



# Peninsula Historian

Newsletter of the Manly, Warringah &  
Pittwater Historical Society Inc.

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## FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome from the UK.

If that's puzzling - ask Jim.

Yes, the Peninsula Historian is back and, we hope, just as interesting and entertaining as before.

However it has been decided that it will become an every-two-monthly publication so it will be published at the beginning of each even numbered month.

## PRESIDENTS REPORT

Unfortunately, I have been dealing with health problems since last I wrote a Presidents Report back in June. My 3 week stretch in Many hospital at least gave me an opportunity to read a novel or two, which has been a rare luxury. On that score, I highly recommend "Waterland" by Graham Swift, which nearly won the Booker Prize in the mid 1980s. As often happens, Swift won the Brooker Prize some years later for "Last Orders", which I think was some sort of compensation for his earlier book. The central character is a History teacher and the book has several themes, one of which is the history of the Fens ( the waterlands ), its landscape and its people, a second theme is his own story and then his explanation of these to his class, as history is to be dropped from the school curriculum. As we are all interested in history and how it is told, I strongly recommend it.

Anyway, my health is slowly recovering, although I would like to put on some weight and at the same time enjoy some warmer weather. Meanwhile, I thank the members of our committee for getting on with the management of the Society and particularly a focus on, where we

want to go into the future. Bryant Lavering Bob Moran, Judith Halnan and Phil Colman have been great in this regard.

Unfortunately July saw the departure of Bill Slessor back to his Yorkshire stamping ground. In his few years with us, Bill gave invaluable service to the Society, both in the improvement to the website and in his contribution to the Peninsula Historian. We are remaining in contact and look forward to contributions from Shipley Glen.

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## HISTORIC HOUSES AT ADELAIDE

In November 2014 I accompanied a small group from the Historic Houses Association touring historic houses in and about Adelaide. We were accompanied from Sydney by Robert Griffin, an architectural historian with a passion for his subject. It was an intensive five day trip, visiting Adelaide's early buildings and churches, hearing stories of good and bad luck, hard work and overcoming obstacles, grief and loss.

On the first day we flew to Adelaide, arriving late in the morning, and it was straight into sightseeing. Our mini bus took us to the SA State Library on North Terrace, where we had a brief look at the Mortlock Chamber (1884), a grand late Victorian hall which is now a showcase for SA's history. There was just time for a quick lunch at the library, before moving along North Terrace to see Ayers House (1846-1860s). Now a museum, Ayers House is the last of the gentlemen's mansions on North Terrace. It is normally closed to the public on Monday, so we had the house and guide all to ourselves.

After that our minibus took us to King William Street, Adelaide's main thoroughfare, where Robert pointed out points of architectural interest. About 4.00 o'clock, sensing that his audience was flagging after a very early start to catch a 10 o'clock flight, he at last let us go to our hotel.

That night we had a welcome dinner at the hotel, which we had ordered when we booked our tour.

Next morning it was out early to visit Urrbrae House (completed 1891), on an estate first settled in 1839. This was built by pastoralist Peter Waite, with interior decoration by Adam Heaton, a contemporary of William Morris. Waite was keen on modern technology, and Urrbrae was the first house in Adelaide to have electric lighting, and the basement, where the family lived in summer, had the first domestic refrigeration plant in Australia. When Waite died he left his estate to the University of South Australia with the proviso that part of the grounds should be open to the public. Now the house is part of the University, with modern buildings added for research, and the 30 acre arboretum is a public park. We were given a two hour private tour over the house and garden.

Then it was on to Hahndorf for (another) brief lunch, before travelling to Hans Heysen's estate, The Cedars, nearby. Heysen bought the estate in 1912 and greatly modified in the 1920s. It is a very comfortable house, and is still a family home, although it is open to the public. Also open to the public is the studio up on the hill, architect-built to Heysen's requirements. The garden remains largely as Heysen created it, and has huge old cedars, from which the house



gets its name.

Another group dinner that night, at Red Ochre

Grill, a smart restaurant on the banks of the Torrens, looking back at the lights of the city.

