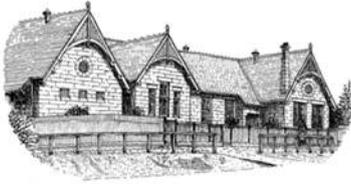


KU-RING-GAI HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.



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

February 2022 Newsletter Vol. 40 No. 1

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

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the. **President's message**

I was so looking forward to starting the New Year. How quickly things can change! But, we must stay positive. KHS activities will be planned as usual and hope that they will not have to be cancelled, postponed or the venues changed at short notice, as was the case for our January meeting. For those who were able to be part of that Zoom meeting, I hope you enjoyed *Out of the Dark, into the Light* presented by historian Laila Ellmoos from the City Of Sydney. I am most grateful to Laila and her colleague, historian Lisa Murray, for organising and making that Zoom presentation possible.

As I have commented previously, I urge all members to consult the KHS website for notifications regarding changes to any of our activities. A few members, however, do not have access to the internet. If you know someone in that situation why not make contact and invite them to join you if a planned face-to-face meeting is changed to a Zoom presentation?

The Committee is planning various activities for 2022 and would welcome your suggestions for inclusion. Also, sometimes you may not be happy with some aspects of KHS. Please let us know your thoughts. These suggestions, therefore, will result in improving the enjoyment of the Society for all.

Remember, KHS involves everyone, and its organisation cannot just be left to a few.

These are still challenging times for all of us, but at this stage we plan to hold face-to-face Family History and General meetings in February, but who knows?

Take care and stay safe,

Lorna Watt

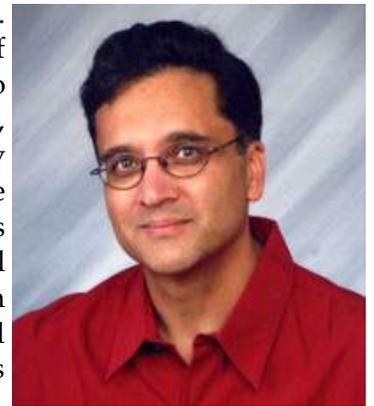
General Meeting

2pm Saturday 19th February 2022

Finding Sanity - An Australian Story

Associate Professor Greg de Moore is an author, historian and a consultant psychiatrist at Sydney's Westmead Hospital. He works as a clinician, teacher and researcher in the fields of neuropsychiatry, general hospital psychiatry, deliberate self-harm and the history of medicine.

Born in Melbourne of parents who migrated to Australia from Sri Lanka, Greg has lived in Sydney for over 20 years. Outside of the hospital he has combined his medical interests with Australian history to write and co-write three books. His latest book *Finding Sanity*,



Greg de Moore

is the story of Australia's greatest mental health achievement: the discovery of lithium for the treatment of bipolar disorder.

From the jungles of a WW2 prison camp to modern medicine, *Finding Sanity* is the story of Doctor John Cade as it explores his life in detail, starting with that of his parents, and then delving into his own family life spent as caretaker and psychiatrist in asylums in country Victoria during the 1940s.



John Cade

This is a story that began in a World War II jungle prison camp and is the subject of the talk by Greg de Moore.

Research Centre

The Research Centre is open on Tuesdays and Fridays between 10am and 12 noon.

As opening hours may be altered at short notice, please check the KHS website for any changes.

khs.org.au

PRISONERS OF WAR IN AUSTRALIA

Part One

When one mentions prisoners of war in Australia during WWII, most older Australians think of the 1944 breakout in Cowra*. Few readers of this article would think of Italian prisoners of war scattered across Australia, even in St Ives, where breakouts occurred.

The beginning of WWII

On 10 June 1940, Italy entered the Second World War on the side of Germany. Because of this, many countries started to see Italian descendants as a threat to their nation. Subsequently, from 1940, the rising fear among the Australian government and community, Italian descendants living in Australia lost their privilege as free persons.

