

Celebrating 60 Years  *1963 - 2023*

Ku-ring-gai Historical Society

October/November 2023 Newsletter Vol. 41 No. 7

Patron: the Mayor of Ku-ring-gai

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the President's message

I am very happy to report that I have fortunately recovered from my accident. Certainly not a good choice for a face lift! Many thanks for all the well wishes received, and to those who assisted during my absence.

KHS could not function without volunteers and their many invaluable contributions. Over the years, in fact since the 1960s, various volunteers have devoted a considerable amount of time to acquiring and preserving oral histories, some in written form and others recorded on cassette tapes and CDs.

As you would be aware, technology changes, so I am indebted to member Chris Edye for volunteering to organise and transcribe these recordings onto a more up to date system. Chris has spent many hours transcribing, cataloguing and indexing these histories which will be transferred onto our intranet, making them more easily accessible by all members. Thank you, Chris.

By the time you receive this Newsletter you would have received information regarding our Annual General Meeting to be held on Saturday 21 October at 2pm in Meeting Room 1, our usual meeting place. Have you considered joining the Committee? Completed nomination forms need to be received by the returning officer by 6 October. You still have time! Following all the formalities of the meeting, we are fortunate to have as speaker our very own secretary, and professional historian, Dr Judith Godden. An Annual General Meeting is very important, so please come along to support your Society.

As our research rooms opening hours are restrictive for some members of the community due to their working commitments, we have been asked if it is possible to open on Saturdays. It would be great if we could offer this service. Of course, to be able to do so, we need room volunteers. Are you able to help?

Invitations to our 60th Anniversary Dinner have been sent to all members and preparations are well under way. I do hope you will be able to join in celebrating this very important occasion. We have already received some reservations, so get in early! Bookings close on Tuesday 31 October (see notice on page 3 of this Newsletter).

Best Wishes **Lorna Watt**



Notice of the AGM of Ku-ring-gai Historical Society Inc.

On Saturday 21 October 2023 we will be holding our Annual General Meeting starting at 2pm in Meeting Room 1, Old Gordon School Building, 799 Pacific Highway, Gordon.

This meeting is to:

- Pass the minutes of the last Annual General Meeting;
- Review and endorse the financial statements for the financial year 2022-2023;
- Appoint the auditor;
- Receive the President's report;
- Elect the office bearers and committee members.

The nomination form for the election of office bearers and members of the Committee has been sent to all members.

Following the AGM, Judith Godden will give a talk on 'Lucy Osburn: Controversial Nursing Founder'.

Find out about the tumultuous 16 years that Lucy Osburn spent at Sydney Hospital and why she is celebrated as the founder of modern Australian nursing, even though Florence Nightingale effectively disowned her. The Lucy Osburn-Nightingale Museum is on the first floor of the old Sydney Hospital. Find out too, why Judith thinks we should all know her story.



Dr Ken Polden
Founding Committee Member,
Ku-ring-gai Historical Society, 1963 – 1967.

Ken Polden (1924-1980) was a former Archivist and Controller, General Operations in the Secretary's Department of the Reserve Bank of Australia. He was a self-professed compulsive student and 'sentimentalist'. He had a strong interest in history and spent much of his spare time tracing his family tree. Dad was an avid historian, and I have memories as a youngster trailing around after him (with my mum patiently waiting in the car) as he explored cemeteries in country towns like Mudgee, Hill End and Merriwa in search of his ancestors.



Dr Ken Polden

My family has a large case filled with documents and notes that Dad made during his research into his family. Dad's notes were always meticulous. Indeed, I have strong memories of visiting him in his study under our house in the late 1960s and 70s while he was writing all his various University theses and sitting quietly watching him write in pencil, with

the word count for each page neatly written in the bottom right-hand corner. When he edited some text he did so with rubber and pencil and then amended the word count as he went. Much of the contents of that suitcase cover both his paternal and maternal family trees, tracing them back to the family origins in the UK and various travails, including conviction and transportation of Joseph Polden to Australia in 1834, as well as dozens of letters he wrote to his family during his time in the navy during WWII, and also during a three-month sojourn to the US and UK in the 1960s representing the Reserve Bank. Naturally, his letters were a detailed and illuminating snapshot of his experiences during wartime and as an 'international jet-setting' Bank Officer.

