occasions. On 28 July 1917, he was granted 12 days’ leave in England. Perhaps it was then that he met Mary, who was living in Shepherd’s Bush and working as a bank clerk. They were engaged before he left to return to Australia on 27 April 1919.

Right: Eric Rowland Handasyde Long with his Mother Dora on his return to Australia from service in France.

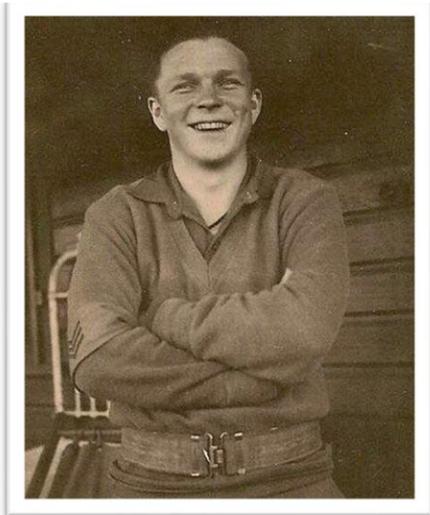


Eric’s application for free passage for his fiancé Mary was approved on 26 July 1919. They were married in Hawthorn on 6 March 1920 according to Roman Catholic rites and moved into the cottage in Delta Street, with few immediate neighbours at the time. Their only surviving child, James Murray Long, was born in September 1921.



Above: Happy days during which Mary transformed the bare land around the house into a private English-style garden, in which Eric built a swimming pool for his son.

Mary suffered a still-birth in late 1923 and by 1927 her marriage had broken down. Mary's religion was important to her and she regularly attended St Dominic's Church in Riversdale Road, so it was with difficulty and not finally until 1937 that she instituted divorce proceedings against Eric. Despite the Depression, overall divorce rates in Australia climbed in the 1930s, compared to the 1920s, but were still low. Divorce proceedings were a messy and unpleasant business. Adultery was by far the most common reason cited in divorce cases, but women divorcing on the grounds of adultery not only had to prove their husbands had been unfaithful, but often also had to prove additional faults. In 1937, the law was changed and divorce was allowed on other grounds including drunkenness, insanity and desertion. Mary was granted her divorce and also gained custody of James, then 15 years old. As Barbara reflected: "homesick, possibly on the rebound, post-natal depression after losing her daughter ... the marriage was not set for success."



Above: James Murray Long
Right: BBQ breakfast in the open - Mary with an American billet

After her divorce and throughout WW2, Mary had a responsible and sensitive job in the censorship office. Her son James Murray Long (Service Number - VX114436), who became a radiographer, joined up and Mary joined the community volunteer network supporting visiting American servicemen. They began to arrive in early 1942 as America prepared to fight the Pacific war. By 1943, there were 250,000 Americans stationed in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. Mary billeted a number and formed a long-lasting friendship with American servicemen Lt Bob Connor U.S.N. from Philadelphia.

Barbara's recollection is that her grandmother spoke of an American Camp in Highfield Park, but a search for references to it



have drawn a blank. Emily Grant, the Family & Local History Librarian with the Boroondara Library Service, couldn't find anything with direct relevance, but forwarded a copy of the April 1943 minutes of the City of Camberwell's Hospitality Committee. (See following page).

After the war, Mary returned to and worked in England for a time, but ultimately returned to Delta Street. As well as gardening, her enduring joys were the chooks she kept, lace work, embroidery, reading and sketching birds. She became involved in maintaining in Surrey Park – although perhaps not with the focus on indigenous plants that has been the core of more recent management plans.



Mary's son James did not move far away and granddaughter Barbara visited every weekend. Mrs Long was well-known in the area and after she died in 1987, her "quaint 1920s timber cottage" was put up for sale. Advertised as 'Westward Ho' – City living - Country style, in c 1984, it had been used as a set in the television series 'Carson's Law'. A simple 5 room cottage, much loved, it was Mary Long's home for 64 years.

Author: Sue Barnett with Barbara Long.

CITY OF CAMBERWELL'S HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE

16th April, 1943.