Laws were implemented against the Italian descendants, the so-called 'Enemy Aliens', to protect the nation from falling to the enemy (the Nazi and its allies). The enforced laws were a way to regulate the Italians through registration as local residents, prior approval of moving, and travel restriction within the community. This was a task implemented by the National Security (Aliens Control) Regulations, 1939, for 'Enemy Aliens', such as the Italians and Italian descendants to follow, in order to live in Australia. The restrictions implemented through the use of the National Security Act 1939 increased to house them in internment camps which were located in every state of the country.

The Italian National Ossario at Murchison, Victoria, holds the remains of 130 Italian soldiers and civilians who died while interned in Australia.

Prisoners of war and internees had different rights and authorities treated them differently. Authorities could force prisoners of war to work, for example, while internees had to be paid for any work they did.

During the course of the war, Great Britain and their allies captured approximately 400,000 Italian troops



Italian prisoners of war in the POW camp at Cowra

in Ethiopia and North Africa who were sent to POW camps all over the world, including Australia.

Between 1941 and 1945, Australia received custody of 18,420 Italian POWs, mostly from India. Others went to India and South Africa. During this time, prisoners wore burgundy/maroon clothing.

Because they had no facilities, the British Government asked the Commonwealth to accept prisoners. Italian prisoners of war began arriving in early 1941. They were rank and file. Later in that year about half were officers. In May 1941, 2,000 Italian prisoners of war captured in Libya arrived in



The POW camp at Cowra.

Photo: Australian War Memorial

Sydney, the average age for the prisoners was 24, many were under weight. Some of the camps that the government built were at: Tatura, Victoria; Hay and Cowra, New South Wales; Loveday, South Australia. Other camps used existing facilities. Many prisoners built their own accommodation.

* The Cowra breakout occurred on 5 August 1944, when 1,104 Japanese prisoners of war attempted to escape from a prisoner of war camp near Cowra, in New South Wales, Australia. It was the largest prison escape of World War II, as well as one of the bloodiest. During the escape and ensuing manhunt, 4 Australian soldiers and 231 Japanese soldiers were killed. The remaining escapees were re-captured and imprisoned.

Morrison Hammond

Part two

' looks at the effects of the Armistice with Italy '
in the March Newsletter.

Happy New Year to you all.

Family History Friday has started again from 10am to 12 noon on Fridays. FHG members will be available to assist you with your family history and you are welcome to use the computers and library to continue private research.

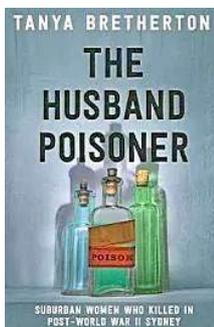
On Saturday, February 5 at 11am, we will have our first workshop for two years.

Lorna Watt is going to teach us how to use SIX Maps to find the history of the houses in which our families have lived. If you plan to attend the workshop, you will need to book as numbers are



limited to 15. To book please call the Research Centre on Friday between 10am and 12 noon or my mobile number, leave a message if the phone is unattended and I will return your call.

At 2pm on Saturday February 5, our speaker is Dr Tanya Bretherton who has a PhD in Sociology with special interests in narrative life history and social history. Dr Bretherton has published four true crime history books. All four of Tanya's books are in Ku-ring-gai Library and have been shortlisted or winners of various literary prizes. She will talk on the most recent book -The Husband Poisoner - which focuses on life for women in post war Sydney. She will also talk about her sources for ideas for her books and the research process she undergoes. She has great research skills and the background scenarios to her books may help you understand your ancestors better and could really help to enliven some family histories.



We hope to see you at meetings in 2022. Please remember before you turn up to a meeting, to check our web page for the latest news.

In March our speakers include Clare Brown and Judith Dunn OAM and in April we welcome Lorna Watt and Patrick Dodd.

For a list of topics see page 8 under 'Diary Dates'.

Sue Holmes

KHS Speakers' Program for 2022

The January to June list of Speakers and their subjects for 2022 was published in the December 2021 newsletter.

