



Celebrating 60 Years  *1963 - 2023*

Ku-ring-gai Historical Society

March 2023 NEWSLETTER Vol. 41 No. 2

Patron: the Mayor of Ku-ring-gai

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General meeting

2pm - Saturday 18th March

Members Forum – the ‘OMG’ factor

Time to get your thinking caps on!

We have begun our 60th year on a positive and enthusiastic note.

As part of Seniors' Week, we held an Open Day on Tuesday 7th February and were pleased with the response. Two of our visitors were former pupils of Gordon Public School and were able to contribute information from their time at the school for our records.

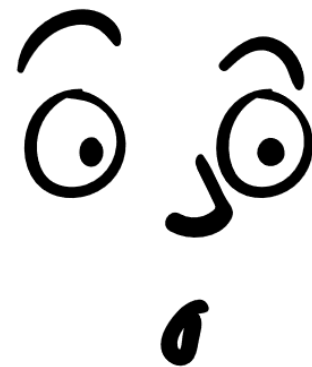
Jenny Joyce gave a very interesting and most informative talk on the subject of 'Beginning Scottish Research' at the first Family History 'Workshop/How-to/Tutorial' session held on Saturday 11th February in our Research Rooms. It was most pleasing to see so many attendees. Why not come along to our next one?

Joy and Allan Murrin have begun their second Family History Course and I am sure all those enrolled will enjoy the six-week course.

The Committee is excited to have begun planning a dinner to be held in November to celebrate 60 years of the Ku-ring-gai Historical Society. Still in the initial stages, I will keep you updated when more decisions are made regarding the venue, date and time. Like our celebration dinner for our 50th anniversary in 2013, we are looking forward to it being a great success and well supported by members.

I am very pleased to announce that the latest edition of our journal, *The Historian*, has now been completed and has been sent to the printers. As you know, this edition has unfortunately been delayed due mainly to the Pandemic, but it will not be too long before you receive your copy in the mail. My thanks to the contributors for their interesting articles which I hope you all enjoy reading.

Lorna Watt



Remember finding out something during your history research or reading and thinking OMG: oh my gosh, how amazing! Or hearing about others' unexpected discoveries which surprised you as well? Now is your chance to tell others about one of these OMG moments, as well as to share in others' OMG moments.

You will have a maximum of **5 minutes** to tell us about something you discovered that made it an OMG moment. If you wish, bring along a few illustrations on a USB stick or an item you want to talk about. The aim is for a short, relaxed chat about things of historical interest among friends. If it's relevant to local Ku-ring-gai history, all the better!

To take part, email Judith at secretary@khs.org.au from 1st March giving the title of your presentation. You can volunteer to talk on the day, but times will be allocated on a first in first served basis. Please note that this is on **Saturday 18th** not 19th as mistakenly advertised previously. Thanks to Ryde District Historical Society, the inspiration for this idea.

Kuring-gai Women War Workers' Effort

Nearly 18,000 Comforts for Troops

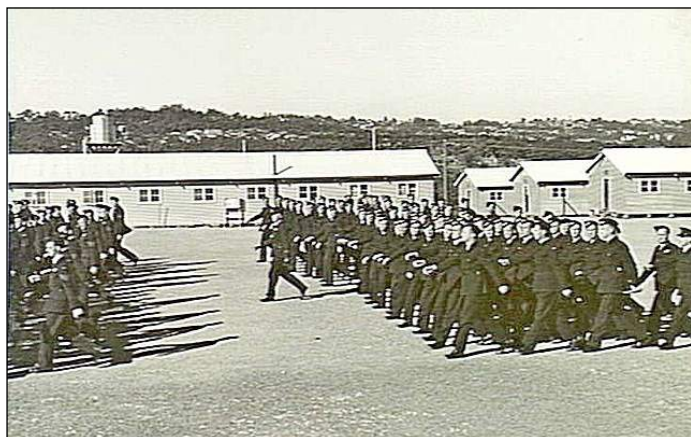
An amazing record of achievement was revealed at a meeting of the Kuring-gai (sic) Women War Workers, held at the Killara Memorial Hall yesterday when a report was presented of the work done during eight months from September 22, 1939 to May 31, 1940.

During this period the organisation contributed 17,993 articles to various branches of the fighting services. Of these 9,747 were knitted garments, 5,708 were other made garments (including flannel shirts, singlets, underpants and pyjamas) and 2,538 "sundries".

