



Ku-ring-gai Historical Society

February / March 2024 Newsletter Vol. 42 No. 1

Patron: the Mayor of Ku-ring-gai

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General Meeting

2pm Saturday 17 February 2024

Welcome to the New Year and our first Newsletter for 2024.

We ended last year on a high with the great success of our 60th Anniversary dinner. The preparations went smoothly for the celebratory event which was held at the St Ives Club, a fantastic venue.



Thanks to Annet and Kevin Latham, as well as chef Nick Williams from Pinnacle Catering, the evening was very much enjoyed by all those in attendance.

A great feature of the night was images, from the 60s era, sourced and compiled

by secretary Judith Godden, and displayed on the screens around the room.

Jill Nicholson's and Sue Moore's photography captured some special memories for our archives. Our editor has featured a selection of photos in this Newsletter.

As a special gift, all guests were thrilled to receive a complimentary copy of our latest publication, 'Ku-ring-gai – a peep at our past', a historical compilation of glossy images. If you were not able to attend the dinner, this beautifully presented book is now available from the Society for \$15.

I look forward to your involvement with the activities and meetings planned for this year.

Best wishes,

Lorna Watt

Our previously advertised speaker Prof. James Curran is no longer able to attend due to unforeseen circumstances. In his place we will be presenting ...

- From the film vaults -

Believe it or not, the last time we presented a program of early films of Sydney, it was through the old-fashioned medium of VHS videotape. This time our selection will be projected in crystal-clear digital quality – join us for a nostalgic rendezvous with Sydney's past in this 45-minute journey down memory lane!



Some of the items in the program. Hope you can join us.

Beverley Dunstan

KHS Speakers' Program

July to November

20 July

Dick Whitaker

A Sydney Wild Man - The John Norton Story

Member Dick Whitaker returns with the story of the tumultuous life and times of Truth newspaper owner John Norton, who, as our first media populist, wielded great power in Australia at the turn of the 20th century.

17 August

Noel Phelan - The Catalina Story

As many of their operations were carried out in secrecy, the story of the humble PBV Catalina and its crucial place in our WWII history is not well known. Noel, a National Maritime Museum volunteer, will highlight the Catalina's role as Australia's 'Spitfire'.

21 September

Richard White - Symbols of Australia

Dr Richard White is co-editor (with Melissa Harper) of this reference work of the symbols that surround, and define, us. In this talk Richard will survey a range of symbols, from the formal to the popular, looking at their origins and the way they continue to change.

19 October

Members' Forum - History in Five

Our annual forum is an opportunity to get to know other members and share historical interests. Members are invited to share their interest in a historical topic, preferably with some photos or showing an item. Each talk is for a maximum of 5 minutes with a few questions afterwards. If it's relevant to Ku-ring-gai history, all the better!

16 November

Stewart Reed - May Gibbs the Artist

Stewart has a long-standing connection with Nutcote, the former home of artist May Gibbs, the creator of iconic gumnut illustrations. His talk will focus on the other artistic achievements of her very long life.

Note: The speaker's program January to June is published in the December 2023 newsletter.

General Meeting

2pm Saturday 16 March 2024

Andrew Rogers - Australians and the RMS Titanic

Andrew Rogers is one of the few people who have made the epic journey inside a Mir submersible for 2½ hours to drop down steadily about 4km into the dark, cold depths of the watery graveyard of the doomed **RMS Titanic**.



Andrew has an amazing tale to tell of his descent in 1998, as well as his subsequent research into all aspects of Australia's involvement in the fateful Titanic disaster – including all the intriguing stories of the Australians on board.

An amazing adventure.

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German Special Interest Group

Our German SIG met on Monday 11th December with 13 members present, including one prospective new member.

Tony Karrasch updated members on activity regarding online German Family History activity over the past two months.

Sue Moore and Christine Edwards reported progress on updating the group project, *German Ancestors of Ku-ring-gai Historical Society Members*. It is hoped to conduct a workshop soon.

A report received from Richard Lander on German Lutherans in South Australia was circulated, which included an article on the Hahndorf State Heritage Area.

The results of the member survey were discussed, and a form was circulated for completion.

Deb Dietz gave a very absorbing presentation on her path to German family history research including her experiences, triumphs and brick walls.

The Archion.de database was discussed - a huge Protestant record database, consisting of over 150,000 German church books, that can help you find your German ancestors.