The following is the list for July to November 2022.

16 July

Ian THOMPSON - More Australian Inventions

Industrial chemist Ian Thompson takes a look at the people and science behind some of the more iconic inventions and innovations from colonial to contemporary times. If you missed Ian's first talk, catch up with this one. There's so much more than the Hills Hoist and the Victa lawnmower.

20 August

David ROSENBERG - Pine Gap

Ex-hi tech spy David Rosenberg who worked at Pine Gap for 18 years, gives an insider's account of what happens behind the gates of the strategically important and controversial joint facility which operated in the desert south of Alice Springs since the 1960s.

17 September

Ian BURNET - The Tasman Map

Author Ian Burnet sets his talk on the mosaic map in the Mitchel Library vestibule against the background of the New Dutch Republic's struggles with its maritime rivals. By 1644 sixteen separate discoveries had resulted in an identifiable map of 'Australia'.

15 October

Patrick DODD - The Holtermann Collection

Recovered from a garden shed in Chatswood in 1951, the 3,500 glass plates that constitute the Holtermann Collection are the world's most complete record of the gold rush era, and a treasure of the State Library. A very informed talk from State Library volunteer and KHS member, Patrick Dodd.

20 November

David HUNT - Girt Nation

Another rollicking ride with author David Hunt as he speaks about *Girt Nation*, the latest book in his series of prize-winning unauthorized histories. Meet a colourful cast of characters from the formative period of Australia's nationhood. There will be books for sale.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Starkey Family

I was interested to read Rosemary Watson's article about her great great grandfather John Starkey and his ginger beer factory.

In the 1950s Starkeys Ltd had a large factory in Bridge Road, Stanmore. We lived at Stanmore and in December 1953 at age 15, I took a Christmas vacation job at this factory. In those days there was a deposit paid on the glass bottles and people would return the empties to the shops when buying more drinks or sometimes just to get the deposit back. Children were always keen to find and collect empties to get the deposit money.

Starkeys' bottles had a symbol on them, a star and a key – Starkey! Shelleys had a shell symbol on their bottles and Marchants had a spoked wheel. The shopkeepers had to keep the bottle brands separate so that empties in each box belonged to the correct company.



Starkeys



Shelleys



Marchants

My job was to unload the delivery trucks returning with empties and put the contents of the boxes on a conveyer belt where they went to a bottle washing machine before being refilled. It was a messy job as the empties often had some liquid still in them which splashed over you as you unloaded. One could only hope that the liquid was soft drink!

There were quite a few young men recently arrived from war-torn Europe working in the factory. I remember being amazed at how much they ate and told my mother about them. She suggested they may have been half starved for years, during the war. It was quite amusing hearing the Aussie workers teaching these migrants English. All they seemed to be taught was how to swear.

Queen Elizabeth was making her first visit to Sydney in February 1954 and Starkeys came out with a new celebratory flavour called 'Queen's

Toast'. We were allowed to take drinks from the production line before the crown seals were put on. We all tried the Queen's Toast, it was pink and sickly sweet. Hardly anyone in the factory liked it much. Ginger beer was much more popular. It seems they were bought out by Shelleys soon after.

I was happy to return to school having decided a soft drink factory was not for me. The next Christmas holidays I got a job in a biscuit factory – much better!

The Starkeys' building is still standing but is now an office complex with a courtyard café called 'Starkeys on Bridge' – dog and child friendly.

Ah, the gentrification of the inner west.

Graeme Collins

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A Day Remembered

Thank you for the most interesting newsletter. The story from Morrison Hammond [A Day Remembered, December 2021 Newsletter] brought back some memories to me. I am pretty sure that was the storm on the North Shore that my husband was involved in. He was a leading hand linesman for Prospect Electricity for many years, and it was around that time they were called down from Windsor Depot to help restore the power to the area. I remember him speaking of the terrible devastation, especially from the large trees.

