

# Newsletter

MARCH 2022 I SERIES 5 I NO. 5

## President's message

Dear Members and Friends

After five years as President of the Society I have retired and welcome **Alex Lofts** to the role in 2022.

I acknowledge and thank all of our members who have understood our reduced ability to carry out our activities and events throughout the Pandemic.

Just like our Committee you have 'hung in there' and we envisage that our membership will be maintained and grow in the coming year.

We wish to reschedule our missed events and hope to see you soon.

With the extraordinary events of the last year, I think this quote by the great writer, Hermann Hesse is rather apt:

*To study history means submitting to chaos and nevertheless retaining faith in order and meaning.*

Best wishes to the new ADHS Committee.

**Mark Sabolch**



**Mark Sabolch and Lucille McKenna at the recent ADHS AGM**

## 20 February 2022

### Annual General Meeting

The Society's Annual General Meeting was held on Sunday 20 February 2022 at the Pratten Park Community Sports & Bowling Club.



**The AGM audience**

The distinguished guest speaker was **Lucille McKenna** OAM, who recently retired as an Inner West Councillor and was the last Mayor of Ashfield Municipal Council, prior to the amalgamation which resulted in the Inner West Council.

**Colin Webb** writes on the events of the afternoon:

The Society's President **Mark Sabolch** took the chair at the start of the 49th AGM of the Ashfield and District Historical Society and welcomed the 40+ people in attendance. Mark acknowledged the Wangal and Gadigal people, the custodians of the country on which the meeting was held.

Mark presented the *President's Report for 2021*. He outlined some of the Society's activities and achievements in what has been an unusual year.



**Mark Sabolch presenting the President's Report**

See: <https://ashfieldhistory.org.au/presidents-report-for-2021/>

## Events held in 2021

At the last AGM we had a presentation on Augustus Alt delivered by **David Morgan**. In March, **Chris Pratten** delivered a presentation on *Frederick Clissold – was he Ashfield's Richest Man in the Nineteenth Century?* In April the *Victoria Street Walk Part I* was held, and this proved to be popular and successful. This was followed in May by a presentation from **Sue Jackson-Stepowski, Alex Lofts & Alan Croker** on the *Burra Charter* and how it applies to heritage considerations. **Patricia Skehan** from the Canada Bay Historical Society delivered a presentation on *The Other Pandemic: The Spanish Flu in the Inner West*. A successful *St John's Cemetery Walk* led by **Ann O'Connell** with contributions from **David Morgan & Lois Gray** was held in November.

## Achievements in 2021

We now have a new logo and signage, thanks to **Bernadette Williamson** and her sub-committee. Bernadette also organised for the Society to have a stall at the Summer Hill Mills Markets, that has increased our visibility in the community and provided an additional income stream.

The Society's photo collection is undergoing further digitisation thanks to **Clare Herscovitch** and **Jennifer Broomhead** and **Carolyn Carter** completed a database of our Folio Collection. In lieu of a Journal a wonderful calendar was produced by **Ann O'Connell, Clare Herscovitch and Carolyn Carter** and this proved to be very popular.

Mark thanked the 2021 Committee for their work and support, and after five years as President, invited a new person to take over the role.

The Hon Treasurer's Report 2021 was then presented by **Carolyn Carter**. See: <https://ashfieldhistory.org.au/treasurers-annual-report-2021/>

## ADHS Committee for 2022

Newly re-elected Inner West Councillor **Mark Drury** then took over the Chair to oversee the election of the new President and the Committee for 2022. The Society welcomes **Alex Lofts** as the new President and **David Rollinson** is Vice President.