Next day we were off again early to see Holy Trinity Church, North Terrace, Adelaide's oldest church (1838). Then across the river to St Peter's Cathedral, North Adelaide. When the Anglican bishop arrived in Adelaide in the 1860s he was armed with plans for a cathedral designed by influential English Gothic Revival architect, William Butterfield. The bishop planned to build his cathedral in the central park of Adelaide, and in this was supported by the Governor. However, the people of Adelaide were horrified by alienation of public land, and after he lost a Court case the bishop stumped off to North Adelaide with his plans, where St Peter's now looks back on the city. It is a very grand English style cathedral.

By complete contrast, next to it, and almost touching it, is the Quaker meeting house (1840). Nothing could be simpler than this. It is a plain hall, with the only decoration a wall clock. When we visited some members were holding a working bee, and kindly let us inside and told us about it. The hall was shipped out from England in pre-fabricated panels, each designed to be handled by a man and a boy.

Then it was on again to Carrick Hill (1939), just outside Adelaide. This was built for members of two of Adelaide's prominent families, Edward Hayward and Ursula Barr Smith. When they married in 1935 their honeymoon trip took them to UK, where they saw a Tudor house about to be demolished because nobody wanted it. They snapped up the Tudor timberwork, as you do, and shipped it back to Adelaide where it was incorporated in their new house. So there is a grand Tudor staircase and gallery in the entrance hall, with doors built from Tudor doors. The Haywards were also keen collectors of artwork, and their collections are still in the house. The house is now a museum, open to the public.

We were given lunch in a marquee with a view over the garden to the sea.

The afternoon's visit resonates with the news this week (3-4 January) of bad bushfires in the Adelaide Hills, as it also was the aftermath of bushfires in the Adelaide Hills. Marble Hill (1878-9) was built as the summer residence of the

Governor. In January 1955 it was destroyed by a bushfire. The Governor and his family just escaped, but the house was destroyed, leaving only the outside walls. It's a wonder they got out at all, as the road to the house is long and winding up through bushland. Even when it was built it must have been tricky to access - imagine the aides-de-camp racing on horseback up the hill to deliver urgent messages to the Governor. For years the government pondered what to do with the ruins. The National Trust did some partial restoration in the 1970s but the site was closed in 1992. Eventually it was sold to private owners. We were given a two hour tour of the ruins by one of the owners, Patricia Bishop, who is a GP and sister of Julie Bishop, the Foreign Minister. My that woman could talk! She had all the facts and figures to hand and relayed them with dizzying speed. Afterwards we were given afternoon tea in their newly built barn, where they had photos of the bushfires which nearly destroyed their parent's farm.

By this time I was glad to have a quiet evening in at the hotel.

Next day, a very hot day, we set off for Martindale Hall (1880), 100 miles north of Adelaide, built by wealthy pastoralist Edmund Bowman. However, drought and extensive borrowings forced him to sell the estate to the Mortlock family in 1891. It remained in the Mortlock family till 1950, and was donated to the University of Adelaide in 1965. There is an account of this in the December Journal. It is a curious place, very grand in places and rather run down in others. The entrance hall is its pride and joy, but the bedrooms upstairs are very ordinary. It seems to be run as accommodation, but its future is uncertain without government funding.

Then we visited Anlaby Station (1839), established by Frederick Dutton, South Australia's oldest merino stud, and still carrying merinos. We were welcomed after a long hot trip by jugs of cold water and plates of sandwiches in the shed, and given an introduction by one of the owners. It is now owned by two men from Paddington. It seems that in 2003 they were looking for a weekender. One of the stipulations was that it should be no more than 1.5 hours drive from Sydney. Just how they ended up buying a property 100 km from Adelaide is still a

mystery to them. I gather that Peter and Andrew still live in Paddington. They are gradually conserving it, still running merinos on it, and producing fine quality woolen blankets from their sheep. Andrew gave us a tour of the house. They are so particular about the quality of conservation that they have delayed painting the library ceiling, after rainwater damage has been repaired, until they find a painter who can guarantee not a drop of paint will spill down onto the original wallpaper. After the house we were taken on a tour of the 10 acre garden (that's just the house garden) by the gardener, who has his work cut out for him restoring a derelict area. He has already done some very good work, creating a lake and a succulent garden.

