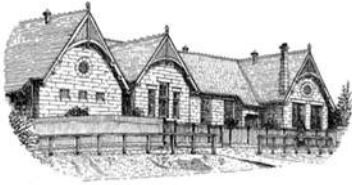


KU-RING-GAI HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.



(Including Ku-ring-gai Family History Group) • Patron: The Mayor of Ku-ring-gai

December 2021 Newsletter Vol. 39 No. 10

Research Centre : 799 Pacific Highway Gordon • web: www.khs.org.au

Mail: PO Box 109 Gordon NSW 2072 • Ph: (02) 9499 4568 • email: khs@khs.org.au



The President and Committee wish all our readers and their families a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous and Happy New Year in 2022.

the **President's message**

I am sure you will agree with me that this year has certainly been a very strange one. As soon as it seemed we were able to start making any plans, again we were controlled by restrictions brought about by COVID-19. Even keeping up with the changes in restrictions has been challenging.

Thankfully, with the vaccination rate rising each day, we can enjoy more freedom and have confidence to 'come out from under our doonas'.

I am looking forward to a more structured 2022 when, hopefully, we will be able to hold our Family and General Meetings in person and once again enjoy each other's company during the various activities of KHS.

I would like to thank the volunteers who have helped to keep the wheels of the Society turning during this past year, and, on behalf of the Committee, I wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

In the meantime, take care.

Lorna Watt



General Meeting

2pm Saturday 15th January 2022

Out of the Dark, Into the Light

Presented by Laila Ellmoos

Drawing on 5,000 'Demolition Book' photographs and glass negatives for the *Developing Sydney: Capturing Change 1900-1920* exhibition, City of Sydney historian Laila Ellmoos will show how digital technology revealed a 'lost city' of buildings and streetscapes – and rich details of Sydney life a century ago.

Laila Ellmoos is a professional historian based in Sydney. She is a historian with the City of Sydney Council and has been in this role since 2010. Laila is passionate about communicating history to a wide range of audiences through exhibitions, talks and the written word. She is a long-standing member of the Professional Historians Association of NSW & ACT and was its President in 2010–13.



Research Centre

The Research Centre will close at 12 noon Friday 10th December, 2021 and re-open at 10am Tuesday 11th January, 2022.

Hoisted on the Shoulders of Another Train!

The front page headline in *The Sun*, 15th March 1935 was striking: 'AMAZING NORTH SHORE RAIL SMASH - CARRIAGE FLUNG HIGH IN AIR'.

It was pre-dawn on the morning of Friday 15th March 1935 when a steel passenger carriage, weighing 50 tons and carrying 11 passengers, crashed into a slow-moving goods train in a sensational early morning accident near Gordon Station. The passenger carriage was thrown 12 feet into the air, landing on the top of some goods carriages and smashing the guard's van to matchwood. Incredibly, not one of the passengers was seriously hurt.

The electric passenger train had left Hornsby at 5.10am, en route to the city and it was still dark. The goods train was moving backwards from the points after having shunted several trucks into the council's depot about a mile up the line from Gordon Station.

The passengers, mostly in the front car, had a terrifying experience. The first they knew of the trouble was when the driver of their train leapt through the door of his compartment into the middle of the first carriage. A second later, they felt a terrific jolt and were thrown from their seats to all parts of the carriage. When they struggled to their feet and looked through the windows, they found themselves on top of three goods train trucks, and about 12 feet up in the air. Of the eleven passengers in the front car, only one was taken to Hornsby Hospital, in shock – the others, merely bruised, refused treatment.



Dawn revealed an amazing litter of wreckage, scattered for yards on either side of the lines. The spectacle of one carriage completely on top of three goods train trucks quickly attracted several hundred residents. There was no sign of the guard's van at the rear of the train. Where it once stood was

nothing but a tangled mass of wheels, steel and splintered wood. Luckily the guard was not in the van at the time as he was helping outside with shunting operations.

In some ways the smash helped to remove a popular misconception as to the risk of electrocution when an electric train meets with a mishap. It was little understood at the time that there were ample automatic devices designed to shut off power in emergencies. The Railway Department, along with the Road Transport Department, was able to restore the movement of passengers and the huge task of recovery was underway by 9 o'clock.

The above is just a brief summary of what was written in *The Sun* that day.