ADHS President for 2022, Alex Lofts

The newly Committee in full is below:

Committee Position	Name
<b>President</b>	<b>Alex Lofts</b>
<b>Vice President</b>	<b>David Rollinson</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Carolyn Carter</b>
<b>Membership Secretary</b>	<b>Carolyn Carter</b>
<b>Heritage Officer</b>	<b>David Rollinson</b>
<b>Public Officer</b>	<b>David Rollinson</b>
<b>Activities Officer</b>	<b>Lois Gray</b>
<b>Rooms Officer</b>	<b>Clare Herscovitch</b>
<b>Minutes Secretary</b>	<b>Bernadette Williamson</b>
<b>Newsletter Editor</b>	<b>Heather Warton</b>
<b>Research Officer</b>	<b>Ann O'Connell</b>
<b>IT Officer</b>	<b>Phil Burne</b>
<b>Web Officer</b>	<b>Colin Webb</b>
<b>Committee Members</b>	<b>Jan Williams</b>
	<b>Paul Williams</b>
	<b>Ronda Gaffey</b>
	<b>Mark Sabolch</b>
	<b>David Morgan</b>
<b>Honorary Architectural Historian</b>	<b>Murray Cleaver</b>
	<b>Bob Irving</b>

**Alex Lofts**, the new President of the Society for 2022, then introduced the guest speaker, **Lucille McKenna**.



AGM Guest Speaker, Lucille McKenna OAM

Lucille was a councillor of the former Ashfield Municipal Council, having been first elected in 2004. She then went on to be elected as the first female Mayor of the Council in March 2013. Lucille was also the last Mayor of Ashfield.

Her presentation about her experiences on the Council was lively, interesting and at times, amusing.

The presentation was followed by a wonderful afternoon tea with the usual great spread of food and enjoyable conversation.



**Question time following the talk at the AGM by Lucille McKenna.** Lucille is with the newly elected ADHS President, Alex Lofts

Images: Colin Webb & Heather Warton



## Upcoming events

### Victoria Street Walk Part II Register now for the walk on Sunday 20 March at 2pm

Last year Part I of the Victoria Street walk was held and now the Part II event to complete the walk will be on **Sunday 20 March 2022**.

The walk will be from *Glentworth* to the former Baby Health Centre, now Outfield Café located in Yeo Park.

**Meet on the corner of Victoria Street & Seaview Street, outside *Glentworth* at 1.50pm.**

**Members free; Non-members \$5.00**

- Limited to 25 people.

**Please register NOW at:**

<https://ashfieldhistory.org.au/event/victoria-street-walk-part-ii/>

### Walk & Talk on Italianate Architecture in the Inner West 21 May 2021 at 2pm – 4pm

**Mark Sabolch** will lead a walk in Summer Hill looking at some notable Italianate buildings. Mark will then present a talk starting at 3pm. This will be a Heritage Festival Event.

The walk is to start at **St Andrews Church in Summer Hill** on the corner of Smith Street and Henson Street. The talk is likely to be held at the Church Hall in Henson Street.

**Members \$5; Non-members \$10**

- Registration required.

**PLEASE CHECK YOUR EMAIL AND THE SOCIETY'S WEBSITE FOR CONFIRMATION OF THIS EVENT**

### Concord Heritage Museum Sunday 19 June at 2pm

This will be a special viewing by the local heritage society.

**Meet at the front of the Museum at 5 Wellbank Street, Concord at 1.50 pm.**

#### Members only

- No charge, but a donation to the Museum appreciated
- Registration is required
- Afternoon tea will be provided
- If you need transport to the event, please advise when registering.

### Guided Visit to Caroline Simpson Library & Research Collection

**Thursday 18 August 2022  
10am to 12 noon**

**Meet outside The Mint,  
10 Macquarie Street Sydney**

#### Members only

- Limited to two groups of 10
- No charge
- Registration is required.

### Talk on Art Deco Architecture by Dr Peter Sheridan Sunday 23 October 2pm -4pm

**Pratten Park Community Sports & Bowling Club.**

Dr Sheridan is a Senior Lecturer Sydney University and has written a fabulous book on Art Deco architecture *Sydney Art Deco*:

**\$5 Members; \$10 Non-members**

- Registration required
- Afternoon tea provided.