In his early adult life, Dad commenced studies in Accountancy and Cost Accountancy, and an Arts degree at Sydney University (1952-56). He completed an M.A. in history at Macquarie University in 1971, on 'Collapse of the

Government Savings Bank of New South Wales in 1931 and its Absorption by the Commonwealth Savings Bank'. His PhD, awarded in 1978 from the University of Queensland concerned 'A Critical Analysis of the Administration of the Australian Note Issue 1910-1945 and of its Effect on the Stability of the Australian Currency'.

Dad married Dorothy Miller in 1949 and over the next 13 years became the proud father of five children. All of Mum and Dad's married life was spent in the Ku-ring-gai LGA. Their first home was in Evelyn Avenue, Turramurra, followed by Inverallan Avenue, West Pymble in the 1950s and finally McIntosh Street, Gordon in 1963. I don't know why Dad stepped down from the Committee at the end of 1967. I was only 8 at the time, and none of my older siblings know the reason why. Sadly, Dad died suddenly and completely unexpectedly, on June 22, 1980 from a series of heart attacks he experienced in the previous 24 hours.

Lorraine Smith - Aug 2023

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Do you know about CLAN?

Nothing to do with a Scottish group, but the **Care Leavers Australasia Network**. CLAN represents and advocates for people who were raised in Australian orphanages, children's homes and in foster care. If you are interested to know more, KHS has received brochures about its work, the National Redress Scheme, and the Australian Orphanage Museum at Geelong, Victoria. You can also find out more about CLAN at www.clan.org.au.

