

Celebrating 60 Years  1963 - 2023

Ku-ring-gai Historical Society

May 2023 NEWSLETTER Vol. 41 No. 4

Patron: the Mayor of Ku-ring-gai

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the president's message

It is with regret that the Committee has accepted the resignation of Ken Bromley from his position as treasurer and as a member of the Committee. My thanks and appreciation go to him for his valued contribution to the Society during the last twelve months.

I am very grateful to Marilyn van Eerde, our previous treasurer, who has kindly agreed to again take on the role.

Due to the Easter break, no family history workshop was held in April. The next one will be held on Saturday 13 May between 10.30am and 12.30pm in our research rooms, not the meeting room. Our guest will be historian and curating archivist, Jan Brady, who will be presenting a topic that I am sure many will find most interesting:

How to understand what photos can and cannot tell family historians

Please note that our previously advertised workshop, Gay Hendrikson's talk about the Female Factory, will now take place on Saturday 12 August.

Copies of our latest journal, *The Historian*, are being received in batches from the Council printer.

As they are packaged, addressed and taken to the mailing centre at North Ryde by a group of willing volunteers all on the same day, we therefore need to wait until the total amount is received before they are posted to everyone. My apologies for the delay, but they are coming!

Take care

Lorna Watt

THE HISTORIAN

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE KU-RING-GAI HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

General meeting

2pm - Saturday 20th May

Sydney's Planning History

Professor Paul Ashton

Professor Paul Ashton is an adjunct at the University of Technology Sydney – where he co-established the Australian Centre for Public History in 1999 – at Macquarie University and at the University of Canberra. Co-founder and editor of the journal *Public History Review*, he has authored, co-authored and edited over forty books. These include a history of town planning in Sydney – *The Accidental City* (Hale & Iremonger) – *Once Upon a Time: Australian Writers on Using the Past* (Australian Scholarly Publishing) and *What is Public History Globally? Working with the past in the present* (Bloomsbury).



Professor Paul Ashton

Sydney has been described as an 'accidental city', one with a long planning history characterised by opportunistic development and disjointed or abortive attempts at holistic planning. At the first Australian Town Planning Conference and Exhibition held in Adelaide in 1917, J.D. Fitzgerald – politician and leading town planning advocate – lamented that Sydney was "a city without a plan, save whatever planning was due to the errant goat. Wherever this animal made a track through the bush", he observed, "there are the streets of today". Despite attempts by colonial governors back to Arthur Phillip to regulate urban growth, Sydney grew 'like Topsy'.

BRADFIELD

John Job Crew Bradfield has always been regarded as 'the father of the (Sydney Harbour) Bridge' in the minds of Sydneysiders, and the question of who really designed the bridge is rarely if ever raised today. It is simply assumed that it was Bradfield.

Bradfield was a resident of Ku-ring-gai, residing with his wife firstly in North Sydney, then in Ashfield and finally in Gordon where he had a house built at the corner of Park Avenue and Elizabeth Street (now Rosedale Road) at a cost of £387.

In his book, 'The Bridge', Peter Lalor quotes Bradfield's son Bill thus:

... it was a small double brick house built in the north-eastern corner of the block. And he had left one third of the acre as natural bush, about another third he had a tennis court on it and the rest of the house and the garden, which was mainly filled with fruit trees ... he had an extraordinary number of different fruit trees and berries ... It was a wild garden, not a formal garden by any means ... (p.62)

Living in Gordon and working in the city (for the Public Works Department) he was well aware of the time and expense of travelling from Gordon Station to Milsons Point, thence by ferry to Circular Quay. For those who worked further towards Central Station, this would have required a tram journey onwards.