For more information visit :

www.trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/page/24643311

Neil Falconer

----- // -----

Family History Group

The end of this year approaches and preparations are being made for hopefully a more consistent 2022, devoid of lockdowns and with more regular sessions for the Family History Group. With the lessening of restrictions we are feeling safe about recommencing our 'first Saturday of the month morning workshops' from 11am to 1pm on Saturday 5th February in our research centre. The afternoon meetings will also resume on the same day at 2pm in Meeting Room 1, followed by afternoon tea.

Topics and speakers for these meetings will be announced on the KHS webpage as soon as they are finalised and also in the next newsletter (due out last week of January 2022).

Don't forget our picnic afternoon tea in Gordon Park on 4th December from 2 pm. All members of KHS are invited to join us. The plan is to be together and to renew friendships. It will be BYO – bring your own drinks, coffee/tea, and something to eat. Bring a rug or a picnic chair to the park on Werona Avenue at Gordon (near the Railway Station). We will gather under the gum trees at the Werona end of the park. There is plenty of parking nearby. If it is wet the picnic will be cancelled. In the event of doubtful weather, Susan Alder (0409 981 605) or Joan Stebbing (0412 617 077) will be available to give you the final decision after 12 noon. We look forward to seeing you then. Wishing all members a safe and happy Christmas and a healthy 2022.

Sue Holmes

The Starkey Family

Some time back, last year, we had a speaker giving us guidance in how to search information on family members using Government records. When question-time appeared to end, I raised my hand and there was general amusement that the name used as an example was that of my great-great grandparents – Starkey.

William Starkey, bellows maker, came to Australia as a convict in 1819 and secured his Certificate of Freedom in 1834. His wife, Martha Ann Starkey, arrived in Sydney with two sons in 1832 and family legend has it she turned to making the family recipe for ginger beer to keep herself and her children.



John Starkey

John Starkey died in 1898 and his eighth child, Frank Oswald Starkey, took over as Manager – he died in 1910 and from 1912, when the firm became Starkeys Ltd., operations continued until the 1950s when it was bought out by Shelleys, closing a long history of the largest ginger beer manufacturing firm in the Southern Hemisphere and one

of the country's longest-running cordial and aerated water businesses.

Rosemary Watson

(John Starkey's Great Great Granddaughter)

----- // -----

KHS Tours

The tour team is pleased to report that several tour venues have been confirmed for early 2022. Our tours will be run according to the State Health Department rules in place at the time of the tour. These rules may include masks, maintaining a physical distance and vaccination requirements. Members will be kept fully informed.

Our first tour for 2022 will be to **Cockatoo Island, UNESCO World Heritage site** and is scheduled for **Thursday 17th February**. Travel will be by train and ferry. Following the tour, lunch will be at the *Societe* cafe with wonderful views of the harbour. Our selected tour is called the *Sandstone to Steel* tour and covers many interesting sites and the fascinating history of this island in Sydney Harbour. Our tour avoids steps. Water bottles, hat, sunscreen and closed shoes are recommended. Travel and food will be at **own expense**. The cost of the tour will be \$25. Booking details will be in the February Newsletter.

Our second tour in 2022 has been confirmed for **Thursday 24th March**. The venues include the historic *Arms of Australia Inn* at Emu Plains and the renowned *Museum of Fire* in Penrith - (**Please Save the Date**). Travel will be by bus. Details will be in the March Newsletter.

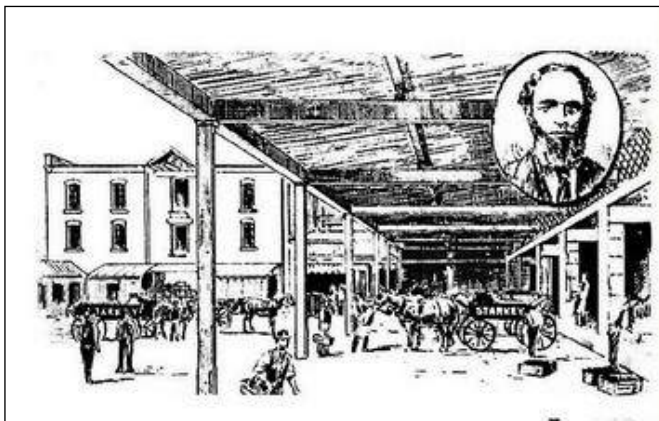
NOTE .