The City of Camberwell's Hospitality Committee has definitely justified the action of His Worship the Mayor in responding to the call of the State's Hospitality Committee for accommodation to men of the Allied Forces when on leave. Up to April 10th, 1943, 1,346 troops have been provided with supper (tea or coffee and toast or biscuits), bed and breakfast (cereals, egg and bacon, or sausages and tea or coffee), at a cost per man of a fraction less than 11d. for the two meals.

That the need for accommodation exists and is appreciated by the men is evidenced by the fact that our first week-end operation (22nd to 24th January) brought in 74 troops; the last week-end (8th to 10th April) brought in 226.

The work has necessitated closing the hall against booking and may have caused disappointment to some ratepayers who, we feel sure, will not feel so bad about the inconvenience when they are acquainted with the good work being done, without which many of the troops would have been forced to sleep in parks.

Members of the American Red Cross Service Club accepted the Mayor's invitation to inspect the accommodation provided. They were most enthusiastically appreciative, declaring that the "Camberwell Hospitality Centre" is a definite rival of their own efforts.

This result has entailed some expense, most of which has been spent on the following furniture and equipment:-

- 50 Telescopic Stretchers.
- 77 Mattresses (14-lbs. Hygienic Wool - Hessian Covers).
- 75 Pillows (Galico Covers).
- 165 Sheets.
- 84 Pillow Cases.
- 35 Breakfast plates, 36 Round & Butler plates.
- 36 Porridge plates, 36 Saucers, 46 Cups.
- 36 Knives, 34 Forks, 36 Dessert Spoons.
- 42 Tea Spoons, 4 Sugar basins, 4 Butter dishes.
- 8 Jugs, 12 Salt & Pepper Castors, 2 Frying Pans.
- 1 Enamel Baking dish, Bread knife, 3 Cooking knives.
- 1 Cooking Fork, 1 Cooking Spoon.
- 2 doz. Towels, 1 doz. Dish Towels and the usual odds and ends necessary to a kitchen.

The blankets in use have been borrowed from various centres. Up to the present, our efforts to obtain them from the Defence Department, have failed.

To complete payment of the aforementioned goods and the cost of providing showers and to procure provisions for the meals, the Committee will require a further advance of £200, bringing the total to £395-8-0.

(Sgd). W. DIMMICK.

W. Dimmick

The heyday of the postcard

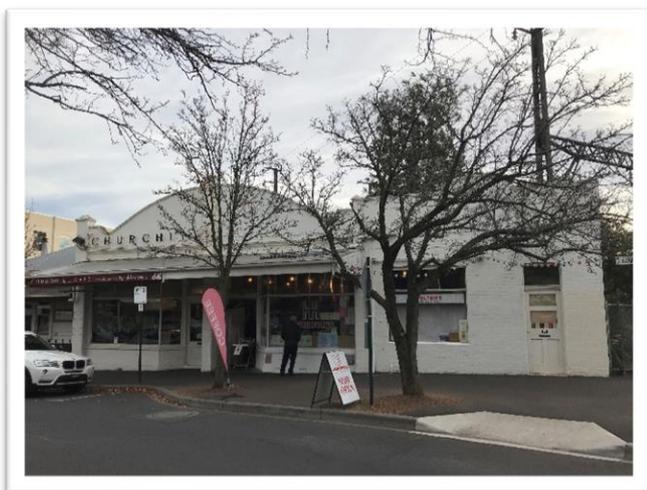


This wonderful image (PC-736) comes from a postcard held in the Royal Historical Society of Victoria's collection. You can't quite see all the writing but it's Mont Albert station, not Surrey Hills. We have very few images of early Hamilton Street in our collection, so it's good to know that there are some 'out there'!

The world's first postcard is recognised as being issued by the Austrian government in 1869. It was created in response to a newspaper article written by a Viennese economics professor suggesting that there must be a simpler, cheaper and more practical way to send a short message, other than a letter. The first post card was a simple, blank, light-brown card with an area for a message, the address and an officially imprinted stamp on the other side. It was half the cost of a normal letter. The concept was quickly taken up by other postal authorities. The first Australian postcard was issued by New South Wales (1875), followed by Victoria (1876), South Australia (1877), Western Australia (1879), Queensland (1880) and Tasmania (1882).