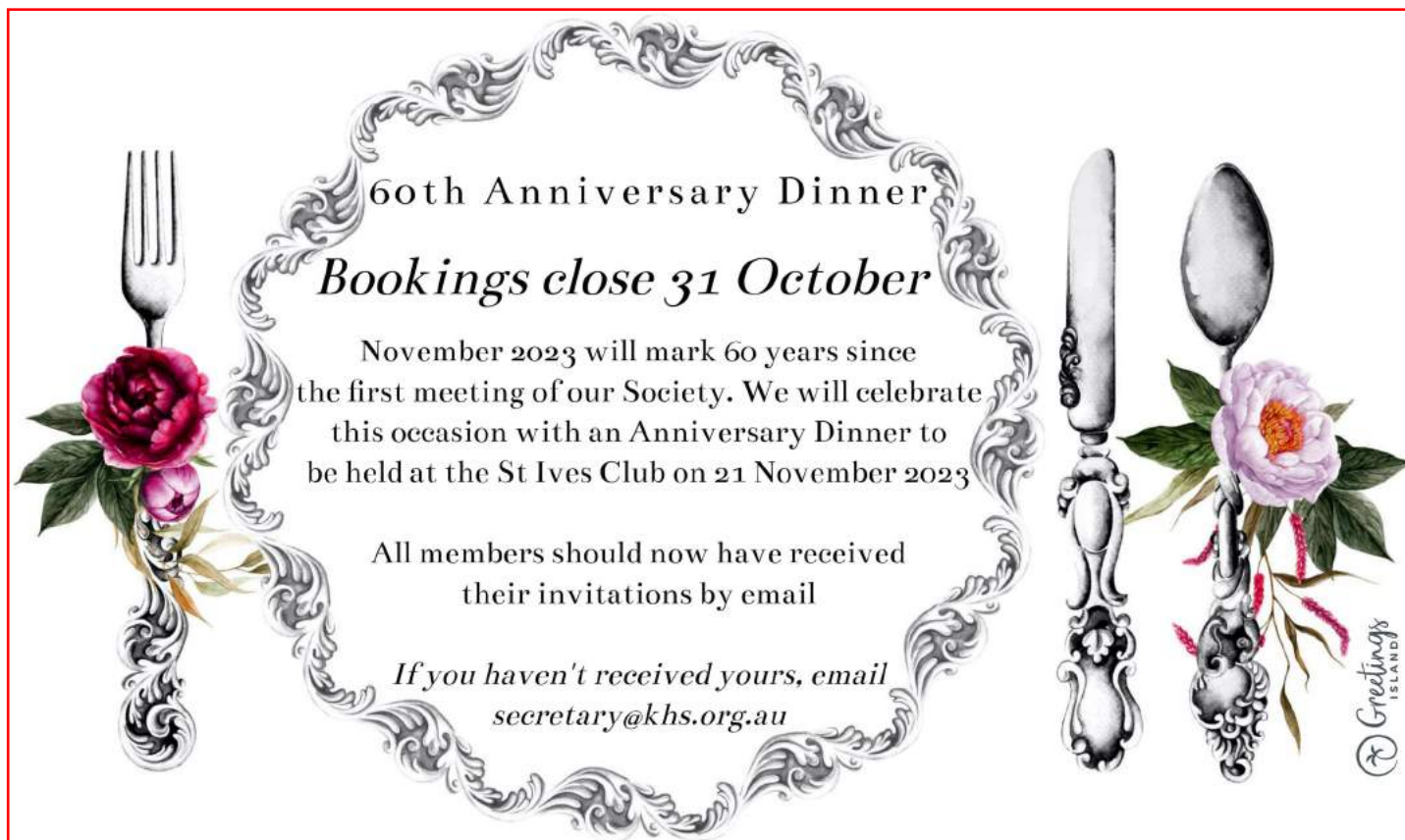
Judith Godden

New Members

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

Robert Leonard	from	Gordon
Diana Oliver	from	Mullumbimby
Robert Smith	from	Seaforth
Kyra Geddes	from	Gordon
Samantha Kent	from	Ashfield
Lauren & Wendy Atmore	from	Roseville
John & Rosemary Sinclair	from	Lindfield

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



Celebrating 60 Years of History

We have much to celebrate at our 60th Anniversary Dinner on 21 November. When the Ku-ring-gai Historical Society (KHS) began, Australia's population had rapidly increased and diversified while communications had become easier. With these changes came a greater interest in Australian culture and history. As the increased population made local societies viable, historical societies were founded: North Shore, Ryde, Lane Cove and Hunters Hill Historical Societies all began during 1959-62.

On 7 November 1963 it was Ku-ring-gai's turn, with a meeting founding KHS. Its initial success was helped by the Ku-ring-gai Municipal Council: the first meeting was in its Council Chambers and the Mayor, George Nicol, was the first President, serving in that role for six years. The support of other historical societies was also crucial. The new committee included representatives from the Royal Australian Historical Society and the Society of Australian Genealogists; links to these two societies remain important. The first Patron was Wahroonga resident Sir John Northcott, a former Governor of NSW and the first Australian-born one. Since his death in 1966, the Mayors of Ku-ring-gai have all taken on that role.

Our initial aims focused on stimulating interest in, and research about, Ku-ring-gai history. We later added the aim 'to facilitate and encourage family history research'. While our aims remain consistent with the original vision of the founders,

history is never static. In recent decades an appreciation of Ku-ring-gai's Indigenous and multicultural history has given us a deeper understanding of our past (and thus present).

Much of what we offer today depends on computers. The amount of historical material that has been digitised is growing by the minute. One example is photographs. In *Ku-ring-gai Historical Society: the first 50 years 1963-2013*, the KHS President proudly boasted that we had 'more than 10,000 photographs'. Now we have around 20,000, all available in digital form in our research room. You may be surprised to find what your locality looked like in the past. On the other hand, you may have photos that you would like to donate or have copied for wider access. KHS welcomes donations of photos that show street scenes and other public aspects of Ku-ring-gai's past.

Now it is easy to get to KHS's rooms but in its early years, we struggled to find a permanent home. That changed in 1997 when we moved into the historic sandstone building that previously was Gordon Public School. Today, we enjoy our research and archive room there, along with our school museum in the former headmaster's office. It is the icing on the cake that our rooms adjoin the Gordon Library, with its complementary local studies collection.

KHS began with 38 members and now has over 350 members. We have a proud publishing record with books on local history, this regular newsletter, and *The Historian*. With the publication of the Roseville

issue, all Ku-ring-gai suburbs have featured in one or more issues of *The Historian*. Our newsletters and website reveal the wide variety of history talks and workshops that are open to members and visitors.

KHS has attracted loyal members and volunteers over the last 60 years. One of the standouts is Les Jeckeln – a member of the 1963 founding committee, and still a much-appreciated KHS member. This newsletter has an article about another member of that founding Committee: Ken Polden. Please contact me if you have information about other early committee members, and remember that new members and volunteers are always welcome.

Acknowledgment: A version of this article is due to be published in the October issue of the *Sydney Observer*.

Judith Godden

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Dead & Buried

On Saturday 19 August, Warren Fahey OAM spoke to KHS members on the subject of Sydney's earliest burial grounds.