With all nine centres now hard at work for the organisation at the suburbs of Roseville, Lindfield, Killara, Gordon, Pymble, Turramurra, Warrawee, Wahroonga to Waitara, the membership has increased from approximately 300 in September to 2000.

The honorary secretary Mrs C. R. McKee, although still walking with the aid of crutches as the result of an accident, came to the meeting to read her report.

The forming of a special auxiliary, under the presidency of the mayoress of Killara, Mrs Noel McIntosh, to assist the Anzac Buffet, was explained. The auxiliary has already collected £295/16 for the buffet funds, and has also sent vast quantities of food and equipment.



RAAF recruits training at Bradfield

Image : Australian War Memorial

The work of the executive in completely furnishing and equipping two huts, one recreation and one gymnasium, at the R.A.A.F. Training School at Bradfield, was also reported. Answers to a radio appeal for equipment brought forth such divers (sic) articles as five gramophones, one cornet, and sundry pairs of boxing gloves. The executive has also assisted to furnish a recreation room at the Fullerton Memorial Church in Crown Street.

Financial Report

The financial report for the year, read by the honorary auditor, Mr W. J. Tidex, showed that in eight months the organisation had collected £2,539/7/5 and spent £1,509/18/4.

The president, Mrs H.B. Turner, took the chair at the meeting, and the honorary treasurer, Mrs T. S. Summerhayes, read the report of work.

A guest speaker was Miss Ruby Board president of the National Council of Women, and one of the three women on the executive of the Lord Mayor's Patriotic and War Fund.

"You have seen what can be done by co-operation in your own district, and I really feel that at last we are getting organised properly," she said. "The Red Cross is organising the welfare for the sick soldiers; the various comforts funds are looking after those who are well, and the recently established Women's Australian National Services will train women for service in emergency".

Sydney Morning Herald

Thursday 25 July 1940 page 17

Transcribed from TROVE

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German Special Interest Group

Our German SIG met on 13th February with 15 enthusiasts present.

Tony Karrasch gave an informative brief on German Family History activity on the web over the past two months.

Sue Moore and Tony both reported on planned activities for the June 2023 IGGP Conference.

With regard to our group project, *German Ancestors of Ku-ring-gai Historical Society Members*, the editorial responsibility has been handed over to Christine Edwards, Sue Moore and Helen Matheson, who now await drafts to be included. Peter proposed we investigate the Microsoft Word Master Document facility to manage the new document, and he will coordinate a planning meeting of the editorial team.

Deb Dietz reported on an online German handwriting course. Further details can be seen at germanologyunlocked.com

The next meeting is planned for Monday 17th April at 1:30 pm. Visitors (and suggestions for agenda items) are always welcome! For more information, see www.khs.org.au/german-sig

Peter Stehn

UNMANNED FLYING OBJECT OVER SYDNEY

Recent headlines about balloons being shot down over North America reminded me of an event that happened over Sydney in 1955.

It was August 30th during the school holidays when some friends and I were in a park and we noticed an aircraft slowly circling very high above us.

A pilot had been practising his landings at Bankstown airport in an Auster training aircraft. His engine cut out as he was landing, he jumped out and swung the propellor to restart the engine. The engine roared back into life and the Auster took off down the runway with the pilot in pursuit. The controls had been set for take off and this is exactly what the plane did. It narrowly missed the airport control tower and then started climbing in ever widening circles over the suburbs.



A typical Auster aircraft

An emergency was declared, people were advised to stay indoors and fire engines and ambulances rushed around the streets following the plane, to be on hand if it came down.

The military were called in to follow the Auster which was now circling the CBD and eastern and northern suburbs. They were to destroy it, if it could be done over the ocean.

The RAAF sent a Wirraway from Richmond with an officer in the open rear cockpit armed with a Bren gun. A rumour had spread that maybe a child was in the aircraft so when the RAAF plane caught up with the Auster they checked to ensure it was really empty.

By now the planes were over the ocean but at a height of almost 10,000ft. A burst of fire from the Bren gun went into the Auster but didn't seem to cause much damage. The gunner tried to load another magazine of bullets but the extreme cold at that height had frozen the gun so they gave up and returned to base.

The RAAF then sent a Meteor jet from Williamtown air base. It soon caught up with the Auster but had trouble getting into position for a shot as the slow

speed of the target was below the stall speed of the jet. When the pilot finally got a shot, his guns jammed and he was forced to return to base.