Early postcards were post office monopolies. In Australia it was not until 1895 that private makers could sell unstamped (pictorial) postcards on which the adhesive stamp could be attached. The heyday of postcards was between 1900 and 1920 when people could cheaply and easily send messages – sometimes on a daily basis, to friends and family, without the formality of a letter. Eventually, every event of significance was commemorated in some way with a postcard. In the Surrey Hills / Mont Albert area many were associated with Empire Day celebrations. The postcard boom was relatively short-lived, due in part to the introduction in 1911 of a one-penny rate for letters - the same charge as for a postcard.

REF: <https://australiapostcollectables.com.au/articles/150-years-of-the-postcard>



Back to the image – can we date it? The W. J. Purton Real Estate office pictured is one of several William John Purton established. He and his wife, Jessie Maria Moore, lived at 6 Highfield Road, Surrey Hills / Canterbury (depending on the listing). Our property register, developed by the late Alan Holt, lists him at 19 Hamilton Street between 1920 and 1930, followed by Alfred Thodey, another real estate agent. Remarkably the building remained as an estate agent premises until the 1970s and is still extant.

Next door at 17 Hamilton Street the writing on the hoarding isn't clear. Part only looks to include 'newsagent'. Again, according to the Alan Holt property register, in 1920 draper Elizabeth Snell was the occupant

of 17 Hamilton Street; (she's also listed in the Sands directory in 1921). She was followed by Percy Francis Walker, a newsagent. He and his wife Essie moved from East Camberwell sometime between 1919 and 1924. They lived locally until the 1950s. Recently we have learned that prior to Elizabeth Snell, Eliza Behan had the newsagent and post office in Hamilton Street for over 20 years, from 1896 until 1921.

Elizabeth Theresa (Eliza) Behan (1862-1937) was a daughter of John William Davis (1823-1912) and his wife Bridget Maguire (1840-1910). The family lived in Windsor Crescent, with several successive generations living at number 84. Eliza married Thomas Behan in 1889 and their daughters Gertrude Mary and Margaret Mary, both dressmakers, operated from home and for a time at 13 Hamilton Street.



Right: 84 Windsor Crescent with later members of the Davis family, courtesy Mary Davis.

So, based on the business names, a date for the postcard would be c1922-1924. Having said all this, the dress of the 2 women depicted would suggest an earlier date – perhaps they were ladies favoring more conservative fashion! However, given that there were only a few businesses in Hamilton Street before 1920, it's probably not far off. The postcard documents two of the earliest shops in Hamilton Street, but probably not the earliest. They are seen on the excerpt below of an advertising flyer held by the State Library of Victoria for the 1919 sale by agent TRB Morton of 14 shop sites along the eastern side of Hamilton Street. (Ref: <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/169804>)

1	140
2	125
3	115
4	130
5	130
6	130

Across the road is seen the house and shop of John Pepper, the boot repairer. He was possibly the first business in Hamilton Street. He and his wife Elizabeth (nee Draffin) lived at 3 Hamilton Street for at least 20 years until their deaths in 1934 and 1940.

Author: Sue Barnett

More about the Thodey family and links to Arundel Wrighte

Hasan Hassan saw the article regarding these buildings on the Surrey Hills History Facebook page and kindly forwarded his research on the Thodey family, who lived at 83 - 87 Dorking Road, Box Hill North. The son Alfred was the real estate agent of Hamilton Street. It is reprinted here with his permission and for reasons of space has been edited and slightly abridged.

William Henry Thodey, a descendant of the famous British diarist John Evelyn, married Mary Ann Ivey in 1864 in Essex. She was the daughter of Samson and Mary Ivey (nee Teesdale). Before moving to Australia from England with his family in 1878, William worked for the renowned Rev John Curwen who popularised Tonic sol-fa (or tonic sol-fah) a pedagogical technique for teaching sight-singing. The Rev John Curwen also invented the 'look and read' method of reading – phonetics.