They, late in the afternoon of a very hot day, we visited a very special place. A little church, St Matthew's Anglican Church, at Hamilton, built in 1896 by Henry Dutton (of Anlaby Station) as a memorial to his 15 year old daughter Ethel, who was drowned while sketching on holidays. It is astonishing to find what is almost like a miniature cathedral out in the paddocks. It has a beautifully preserved Arts and Crafts interior, with painted ceilings, a timber screen and finely carved oak choir stalls and brass and silver fittings imported from England. The caretaker, who lives in the only house visible for miles, let us in and showed us around. Now only about ten families worship there.

On the way back to Adelaide the air conditioning on our minibus broke down. With no opening windows, it was a choice of waiting for a relief bus or pressing on. We elected to press on, and luckily we had a large refrigerated box of iced water. We made it home without heat stroke.

Next day was our last, and Robert planned to walk to the Botanic Gardens, and invited anyone who wanted to come to accompany him. Everyone did, and as we strolled along North Terrace Robert explained the architecture of the handsome public buildings. In the Gardens we visited the Museum of Economic Botany (1881) which houses an extensive and fascinating collection of plants which are of commercial use.

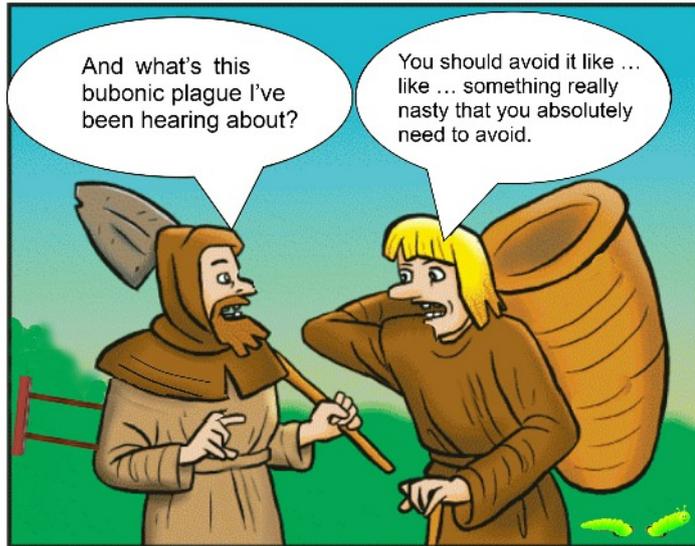
After that we went our own ways, some to wander round the Gardens, some to visit an exhibition at the Art Gallery, until we met back at the hotel prepared to leave for the airport.

And so we arrived back in Sydney, tired but happy, etc, after a wonderful trip. I must admit that after some of these long tours the facts and figures tended to blur, and I was looking for somewhere to sit down, but it was a very worthwhile trip and thoroughly enjoyable. The Historic Houses Association is to be congratulated on a well organised visit.

initially attending a talk as an observer. The next stage could be doing spots within a talk given by a more experienced speaker. Then one could work up from small groups to larger ones.

### Objectives

The talks are a good opportunity to promote the Society not only in its broad role but in assisting a historical and archival function within that community group. The end objective is having a historian and archivist within that group who is recognised within its organisation. It would be great to see evidence of that on websites of community groups. The third objective is that such a talk is not only available to be given at a future date but also can be expanded on to provide a more detailed article for the Peninsula Historian. Speakers are then encouraged to provide a copy of their notes for the Society archives. A last objective is to maintain a link with the inviting organisation as a source of historical material. It is amazing how memories are given a shake by a talk, and only bear fruit after the event.