The ferry terminal at Milsons Point c 1900

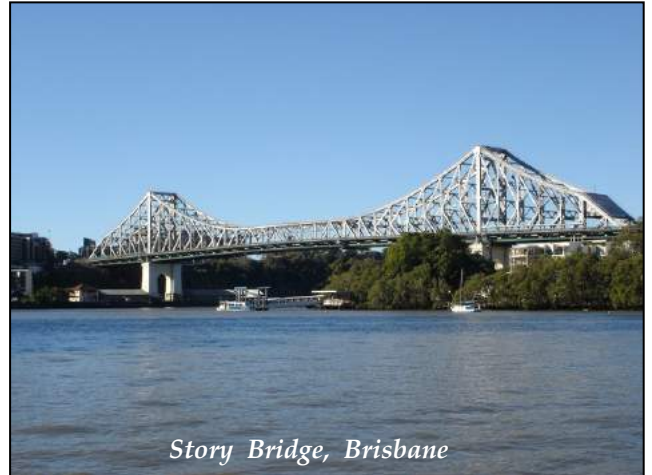
Initially the government had decided that the solution was to have three tunnels resting on the sea floor, one for trains, the second to be built when the rail system was electrified, and a commuter tunnel.

By 1912 Bradfield had rejected the idea of tunnels and produced a plan for a bridge for vehicles, trams and foot traffic. In 1913 the government decided to opt for a bridge on the lines of submissions by Bradfield (who by this time had advanced to Chief Engineer for Metropolitan Railway Construction and Sydney Harbour Bridge).

The government considered it had found the right person to undertake the task of seeing the proposal for a bridge through to fulfilment.

Thus, it is clear that Bradfield had the earliest association with the bridge, going back to his proposal of 1912.

At first the Public Works Committee considered a cantilever bridge (the Story Bridge in Brisbane is one such bridge) and the artist, Lloyd Rees had painted the 'North Shore Bridge' as a cantilever bridge.



In May 1922 Bradfield visited Quebec, Canada and inspected their cantilever bridge. He was impressed by what he saw and felt that such a bridge over Sydney Harbour would be even more impressive. Gradually however he became more amenable to the idea of an arch bridge, stating that an arch bridge would require less steel. He had also seen the construction of the Hell Gate Bridge in New York, which was an arch bridge, and he included specifications for an arch bridge in his submissions.



The French engineer G.C. Imbault had worked on the Victoria Falls Bridge, which was a parabolic arch, completed in 1905.

Together with a young engineer, Ralph Freeman, twenty years later, they tendered for a bridge to cross Sydney Harbour. Freeman took his designs (*nota bene!*) to the engineering firm, Dorman Long, which then tendered for a bridge using Freeman's

designs. There were seven designs, five were arches and two were cantilever.

Three of the arches featured pylons at each end.

Having initially been impressed by the cantilever bridge at Quebec, Bradfield had come around to the idea of an arch bridge and when presented by Dorman Long with the seven designs, he chose one of the arch designs complete with pylons. What is clear however is that the seven designs shown to Bradfield by Dorman Long were those of Ralph Freeman. It is nevertheless indisputable that Bradfield had been associated with the idea of a bridge over Sydney Harbour since 1912 and had vigorously promoted the idea with governments since then. There is no doubt that he was passionate about a bridge and already in 1913, the Public Works Committee had approved a cantilever bridge according to a scheme submitted by Bradfield.

Bradfield chose one of Dorman Long's (i.e., Freeman's) designs, however in his report to the Minister he remarked:

(The Bridge) ...is my design as sanctioned by Parliament and as submitted for tenders. (p.144)

What exactly did he mean by "my design"? It would seem that the issue comes down to the definition of 'design'. If 'design' means the initial drawings by Freeman from which Bradfield selected one, then clearly Freeman designed the bridge. If, however 'design' meant the selection and execution and the immense number of details to turn the drawing into a bridge, then certainly Bradfield has a claim to be the designer of the bridge. One detail by Bradfield was to insist that the pylons should be clad in the infinitely more expensive stone rather than in cement.



The Sydney Harbour Bridge - 2021

All such myriad details were made by Bradfield, who was truly 'the father of the Bridge'. There can be no doubt that Bradfield was intimately associated with the concept of a bridge from at least 1912 and,

having selected the drawing he wanted, proceeded to turn the drawing into the reality we have today. He lived and breathed the bridge from beginning to completion.

If, on the other hand, the image on paper, conceived by Freeman and Dorman Long, and if that is the meaning of 'design' then clearly Freeman has a claim to the honour.

Bradfield died peacefully at his home in Gordon at the age of 76, and was buried at St. John's cemetery, Gordon, a son of Ku-ring-gai.