William and Mary Ann Thodey lived at 83 – 87 Dorking Road with their children Margaret, Alan, Henry, Alfred and Robert. The land on which the property now stands was originally part of Arundel Wrighte's 'Beaudesert' estate and was bought by William in 1889. In 1891 he built a villa on the site in the late 19th century Americanised French Second Empire style. It was designed by the Melbourne architect Arthur E Clarke, who had served his articles with

John Hayward (nephew of Sir Charles Barry, designer of the Houses of Parliament, London 1837). Hayward then worked for the Melbourne architectural practice of Grainger & D'Ebro ¹.

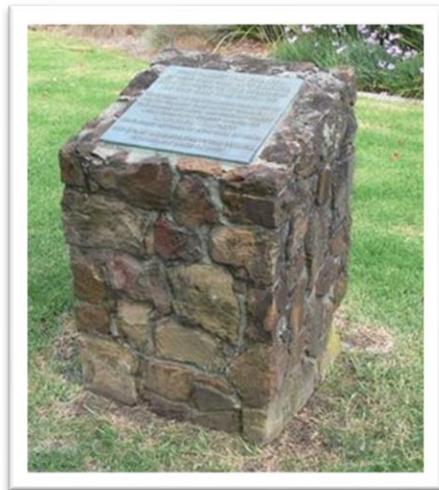
In 1885 Arthur Clarke commenced his own practice, which he ran from the Nicholson's Chambers opposite the Melbourne Town Hall. Public buildings designed by Arthur E Clarke include the Box Hill Shire Hall (on the corner of Cambridge and Station Streets in 1889; demolished in 1987); the Nunawading Shire Hall (destroyed by fire in 1927); St John's Anglican Church, Blackburn (1890) and St Paul's Anglican Church, in Inverleigh (1889), near Geelong. The villa at 83 - 87 Dorking Road is the only known example of a home using the French Second Empire style of architecture in a domestic situation.



Above: (L) Box Hill Shire Hall, 1889; (R) 83 - 87 Dorking Road – both designed by architect Arthur Clarke.

William Thodey was a significant Box Hill landowner, a financial writer for 'The Argus' and editor of the 'Australian Insurance and Banking Record', a member of the British Institute of Actuaries and a member of Melbourne's Athenaeum Library committee. The family were members of the Box Hill Tennis Club, Box Hill Cricket Club and Box Hill Library and Debating Society. William made numerous donations to the Doncaster and Box Hill Show as part of the show's fundraising campaigns. Son Alfred entered apples he had grown from his orchard in Blackburn in the show and won a second prize. Alfred served in World War 1 in France with the 10/13 Light Horse at Abbeville, on the Somme and at Ypres.

William Thodey died in May 1914 and Mary Ann Thodey in September 1914. They are buried in Box Hill Cemetery, as are many other members of the Thodey family. After their deaths the estate was sold to the Box Hill Township Estate Company, it was then bought by local resident G L Morris in 1918. ²



In 1957 Margaret Luke (nee Thodey) donated stones from Arundel Wrighte's original home 'Beaudesert' (on the corner of Shannon and Station Streets, Box Hill) to the Box Hill Council. The stones were used to make a memorial cairn which was dedicated to Arundel Wrighte and which is located in Pioneer Park on the corner of Station and Harrow Streets, Box Hill. Margaret obviously knew of and recognised Arundel Wrighte's position in helping to found Box Hill and wanted him remembered. Margaret lived at 794 Station Street, Box Hill until her death in 1963 aged 92.

Left: Arundel Wrighte Memorial Cairn - <https://monumentaustralia.org.au/themes/landscape/settlement/display/30470-box-hill-pioneer-memorial>

Thanks to Hasan Hassan.

¹ Charles D'Ebro (1850–1920) was a London-born architect who emigrated to Adelaide in 1877 with John Grainger, father of composer Percy Grainger. They worked together for 4 years from 1881 until 1885 when the partnership was dissolved. They designed many notable buildings together, not just in Melbourne. These included the Fremantle Town Hall, Auckland's public library and municipal offices, the Equitable Co-operative in Collins Street (later occupied by Georges) and a grand Masonic Hall on the Collins Street hill (demolished).

