

Celebrating 60 Years  *1963 - 2023*

Ku-ring-gai Historical Society

June/July 2023 NEWSLETTER Vol. 41 No. 5

Patron: the Mayor of Ku-ring-gai

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General Meetings

2pm - Saturday 17th June 2023

The Story of Surry Hills

Dick Whitaker

Always a popular guest speaker, Dick returns with a tale of the ever changing fortunes of this early inner suburb – from colonial farms and country estates to rapid overdevelopment, then followed by a lengthy slump to slum status, and a return to desirability over the past 50 years.

After graduating from Monash University in Science in 1968, Dick was conscripted and served two years in the Army, ending his military career as an Infantry Junior Officer with 5th Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment.



Dick joined the Bureau of Meteorology soon after and he began his public service career that would last for some thirty-one years. Dick left the Bureau in 2002, but never lost the 'weather bug' and came out of retirement to

start his own meteorological consultancy business. He was Chief Meteorologist with Sky News Weather for many years until 2016 and appeared regularly on radio and television.

Dick is very interested in history and meteorological education, particularly through television, radio, and books, and has been author, co-author and consultant editor of seventeen books about the weather, including publications for Time-Life and Reader's Digest. His latest book is *From Gods to Gigabytes – A Brief History of Weather Forecasting*.

Dick is an experienced lecturer and has delivered numerous presentations on history and the weather to such groups as Probus, Rotary, Libraries, U3A, bushfire brigades, historical societies, schools and business groups.

Signed copies of *From Gods to Gigabytes* will be available for \$25 (cash only, so please try to bring exact amount).

2pm - Saturday 15th July 2023

Historical Guide to New South Wales

Phillip Simpson

Phillip spent nearly 31 years writing the *Historical Guide to New South Wales* (Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2020). At 835 pages, it is the first comprehensive guide to the location and history of every country town and village in the State. It is the only place-by-place chronology of the settlement, history and development of Australia's premier State, covering over 230 years and almost a third of the nation's places.

Phillip's presentation will illustrate how he achieved this and how the result will be indispensable to historians, geographers, librarians, heritage consultants, local historical societies, local councils, journalists and especially family historians.

It will illustrate how and why towns came about; the amazing variety of industries in which people worked; the infrastructure that enabled people to move around; the many churches that held various communities together; the schools; the public services including post, telegraph, water, sewerage, gas and electricity to name a few.



Phillip is uniquely qualified for a task of this scope and magnitude, with several decades of experience in heritage and government in NSW and postgraduate degrees in both Historical Archaeology and Public Administration, from the University of Sydney. For a decade he was Chairman of one of the National Trust's principal research committees. In acknowledgement of his service to the recognition and preservation of our heritage and his great contributions to industrial archaeology he was awarded the Trust's silver medallion. More recently the Premier of NSW awarded him a medallion for Meritorious Long Service to the State.

I am sure you enjoy receiving and reading our great Newsletter. It is always packed with interesting information and articles, made possible by the efforts of a number of dedicated volunteers who help to produce and distribute it each month.

When the Newsletter began many years ago it was the only means of communicating with members, and distribution was only by 'snail mail'.

Times have changed!



As communication can now also be by email, or via our website, the Committee has decided that at the end of this financial year our Newsletter will be produced and issued bi-monthly.

If at any time between newsletters it is necessary to inform you of any important news, you will, of course, be advised by email. Information will also be posted on the KHS website which I hope you are referring to from time to time.

So, the next Newsletters will be issued in August, then October and December.

Editor Geoff Little is hoping that he will be receiving plenty of articles, from a number of contributors, to make each edition bulging with interesting reading.

My best wishes,
Lorna Watt

German Special Interest Group

Our German SIG met on 17 April with 17 members present and some excellent, thought-provoking presentations.

Tony Karrasch updated us on online activities including Trove funding and IGGP Conference planning.

Christine Edwards reported on progress to update our group project, *German Ancestors of Ku-ring-gai Historical Society Members*.

Sue Moore gave a fascinating presentation on *the Bruhn family*.

Gerry Cohen gave a poignant presentation, *From Kattowitz to Ku-ring-gai – the journey of Gerda Cohen, a German speaking holocaust survivor*.

Frank Olivier gave a presentation on *Family members who have recently visited Germany, and others who are now living and working in Germany*.

Leone Stumbaum spoke about Transkribus, an online service that provides handwritten text recognition and transcription. See <https://readcoop.eu/transkribus>

The House by the Lake, a book by Thomas Harding, was endorsed by several members as an excellent read – a portrait of twentieth century Germany through the prism of a house which was lived in, and lost by, five different families.