Gerry Cohen

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WHO NEEDS A BATHROOM ?

A copy of the 1872 – 1972 history of St John's Church recently came to light. Though reproduced in the 1997 update, its appearance was the opportunity for a refresher. Among the many anecdotes was this one which we quote:



St John's Church , Gordon

The planning (for the 1891 Parsonage) caused some friction between the Curate-in-charge, Rev. E. D. Crisford and his Trustees. Mr Robert Pymble did not approve of the many modern gadgets contained in the plans. He particularly objected to the installation of a modern contraption – a bathroom. A compromise was reached and the offending room was reduced to the dimensions of 10' x 4' (3.05 m x 1.32 m) and it served the succeeding Rectors until 1964.

New Members

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

Carolyn Robson and **Antony Sprigg**
from North Wahroonga

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

Training for Sabotage - (Part 1)

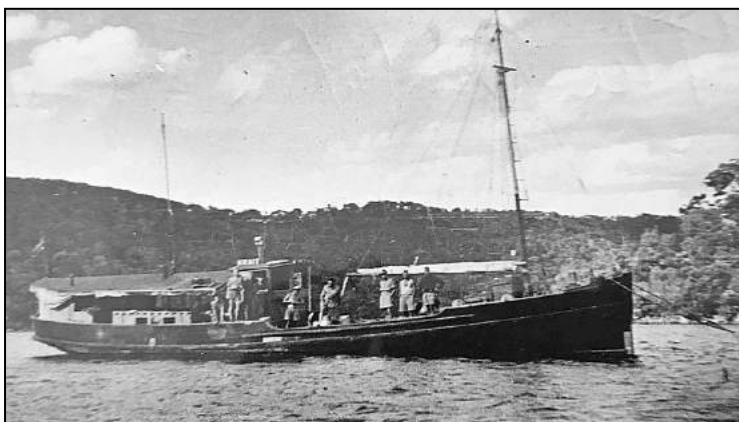
BROKEN BAY, Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park

In September 1943, *MV Krait*, a wooden-hulled vessel, transported members of *Z Special Unit* to Singapore, where they successfully raided the city's harbour, sinking seven ships in what became known as *Operation Jaywick*. She returned to Australia in October. After the return, *Krait* was used by the Australian military throughout the war and was present at the surrender of the Japanese forces on Ambon in September 1945.



A Plaque at Refuge Bay on the Hawkesbury River where they trained before going to Singapore

Krait was originally a Japanese fishing vessel based in Singapore named *Kofuku Maru*. Following the outbreak of war, the ship was taken over by the American destroyer *USS Edsall* and used to evacuate over 1,100 people from ships sunk along the east coast of Sumatra. The ship eventually reached Australia via Ceylon and India in 1942 and was handed over to the Australian military. In Australian service, she was renamed *Krait*, after the small but deadly snake. The *MV Krait* is on display at the Australian National Maritime Museum (ANMM).



The Krait in Pittwater in January 1943

Initial training for the raid was organised and carried out by Major Lyon and Captain Davidson, at Refuge Bay. The site selected was a remote, inaccessible area along the Hawkesbury River, New South Wales, named 'Camp X' for the purpose.



The crew of Krait and operatives of Operation Jaywick

Left to right (Front): Lieut Ted Carse, Lieut Donald Davidson, Major Ivan Lyon, Major Jock Campbell (did not accompany the expedition), Lieut Robert Page; *(Middle):* Corporal Andrew Crilly, Leading seaman Kevin Cain, Leading seaman James McDowell, Leading telegraphist Horrie Young, Able seaman Walter Falls, Corporal Ron Morris; *(Back):* Able seaman Moss Berryman, Able seaman Frederic Marsh, Able seaman Arthur Jones and Able seaman Andrew Huston.

The Expedition

On 2 September 1943 *Krait* left Exmouth Gulf (WA) and departed for Singapore. The team's safety depended on maintaining the disguise of a local fishing boat. The men stained their skin brown with dye to appear more Asiatic and were meticulous in what sort of rubbish they threw overboard, lest a trail of European garbage aroused suspicion. After a relatively uneventful voyage, it arrived off Singapore on 24 September. That night, six men left the boat and paddled 50 kilometres with folboats (collapsible kayaks) to establish a forward base in a cave on a small island near the harbour. On the night of 26 September 1943, they paddled into the harbour and placed limpet mines on several Japanese ships before returning to their hiding spot.