If you would like to join our tour to the **Sub Base Platypus on Thursday 9th December this year**, we have two vacancies. If you are interested please contact



Yvette on 0414 249 737 as soon as possible.

Your Tour Team



John Starkey's factory at 164 Phillip Street Sydney c. 1875
(Inset : John Starkey)

After William was released he established a factory in Elizabeth Street Sydney around 1838 and was so successful he moved to larger premises in Castlereagh Street. About 1860 his elder son John joined him and an additional site in Phillip Street was listed under John Starkey as 'lemonade, cordial and soda water manufacturer'. Father and son remained in partnership until 1875 when John took over. He and brother William owned a couple of houses around Rowe and Moore Streets and 25 acres at Marrickville where he rested the horses that pulled the delivery carts.



Starkey Ginger Beer bottles

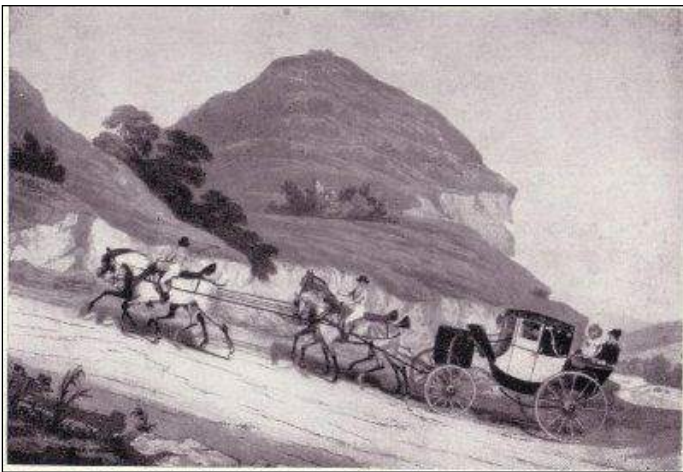
Taking a Gap Year in the 18th Century

Some seventy members of the 3F Club, Fullerton's Faithful Followers, attended *Susannah's lecture, in May, on the Grand Tour. Her allusion to the modern Gap Year was most apt in that the young men of the 18th Century on their tour lived rough, saw the sights, explored the opposite sex and gathered souvenirs - just as they do today. The main difference is that in the 18th Century the travellers were almost all young aristocrats with family wealth behind them. For young men, then and now, it is seen as a male rite of passage.

In the 18th Century they travelled first to France where they obtained phrase books, learned about currency conversion and bought guidebooks which led them to historic sites. Today all these things are in the Lonely Planet series.

Most of them had some Latin and Greek and some a little French, and a whole industry arose around them to supply services - which included many clever swindles and scams. Most had servants and a tutor to try to make it a real learning experience, some even a doctor to accompany them. Some travelled in real style - Byron going on his Grand Tour in a copy of Napoleon's carriage.

They all went to Paris where, evidently, riotous



A carriage used by young men on tours in the 18th Century

bands of drunken young Englishmen causing trouble was the norm - as a consequence, many of them did not learn much. They did however, try to call on as many famous people as possible to embellish their journals. Voltaire had over four hundred of them through his salon. James Boswell, who was a dreadful snob who 'collected' famous people, called on Rousseau.

Boswell also highlighted another aspect of the Grand Tour when he boasted he had 'had sixty prostitutes in three years and ten doses of the clap'. He chased women for the rest of his life.

Then it was over the Alps to Italy which was a really hazardous journey. Carriages were dismantled and manhandled over the mountains to be reassembled on the other side. The tourists rode mules to the top and were carried down the other side in a chair. Rome and Naples were their destinations as they were seen to be the centres of classic antiquity, which was thought to be the height of good taste. Dr Johnson said, "A man who has not been to Italy will always feel inferior".

This was the normal route of the Grand Tour, very few went to places such as Germany and Holland and only Byron headed to the East. Susannah recounted many fascinating stories of the personalities of those times who 'took the Grand Tour'.

Sex was a large part of any tour. It was a case of 'go and sow your wild oats out of England' and in fact many fathers gave their sons recommendations to madams and famous courtesans. Buying a mistress during the tour was not seen as anything out of the ordinary.

