

# ASHFIELD AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

SERIES 4 NO. 93  
MARCH 2020

*Our Annual General Meeting for 2019 was held on Sunday 16 February 2020 at the Pratten Park Community Sports and Bowling Club*

## ANOTHER SUCESSFUL AGM

The Society's AGM held on 16 February 2020 was a great event. The Mayor of the Inner West Council, **Darcy Byrne** giving the main address, an entertaining and informative talk on Growing up in the Inner West: People, Places and Events that have shaped my Thinking.

Darcy is an impressive speaker and told us some interesting stories about the colourful political events and figures that he and his family have been a part of. It was fascinating to learn about some of the personalities and events that have made the Inner West such a wonderful and diverse place in which to live.

Our President, **Mark Sabolch** presented his report on the initiatives and events of the Society in 2019. A copy of Mark's report that he presented at the AGM can be found on our new webpage: <https://ashfieldhistory.org.au/>

A new Committee was elected for 2020. We congratulate **Mark Sabolch** for being re-elected as President. The Society is fortunate to have Mark at the helm, to continue as President in 2020 with enthusiasm and drive.

**David Rollinson** continues as Vice President and Public Officer. David is also the Heritage Officer for 2020, a role that involves keeping watch on developments in the area. David continues to advocate for heritage by making submissions on behalf of the Society in writing and in person at development approval meetings. We have a new Treasurer for 2020, **Carolyn Carter**, who replaces **Heather Warton**. Heather is now the Newsletter Editor.

**Ann O'Connell** has been the major contributor to the running of the Society for many years, taking on several roles at once, including Secretary, Newsletter Editor, Research Officer as well as editor and prolific contributor to our journals.

*President:*

**Mark Sabolch**

*Vice President:*

**David Rollinson**

*Treasurer:* **Carolyn Carter**

*Events:* **Lois Gray**

*Minutes &*

*Correspondence:*

**Murray Cleaver**

*Rooms & Collections:*

**Clare Herscovitch**

*Web:* **Colin Webb**

*IT:* **Philip Lingard**

*Newsletter:*

**Heather Warton**

*Architectural Historian:*

**Bob Irving**

*Committee:*

**Alex Lofts**

**Bernadette Williamson**

**Helmut Kals**

**David Morgan**

**Jan Williams**

**Paul Williams**

Ann is currently working on two journals to be published this year, one being about people who served from Ashfield and district in World War I and the other is the publication for the opening of the new Ashfield Pool complex, in September 2020. Ann will continue to be Research Officer and Journal Editor in 2020.

Our Society will continue to be served well by **Lois Gray** as Events Coordinator, and our thanks to Lois and the members of the Committee who contributed to the fine afternoon tea at the AGM and at our other events during the past year.

**Clare Herscovitch** continues as Rooms and Collections Officer. Clare has been undertaking the important role of digitizing the photographs and documents held in the Society's collection in the Rooms, for future safekeeping and ease of access. The minutes of our meetings and events will continue to be accurately recorded by Murray Cleaver. Murray will also taking over from Ann to deal with correspondence. Murray is the Minutes and Correspondence Secretary.

This year our Committee member **Colin Webb** has made a fabulous contribution to the Society through the creation of our new website. Colin is now appropriately, the official Society's Web Manager. Philip Lingard also continues as IT Coordinator. The esteemed **Bob Irving** will continue as the Society's Honorary Architectural Historian.

We had much interest from members wishing to join the Committee, and now have possibly the largest Committee ever. The general Committee Members returning from last year are **Alex Lofts** and **Bernadette Williamson**, and the new Committee members are, **Helmut Kals**, **David Morgan**, and **Jan** and **Paul Williams**.

Thanks also to our outgoing Committee Members, **Mandy Keevil** and **Rachel Davies**, who will still contribute to our events and assist at the Research Rooms.

*Meet and Play at  
Thirning Villa*



## RECENT ACTIVITIES

The Society participated in the **Meet and Play at Thirning Villa** event, part of the NSW Seniors Festival promoted by the Inner West Council. This was held at Thirning Villa on Saturday 22 February 2020.

The Society provided a display of historical photographs and information, and Committee members Clare, Lois, Ann, Bernadette, Mark and David provided information to those attending.

Other events held were bowling and food stalls at the Pratten Park Community & Sports Club, and tennis hosted by the Western Suburbs Lawn Tennis Club.

The Society collaborated with the New Moon Collective, a community group based in Thirning Villa together with the Refugee Art Project who provided art and craft workshops.

*North Head & the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust talk by Barry and Marie*



*Marie speaking about nurses who volunteered to work at the Quarantine Station during the period of Spanish Influenza*



*Marie, Barry and Lois Gray the Society's Event Coordinator*

*Thank you to all Members and friends of the Society who attended this event*

On Sunday 15 March 2020 the Society hosted a talk by **Barry McDonald and Marie Palmer** on North Head & the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust. Barry and Marie, members of the ADHS are both volunteer members of the Sydney Harbour Trust. They were wonderfully enthusiastic and knowledgeable in their dual presentation about North Head. You had to be there to appreciate the references to the 'handbag'. Marie has been a volunteer for over thirteen years and regularly leads guided tours of the cemetery and other sites at North Head. Marie described how The Sydney Harbour Federation Trust was established by the Federal Government in 2001.