**Please register for events at:**  
<https://ashfieldhistory.org.au/event>

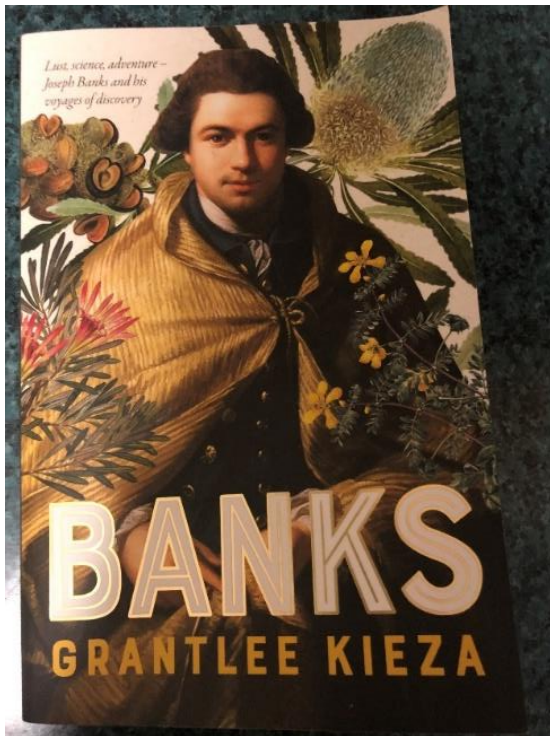
# Book review

by Murray Cleaver

## *Banks*

This very readable book by **Grantlee Kieza** provides extraordinary detail of the life of one of the world's most famous adventurers, a man who had an enormous influence on the exploration and European settlement of Australia.

It provides an in-depth history of a man who was extraordinarily wealthy and whose influence went well beyond accompanying James Cook on board the *Endeavour* in 1770. Banks, as one of the first Europeans to set foot on the east coast of Australia, had the ear of King George III, the reigning British monarch, when it was decided to send a fleet of ships carrying military and convicts to Australia in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.



Banks advised Britain to establish a penal settlement and strategic base at Botany Bay and he eventually became the expert on everything Australian at that time.

The book details his fascination with beautiful women, a fascination only surpassed by his obsession with the natural world and his yearning for scientific knowledge.

Amazingly wealthy, Banks was a force behind a number of epic voyages and scientific discoveries during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century in Australia, New Zealand, the South Pacific, Europe, North America, South America, Asia, Africa and the Arctic at a time when the known world was much smaller indeed.

Banks generally financed his own team of scientists and artists in expeditions to hostile locales that expanded the world's knowledge of life on distant shores. He collected thousands of plant and animal specimens in his travels, and as a result of the collecting by others who were often mentored or funded by him. His obsession with science and the natural world generated immense interest across Europe and Kieza's accounts of his amorous adventures in Tahiti made him one of the most famous and notorious men in England. His penchant for collecting a range of some natural history items would, certainly, have not been welcomed in the current era.

Banks was the longest serving president of Britain's Royal Society and was perhaps the most important man in the scientific world for more than half a century.

He acted as Lord High Sheriff of Lincolnshire, he was an associate member of the Paris Institute National des Sciences et de Artes, he was a member of the Royal Society Club, the Society of Arts, the Dilettante Society, the Society of Antiquaries, the Royal Institution, the Engineers' Society, the Literary Club, the Freemasons, the Horticultural Society, the Merino Society, the Lincolnshire Agricultural Society, the African Association, the Linnean Society and a trustee of the British Museum. He was also on the Board of Longitude, the Board of Agriculture, the Coin Committee, and the Committee of Trade of the Privy Council.

He provided inspiration to Matthew Flinders and many others of importance in Australia's history.

## Book review: *Banks*

He was a correspondent of many important historic personages such as Benjamin Franklin, Carl Linnaeus as well as a number of early Australian Governors as he set about the movement to initiate Australia's vast potential in agriculture and minerals.

**Grantlee Kieza** is an award-winning writer of a number of biographies of Australian figures including Lachlan Macquarie, Henry Lawson, Banjo Paterson, John Monash and Ellen Kelly (Ned's Mother). I recommend the book to you.

***Banks: Lust, science, adventure - Joseph Banks and his voyages of discovery***  
By Grantlee Kieza, Harper Collins, 2020.