They were away for 2 or 3 days down there. Those days, as mentioned in the article, there were no mobile phones, and when they went out on jobs like this, we at home did not hear from them at all; until they finally arrived home, very dirty and exhausted. They just kept on working, and you expected them when you saw them again - not sure if that would be allowed these days!



Joy Shepherd, - Vice President

Colo Shire Family History Group Inc

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Letters to the Editor are welcomed, as we would love to publish a selection of letters each month!

Simply email editor@khs.org.au – our publication deadline is the 13th of the month.

Ku-ring-gai... *Then...* and **Now** by Dick Whitaker

To welcome in 2022, this month we begin a new column featuring snapshots from Ku-ring-gai's past, compared with the same scenes today.

Thank you to Dick Whitaker for getting us started with this idea!



Then:

Looking east on Pittwater Road (now Mona Vale Rd) towards Rosedale Road, St Ives in 1922. The War Memorial is on the right and the St Ives Public School is visible in the centre of the image.



Now:

The same view in recent times, courtesy of Google Street View. The War Memorial is still visible but the St Ives Public School building (no longer a school) is hidden behind the trees.

Do you have any 'Then & Now' photos of Ku-ring-gai? We'd love you to share them with us!

Send them to editor@khs.org.au along with their descriptions. If possible, please also tell us where the photos came from, so that we can attribute them to the appropriate photographer or source.

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Untold Stories: Women Transported from Britain to NSW

Carol Liston AO

More than 46 people logged in on 20 November to hear Carol talk. Her topic was her and Kathrine Reynolds' latest research findings about women transported to NSW during 1800–1836. Drawing on their database of some 5,000 women, Carol debunked many of the myths about these women as desperate, impoverished victims who committed minor crimes. Rather, she argued, the evidence is that many were experienced thieves whose crimes showed considerable planning, organisational skills and daring.

Carol outlined the circumstances of the women and explained some more obscure terms such as 'man robbery'. She also provided some fascinating cameos of individual women convicts – a personal favourite was the story of Chimney Sweep Bett. Throughout her talk, Carol gave tips on finding convict information online. In question time she also spoke about the invaluable *Biographical Database of Australia*. As responses and questions showed, it was an enjoyable and illuminating talk.

Judith Godden

TOUR REPORT

Our tour plans for early 2022 are off to a disappointing start with the decision taken to defer our trip to Cockatoo Island in February, due to the difficulties presented by the Omicron Virus. The March tour – Thursday 24th - to the Arms of Australia Inn and Museum of Fire, both at Penrith, remains as scheduled. The March Newsletter will contain full details and will illustrate tours for April/May /June period.

Our final tour for 2021 was the Naval History Tour – HMAS PLATYPUS RAN SUBMARINE BASE 1967-1999. This tour, held on 9th December 2021, was conducted by knowledgeable Naval History Society Guides.

Our end of year tours are normally held touring the waterways of the Hawkesbury and/or the Port Hacking river. Outdoor venues are preferred because of summer weather.

Sometimes tour venues or travel plans do add some disappointments. At the end of 2019 our tour on the Hawkesbury was difficult because of the massive amount of smoke in the area due to the huge bushfires at the time. This year we had an unusual difficulty. Your tour team carefully checked the latest train and ferry timetables to ensure there were no last minute changes.