The next meeting is on Monday 12th February at 1.30 pm. Visitors are welcome. For more information, see khs.org.au/german-sig

Peter Stehn

INTERESTING KU-RING-GAI SNIPPETS

Kissing Point

We were reminded that Ryde had previously been known as Kissing Point because it was there that the river shallowed and boats headed to Parramatta touched, or 'kissed', the bottom. As we know, Ku-ring-gai has Kissing Point Road at Turramurra. How many realise, however, that it is the same Kissing Point and that Turramurra's Kissing Point Road was so named because it was the path, or track to Ryde from the Ku-ring-gai area in the mid 1800s? As the booklet Turramurra – A Special Place, published by the Kissing Point Progress Association, puts it – "There was much interchange between Ryde (Kissing Point) and Ku-ring-gai, and one pathway linking the two areas became Kissing Point Road, officially gazetted in 1858. A wooden bridge that was built across the river survived until the 1940s". Nowadays the road ends well before reaching the Lane Cove River. Inevitably, either intentionally or in ignorance, the name Kissing Point has from time to time been locally applied to the area at the foot of Kissing Point Road. It has even been used in some street directories and appears in the name of parks and some local groups - such as the Kissing Point Progress Association itself. A proposal to officially call the lower section of South Turramurra Kissing Point was refused in 1958-59.



An early street scene of Kissing Point Rd

Image : Ku-ring-gai Historical Society

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Pearce's Corner

Anyone in Ku-ring-gai over the age of ten who does not know Pearce's Corner must surely have only recently arrived in the area. Mind you, even though it is in Wahroonga, Pearce's Corner is not in the Ku-ring-gai Local Government Area, but rather in Hornsby Shire due to boundary changes. Ku-ring-gai LGA now stops at the M1 Freeway.



*Looking south along Pennant Hills Road
from Pearce's Corner*



*At Pearce's Corner, St Pauls Anglican Church,
Wahroonga - c.1900*

Images: KHS

Nevertheless, being, as it is, just a couple of stones' throw from Wahroonga Railway Station, we Ku-ring-gai people tend to have a proprietorial feeling toward Pearce's Corner which we hope our Hornsby neighbours can tolerate. Why Pearce's Corner? Yes, there was someone called Pearce who gave it his name. Aaron Pearce came from Buckinghamshire as a 25 year-old convict in 1811 and in 1835 leased land from Frederick Unwin which he later bought. It was at the junction of "Lane Cove Rd" and Pennant Hills Rd. It is possible he was actually on the land before the formalities were processed, This was not unusual in those days. He built a slab hut near the corner on the western side of Pennant Hills Rd. Aaron was a timber getter and dug saw pits on the property and planted an orchard. In 1815 he had married another convict, Ellen Holland, and there were ten children marked down to them. Aaron died in 1849 and Ellen in 1856. The Pearce name remained in the area for many years with two sons, John and James, both having homes at Pearce's Corner on the Pacific Highway opposite St Pauls Anglican Church in 1894.

Note: These 2 articles were reprinted from July 2007 Newsletter.



Our 60th Anniversary Dinner Celebrations

The 60 year anniversary of the Ku-ring-gai Historical Society was celebrated with a dinner at the St Ives Club on Tuesday 21st November 2023. Attended by a large gathering of members and friends, the evening was highly successful. The photos capture a memorable event in the Society's history.





Copies of all photos are available from the Editor as a Jpeg file.

Irish Town

Just as the leprechauns of Ireland have faded from the sight of man, so too has Ku-ring-gai's Irish Town. Perhaps the only evidence that it ever existed is a tiny sliver of land facing Adams Street in Turramurra carrying the name *Irish Town Grove*. Yet in the early days it was recognised as a specific district by the local population. Also like the leprechauns, it was never clearly defined nor was it ever really a town.

In the sparsely populated Turramurra of the time it was, as Margaret Wyatt put it in her book on North Turramurra, "the land now bounded by Merrivale Lane and Merrivale Road in the east, to Bobbin Head Road in the west, and extending from Pentecost Avenue to Chatham Place, North Turramurra". This area fell within the land granted to Robert Pymble in 1823 and parts of which were progressively sold in the latter half of the 19th century. Access was from the Highway via 'Irish Town Road' which also defies clear definition though was in the immediate vicinity of Bannockburn and Reservoir Roads. Indeed part of it was actually incorporated into Bannockburn Road. Though the name Irish Town Road is said to have been used until as late as 1924 it never appeared in the Sands Directories which were published for Ku-ring-gai from 1903.

Those sections of the Pymble land in what was to become known as Irish Town were bought by Samuel King, Thomas Connolly, Thomas Adams, John Henry Reely, Daniel Ryan and Michael Joseph Bourke (Burke). With the exception of John Reely all were of Irish extraction though Samuel King was from Northern Ireland and a staunch Presbyterian. John Reely had been born *Johann Henri Rhule* in Germany and changed his name some time after arriving in Australia. Invariably all these people were farmers and orchardists. With these residents it is in no way surprising how the name *Irish Town* was coined.