On his tour in 1739-41 Horace Walpole, who became enamoured of Italy, collected naughty pictures and pornography like many others and had his portrait painted - which was *de rigueur* for these travellers.



Lord Byron



James Boswell

Two of the men who took part in the tours

Huge collections of souvenirs were shipped home to England - many of which were later essential to the establishment of the National Gallery and the British Museum. Some did not regard the artefacts shipped home as important. On the death of the Duke of Bridgewater, he of canal fame, all the curios he had sent home during his Grand Tour were found still in their packages, they had never been unwrapped.

On his tour Wordsworth braved the Terror in France and was in Paris at the height of the guillotining. He fathered a child while in the South of France and

sent money regularly for its upbringing.

During the subsequent long wars with France, domestic tourism became more patriotic and the Lake District, Scotland and the Welsh Mountains were the destinations of choice. The Grand Tour lost favour with the aristocracy in the 19th Century because, as the middle classes got richer, they also started to do the tour and the aristocracy did not want to mix with them. They would be astonished today to see the huge numbers of young people from all parts of many societies doing the modern equivalent of the Grand Tour.

Susannah's lecture was, as usual, lively, succinct and interesting - she is a great storyteller. She proved, at least to my satisfaction, that there are great similarities between a Grand Tour in the 18th Century and a Gap Year in the 21st - except for the gender balance!

* *Susannah Fullerton OAM, FRSN. Literary Historian and President of the Jane Austen Society.*

Patrick Dodd.

----- // -----

KHS Speakers' Program for 2022

Beverley Dunstan, our Speakers' Program Co-ordinator, has kindly organised the speakers for our General Meetings for next year.

The following is a list for the next six months.

15 January

Laila ELLMOOS -

Out of the Dark, Into the Light

Drawing on 5,000 'Demolition Book' photographs and glass negatives for the *Developing Sydney: Capturing Change 1900-1920* exhibition, City of Sydney historian Laila Ellmoos will show how digital technology revealed a 'lost city' of buildings and streetscapes – and rich details of Sydney life a century ago.

19 February

Greg de MOORE -

Finding Sanity – An Australian Story

Australia's greatest mental health achievement - the discovery of lithium for the treatment of bi-polar disorder, a story that began in a World War II jungle prison camp – is the subject of this talk by psychiatrist and historian Greg de Moore.

19 March

David WILKINS OAM -

Three Vietnam Wars from 1946 to 1975

Military historian and KHS member David Wilkins discusses the causes and impact – and the controversies – of the 'American War', the colonial war that preceded it, and the one that followed.

16 April

Easter Saturday - **No meeting**

21 May

Margaret CAMERON-ASH -

Lying for the Admiralty

Lawyer and academic Margaret Cameron-Ash's latest book sets out, through meticulous research, to explain how Capt. Cook could have overlooked such obvious features as Bass Strait and the entrance to Pt. Jackson. He didn't miss them: he hid them. A postponed nod to the 250th Cook anniversary.

18 June

Dr Reinhard RONNEBECK -

Grace Cossington Smith – A Ku-ring-gai Local

Reinhard's talk explores the life and work of a quiet pioneer of modernism who practised her art in Turramurra. Senior clinical psychologist, Reinhard's many presentations to U3A and the SMSA draw on his life-long interest in art history.

New Members

In October we had 3 new members join our Society. Welcome to the Society.

Andrew **SWEENEY** from Killara

Wendy **BLAXLAND** from Wahroonga

Jono **HERRMAN** from Killara

We hope you will find your membership rewarding, and look forward to your participation in the many activities we have to offer now that we are recovering from this current lock-down.

Correction.

The address under the photo of Abbotsholme in the November newsletter should have read : -
Cnr Lane Cove Road and Greengate Road
Killara.

A Day Remembered

21 January 1991

We were on holiday in our house at Shoal Bay. Late in the afternoon our neighbour said "I think you people should go home. There seems to have been a storm".

My adult children and I set off for St Ives. At the end of the motorway at Wahroonga we found dozens of people walking up the Pacific Highway and as we progressed south, the numbers increased. We called into my mother who had an apartment on the top floor of a block near Ray Street, Turramurra. She was in her 80s and we found her paddling around on her water-soaked carpets. She was anxious and alarmed.