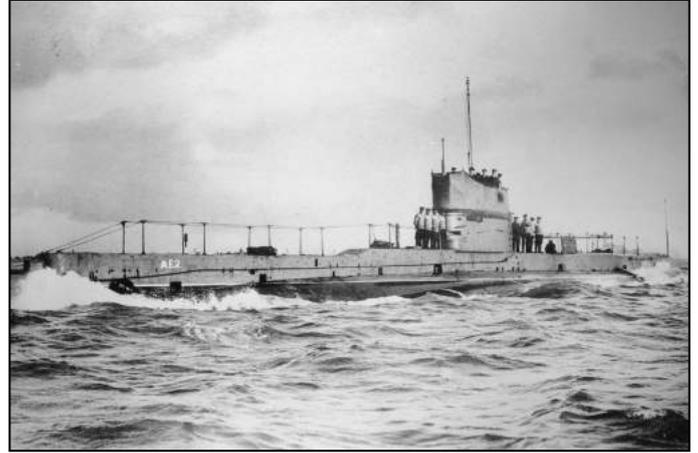
There we were at Circular Quay wharf ready to catch our ferry to High Street Wharf North Sydney when one of our keen-eyed members noticed a rather obscure sign saying that the High Street Wharf was closed for urgent repairs. After much deliberation it was realised that we would have to depart the ferry at the Kirribilli Wharf which resulted in an interesting but difficult kilometre (at least) walk through the pretty suburb of Neutral Bay, to arrive almost on time for our tour. Such is life.



The hardy tour team resting at the Submarine base

The tour however was excellent and we were able to learn the history of the site and the RAN's

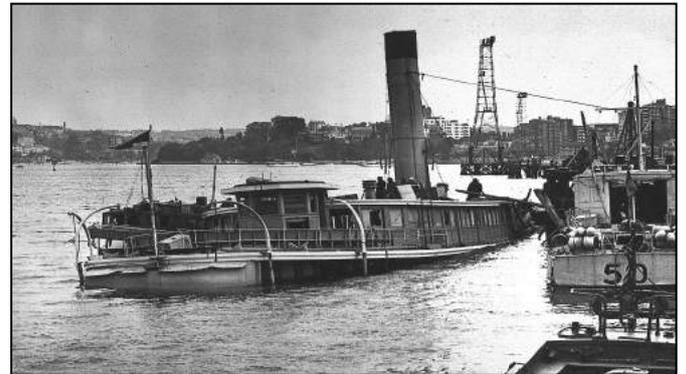
submarine force and how Australian and Allied submarines have connected with Sydney Harbour for support and maintenance. Our guide discussed Australia's role and submarine types from E Class – AE-1 and AE-2, which endured a baptism of fire as they were immediately deployed in 1914 to support the war effort (AE-1 was lost one month later off the Duke of York Island in the Bismarck Sea, AE-2 was lost in April 1915 in the Dardenelles) through to the Oberon and the current Collins Class.



HMAS AE-2

(Photo: Naval Historical Society of Australia)

The Japanese Midget Submarine Attack in Sydney Harbour on 31st May 1942 was also explained.



HMAS Kuttabul sunk by the Japanese mini submarine

(Photo: Naval Historical Society of Australia)

The torpedo factory, which stood adjacent the Sub Base Platypus site, has a story all of its own. It is a story of precision engineering delivered by a wartime civilian workforce recruited at short notice who provided exceptional support at a difficult time.

Our tour members enjoyed the tour with its thoughtful and fascinating stories.

Tour Team.

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Tales from the Past

5th January 1806

Lost, on a road between Sydney and Parramatta, a Tin Chaise Lamp. Any person who may have found the same will, on delivering it to Mr Fleming, receive a Reward of half gallon of brandy!

10 Years ago

The following article appeared in the February 2012 newsletter.

Left-handers through history

The final general meeting for 2011 was livened up by an interesting talk by Bob Davis on *The Natural Superiority of Left-handed People Through History*. He started by telling us that 10% of the world's population are left-handers, and this percentage has remained constant throughout history, as can be seen via old cave paintings etc. And this proportion is not limited to humans. About 10% of sea shells spiral to the right, and 10% of vines spiral to the left, with the other 90% spiralling in the opposite direction.

Strangely enough, all polar bears are left-handed, as are sulphur-crested cockatoos.

Some of the insulting terms that have been used to describe left-handers include Mollydooker (effeminate and weak), Sinistral (the hand of the devil – wicked and evil), Gauche (awkward and clumsy) and Cacky-handed (dirty and unclean). Yet looking at some of the left-handers through history these descriptions seem inappropriate: Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Marcel Marceau, Albert Schweitzer, Alexander the Great and Robert Baden-Powell.