Warren spoke with much enthusiasm on this subject and has written and published a book on the topic, which he brought with him for sale.

The audience would have had some knowledge of burial grounds, as many could have walked through Gore Hill Cemetery or the one closer to home at St Johns Church, Gordon. This was a part of life in days long gone and treated with great respect. It was the black and white photos Warren showed that really gave us a glimpse of the time.

One photo showed a coffin being lowered into a grave. Mounds of earth had been roughly shovelled on two sides. Four gentlemen performing their duty as pallbearers showed great strain on their faces. This, coupled with their attire, made for sombre viewing. Three women in bonnets draped in crepe, a fourth completely veiled, an elderly gentleman nearby plus a minister or priest completed the picture.

The black and white print only added to the solemnity of the occasion. However, a plank in front of the coffin, which kept the feet of the ladies dry and out of the grave, gave it a touch of normality. Though a scene of a burial from another time, it was so poignant.

Warren is a man of many parts. He is not just an author of thirty books and interested in digging up history, he admitted being physically troubled re the plight of the Aborigine after the arrival of the First Fleet as so many died. Maybe that will be his next book. All in all it was a well spent Saturday afternoon.

Elizabeth Dokulil

German Special Interest Group

Our German SIG met on Monday 14 August 2023 with 16 enthusiasts present, including two welcome visitors.

Tony Karrasch updated us on online German family history activity, especially the wealth of activity in the latest International German Genealogy Partnership newsletter. Tony also reported on the deletion of the German-Australian Genealogy History Alliance website and its possible future.

Peter Stehn reported on the future of TPG, iiNet, Internode and Westnet email accounts following the recent announcement to transfer the email to The Messaging Company.

Christine Edwards and Sue Moore updated members on progress with the group project, *German Ancestors of Ku-ring-gai Historical Society Members* following the recent productive workshop with Helen Matheson.

Joan Wilson gave an interesting presentation on her master mariner grandfather, Prinzhorn, and his loss at sea off Sydney Harbour.

To conclude, Peter presented an introductory workshop on the Ancestry.com 'Library Edition' which is available to all KHS members for free in our rooms.

The next meeting is planned for Monday 9 October 2023. Visitors (and suggestions for agenda items) welcomed. For more information, see khs.org.au/german-sig

Peter Stehn

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Family History Workshop

At our Family History workshop held on 8 July we were very lucky to have Heather Garnsey speaking to us about 'How to find NSW Church Registers through the Joint Copying Project'.

Heather is a very practiced presenter and speaker. Her presentation was very informative and very entertaining as well. Heather explained the difference between the Joint Copying Project and the Australian Joint Copying Project and how they both came about, which led into the rest of the presentation.

The workshop was well attended by members who, from the number of questions asked, seemed to enjoy the presentation.

Marilyn van Eerde

INTERESTING KU-RING-GAI SNIPPETS

- PYMBLE -

The suburb of Pymble was named when the north shore railway was opened in 1890. It is named after Robert Pymble, an influential pioneer, whose 600 acre land grant of 1823 covers around half of modern Pymble.

It was not, however, always the quiet suburb it is today. In fact, Pymble was the home of pubs. The first was Daniel Bullock's *New Inn* built in 1843 on the eastern side of the highway close to the present Mona Vale Road. It was changed in 1854 to the *Travellers' Home Hotel* and later to the *Travellers' Rest Hotel*.

When the railway was established, the hotel was demolished and a new hotel, the *Lane Cove Hotel*, was constructed further north up the highway. The building is still standing and has been redeveloped as commercial premises.



The Pymble Hotel

Other pubs were to be found between Telegraph Road and the railway crossing near the station. One of these was *The Gardeners' Arms*, a weatherboard building constructed in 1866 by orchardist Richard Porter on Pymble Hill next to the first Roman Catholic Church. From this time, the centre of commercial activity came to be at the top of the hill around the Pacific Highway and Bannockburn Road area. The hotel was later rebuilt and named the *Pymble Hotel*.

After the arrival of the railway, and the new railway station being located by necessity at the foot of the hill, development began to concentrate nearer to the new

station. The *Pymble Hotel* was eventually bought by John Toohey of Toohey's Brewery who, in the late 1930s purchased land further down the hill and moved the hotel business to a new Art Deco style two-storey hotel, retaining the name and demolishing the old hotel between *Grandview* and the church.