## Heritage Report

by **David Rollinson**

In a great win for heritage and streetscape, the Land and Environment Court has refused the appeal for the erection of a residential flat building at **5 Bruce Street Ashfield**. This would have required the demolition of the existing two storey Victorian villa at the site which, while in poor external condition, is one of the earliest buildings in the Federal Fyfe Heritage Conservation Area (HCA). The Society was pleased to provide assistance to the local residents who had many objections to the DA; they are now encouraging Council to re-examine the significance of this villa.

The Society has also raised concerns with a DA for a 2-storey rear addition to a post war bungalow at **42 Lang Street, Croydon**, one of four that are largely intact, built by the same builder and comprise a small HCA.

Objection to side additions to a bungalow at **32 Edwin Street South, Croydon** (also in a HCA) has also been lodged; the opportunity to restore original features is being overlooked and an intention to have a driveway and parking space in the front yard is inappropriate (given the property is on a corner with Thomas Street).

## Appropriate colour schemes

by **David Rollinson**

In common with many of you I have been concerned with the excessive use of 'shades of grey', brilliant white and black on external walls and fences of our period homes, following a 'freshen-up' fashion that has no heritage basis (certainly not in the Inner West).

Often there is no contrast in the trim colour used for window frames, doors, verandahs etc. The result is a house that is striking if not foreboding and not complementary to its neighbours or the streetscape.

This is becoming a major issue in our heritage conservation areas, of which there are many.

### *Where does this trend come from?*

Maybe it is the resort to stylists who are giving poor advice. Or is it the influence of popular TV renovation shows, or articles in 'Domain' or real estate adverts generally. Maybe it is based on research that unfortunately yielded colour charts appropriate to the period but from another State, or country!!

The Inner West Comprehensive DCP administered by Council has little to say about colour schemes, acknowledging that fashions and tastes change. It does not prescribe what colours are to be used when assessing DAs but it does require details of finishes and colours to be submitted by applicants.

In 2019 on behalf of the Society I wrote to Council drawing this issue to the attention of its planners. This led to a lunch-time meeting with the strategic planners at which I also expressed the willingness of the Society to assist where it could.



## Appropriate colour schemes

Our friends at the Haberfield Association are experiencing the same problem and their most recent newsletter notes that Council's heritage advisors are grappling with it regularly, noting that white was a 'sanitary' colour and black often came from fireplace ash – the poor man's forced choice, certainly not used in Haberfield!!

The Haberfield Association has drawn our attention to the British Standards (BS) 2660 and 381C for colours that may be appropriate. 'Heritage' or 'Traditional' colour charts from paint companies like Dulux, Pascol and Solver depict these. But how to pick what's right and where to use them does require some understanding of what is appropriate.

Here *Colour Schemes for Old Australian Houses* (Ian Evans, Clive Lucas, Ian Stapleton, 1984, Flannel Flower Press) is very useful and it also contains a full BS paint guide. Some blues and greys are there but these are for gutters, downpipes, sometimes trim, not whole walls or fences.

There is a good range from which to pick, so everything does not have to be 'green and cream'!!

Of course, there is a lot to be said for taking some paint scrapings from an area of wall that is hidden or was hard to get at, to find an original colour scheme. A clear understanding of the design and composition of a period home is important.

For many home-owners in the former Ashfield Municipality a read of 'Getting the Details Right' (Restoring Australian Houses 1890s-1920s) written by Ian Evans with detailed drawings by the then NSW Department of Planning (1989, Flannel Flower Press) is a must.