The next meeting is planned for Monday 19 June at 1:30 pm. Visitors (and suggestions for agenda items) welcomed.

For more information, see www.khs.org.au/german-sig

Peter Stehn

Transkribus

Unlock historical documents with AI

Transkribus is an **AI-powered** platform
for **text recognition, transcription**
and searching of historical documents –
from any place, time, and in
any language.

New Member

We extend a warm welcome to the following member who has recently joined the Society.

Ian **Lawry** from Turramurra

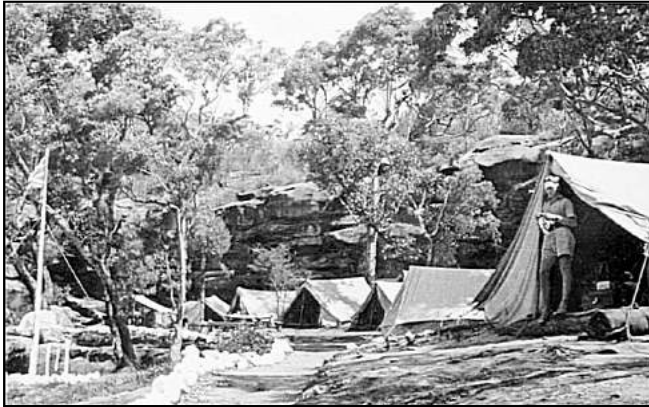
We hope you will find your membership rewarding and look forward to your participation in the many activities we have to offer each year.

OPERATION JAYWICK

Refuge Bay, Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park

(Part 2)

The men were required to access the beach below the cliff by bosun's chair and they would then climb back up the cliff by swing-climbing on a rope. They trained for about 18 hours per day for three solid months. They were not allowed access to cigarettes, alcohol or female company for the whole three months. They were plagued by snakes, and some very hot days.



The Camp

They learnt how to use, disassemble and reassemble, in the dark, their rifle, a Bren Gun, a Lewis Gun, an Owen Gun and a Sten Gun. They had concentrated physical fitness training which included canoeing. They learnt techniques for moving silently through water and the bush, as well as various camouflage techniques. They learnt bushcraft and how to use a compass and a map. They learnt how to transport and set explosive charges. They learnt how to sneak up on an enemy guard and kill using a knife, cord or other weapons.

They rowed their canoes across Broken Bay and up and down the Hawkesbury River. They also carried out mock attacks on the West Head Defences and other military camps in the general area.

Towards the end of the three months of intensive training, Bill Reynolds brought the *Krait* from Sydney and anchored her off 'Camp Z'. Davidson then selected five men from the eleven trainees who would become members of 'Jock Force', who would carry out *Operation Jaywick*.

On about 6 or 7 December 1942, an official ceremony took place at Refuge Bay after Lord Gowrie, the Governor General of Australia, arrived in secret with high-ranking officers.

On 18 January 1943, *Krait* left Refuge Bay with its complement of 'Z Unit' operatives on board. The vessel made its way via Cairns across the top of Australia and arrived in Exmouth, Western Australia, where it suffered major mechanical

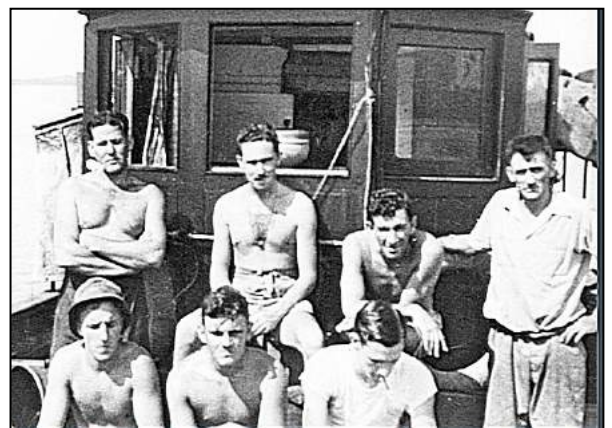
failures. *Krait* finally departed in August 1943 and would not return for another 48 days.

One team member remembers his time at the Refuge Bay Training Camp. He remembers it as 'Camp X' and having to climb, loaded up with all their gear, the cliffs at the camp site. He recalled that the tents were already erected when his group of 18 men arrived at the camp. They had a special galley for the cook and an open stove. They were only fed two meals a day.