Grandview, appropriately named for its unobstructed views which were some of the grandest in Ku-ring-gai, is prominently located on the western side of the Pacific Highway near the top of Pymble Hill.

An early two-storey Victorian villa, *Grandview* was built c.1883 by Michael Joseph Porter, a local orchardist and the fifth son of Richard Porter, pioneer orchardist and publican. It is one of the oldest substantial buildings remaining in the Ku-ring-gai area.

Constructed of sparrow-picked ashlar sandstone which was locally quarried, the openings in the principal façade are articulated with quite massive quoins and lintels of smooth dressed sandstone. The front façade and one adjacent side feature two-storey verandahs with bell-cast corrugated iron roofs and cast iron columns and balustrades. Shuttered French windows open onto the verandahs. The interior has a simple four-square plan with a central hallway, and there are marble fireplaces in several rooms.

At the rear of the building was a detached kitchen wing and a former brick-lined well/storage tank. This ensemble of a Victorian stone residence, detached kitchen and water storage was unique in Ku-ring-gai.



Australian Joint Stock Bank

In 1888 the house became the first bank in the area when Michael Porter leased the property to the Australian Joint Stock Bank for three years at £150 per year, with the right to renew for a further three years at the same rent. The front rooms were used as the banking chamber and the upper floor accommodated the manager and his family. The bank operated there until 1894 by which time the railway had opened.

In the early part of the 20th century, *Grandview* was used as a boarding house for a number of years. Later, the vacant and neglected building was restored for use as a private home and is now divided into two residential apartments.

The property has been heritage listed for its historic, architectural, landmark value, and state significance.

Lorna Watt

Looking for back copies of our Newsletter?

There are several ways you can access back copies of our Newsletters.

If you're looking for particular content, did you know that the complete content of our Newsletters from November/December 2005 onwards is searchable via the search box at the top right of any page on our website? On mobile devices, the search box is located inside the 3-dot menu at the top right of the screen.



When you enter some keywords into the search box, you'll be presented with a page of relevant results (in some cases, more than one page) which include content from our website; from our Society Library catalogue; and from our Newsletters from November/December 2005 onwards.

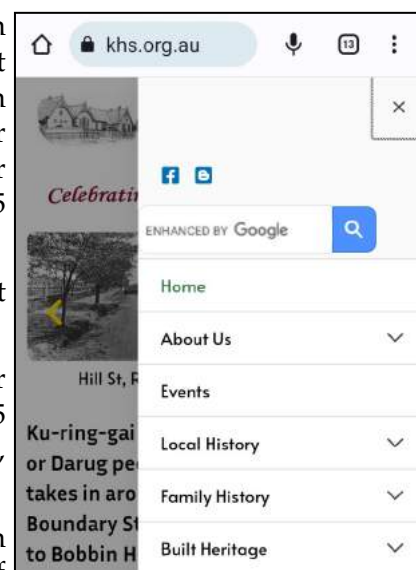
You can then read and download the relevant Newsletter, and print it at home.

You can also read and download copies of all our Newsletters from November/December 2005 onwards on our website's Newsletters page, www.khs.org.au/newsletters

Older Newsletters are available in print form in our rooms. A PDF index to the major content of

our Newsletters from 1983 to December 2014 is available on our website's Newsletters page. This index should really only be required if you're looking for content published from 1983-2005, as the search box will return results from November/December 2005 onwards as described above.

To read pre-2006 Newsletters, feel free to visit our Research Centre in Gordon, where print copies are available for you to peruse in our rooms. Please refer to our website's Contact Us page for our opening hours, www.khs.org.au/contact-us



Ross McMullin, *Life so Full of Promise*, Further biographies of Australia's Lost Generation.

Ross McMullin is an award-winning author who has donated a copy of his latest book to KHS. This book is a sequel to his *Farewell, Dear People: Biographies of Australia's Lost Generation*. There are three main biographies in *Life so Full of Promise*: that of Brian Pockley; Norman Callaway; and Murdoch Mackay. McMullin has extensively researched each man to, as he states, "make it clear why he was special". All were combatants in World War I; all had connections to high-level cricket.