In the resulting explosions, the limpet mines allegedly sank or seriously damaged seven Japanese ships, comprising over 39,000 tons between them. The commandos waited until the commotion was over and the attack had subsided. They then returned to *Krait*, which they reached on 2 October. Their return to Australia was mostly uneventful, except for a tense incident in the Lombok Strait, when the ship was closely approached by a Japanese auxiliary minesweeper *Wa-102* on patrol. *Krait* was not challenged. On 19 October, the ship and crew arrived safely back at Exmouth Gulf.

The Krait in Sydney Harbour c 2005



The expedition has been covered by several television series, including *The Heroes* (1989) with Jason Donovan and Cameron Daddo.

A short ABC piece is at:-

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=10156199404767818>

Part two will include details of the training and excerpts from diaries.

Sources:

Wikipedia

Weekly Times (Melbourne, Vic. : 1869 - 1954) / Wed 7 Aug 1946 / Page4 / Long paddle to look for likely targets

Morrison Hammond

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Bridges to Ku-ring-gai

Ku-ring-gai was late to develop largely because the harbour served as a barrier.

The 'minor' bridges gradually reduced isolation until the Harbour Bridge overcame all the problems, at least until traffic congestion brought new ones. A brief history of Ryde, published in 1976 by the Ryde Historical Society, lists the Gladesville Bridge as opening in 1881, Iron Cove in 1882 and Fig Tree in 1885, de Burghs in 1899 and Fullers in 1918. Roseville Bridge was not opened until 1924 and it brought Frenchs Forest and Manly into far better contact.



Roseville Bridge - c 2012

The Roseville Bridge was in existence until 1974. The new 6 lane bridge was opened by the Premier Robert Askin on 2 April 1966.

The new concrete de Burghs Bridge was opened on 15 December 1967. The original wooden bridge was destroyed by bushfire in January 1994. The northern abutments are still visible as are parts of the supporting piers. The new bridge offers a vantage point to view the remnants of the original structure. The accompanying photograph shows the new bridge and the winding road to get to the old wooden bridge.



The old and new de Burghs Bridge at West Pymble

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Tales from the Past

Roseville Theatre ~ *SMH Tuesday 9th June 1936*

A picture theatre of the small, modern familiar type, has been erected at Roseville, in which the seating accommodation will be about 600.