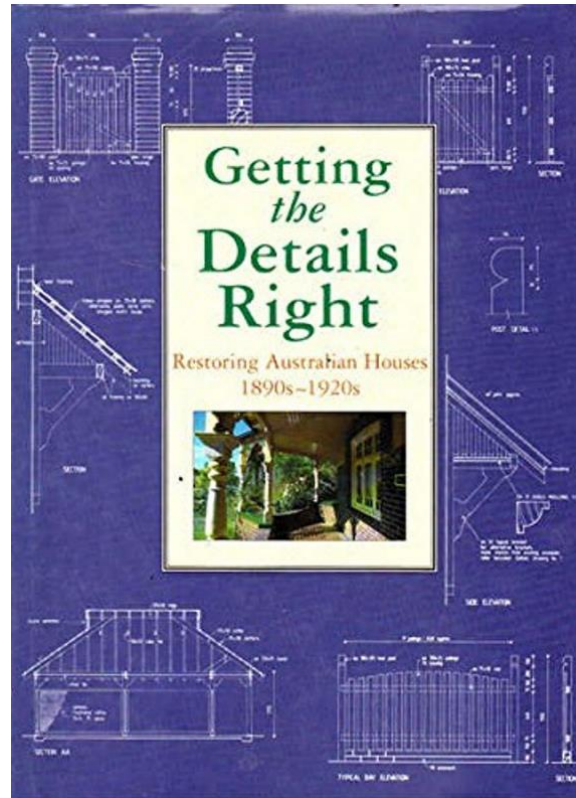


Image: booko.com.au

There are the individual books written by Evans and Stapleton (including his drawings from the SMH articles) and the many photos in *The Federation House: Australia's Own Style* (Hugh Fraser and Ray Joyce, 1986, Lansdowne Press).

Then we might start to see the end of the metal-rib clad 'box on the back' in Colorbond Monument – but that's a story for another day



**Traditional colours on Nundara, Moonbie Street Summer Hill**

Image: Bernadette Williamson

# A local connection to British Royalty

by **Ann O'Connell**

A Shorts Sunderland Mk. III flying boat, Aircraft W4026, took off from the 228 Squadron RAF seaplane base (Coastal Command) in the Cromarty Firth at Invergordon, Scotland bound for Reykjavik, Iceland, just after 1pm on Sunday 25 August 1942. On the official record there were 15 persons on board, one of them being the Duke of Kent, who was the son of the late King George V and Queen Mary, and the younger brother of the then reigning British sovereign, King George VI.



**Sunderland Flying Boat Mk. III used by the Royal Air Force during WWII**

Source: Courtesy Australian War Memorial

Less than half an hour after take-off, the plane had veered off course and lost altitude, crashing into a rugged hillside, named Eagles Rock, near the Berriedale River in Caithness, Scotland. Fourteen of the crew including the Duke were killed instantly. The only survivor was Sergeant Andrew Jack, the Air Gunner, who had been in the rear of the plane.

Prince George was a famously glamorous and popular celebrity who lived life to the full, exploring many boundaries not usually within the realm of a member of royalty.

It was said that he was even more in favour with the public than his eldest brother Edward who had notoriously pursued twice-married, Wallis Simpson and abdicated his throne to marry her. However, he'd been well-travelled, served in the Navy and later learned to fly in his own time. In November 1934, King George V gave him the title of Duke of Kent and he married Marina, granddaughter of the king of Greece, in December. In 1939 it was officially announced that he would take on the position of Governor General of Australia but when war broke out he joined active service and took on the rank of Air Commodore. In this role he busied himself inspecting military bases and dutifully lifting the morale of the forces.



**Prince George, Duke of Kent.**

Source: National Portrait Gallery of London, accessed through Wikipedia 26 January 2022

On 6 July 1882 an engineer named **John Wood** bought a block of land in Kensington Road Summer Hill and by February 1883 had a single storey house built, which he and his wife Elizabeth Mary Wood named *Yass Cottage*.



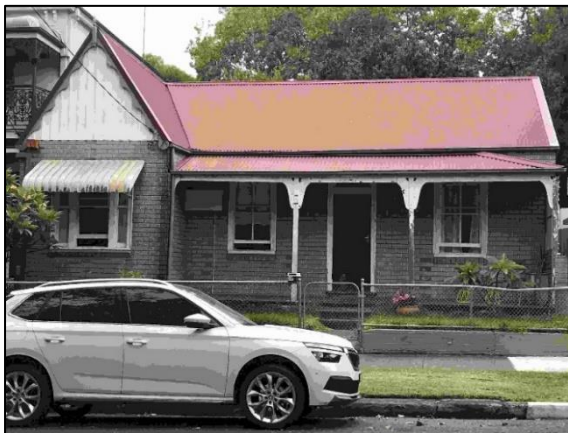
## A local connection to British Royalty

It was a weatherboard house with an iron roof, having four rooms which at the time was enough for their growing family.