The RAAF sent more jets from Williamtown but before they arrived on the scene, two Sea Fury fighters from the Navy Fleet Air Arm had arrived from HMAS Albatross near Nowra and promptly shot the Auster to pieces and sent it flaming into the ocean off Broken Bay.

When the Navy Sea Furies returned to Nowra, enthusiastic ground staff painted a small yellow silhouette representing an Auster on the fuselage of each plane and there was much friendly banter between the Navy and the RAAF.

The incident continued to play out in Federal Parliament with Mr Fred Daly asking, during the Budget Debate the following month, why so much money was being spent on defence when it took over two hours to shoot down an unarmed light aircraft.

Aviation authorities said that the almost dead calm weather had probably prevented a major disaster, as the Auster could have crashed anywhere on its route had it been a windy day.

The criticism against the Services was probably unfounded and, despite some early bad luck, they did pretty well considering the restrictions on when they could act.

Anyway, they had an exciting Tuesday morning over and around Sydney with a free target to practise on. We school boys got stiff necks from watching the chase and had something to talk about for weeks

Graeme Collins

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Tales from the Past

KNOX GRAMMAR SCHOOL AT WARRAWEE.

THE FORMER RESIDENCE OF SIR CHARLES MACKELLAR.

The trustees of the Presbyterian Church of New South Wales have purchased this property, to be used as a boys' college, and the opening ceremony will be performed in February next. The area of the grounds is 13 acres.

SMH ~ Friday 21st September 1923

Vale Max Farley

We are saddened to hear of the passing of one of our Life Members, **Max Farley**.

Max's interest in Ku-ring-gai's history led him to KHS, joining in 1992 and serving as President from 1995 to 1998. This was an uncertain and difficult period for the Society as it had to re-establish itself as an independent body due to Ku-ring-gai Council deciding to close its Local History Centre.

In 1998 Max proposed the formation within the Society of the Family History Group which came into being in 2001/2002, with him again serving as President at that time.



Max researched, compiled and wrote numerous articles on many areas in Ku-ring-gai, beginning with a brief history of Dudley Avenue where he, his wife Marion, and family, lived for 36 years. His labour of love over many years resulted in a database known as *Search Ku-ring-gai*, a large collection of local articles and information, available in our research rooms.

In 2004 he received a Certificate of Achievement from the Royal Australian Historical Society, and was made a Life Member of our Society in 2006.

Our sincere condolences to Marion and family.

Lorna Watt

New Member

We extend a warm welcome to the following new member who recently joined the society.

Gwen Scott from Arcadia

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

Tales from the Past

LETTERS

When readers wrote letters to the editor the topics which sent quills dipping into the inkstands included:

drinking wives, conserving seals on the Bass Strait Islands, uses for cow dung, the fashion for cutting off ears and tails from animals, warning young girls from keeping bad company, climate change, adulterated milk, and the rights of ageing de facto wives.

The letters were addressed 'To the printer of the Sydney Gazette' and published, as was the English newspaper custom, over pen names. Of course, some of them may have been written by George Howe himself.

Sir,

Through the Channel of your useful Publication I wish to recommend an easy, cheap, but efficacious tho' vulgar Application in all cases of violent Burns or Scalds, instances of the fatality of which have too frequently appeared.

Take any quantity of fresh Cow Dung and with warm water bring it to a consistency of a soft poultice; if the injury be extensive or has penetrated deeply and thereby destroyed much of the soft parts, let slips of lint of soft linen be moistened with cold drawn Linseed or Sweet Oil, Hogs Lard, or Fresh Butter; apply this to the affected part; and cover the dressings with the above poultice as warm as new milk, in such quantity as to retain warmth and moisture. When the parts become painful repeat the application as often as the occasion may require, and however this may be despised by persons in a more elevated sphere, yet whoever may choose to give it a fair trial will find in its usefulness a compensation for its indelicacy.

Without presuming therefore to enter into any chemical analysis of Cow Dung, let it suffice to say, that its good effects have been manifest in formidable cases, arising from accidents by fire, boiling water, wort, and hydrogen gas; and it is the application I would use upon myself, or in the family of any friend.

The above observations are not intended to supersede medical assistance where it can be obtained, for there are some circumstances in all desperate cases that require attention, a knowledge of which is best acquired by observation at the bedside . . .

I am &c

A MILKMAID.