They slept four to a tent. They used a crevice in the rocks as their toilet facilities. He remembers the waterfall which provided fresh clear water. There was also a small pool area in front of their tents. They had an ammunition tent down on the sandy beach and kept their canoes down there.

Their duties included the bullring for unarmed combat, day and night walks, regular running walks and finally using the canoes. Besides normal handling of the canoes and long journeys in them, they were required to learn to pull them apart and reassemble them in about a 15-minute timeframe.

Their demolition training had the side benefit of providing fresh fish for their meals. They would carry out night-time 'commando attacks' on corvettes moored out in the bay. They would wear balaclavas and blacken their faces. They would draw a cross inside a circle on the side of the corvette to prove they had been there. When they became more proficient, they would board the ship and remove an item from the ship as evidence of their presence onboard *HMAS Inverell* which co-operated with Naval Commando personnel (Z Special Unit) at Broken Bay in an attack and repelling of the boarders' exercise.



The Operatives

After *Krait* had left Refuge Bay, the two recruits not selected for the operation were left behind to dismantle 'Camp X'. They took down the tents and packed up all the remaining equipment for shipping back to Sydney. The camp was then abandoned and overtaken by vegetation and wildlife, never again to be used for military training.

Today, 'Camp X' is located within the boundaries of

the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park. As in 1942, Refuge Bay is only easily accessible from the water. There are no formal walking tracks and the thick bush and steep sandstone cliffs ensure that few people visit the campsite.



The beach and waterfall at Refuge Bay

Due to the secret nature of the training that took place at 'Camp X', there are no known maps of its layout. Only a few black and white photographs exist, along with personal diaries of the men who trained there. The camp itself was a modest affair comprising '... about a dozen tents with meal and toilet facilities of a primitive kind. All the material for the camp had to be brought in by boat and then hauled up the cliff by hand. To reach the beach, a bosun's chair was used and then to return up the men had to swing-climb up the cliff-face on a rope'.

The main part of the camp was situated in a cleared area approximately 100 metres long and 50 metres wide where about a dozen tents lined up before a flagpole and a series of formalised paths lined with the obligatory military issue whitewashed rocks.



The camp with the whitewash rocks

Between a small stream and a rocky outcrop to the rear of the camp, there was a combined mess tent and a bullring (boxing ring) for unarmed combat training. These were all the facilities that were needed to support the training of the 'Z Unit' men. Mostly, their training consisted of paddling folboats*, hand to hand

combat, explosives and small arms weapons training. They were taught how to survive off the land and to operate for long periods of time with little or no sleep.

Postscript

A sad postscript to the success of *Operation Jaywick* was the follow-up raid, *Operation Rimau*. As the Jaywick raid was so successful it was decided to mount a second clandestine attack on Singapore Harbour. Six of the original Jaywick party (including Major Ivan Lyon) joined *Operation Rimau*. The operation consisted of a total of 22 operatives and used 15 one-man, motorised, submersible canoes known as 'Sleeping Beauties' (SBs). It was planned that the SBs would sneak back into Singapore Harbour and attach limpet mines to as many ships as possible. Once they were clear of the Harbour the operatives would scuttle their SBs before making their escape in folding kayaks. Unfortunately, the operation was discovered before the attack could be launched and all the operatives were either killed or captured and executed.

In May 2016, the NSW Heritage Division, Office of Environment and Heritage started the first archaeological survey of the 'Camp X' site.

Sources:

NSW Office of Environment & Heritage

Australian War Memorial

Trove

* also known as foldboats or faltboats

Morrison Hammond

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Tales from the Past

March 1803

Families & Children

Most women weren't married, and were living with men. Most children were illegitimate. While all manner of families' matters appeared in the Sydney Gazette it is the children who attract most attention, for their appearance usually means disaster. Young colonists were scalded, drowned, attacked by dogs, bitten by snakes. They fell out of trees, they fell into wells, they were stomped on by horses and run over by carriages, they played with fire and shot each other with guns. If taken on picnics they invariably drowned, if orphans they were molested by gentlemen or leased out to work on farms.

Surprisingly many of them survived into adulthood!

Upcoming Family History Workshops

Saturday 10th June - 10.30am

Kevin Dodds

How to use ancestry.com.au

Come along and learn about Ancestry – what's available and how to use the site.

If you are new to Ancestry, thinking about joining (or wondering whether it's worthwhile joining) then you really shouldn't miss this session!