### TALKS GROUP

The Society is often asked to provide a speaker on various historical subjects, mostly focusing on a particular area. These requests have come from Probus groups, Rotary clubs, schools and residential community groups. These talks average 45 minutes with an additional 15 minutes of questions from the floor. Most presentations are given in the late mornings or evening, with very few in the afternoon. The average number of invitations in a given year is 6 but the requests do appear to be increasing. The average audience would be about 40 people, equally composed of men and women.

### Presenters

I have been doing nearly all of these presentations but I think it is better for the Society that these presentations be spread across a group of 3 or 4 at a minimum and ideally have a mix of men and women. Public speaking can be fun but often people lack confidence to try. This issue could be met by prospective speakers

### Support Material

To prepare a talk, the Society is well equipped to provide a speaker with material. These are the following:

Society Archives ( Manly Lib ) – Books, magazines, photographs, manuscripts, artefacts etc.

Ephemera ( Cromer ) – The bulk of Ephemera is divided by locations across the Peninsula into about 25 suburban clusters. There is a smaller Ephemera section that focuses on activities e.g. Health, Education, Retail. There are 2 smaller sections of Ephemera focusing on personalities and sport.

Organisations (Cromer). These are organisations and institutions where the society maintains contact e.g. Councils, sporting clubs, residential groups

Previous Talks/Articles (Cromer). These are collections of notes and summaries that support talks and articles e.g Peninsula Living. These collections should also include the finished article or talk where possible.

Free publications ( North Head ) – These are publications or sometimes CDs produced either by councils or other reputable organisations eg

NSW Govt. Depts., NPWS, NSE Heritage Division.

### Talk Structure

Most talks are of 45 minutes duration and provided with a mike, a lectern and a side table for notes and printed material. The talks have the following structure:

- Introduction of our Society
- Short summary of talk
- Brief chronology
- Identification of historical turning points (Often generational every 25 years or so )
- Detail grouped into about 5 clusters
- Recap emphasising history as an on-going exploration
- Conclusion emphasising the uniqueness of that location, activity or personality and drawing out similarities with paces or activities elsewhere.
- Invitation for questions emphasising availability not only over coffee/tea but by email or phone.

### Summary

These talks should be fun not an ordeal and one should have a notebook handy re questions where you don't have a ready answer. The notebook entry should have brief details of the question, name, email/phone contact.

Often you may be asked to provide a summary of your talk for that group's newsletter. Again summary plus notes on talk and reference to background material should be provided to the President or Archivist for filing in a large envelope in that particular section of the Cromer filing system identified for that purpose.

When invited to give the talk, the speaker should ask the Talks Organiser or officer of the organisation, who has invited you, as to previous speakers and the periods in which the audience is most interested. If you can't get a clear guide tend towards inter-war and post-war and use Question time to expand on periods or activities where there is curiosity and interest.

The speaker should always have a stock of society membership forms, and some other free printed material on display on a table. Material

for sale should only be on display if you can maintain control over it. I always show up at least 30 minutes before my time to start talking. You need to set up free of stress and get a feel for the room.

Jim Boyce – President 21 July 2015

### Fancy That

When the grey exterior of the Presidential mansion was painted white to cover the fire damage caused by British forces in the War of 1812, the change in colour brought about the change in name of the building to the White House.

### THE ROLE OF THE MARINE WORLD AND LONG REEF

For our August meeting, Phil Colman gave an expansive talk on Long Reef and how its main features illustrated the place of the marine world in our environment. Phil calls himself a naturalist and his experience gained at the Australian Museum over many years has given him a unique perspective on the coast and in particular Long Reef, near where he lives.

Phil briefly described the number of marine themes that were represented at Long Reef. First, Fisherman's Beach and its long history of being a sheltered inlet for fishermen, both for their fishing craft and, in the early days, for their habitation. A second aspect was the seasonal presence of migratory birds both large and small, and how their flight paths had been traced up and down the Western Pacific. Another aspect the number of ships that had foundered on the rock shelf spearing out from the headland. In this respect it had claimed a few 90 milers as the small coal ships were called, who plied their trade from Newcastle.