Left-handers are found in profusion in the entertainment industry, with Rex Harrison, Danny Kaye, Steve McQueen, Greta Garbo, Kim Novak, Marilyn Monroe and two of the Beatles fitting into that category. World leaders and scientists like Barack Obama, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Julius Caesar, Albert Einstein, Marie Curie and Isaac Newton were also left-handed. Even the British Royal family contains many left-handers: King George VI, Prince Charles and Prince William.

In fact, since the left side of the brain controls the right side of the body, and vice versa, it could be said that lefthanders are the only people in their right mind. And perhaps it can be said that ambidextrous people are only half-right.

Yet the world often ignores the needs of left-handers, with their right-handed brethren developing scissors and secateurs that are notoriously difficult for left-handers to use, and building spiral staircases that favour right-handed defenders.

Many have also struggled to learn to knit or play guitar when taught by a right-hander. Yet sometimes the left-hander can gain an unexpected advantage. The spiral staircase may be designed to be defended by a right-hander, but this means that a left-handed attacker has an advantage. And a right-hander facing a left-hander in sport or battle will be in unfamiliar

territory, whereas the left-hander will spend most of his time competing against a right-hander, and is therefore used to that situation.

One interesting question was posed during question time. Many identical twins are mirror-twins, with one being righthanded and one left-handed. Yet how can this be, when they have the same DNA? Bob summed up his talk with a plea for understanding: "We have a right to be left!"

Jenny Joyce

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"The best Guides have been trained at
Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden, St Ives"

Photo by a KHS member

New Members

In November we had 3 new members join our Society.

Welcome to the Society.

| | | |
|---------------------|------|-----------------|
| Justine McLARTY | from | Turrumurra |
| Colette FITZPATRICK | from | Lane Cove North |
| Ingrid KING | from | Wahroonga |

In December we had 3 new members join our Society.

Welcome to the Society.

| | | |
|---------------|------|-----------|
| Esther LENNON | from | Gordon |
| Rob EDWARDS | from | Wahroonga |
| Steve EDWARDS | from | Marsfield |

We hope you will find your membership rewarding and look forward to your participation in the many activities we have to offer once we recover from this current set-back of Omicron.

Annet Latham

DIARY DATES

FEBRUARY 2022

- Saturday 5 : **11am - Family History** - Lorna Watt
Using SIX Maps to investigate where your family lived.
2pm - FHG - Dr Tanya Bretherton
Will talk about her research process for novels especially 'The Husband Poisoner'.
- Thursday 17 : **Tour** - Cockatoo Island (*Postponed*)
- Saturday 19 : **2pm - General Meeting**
Finding Sanity - An Australian Story
Presenter : Greg de Moore

MARCH 2022

- Saturday 5 : **11am - Family History** - Clare Brown
Tips for writing your family history
2pm - FHG - Judith Dunn OAM
Parramatta Cemeteries
- Thursday 24 : **Tour** - Penrith - Museum of Fire & Arms of Australia Inn
- Saturday 19 : **2pm - Annual General Meeting**
Three Vietnam Wars from 1946 to 1975
Presenter : David Wilkins OAM

APRIL 2022

- Saturday 2 : **11am - Family History** - Lorna Watt
Using Trove to discover your Family History
2pm - FHG Meeting - Patrick Dodd
The Dreadnaught Scheme
- Saturday 16 : **2pm - General Meeting**
- Thursday 21 : **Tour** - TBA

Note

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

Treasurer's Report

Our Income over Expenditure for November and December 2021 showed a surplus of \$635.22 with our main Income from Membership Fees, Research and Book Sales. Our main Expenses this month were for Affiliation Fees and Leasing of the Photocopier.

Hopefully 2022 will see us meeting face to face again and seeing life return slowly back to 'normal'.

Ku-ring-gai Historical Society bank account details are:

Westpac Bank BSB: 032-083 Account No: 248971

Marilyn van Eerde

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Newsletter Details

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