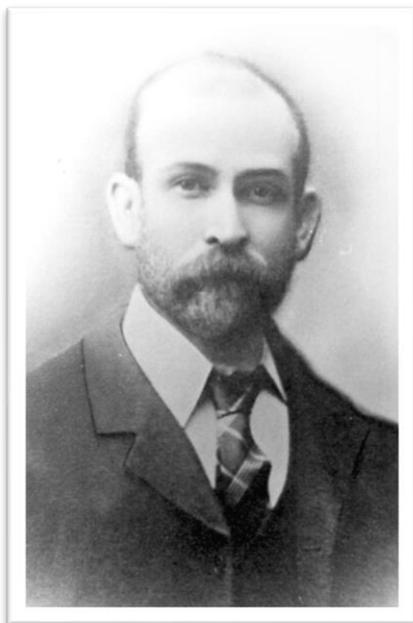
² Sadly, the future of this unique home is threatened. It is situated on a large parcel of land and since being sold in 2017 there have been a number of VCAT hearings regarding its redevelopment. The house has local heritage protection.

Surrey Gardens Rotunda – historic plaque re-installed



The erection of a rotunda in the Surrey Gardens, to replace the original one demolished in 1972, has been a protracted project but, with the re-installment of the historic plaque, it is complete, bar the planting of the small surrounding beds come spring.

The original rotunda was built in 1912 by carpenter Clarence Montgomery for the Surrey Hills Progress Association and the local community and dedicated to John Gray, "a highly respected and revered citizen". Clarence Montgomery was born in Taradale in 1969. At the time he was working on the rotunda, he lived in Sunbury Crescent but in 1916 he and his family moved to 83 Croydon Road, where he lived for the rest of his life. He was probably responsible for a number of homes built in the area.



Bootmaker John Gray's name crops up in many early local records. He too was born a long way from Surrey Hills – in 1861 in Eldorado. He married Emma Beckett in 1888 at 'Guildford Villa' in Essex Road, the Beckett family home. Their home was at 24 Arundel Crescent, known as 'Tumberumba' where they raised a large family: (Gunner) John Robert Gray (1888, Surrey Hills - 21 June 1917, France) Benjamin Walter Gray (1890, Surrey Hills - 1949, Heidelberg), Herbert Harry Gray (1892, Surrey Hills - 1959, Queensland) William Beckett Gray (1897, Surrey Hills - 1899, Surrey Hills) Norman Douglas Gray (1901, Surrey Hills - 1947, Sydney) Evelyn Lizzie Gray (1906, Surrey Hills - 1983).

Left: John Gray (SHP0673)
Right: The original rotunda (SHP0847)

Surrey Hills Brass Band gave concerts in the rotunda, providing music for regular

'loyal' celebrations. It was also used in relation to the screening of silent films held in the gardens. The rotunda was quite elevated off the ground due to the slope of the gardens and the bioscope used to screen the films was stored in the room underneath. This was later used as the Infant Welfare Centre until the Progress Association built a dedicated facility for this purpose.



Recent donations to the local history collection

Our thanks to the following people for these recent donations:

Lorraine Bates – Copy of title to 4 Neath Street, Surrey Hills and State Savings Bank ephemera

Simon Gardiner (author) – Books: *Great Innings at Canterbury*; *Great Bowlers at Canterbury*.