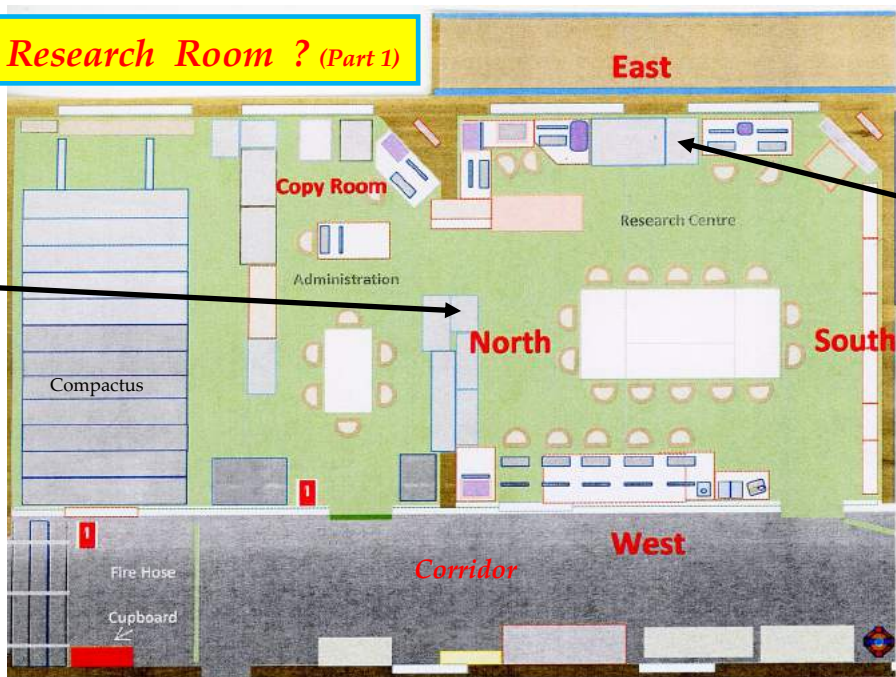


The latest ideas in theatre construction have been exploited by the architects to get the best results. The acoustics have received special attention. The walls have been treated with sound absorbing plaster and wallboard. A talkie machine, one of the Raycophone extended frequency range type, has been installed, designed to reproduce the lowest and the highest pitch. Lighting is receiving special attention. It will be supplied by concealed Neon strips and incandescent installations. Ventilation provision is of the approved type.

What's in the Research Room ? (Part 1)



Vertical Files



Biographical

Ku-ring-gai Historical Society Research Centre

On the 7th November 1963 the Ku-ring-gai Historical Society was formed and the first meeting was in the Council Chambers. The Society had various homes for the next 35 years before settling on the current address. KHS signed an agreement with the Council in late 1997 to rent part of the old Gordon Public School. The Research Centre was open to the members and the public in 1998. Later this year the Society will celebrate its diamond anniversary.

Since 1963, volumes of historical information have been collected comprising built heritage (property history), photographs of many Ku-ring-gai streets, houses and other interesting features as well as some of the Municipality's well known and less well known people. One of the major acquisitions was the introduction of computers which can be used to access Ancestry, KHS intranet and many other resources that are held by the Society. Other hard copy items can be found in lots of cupboards, in a various array of shelving including the large library and the compactus in the administration room.

Vertical Files

Among the files in this cabinet can be found the information on such items as :-

- Community organisations including the Art Society, Bridge Club and Meals on Wheels
- Various churches in the Municipality
- Hospitals from Royal North Shore to the SAN in Wahroonga
- Some memorials with the Sphinx at North Turramurra and the WWI monument in St Ives
- Schools ~ public and private (well over 50 schools in the files)
- Police Stations ~ Gordon and the old Pymble Police Station

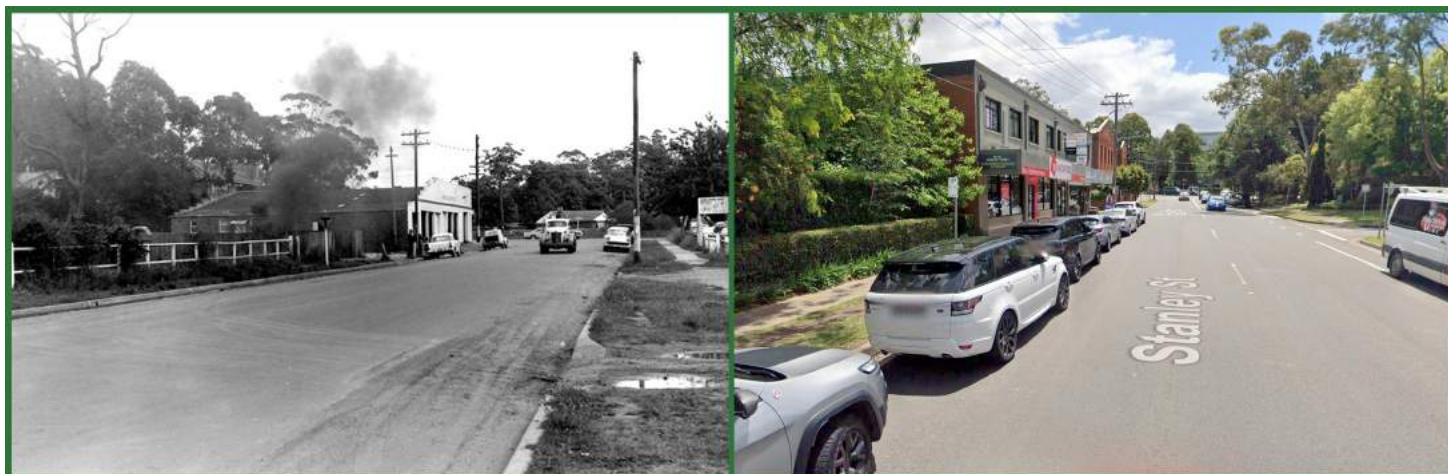
Biographical

A green coloured filing cabinet containing folders of biographical information on the many notable Ku-ring-gai citizens, is situated against the eastern wall of the room. Some of the more familiar names on the folders are:-