This workshop will also be beneficial to long-time users of Ancestry because, as we know, there's always something new to learn with genealogy.



About Kevin Dodds

Kevin is a retired Chief Inspector with the NSW Police and has a degree in Family History from the University of Tasmania. He has been studying genealogy since 1977 and has a broad knowledge of US, UK and Australian history through studying his ancestors. Kevin continues to study specific time periods where his ancestors were involved in key moments in history and, having used all the major family genealogical sites, considers his skills to be at an expert level.

Kevin is a member of the Parramatta Female Factory Friends Action Group where he holds several positions, including Tour Guide. He has been cited in various publications for his research, and has assisted authors and historians.

Kindly note that there will be several handouts, and all attendees must bring their own pen and pad.

Saturday 8th July - 10.30am

Heather Garnsey

How to find NSW Church Registers through the JCP

There are many reasons why finding the original church register entry for a baptism, marriage or burial is important for family history research. In 1974 the Joint Copy Project (JCP) was set up as a collaboration between the Society of Australian Genealogists, the Mitchell Library in Sydney and the National Library in Canberra to make sure that original NSW parish registers were preserved and made available to researchers.

Today the JCP includes many Anglican, Catholic, Methodist and Presbyterian registers from across the state. This session will show examples of what is covered and how researchers can find and use this valuable resource.

About Heather Garnsey

Heather joined the staff of the Society of Australian Genealogists (SAG) in 1984 and was its Executive Officer from 1988 until her retirement in 2020. She is an Honorary Member and Fellow of SAG, an Honorary Fellow of the Heraldry & Genealogy Society of Canberra, and was the joint recipient of the AFFHO Award for Meritorious Service to Family History in 2015. She holds a Masters' degree in English History and SAG's Diploma in Family Historical Studies.



Heather has been a sought-after speaker for over thirty years and has presented papers at many of the triennial Australasian Congresses, NSW Annual State Conferences and local seminars throughout Australia. In her retirement she is enjoying having time to spend on her own family history research.

Please note that Family History workshops are in the Research Room (not in Meeting Room 1). The workshop will run from 10.30 am until approximately 12.30 pm.

What's in the Research Centre ? (Part 2)

The Computers



The nine computers have been given names of well known Ku-ring-gai residents. E.g. Archbold, Cazneaux and Jenkins.

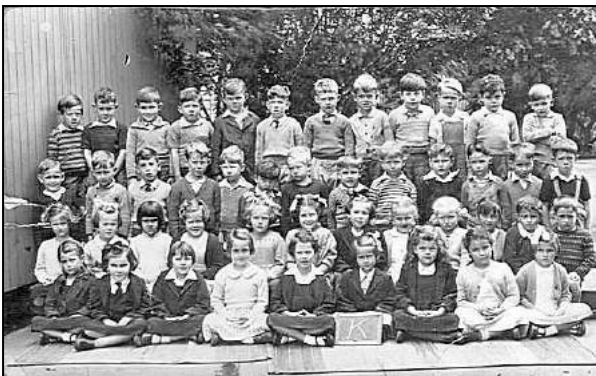
The Intranet

With a familiar appearance just like a web browser, our Intranet provides easy access to over 1000 computer and paper resources in our collection. Think of our Intranet as a :-

'catalogue of catalogues'

Using the KHS computers and searching the Intranet you can find :-

- Built Heritage which contains property history
- Photos and class rolls of Gordon Public School - if you are a former student you may be in one of the class photos



Gordon Public School, Kindergarten - 1950

- Free access to Ancestry Library Edition and the FamilySearch 'Affiliate Library' collection. This is a must as you will have a huge entry to worldwide history information



Ku-ring-gai Historical Society Research Centre

Our **Library Catalogue** contains numerous reference books and not only about Ku-ring-gai. Among the books are biographies, architecture, cemeteries and much, much more.

- **KUPEDIA** - it is our very comprehensive encyclopaedia of Ku-ring-gai's history. It contains all articles from *The Historian* ever published, as well as stories from *Women of Ku-ring-gai*
- Tens of thousands of files and photos of houses, places and people mostly from Ku-ring-gai



Wahroonga House c 1896

- Access numerous apps containing valuable data from times past such as births, deaths, marriages, convicts, pioneers, properties, cemeteries, immigration . . . **and much more!**

The KHS '**Intranet**' gives you an enormous head start for you to research your family history. Whether it is from delving into '**Ancestry**', or finding grandparents who attended Gordon Public School or even locating an old photo of your home, the place to visit to find out these facts is the KHS Research Centre.