In the main, his talk focused on the marine life to found on the rock shelf that extends out from the headland at Long Reef. Over a dozen or so slides, the talk covered shells, crustaceans, starfish and other marine life that could be found on the rock shelf. He also went into the recovery process, one could expect after major storms. An

interesting point was the number of government instrumentalities who have some responsibility for the protection of that coastal environment. The area from opposite the Long Reef SLSC clubhouse around to the Collaroy Rock Baths is classified as the Long Reef Aquatic Reserve and this Reserve extends out 200 metre from the shoreline.

A major point is that, although Sydney has 4 universities, and several world-class research stations a few thousand miles away in North Queensland, it does not have a local field station and Long Reef is ideally placed for that purpose. Long Reef is probably unique in that it shows aspects of the four points of the compass, even a westerly one, making it very biologically diverse. It is easily accessible, has ample parking available, it's close to Sydney, and even has public toilets. There is also an existing room, which with minor modifications, would be eminently suitable – although there is politics to solve there!

It was a very interesting talk and an area that many people were familiar with but not the level of detail that Phil had at his disposal. It is one of the environmental gems of Sydney.

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## WINIFRED ATWELL AND THE ENGLISH ADOPTION

There have been many prominent English entertainers who have retired to our shores. Googie Withers and John McCallum come to mind but probably the most well known was Winifred Atwell who settled in Australia in the early 1970s and died in 1983, at the age of 69. Winnie as she was known, was the most popular entertainer in England in the 1950s with an act featuring rag-time and boogie-woogie piano music. She had a range of No. 1 hits through the 1950s and played three Royal Variety Performances as well as a private party for Queen Elizabeth. Winnie had her own TV series in Britain and toured to sell-out crowds in Europe and Australia.

She first toured Australia in 1955, continued through the 1960s and finally settled in the early 1970s. She was born in Tunapuna, a small town outside the capital of Trinidad and Tobago, Port of Spain. She was in her early 20's, when she left Trinidad and eventually moved to London, where she shot to fame with her piano hit "Black and

White Rag." Though a dynamic stage personality, Atwell was, in person, a shy, retiring and soft-spoken woman. She and her husband Lew Levisohn were an intelligent team and are buried together in a small cemetery just outside Lismore, a place they passed on their travels and which they decided was a fitting resting place.

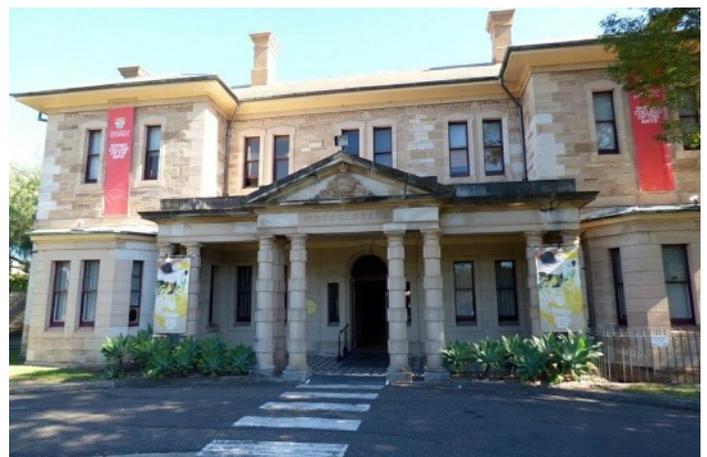
Winnie was keenly aware of injustice and racism and was outspoken about the treatment of Aborigines in Australia. Eventually, Winnie took out Australian citizenship in 1981. She was a devout Catholic and often played the organ on a Sunday at her parish church, St Joseph's in Narrabeen. She had moved to Narrabeen later in life and, shortly before her death in 1983, her Narrabeen home was destroyed by fire, due to an electrical fault. This undoubtedly contributed to her heart attack. She will be long remembered as a person who brought a lot of happiness to a generation recovering from the war, both in England, Europe and Australia.