N.B. Brandy, vinegar, linseed oil, yeast and various preparations of lead have been justly recommended; any of them may be used when at hand.

18 December 1803



Image: ANU Archives



Image: Google Street View

Then:

The Greengate Hotel, Killara, c.1945.

Now:

It's nice to see that there has been very little change to the Greengate in nearly 78 years!

In 1833 a stone cottage was established by John Johnson on the site of the present day Greengate Hotel. It was known as *Ye Olde Greengate Inn*. For over 190 years a Greengate Hotel has been on this corner giving service to the North Shore community. The current building was constructed in 1943. A five-barred gate painted green from the early structure is still in existence today. A murder most foul is detailed in Elliot Lindsay's book 'The Killara Greengate Murder'

Details courtesy : Greengate Hotel website

Postcards, Moments and Windows in History

In an antique shop in Tokyo in 1982, our January guest speaker Jeff Fitzgerald found a bundle of old postcards. It awakened his interest to such an extent that he has been collecting them ever since.

Collecting, buying and sending postcards have been popular since 1900. Who hasn't been away and either sent a card to friends or family depicting a scene with a few pertinent words on the back, some never posted, but kept as a memento in an album?

The format was always the same. Each has an image on the front on topics such as animals, work, transport, sport and Christmas as well as pretty children, fashion, school teachers, the law, pop groups, autographs, celebrities abounded. Significant events, news from soldiers, and even cards with words 'Saving Australia' in 1940, were produced.

Not all postcards were of the standard size of three and a half by five and a half, with an address, postmark and picture. They have been known to be on a gum leaf, made of silk

or leather or even on a gramophone record.

Themes covering social, rural, working, industrial and recreation life, plus workers in the beef, timber and wool industries in pictures were popular. They showed life as it was then or even now.

What was disturbing was the number printed on how the Europeans saw the Aborigines, (our first nation's people). These images were made to appeal to the public but today would be condemned as racist in the extreme. Photos of naked or barely clothed first Australians fishing or as hunter gatherers, in menial jobs or wife to a white man with many children were made. It made one cringe at the thought these were bought to send as something of interest to a family member or friend.

For the historian, postcards track a history found nowhere else. With just a picture and a few words each captures a moment in time that can assist a search or background in that period of time.

Jeff spoke well on this fascinating subject with slides and details shown on the screen as aids to this subject. Thank you Jeff.

Elizabeth Dokulil

DIARY DATES

MARCH 2023

Saturday 11 : **10.30am Family History Workshop**

*The Major Changes at the NSW State
Archives*

Saturday 18 : **2pm - General Meeting**

Members' forum

APRIL 2023

Saturday 8 : **Easter Saturday ~ no Workshop**

Saturday 15 : **2pm - General Meeting**

The Mighty Sunderland

Presenter : Denis Smith

MAY 2023

Saturday 13 : **10.30am Family History Workshop**

Saturday 20 : **2pm - General Meeting**

Sydney's Planning History

Presenter : Prof. Paul Ashton

JUNE 2023

Saturday 10 : **10.30am Family History Workshop**

Saturday 17 : **2pm - General Meeting**

The Story of Surry Hills

Presenter : Dick Whitaker

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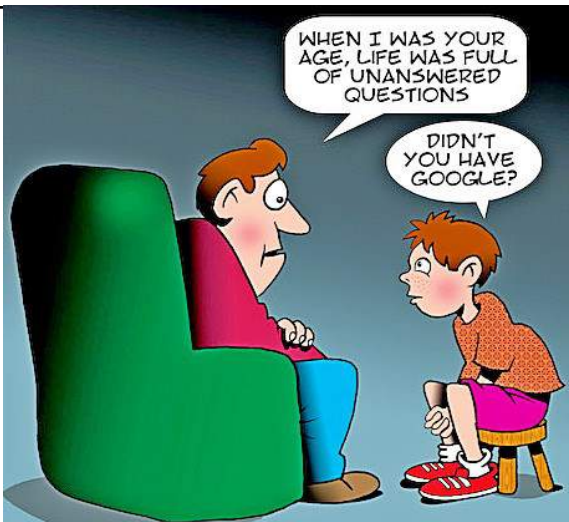
### The Research Rooms

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 No. ... 248971



## ADMINISTRATION

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|           | Geoff Little      | 0411 885 870 |

### Appointees

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### Newsletter Details

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