Irish Grove Park in Turramurra Image: Ku-ring-gai Council

Turramurra has long since engulfed Irish Town but if we ever happen to be in that part of Ku-ring-gai,

as many of us are from time to time, it adds just a little to our pleasure as local residents to remember that the area was once home to many Irish people and their usually very large families.

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Phillip's Bungaroo Trek

From time to time questions arise about details of Governor Phillip's journey to Bungaroo. This was to be the first known overland journey by a white person to Ku-ring-gai. Phillip was looking for land suitable for farming. Over the intervening 217 years there have been conflicting accounts of the details. Our recently deceased member Harry Morris was our own expert on the topic and in a talk to the Society in 1997 he told of the conclusions he had reached. In short, Phillip's party landed near King Avenue, Balgowlah on Saturday, 16 April 1788. They travelled inland but met a large lake "surrounded with a bog and a large marsh" so travelled to the coast and walked north along the coastal beach before turning inland. That night they camped on high ground near Allambie Heights.

The next morning was Sunday, 16 March, and they pressed further west before coming to that part of Middle Harbour at the tidal headwaters above Roseville Bridge where they camped. This was named Bungaroo. On the Monday, 17th April, a number of the party crossed into Ku-ring-gai and when about fifteen miles from the sea coast he had, in his own words, "a very fine view of the mountains inland". This would have been in the vicinity of Dalrymple Hay Nature Reserve on Mona Vale Rd. The forest was, however, impenetrable and the land generally poor so the party returned to Bungaroo that night and moved camp a little further downstream. Next day, Tuesday 18th April, they travelled further downstream where they were picked up and returned to Sydney by boats sent by Captain John Hunter.

Note: These 2 articles were reprinted from Jan/Feb 2006 Newsletter

New Members

We extend a warm welcome to the following members who have recently joined the Society.

Anna Fraser	from	Killara
Terry & Sue Irving	from	Killara
Julie Paine	from	Killara

We hope you will find your membership rewarding and look forward to your participation in the many activities



Image: Charles Kerry - Museum of Arts and Applied Sciences



Image: Google Street View

Then:

The railway bridge over Stoney Creek Road at the Intersection of Gordon Road, Gordon c. 1900.

Now:

The view in June 2022:

Stoney Creek Road is now Monavale Road, and Gordon Road has become the Pacific Highway.

How long since you have looked in old family albums? You might find a great 'Then' photo. Get it out and send to the Editor who is waiting to publish. We will provide the 'Now' photo.

Webinars

The Museums of History NSW website has a series of highly interesting webinars that would be of interest to researchers of family history, researching houses and of convicts who were transported from UK. Listed below are some of the webinars which are now available.

1. The recording of the 'Finding resources about immigration' webinar is now available for viewing on the [Museums of History NSW website](#).

Use the following link to view the recording: [Finding resources about immigration \(mhnsw.au\)](https://www.mhnsw.au/webinars/finding-resources-about-immigration)

2. The recording of the 'Finding resources about the history of a house' webinar is now available for viewing on the [Museums of History NSW website](#).

Use the following link to view the recording: [Finding resources about the history of a house \(mhnsw.au\)](https://www.mhnsw.au/webinars/finding-resources-about-the-history-of-a-house)

3. The recording of the 'Using sensitive collections for your research' webinar is now available for viewing on the [Museums of History NSW website](#).

Use the following link to view the recording: [Using sensitive collections for your research \(mhnsw.au\)](https://www.mhnsw.au/webinars/using-sensitive-collections-for-your-research)

4. The recording of the 'Finding resources about convict history' webinar is now available for viewing on the [Museums of History NSW website](#).

Use the following link to view the recording: [Finding resources about convict history \(mhnsw.au\)](https://www.mhnsw.au/webinars/finding-resources-about-convict-history)

5. The most recent webinar Public Works Photographs: 'An unsung treasure' is now available on the [Museums of History NSW website](#). : <https://mhnsw.au/webinars/public-works-photographs-an-unsung-treasure/>

Should you require further information you can send an email to learning.library@sl.nsw.gov.au

DIARY DATES

FEBRUARY 2024

Monday 12 : 1.30pm - German SIG meeting

Saturday 17 : 2pm - General Meeting

From the film vaults

(See page 1 for details)

MARCH 2024

Saturday 16 : 2pm - General Meeting

Australians and RMS Titanic

Presenter : Andrew Rogers

APRIL 2024

Monday 8 : 1.30pm - German SIG meeting

Saturday 20 : 2pm - General Meeting

Life So Full of Promise

Presenter : Ross McMullin

MAY 2024

Saturday 18 : 2pm - General Meeting

The Great Expositions

Presenter : Paul Storm

The Research Rooms

The research rooms are open every Tuesday and every Friday from 10am to 2pm for research and general enquiries.

KHS bank details are as follows:-

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Newsletter Details

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