- **Kerrin Cook** ~ author of the book 'The Railway came to Ku-ring-gai'
- **Eccleston du Faur** ~ instigator of Ku-ring-gai National Park
- **William Penfold** ~ printer and stationer
- **Neil Harvey** ~ member of the 1948 invincible Australian cricket team
- **Ethel Turner** ~ author of many books

With such a huge amount of storage in these cabinets, we suggest that you could make use of the rooms to assist in your research. You might find relevant biographical information, as well as memorials, schools, even historic sites, all listed in the vertical files, which could lead to a fascinating discovery.

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*

Stanley Street, St Ives, circa 1950.

The Arthur Gillott garage and service station is on the left at the corner of Mona Vale Road.

Now:

Gillott's Garage is long gone, and the Stanley Street shopping strip is a well-established feature of St Ives today. On the evening of Friday 12th November 2010, a fire almost destroyed the group of shops in the foreground.

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 Members Forum

Despite sweltering conditions, the Members Forum on 18 March was a friendly, enjoyable occasion. Seven speakers entertained us with quite different OMG moments.

- **Fran Everingham**, trowel in hand, spoke about the mystery of two young girls with similar names apparently being in the same grave.
- **Chris Edye** shared a richly detailed filing card he found in the Australian National University's Noel Butlin Archives Centre about his grandfather, a successful hotel owner.
- **Elliot Lindsay** came straight from presenting one of his entertaining 'Murder Most Foul' walking tours, and described a local murder that was initially seen as a suicide.
- **Gerard Esquilant's** OMG moment was when he quickly increased the known number of children in an ancestor's family from two to thirteen. His main source was the UK Free BMDs.
- **Gary Smith** took us to Gulgong with an account of his delight in discovering Louisa Lawson's sister in his family tree.
- **John Byrne**, using an illustration in the publication *2075 St Ives*, gave an account of investigating the historic pear trees along Mona Vale Road at Ayres Road.
- **Lorna Watt** gave us an account of her detective work when she set about tracking down descendants of Margo Cooper. Margo's 1942 diary had been found at the Gordon Centre; Margo had written it when at an Elementary Flying Training School at Temora, NSW. Thanks to meticulous fact-checking, Lorna identified Margo as Audrey Mildred Cooper; found her daughter; and enabled the diary to be returned to the family.
- **Judith Godden's** OMG moment was when reading a novel by Banjo Paterson in which he described shooting a platypus (and killing other harmless native birds and animals) as a pleasant day's activity for his heroine.

Some common themes were the fallibility of newspapers (even when on our treasured Trove!) and (as Fran Everingham said) how our research journeys lead us to unexpected places.

*Judith Godden*

## DIARY DATES

### MAY 2023

Saturday 13 : **10.30am Family History Workshop**  
*How to understand what photos can and cannot tell Family Historians*

**Presenter : Jan Brady**

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**

Monday 19 : **1.30pm - German SIG Meeting**

### JULY 2023

Saturday 8 : **10.30am Family History Workshop**

Saturday 15 : **2pm - General Meeting**  
*Historical Guide to New South Wales*

**Presenter : Phillip Simpson**

### AUGUST 2023

Saturday 12 : **10.30am Family History Workshop**

Saturday 19 : **2pm - General Meeting**  
*Dead and Buried: Sydney's Earliest Burial Grounds*

**Presenter : Warren Fahey OAM**

### 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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| Treasurer      | Marilyn van Eerde | 0418 269 126 |
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|           | Geoff Little     | 0411 885 870 |

### Appointees

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| Catering             | Vicki Williams   | 0401 914 524 |
| Computer Systems     | Peter Stehn      | 9489 9488    |
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### Newsletter Details

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