<https://www.harbourtrust.gov.au/en/>

It was the result of many years of struggle and campaigning by the Defenders of Sydney Harbour who worked to ensure that some of the most beautiful places, former defence and other Commonwealth facilities around the Harbour, remained in public hands.

The Trust now has to be 'self-funding' using the income provided by the ten sites around Sydney Harbour. Marie described how the Trust was to be handed back to the State in 2008 but this has been extended to 2030 provided it can exist on the income from the various sites. Her description of the significance of the volunteers to the Trust was most enlightening. The Trust has a full-time staff of about 50 but it has approximately 200 volunteers who collectively provided 29,500 volunteer hours over the ten sites! Marie's comments on just three of the people who were interred from 1881 in the three cemeteries was quite moving and would motivate anyone to visit the site. Barry spoke about some of the Site's military history and his presentation described the first fortifications built at North Head in 1934. He then narrated his understanding of the raid on Sydney Harbour by three Japanese submarines during WW2.

The enthusiasm, knowledge and commitment of Barry & Marie, resulted in a talk that was both entertaining and informative. It was a wonderful afternoon at a new venue for the Society, the Hall at St Patrick's in Summer Hill. It was concluded with our usual wonderful after-event 'nibbles' and great camaraderie.

After the event Barry advised the Society that he has a close local connection to Ashfield, his great uncle **Daniel McDonald** was elected to Ashfield Council in 1917 and then elected Mayor in 1924 and 1925. Barry was inspired to undertake some further historical research of his paternal side. Barry writes:

*It seems I came from a house painting family. My great grandfather, Daniel, was shown in the 1841 Scottish Census as a 14 year old Painter's Apprentice, an occupation continued throughout his subsequent life in Scotland & England. Three of his 4 sons followed in his tracks, all of whom came to Australia around the 1880's and set up a business as a painting contractor. The eldest of the three, Daniel (same name as his father) appears to have been the most successful, initially having a paint shop at the bottom of Lackey Street Summer Hill then moving from his painting activity to a master builder completing several major buildings in the area and then joining the Council. He had 2 sons, one called Daniel also (just to create confusion) who also followed the family tradition becoming painters. The youngest of the 3 sons of the original Daniel was my grandfather, John, who with his 2 sons, the eldest being my father, ran his own painting business centred around the Ashfield/Haberfield area. It seems I broke the mould (perhaps in more ways than one!!) by moving out into the corporate world of accounting & finance. But I have done a bit of painting and wall papering around several homes in my time so it must be in the blood!!*



**All ADHS events are postponed until further notice**

*Please see future newsletters for new dates for:*

*\*WW1 Book launch*

*\*Yasmar Day*

*\*Victoria Street Walk*

**The Research Rooms at Thirning Villa will be closed until further notice**

## COVID-19

Unfortunately our event with Barry and Marie will be our last for a while. The Ashfield and District Society is committed to protecting the health of its members and visitors. Due to the current situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic **the Committee has postponed all events for now**. Our up and coming events, the launch of the ADHS Journal of WWI to be held on April 19 2020 and our Victoria Street in Ashfield Walk to be held on 3 May 2020 are both postponed. The Haberfield Society has also postponed the Friends of Yasmar Market that was to be held on 9 May 2020.

Should you know of members unlikely to read the newsletter could you notify them accordingly please. Our next newsletter will be in early May. Our website will remain in operation and will provide updates.

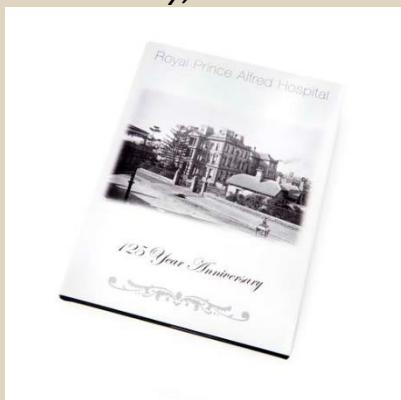
The Society will continue to monitor the situation, taking advice from Health authorities, and keep Members informed. Please stay safe and healthy.

## RECENT ACQUISITIONS

We are very fortunate in having **Joanne McGrath** visit our Rooms recently with an old family photograph which she very kindly shared with us. It shows the tiny cottage at 21 St Davids Road Haberfield, the home of Kevin and Irene Ryan and family in 1950. Pictured out the front of the house is Joanne's aunt Joan, her grandmother Irene, her mother Ellen, and another woman (unknown). It's not just the large impressive mansions that are interesting, it's the modest family homes that capture a place in time also. Thank you Joanne.