They already had Jessie Gertrude (born 1880), David (1882) and Oswald (1883) when they moved in and went on to have another four children, Norman, Ina, William and Allan, over the following decade.

There was a barber named **Sydney James Smith** in Lackey Street, Summer Hill in 1903 and it appears that **Jessie Wood** and he were a match and they moved to Broken Hill.

The couple had a son, John James in 1909, a daughter Jean in 1910, and finally another son who they named Sydney Wood Smith on 4 February 1918. The children attended the 'North School' at Broken Hill and they were all very clever, with John James Smith (Jack) becoming the dux of the school.



**22 Kensington Road Summer Hill. The old weatherboard has been clad in bricks but the house shape and form has been retained**  
Image: Ann O'Connell, January 2022

According to family statements, both Sydney James Smith and Jessie Gertrude Smith died and in around 1927, Jack, Jean and Sydney went to live with their maternal grandmother, Elizabeth Mary Wood, at *Yass Cottage*, 22 Kensington Road, Summer Hill.

Sydney Wood Smith was educated at the Sydney Technical High School before obtaining work as an accountancy clerk in the Metropolitan Water, Sewerage and Drainage Board. He reportedly had studious habits and a capacity for hard work.

Elizabeth Wood died in 1936 and she left the house to her youngest daughter Ina Victoria Holborn (nee Wood). Jack, Jean and Sydney remained at *Yass Cottage* living with their Aunt Ina, her husband Edwin Holborn and their children, Beth, John and Anne.



**Pilot Officer Sydney Wood Smith of 22 Kensington Road, Summer Hill.**  
Source: *The Sun*, 28 August 1942

## A local connection to British Royalty

After the outbreak of World War II, in 1941, Jack Smith had enlisted in the Australian Military Forces, Jean was a private secretary to the Minister for the Army, Mr F.M. Forde, and in March 1941, Sydney signed up with the R.A.A.F. as an Empire Air Scheme Trainee.

Sydney was evaluated as having a very good character and was assigned to No. 21 Training Squadron, as a trainee pilot. Advancing quickly through the levels of instruction, he was just three weeks away from being sent to Canada to complete his pilot training, when on 21 July 1941 he married his sweetheart Edith Mary Howitt.

Having received his commission as Pilot Officer, on 8 August Sydney embarked a sea transport and disembarked in Canada on 29 August for further training. Three months later he was awarded his Pilot's Flying Badge and on 9 February 1942 he arrived in the UK. He had flown the Tiger Moths and Avro Anson planes but in June 1942, he wrote to his wife Edith from Scotland to proudly tell her that he'd achieved his lifelong ambition to be posted to a Sunderland flying boat. He was assigned to the 228 Squadron in Scotland.

On 25 August 1942, the Captain of the flying boat transporting the Duke of Kent to Iceland was Flight Lieutenant Frank McKenzie Goyen, a highly trained and experienced airman, an Australian from Shepparton Victoria. He had served in Britain, Malta, Greece, Crete, Alexandria, Nigeria and Gambia. Wing Commander Thomas Lawton of the RAF was the 1<sup>st</sup> Pilot and Flying Officer Sydney Wood Smith from Summer Hill was the 2<sup>nd</sup> Pilot.

The weather deteriorated during the first half hour of the flight: it was raining, and the fog had thickened around the Scottish Highland hilltops, however the conditions should have presented no difficulty to a crew of such experience.



**Flight Lieutenant Frank McKenzie Goyen, previously of Shepparton, Victoria**

Source: *Daily Mercury*, 8 September 1942

The plane had deviated from its flight plan and was flying as low over land as it would normally over the water. The plane was heard to be travelling north when it crashed with a heavy thud into a 1000-foot-high hill named Eagles Rock in lonely roadless terrain. The wreckage was found only after a two-hour search although witnesses were only one-mile distant.