Where is the house ?

As we travelled toward Killeaton Street, driving became more difficult because of the trees and debris on the road. I stopped at our gate. We could not see the house and when we climbed over some gum trees that were strewn across the drive, we could see the house. On entering, we found that there was no electricity. The windows on the western side of the house had blown in, and those on the east blown out. The blinds in my daughter's bedroom were shredded and shards of glass were embedded in the opposing wall. Further examination of the house revealed the damage. We could see the stars through the roof above my study. The only intact room was the kitchen. We settled down as best we could for the rest of the night. Remember there were no mobile phones in those days.

Our house is set back from the road and we have a pole between the street and the house that carries the electricity and phone lines. It had broken off, breaking the electricity line, but there was sufficient slack in the phone line to enable it to be alive.



A Warning Sign

In the morning my wife phoned to say that on the previous evening she could not find any service station open to get sufficient petrol for the homeward trip. I spent time talking to insurance companies for my mother and myself and to the SES.

With the family reunited we surveyed the damage. Trees everywhere were shredded. Our survey showed that the sauna was on the bottom of the pool and two gum trees were across it. Two turpentine trees were leaning on the back of the house making the flat roof into a curved roof. Three gum trees lay across the drive. The SES turned up with tarpaulins to cover most of the rear of the house and part of the front, and to rearrange tiles on the roof. Our daughter and her friends installed the tarps.



The product of their labour – Tarps in place !



A neighbour kindly ran an extension cord to our house enabling us to get hot water and use a one plate cooking top. Out with the barbeque.

Try to find a licensed pole erector after a storm. What a laugh! I eventually found one in Dural but we had a wait for his service. So, we lived/camped for a few weeks, until electrical service was restored. We depended on friends for showers and washing clothes.

A daily routine evolved that made us think of prisoner-of-war camps. No electricity meant no TV and living by candlelight at night. The pattern was early to bed and up at dawn to start work. We have half an acre of land which meant that there were piles of branches and trees that needed to be cut up and taken to the street front where the council and the army picked them up. A battery radio and the SMH were our contacts with the outside world.



The Author removing debris



The crane lifting trees from the rear yard to the front of the house

Cooking was done on the one plate cooker and the barbeque. I have never since used a barbeque! One evening when we were cleaning up in the front yard, a blue-heeler, from across the valley, that had adopted us, was sneaking up the drive with the meat that was to be our dinner and had been defrosting on the kitchen bench.

Our insurance company arranged for the trees to be removed from the house. A crane was brought down from Newcastle to lift trees over the house into the front yard but that was the end, it was up to us to get rid of them. A surprise. Then repair of the house could begin. We gave the job to Peter Bidencope's sons: one did the roof; the other the structural job.



The arrival of materials for repairing our home

Initially, our insurance company allowed partial repair to the electrics until the work done by the Bidencopes was complete. That meant that half the house was alright by day.

Dealing with the insurance companies was interesting. The company that my mother used tied all of the replacements of curtain and carpets to two vendors. Our insurer gave me a handful of cheques to use to best advantage. The outcome was that my mother had coverage for nylon carpets, and we could use wool.

What did this experience show? It showed how to be resilient and self-sufficient - and the value of friends. It gave the feeling that one wanted to give something back. Our daughter joined the SES and I became involved in community activity when I retired.

Many members of the Society will have their own memories of that time. Fortunately, there were no deaths but there were injuries when people got out to survey the damage.

Morrison Hammond

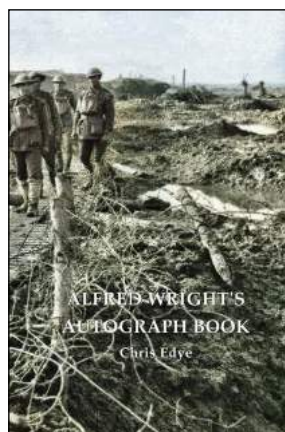
----- // -----

Alfred Wright's Autograph Book

by Chris Edye

Member Chris Edye was good enough to offer to do our first talk by Zoom. His topic was about the kind of autograph book so many of us remember from our school days. It was kept by Lt. Alfred Wright from the time he enlisted in the AIF in December 1917 until the end of World War I. Chris used the 133 autographs, along with other sources and photographs, to painstakingly piece together the story of Lt. Wright's war service. There was added local interest as some of the men had been with Wright when he was on the staff of the Engineers Officer Training School at Roseville in 1916.