The life especially relevant to Ku-ring-gai is that of Dr Brian Pockley who grew up in Wahroonga. Dr Pockley was admired for his 'uncommon blend of conspicuous ability and an endearing personality'. As a new graduate, he started work at Sydney Hospital in March 1914. In August, a few days before World War I started, he volunteered to join the medical corps. His war service lasted only around a month; on 9 September 1914, aged 24, he was killed in action. This book allows us to appreciate what our country lost with his death and that of so many other talented young men.

Judith Godden

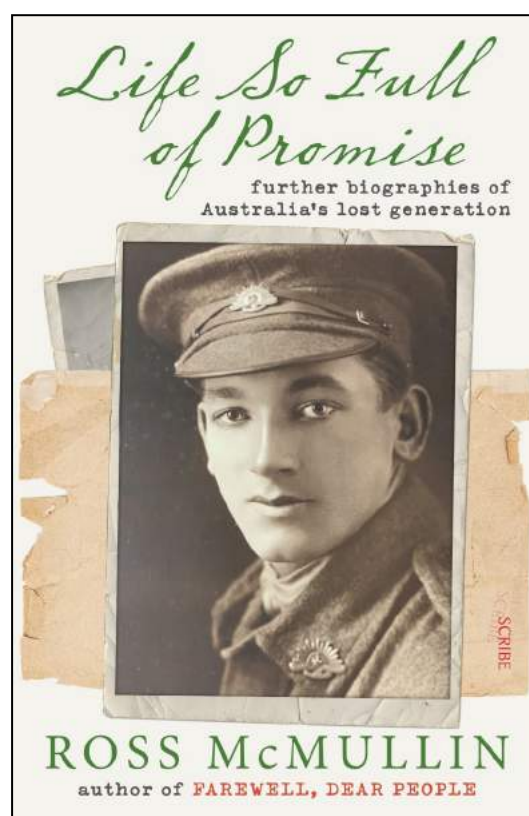




Image: Ku-ring-gai Library



Image: Google Street View

Then:

Killeaton Street, St Ives, under construction c.1960

Now:

The view today shows the area still dominated by thick bush and with a footpath now running alongside the road on the right. The Armco railing on the left is also a more recent addition.

Have you any old 'Then & Now' photos of Ku-ring-gai hidden in old albums ?
Get them out and send to the Editor who is waiting to publish them.

Easy Care Gardening

On 8 August, 1988 the three founders of Easy Care Gardening Inc., Anne Shires, Kathleen Ciemiega and Henry Llewellyn, started the organisation with a grant for just \$1,500 from Ku-ring-gai Council.

They were all Horticultural Therapy Association volunteers and had seen that there was a need for a gardening service for the frail aged that enabled them to remain in their own home. By February the next year, they had 31 clients and just four volunteers. Clients were assessed and visited on a monthly, bi-monthly and 'ring when needed' basis and were asked to donate a small fee to assist with on-going costs.



Volunteers Susan Saunders and
Joanna Brown

In 1990 a grant from Home and Community Care assisted ECG to take over clients from the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Home Handyman service so that the service now covered Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai. By February 1991 ECG was granted incorporation with the status of a Charity. Further grants enabled one full time and one part-time member of staff to be employed. By 1998 there were 306 clients, 100 lawn-mowing clients and 150 other volunteers.



Founder Anne Shires and
President Frank Windeyer

In 2003 another grant was provided by DADHC for ECG to expand into Ryde and Hunters Hill council areas, taking gardening clients to 500, 100 lawn-mowing clients. Today we continue to operate in the Hornsby, Hunters Hill, Ku-ring-gai and Ryde areas. We have served over 5,000 clients, serviced almost 68,000 gardens and accumulated over 235,000 hours in the garden!

With the continued support of our volunteers and clients, the organisation has a bright future ahead.

Leslie Whelan for Easy Care Gardening

DIARY DATES

OCTOBER 2023

- Monday 9 : 1.30pm - German SIG meeting**
Saturday 14 : 10.30am Family History Workshop
Why should I bother citing my sources?
Presenter: Jenny Joyce
Saturday 21 : 2pm - AGM
Lucy Osburn : Controversial Nursing Founder
Presenter: Dr Judith Godden

NOVEMBER 2023

- Saturday 11 : 10.30am Family History Workshop**
Saturday 18 : Please note that there will be no General Meeting or guest speaker on this date
Tuesday 21 : KHS 60th Anniversary Dinner

DECEMBER 2023

- Monday 11 : 1.30pm - German SIG meeting**

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



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Newsletter Details

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