The Research Centre is open every Tuesday and Friday between 10 am and 2 pm.

**Then:***Image: Ku-ring-gai Library**Image: Google Street View*

Pentecost Ave Pymble, circa 1950, with the kerbing and guttering under construction.

Now:

The two large eucalypts on the right could be the same pair as shown in the 1950 image. The power poles on the left also seem to be in roughly the same positions as we see in 1950.

Have you any old 'Then & Now' photos of Ku-ring-gai hidden in old albums ?
Send them in and the Editor will publish them.

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## The Sunderland Flying Boats

'The Ships that Flew'

Denis Smith OAM told us the fascinating story of the Sunderland Flying Boats.

Australia first purchased nine Flying Boats in 1939. 10 Squadron RAAF sailed to England to collect the planes and were to fly them back to Australia. Unfortunately World War II broke out and the Squadron were seconded to Great Britain.

10 Squadron RAAF, and later 461 Squadron RAAF, then spent the whole war chasing and sinking German U-Boats.

In one incident, one of the Flying Boats from 461 Squadron RAAF sank a German U-Boat. When the Sunderland returned to base they discovered that the U-Boat they had sunk was named 'U-461' and the Sunderland from 461 Squadron had 'U' painted on its side. What an unbelievable coincidence.



A Sunderland from 461 Squadron

After the war these flying boats were used for domestic flights to New Zealand and Lord Howe Island taking off from Rose Bay. Once a runway was built on Lord Howe Island in 1974 the Flying Boats were discontinued.

What an amazing story Denis Smith told regarding these Flying Boats. His tremendous knowledge and passion came through. Thank you Denis for enlightening us on a part of history that is not often told.

Marilyn van Eerde

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## Interesting listening

Anyone who has had, or is thinking about having, their DNA tested, should find the following program interesting. It is ABC Radio National's Background Briefing in an episode called 'Fine Print' first aired on 12 May. The episode explores the consumer genetic testing industry, covering a range of significant issues and perspectives. It is available on the ABC Listen app and podcast apps.

Judith Godden



## DIARY DATES

### JUNE 2023

- Saturday 10 : **10.30am Family History Workshop**  
*How to use ancestry.com.au*  
**Presenter : Kevin Dodds**
- Saturday 17 : **2pm - General Meeting**  
*The Story of Surry Hills*  
**Presenter : Dick Whitaker**
- Monday 19 : **1.30pm - German SIG Meeting**

### JULY 2023

- Saturday 8 : **10.30am Family History Workshop**  
*How to find NSW Church Registers through the JCP*  
**Presenter : Heather Garnsey**
- Saturday 15 : **2pm - General Meeting**  
*Historical Guide to New South Wales*  
**Presenter : Phillip Simpson**

### AUGUST 2023

- Saturday 12 : **10.30am Family History Workshop**  
*The Parramatta Female Factory*
- Monday 14 : **1.30pm - German SIG Meeting**
- Saturday 19 : **2pm - General Meeting**  
*Dead and Buried: Sydney's Earliest Burial Grounds*  
**Presenter : Warren Fahey OAM**

### SEPTEMBER 2023

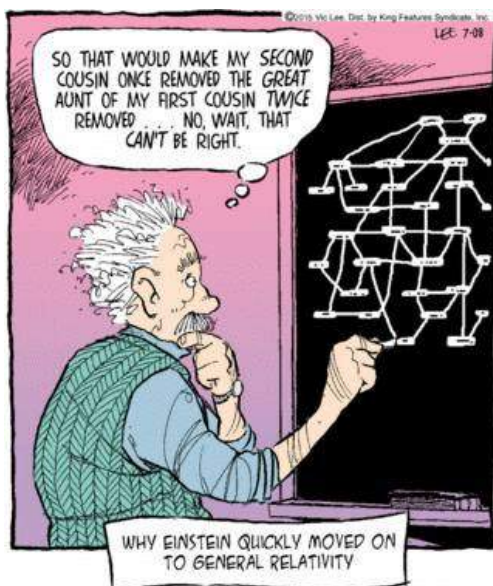
- Saturday 9 : **10.30am Family History Workshop**
- Saturday 16 : **2pm - General Meeting**  
*Australia and the Pacific*  
**Presenter : Dr Ian Hoskins**

### 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:-**

**BSB ... 032-083    A/c ... 248971**



## ADMINISTRATION

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|                | Geoff Little      | 0411 885 870 |

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For correspondence :-

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