Chris rounded out his fascinating story with details of Wright's turbulent life after the war, until his death in 1932. For those of you who missed the talk, a recording is available. As well, Chris has published a book also called *Alfred Wright's Autograph Book* (ETT Imprint, 2020). His talk showed what rich historical stories lurk in the most unexpected places.



Judith Godden

DIARY DATES

DECEMBER 2021

Saturday 4 : **2pm - Family History – A Day Out**
A picnic in the park (see FHG report)

Thursday 9 : Sub Base Tour

JANUARY 2022

Saturday 15 : **2pm - General Meeting**
Out of the Dark, Into the Light
Presenter : Laila Ellmoos

FEBRUARY 2022

Saturday 5 : **11am - Family History - Workshop**
2pm - FHG Meeting

Thursday 17 : Tour - Cockatoo Island

Saturday 19 : **2pm - General Meeting**
Finding Sanity - An Australian Story
Presenter : Greg de Moore

Note

As meetings may have to be cancelled or postponed at short notice, please check the KHS website for any changes.

For correspondence :-

The Secretary ~ secretary@khs.org.au
Membership ~ membership@khs.org.au
KHS website ~ webmaster@khs.org.au
Treasurer ~ treasurer@khs.org.au

Treasurer's Report

Our Income over Expenditure for October 2021 showed a surplus of \$490.08 with our main Income from Membership Fees, Research and Book Sales. Our main Expense this month was for the Anti Virus Programme for all our computers.

As this is the last Newsletter before Christmas, may I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Hopefully 2022 will see us meeting face to face again and seeing life return slowly back to 'normal'.

Please keep safe and well.

Our bank account details are:

Ku-ring-gai Historical Society

Westpac Bank BSB: 032-083

Account No: 248971

ADMINISTRATION

President	Lorna Watt	0402 028 034
Vice President	Annet Latham	0431 479 987
Treasurer	Marilyn van Eerde	0418 269 126
Secretary	Judith Godden	0408 967 937
Past President	Jenny Joyce	0404 473 767
Committee	Ralph Davis	
	Neil Falconer	9488 7293
	Morrison Hammond	0425 303 525
	Geoff Little	0411 885 870
	Yvette Reeve	0414 249 737
Family History Group	Sue Holmes, Convenor	0414 255 003
	Susan Alder	0409 981 605
	Jo Harris OAM	9489 4393
	Margaret Holland	9488 5452
	Jean Smith	9498 4468
	Joan Stebbing	9489 6476
	Pam Tout	9488 9807

Appointees

Accessions	Jennifer Wallin	9983 1871
Book Sales	Margaret Holland	9488 5452
Catering	Vicki Williams	0401 914 524
Computer Systems	Peter Stehn	9489 9488
Curator	Ann Barry	9144 6480
Built Heritage Group	Lorna Watt	0402 028 034
	Trish Thomson	9499 8659
Historian Editor	Lorna Watt	0402 028 034
Indexing	Beth Facer	9988 0823
Newsletter Editor	Geoff Little	editor@khs.org.au
Public Officer	Helen Whitsed	9416 5825
Research (Fam Hist.)	Joan Stebbing	9489 6476
Tour Contact	Yvette Reeve	0414 249 737
Speakers' Programme	Beverley Dunstan	9419 8526
Web Masters	Peter Stehn	9489 9488
	Ralph Davis	webmaster@khs.org.au
Welfare Officer	Jill Nicholson	9144 6948

Research Centre

The Research Centre has re-opened on Tuesdays and Fridays between 10 am and 12 noon.

khs.org.au

© Ku-ring-gai Historical Society Inc. and authors. The content may be reproduced as sourced from this newsletter with acknowledgment to named authors.

Newsletter Deadline

Please send email copy for publication to editor@khs.org.au as early as possible, **but no later than 13th of each month**. Copy is accepted on the basis that Ku-ring-gai Historical Society has editing rights and that readers can reproduce it in whole or in part with acknowledgment. If possible, material should be in electronic form, with typing as **WORD** docs and photos as **jpeg** files and with as little formatting as possible.