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## CALLAN PARK WALK

Gordon and I recently enjoyed a walk through a part of Sydney we had not previously known. Beginning at Darling Street, Rozelle we first explored Callan Park, then across Iron Cove Bridge and around to Rodd Point along "The Bay Run". The walk continued along "The Greenway" through a green corridor beside the Hawthorne Canal to Lewisham West, where we caught the Light Rail back to Haymarket.

An absolute highlight was our self-guided tour of Callan Park, which has only been open to the public in recent years.



The complex was designed and built by colonial architect, James Johnstone Barnett, in the 1880's. The site was selected when Gladesville Mental Hospital proved too crowded and it became Australia's largest public works project of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



It was named **Kirkbride**, after an American doctor who believed in the curative powers of pleasant surroundings. The beautiful buildings are now the home of the Sydney College of the Arts and it was a delight to wander around, appreciating the detail and atmosphere of this historic place.

There is an excellent website detailing **Kirkbride Past and Present** at: [www.sydney.edu.au/sca/docs/about-us/Kirkbride\\_booklet.pdf](http://www.sydney.edu.au/sca/docs/about-us/Kirkbride_booklet.pdf)

Barbara Davies  
May 2015

A monotreme is an animal that lays eggs and suckles its young. The world's only monotremes are the platypus and the echidna.

## SECRET SITES

This carving lies beside a well used pathway.



Can anybody identify just where?

Can anybody throw any light on the carving's history?

## PREVIOUS SECRET SITES (June 2015)

The Defence of Sydney Memorial is another of the special places on North Head. It is at the beginning of the Memorial Walk.

The Defence of Sydney Monument, honours those who served in defence of Sydney during the Second World War. It was unveiled in 1995. The Monument takes the form of a lookout.

The circular sandstone base of the Monument represents both coast artillery gun emplacements and observation posts. The timber walkway and platform represent a gangplank and a wharf, and the stainless steel railing has a strong nautical quality and suggesting standing on the bridge of a ship. From above the structure reveals the form of a radial aircraft engine complete with propeller spinning and cowling. The sandstone wall, as it intersects the circle, suggests the leading edge of a wing.

Australia's Memorial Walk honours those Australians who served in defence of the Country in both war and peace. It consists of five monuments linked by a pathway, made-up of engraved pavers that have been donated by friends, families, local organisations and units, recognising the service of Australian individuals and units. The entrance to the Walk has a sandstone block bearing the badges of the Royal

Australian Navy, the Australian Commonwealth Military Forces, the Royal Australian Air Force and the Australian Merchant Navy.

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## HERITAGE IS A MOVING TARGET

It is important to remember the meaning of heritage in a governmental sense in that it is physical items of historical significance that remain from the past. In the light of movements in technology, the physical presence of a heritage item is changing. While these developments are happening in Europe and Africa, they will inevitably come to Australia and will probably have the greatest impact on our knowledge of Aboriginal history.

I refer to the recent discovery of stone formations near Stonehenge. This has involved the use of two techniques to explore below ground level archaeology with miniaturised electronic systems. The first type measures local disturbances in the magnetic field, which show up any anomalies from pits, ditches or monuments below the surface. This is called magnetometry and has a record of achievement in archaeology.

The second uses multi-channel ground-penetrating radar, which transmits radio waves beneath the surface and picks up any reflections from underground artefacts. While these techniques have been around for some time, it is the miniaturisation of the equipment that has made the inexpensive exploration of large areas possible. In this case, it has been the discovery of a large assembly of stones in a pattern, in proximity to Stonehenge, that has excited the heritage industry.

While there is no history of stone circles in Aboriginal culture, these techniques and the developments that will flow from them, are likely to add another dimension to the discovery of Aboriginal artefacts. This also could have a bearing on built heritage since colonial occupation. The overall point is that the determination of a physical presence of a heritage item is dependent on the technology that we use, not just the 5 senses with which we are provided.

Jim Boyce



Manly, Warringah and Pittwater  
Historical Society Inc.

Established 1924

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