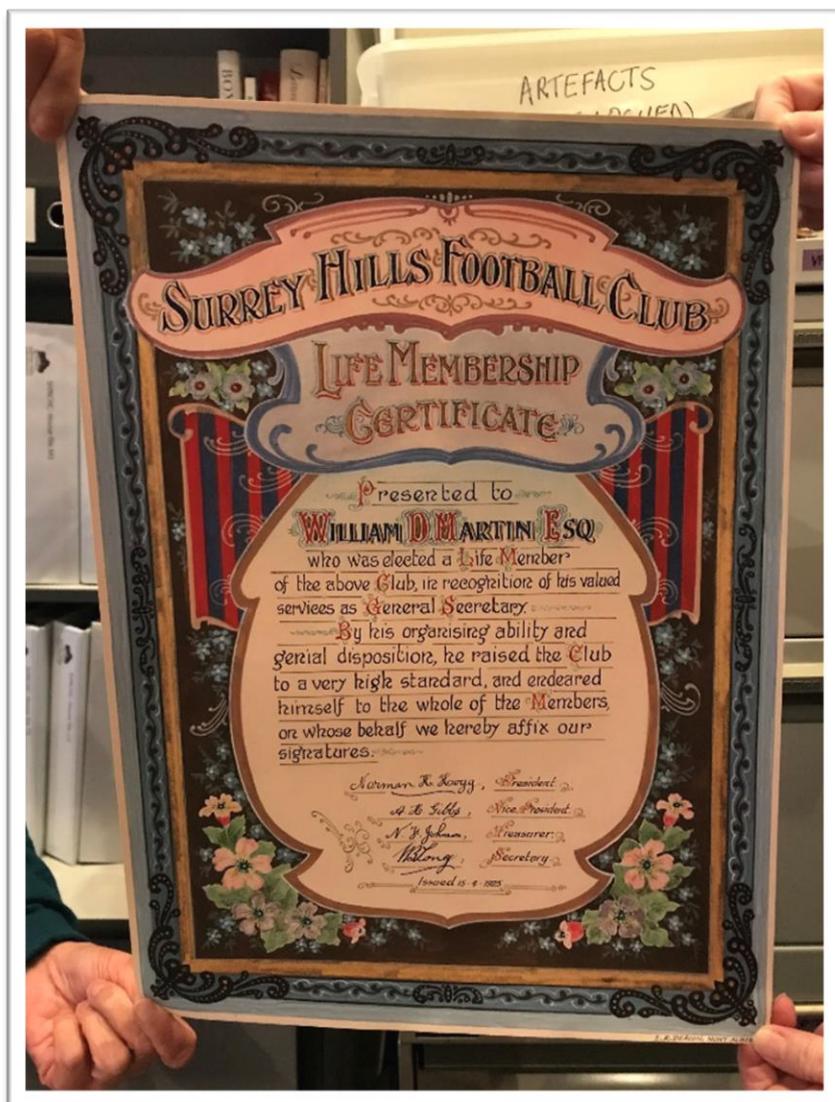
Stephen Gillespie – contemporary photos of the rail corridor between Mont Albert and Surrey Hills

Sue Barnett – Magazines: *Australian Home Journal*, Christmas 1941 and January 1942.

Kew Historical Society – Book: *From Municipality to City, Chairmen & Mayors of Kew, 1861-1994*.

Box Hill RSL – Book: *One Hundred Years in the Making – Box Hill RSL, 1920-2020*.

David Cay of Bendigo – copy of the Life Membership Certificate awarded to his grandfather William DeWitt Martin in 1925 by the Surrey Hills Football Club and a digital copy of a formal photograph of his grandparents.



David Cay had contacted us by email hoping we could help him locate his grandfather's shop in Union Road. He wrote:

"My maternal grandfather was William DeWitt Martin. He spent most of his early adult years around the Surrey Hills/Mont Albert area. I have the addresses of his private residences from the census records of the time (about 1900 to 1926). After 1926 he sold up and went to the Western district and later the Mallee farming. The period I want to ask you about is from about 1910 to 1926. The family story is that he had a tailor's shop on the corner of Whitehorse Road and Union Road. I've checked the Sand's and MacDougall directories of the time and the address listed is Union Rd (with no street number). There are obviously 4 corners on the intersection, although one corner is now a slip lane and small (car) park. Apparently, it was a 2-story building and he had the shop on the ground floor and the seamstresses and cutters worked upstairs."

The location of the intersection of Whitehorse Road and Union Road was initially a distracter. However, the Camberwell Rates records for 1919 show

that William DeWitt Martin was renting a shop in Union Road from the man next door, Charles W Smith, a newsagent. This helped me to locate him in our property register. Mr Smith was at (current day) 100 Union Road and David's grandfather at 96 Union Road. It's an imposing building and today it's occupied by Fletchers Real Estate. Renumbering of Union Road occurred in c1929, so the 1924 electoral roll gives the address as 266 Union Road – a 'confusion', but it was the same building. It appears that another tailor (W H Vivian) moved in after William DeWitt Martin left. The double-storey nature of the building fits with seamstresses and cutters working upstairs.

Forthcoming meetings:

17 August: TBC

21 September: Mary Bell from Sydney: The Bell family of Surrey Hills

19 October – Stephen Gillespie – Photographs that enhance family history