**Sue Aird** has been very interested in researching her family, in particular the lives of her great grandparents George and Nellie Slater who lived at Lynwood, 5 Drynan Street Summer Hill. George Slater died at the house in 1947 after which it was sold to the Catholic Church and today it is part of the St Patrick's Catholic Church and Primary School precinct. Sue has given us access to photographs of family members standing in front of the veranda and shows the beautiful carved wood fretwork that sadly is no longer there. It is a nostalgic look into the past with all the women wearing stylish floral dresses and the men dressed up in suits, standing in front of such a beautiful home. The photographs will form a feature in an article on the house in a future journal.

**Royal Prince Alfred Hospital: 125 Year Anniversary, 1882-2007**



## BOOK REVIEW

**Royal Prince Alfred Hospital: 125 Year Anniversary, 1882-2007** is an impressively presented book with an early black and white photograph of the hospital with the Caretaker's cottage on the front cover. This history book is attractively and meticulously laid out with great attention to detail, the decorative elements adding to the experience of the reader, which although is secondary to the content, it is worth pointing out in this instance for its excellence.

According to the Executive Director of RPA, Di Gill, the book was the result of a year's work by the hospital's History Committee in gathering photographs and information, which was chaired by Mr Ray Barbour and backed up with a talented team of researchers and contributors. Essentially this anniversary book is a pictorial history of each area of the RPA complex, arranged chronologically, providing a comprehensive record of the buildings and their adaptive development over the decades.

*Book Review:  
Royal Prince Alfred  
Hospital: 125 Year  
Anniversary, 1882-2007*

*Donated to the ADHS  
by Jan Williams*

The old photographs are expertly presented and many capture aspects of the working lives of hospital staff and so it also presents the social history of the hospital. The newer images taken of the modern developments of each area are exemplary in clarity and composition and show how the hospital has been drawn from its early years to today's standards.

One cannot help but dwell over each photograph in this book and to absorb the historical overview of the hospital's history which was compiled by historians Ms Helen Croll and Dr Bruce Storey, assisted by Dr Kathryn Hillier, with information and materials prepared by a large number of contributors.

We sincerely thank **Jan Williams** for her generosity in donating this book to our Society. May we recommend that members take a good look through this valuable asset to our collections. Thank you Jan.

*Write a journal*

## STAY AT HOME ACTIVITIES

The Committee has been sharing our thoughts on the crisis that we all find ourselves in due to the COVID-19 Virus. **Colin Webb** suggests our members could write about the calamity by producing a diary or journal to document how this experience has had an impact on our lives and the changes that may occur over the next few months and years. This would make a fascinating history of the moment. **Bernadette Williamson**, herself an author suggests that Colin may well turn out to be the Samuel Pepys of our time. Bernadette says she is also reminded of Daniel Defoe's *Journal of the Plague Year, 1722*, now regarded as a historical novel, albeit an extremely accurate one. Journals are wonderful primary sources for historians to use, with the wisdom of hindsight. **Ann O'Connell** muses:

*How much space is needed? - some historians suggest 50 years, while Mao or Deng or someone like that said not enough time had elapsed since the French revolution of 1789 for us to understand its effects. We certainly hope this year does not prove to be one of the most momentous events in history, but none of us knows. I am an optimist by nature.*

*Sort out old photographs*

## ANOTHER IDEA

At the Society, Members including **Clare Herscovitch** and **Jennifer Broomhead** have been scanning and cataloguing our collection of photographs. Now is a good time to start on this as a home project.

The State library in its recent newsletter published a **Fact Sheet for Caring for Photographs**. This contains some good ideas.

<https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/research-and-collections/building-our-collections/caring-libraris-collections/caring-photographs>

## HERITAGE NEWS

The Society made a submission to the Inner West Council on a proposal for the **Haberfield Library** (former School of Arts). This was a development application for the part demolition, alterations and additions, new solar panels, easements, consolidation of lots and associated landscaping of the existing Haberfield Centre and Library. The Haberfield Association also made a submission. **David Rollinson** from the Society and **Vince Crow** from the Haberfield Association addressed the meeting of the Inner West Planning Panel, who considered the DA on 11 February 2020. David advises that despite a number of people opposing the DA, it was approved.



Members may have noticed that the former **Boomerang Garage** on the corner of Liverpool Road and Grosvenor Crescent Summer Hill (88 Liverpool Road) has recently been demolished. We were surprised to learn that this landmark building was not a heritage item. A DA was approved back in December 2014 for a three storey residential flat building that will replace it.

*Thank you to all who have  
renewed their  
Membership for 2020*

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

The Society's Membership renewal form is on our website. Renewal is for the 2020 calendar year. The very reasonable cost covers the free supply of a copy of new publications, the newsletter, access to the Society's collections and invitations to our events. Thank you for your continued support.

The Society's Rooms are located on the western side of

Thirning Villa, in Pratten Park, Arthur Street, Ashfield

The Rooms are usually open on the second and last Saturday of each month

but we will not be opening until further notice due to COVID-19

Postal address: PO Box 20 ASHFIELD 1800

Email: [adhs@tpg.com.au](mailto:adhs@tpg.com.au)

Website: <https://ashfieldhistory.org.au/>



*Newsletter stories written by Ann O'Connell, Bernadette Williamson and Colin Webb.  
Edited by Heather Warton*

*March 2020*