All those at the crash site were deceased having sustained multiple injuries from the impact and the bodies had been burned by the ensuing fire. The Court of Enquiry held the following month found that responsibility for a serious mistake in airmanship lay with the captain of the aircraft, Frank Goyen and:

*that the accident occurred because the plane was flown on a track other than that indicated in the flight plan given to the pilot, and at too low an altitude to clear rising ground on the track.*

## A local connection to British Royalty

An examination of the propellers showed that the engines were under power when the crash occurred. Those on board with the Duke were servicemen of 228 Squadron and all were on duty. In winding up the enquiry it was noted that 'in view of Flight Lieutenant Goyen's previous experience this sudden lack of judgement was quite unpredictable'



**This photograph is held in Sydney Wood Smith's WWII service records**

Source: National Archives of Australia

Sydney Wood's wife, Edith was slow to receive official notice and details of Sydney's death. She had moved to 29 Lucy Street, Ashfield but had notified the authorities of the address. In speaking with reporters a few days after the news came through, they wrote that her eyes were red from weeping and her hands played nervously with a pair of silver wings that were pinned to her blue dress. The wings had been a gift from Sydney.

She said that she was terribly proud that he'd been selected as second pilot to the plane which carried the Duke. It was not until 11 March 1943 that she was informed that Sydney's body was buried in Oban Cemetery, Argyll, Scotland on 29 August 1942 and a photograph of his grave was sent to her. Fellow Australian, Flight Lieutenant Frank Goyen was also buried at Oban.

The death of George Windsor, the Duke of Kent in the 1942 plane crash enabled the Royal Family to stand with the people to mourn the loss of their loved ones. A Celtic Cross monument erected on a lonely hillside, north of the Berriedale River commemorates the death of the Duke and the aircrew.

***The cause of the crash is subject to many conspiracy theories still to this day***



**Monument commemorating the Duke of Kent and others who died in the plane crash on 25 August 1942**

Source: Wikipedia, viewed 26 January 2022



## New photographs for our Local History Collection

**Ann O'Connell** writes: Some years ago the Society assisted a researcher for the Hungerford and Associated Families Society, **Brett Harvey**, when he was seeking information about houses that Thomas Hungerford and family members lived in within the Ashfield area.

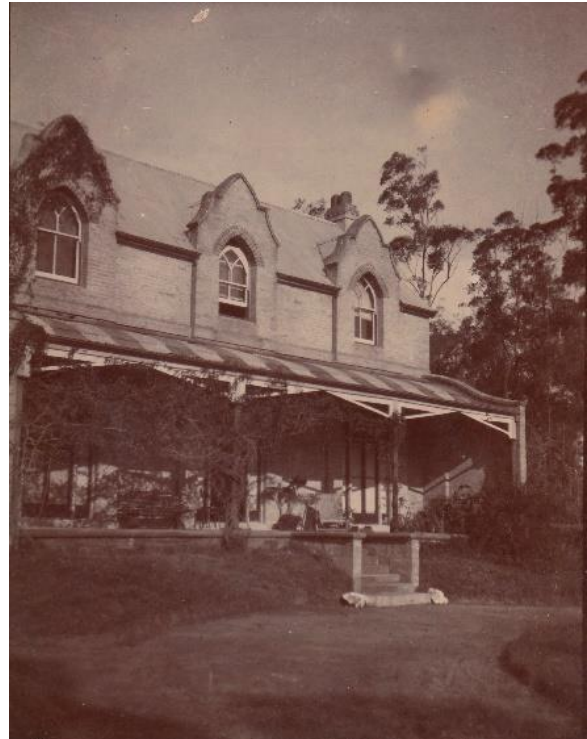
We are very pleased that Brett has shared newly acquired photographs with us, some of these are of *Killowen*, the large Hungerford home, situated just off Milton Street Ashfield. Others are portraits of members of the Hungerford Family.

All of these are subject to copyright.

Thank you Brett.



**Catherine Mary Hungerford**



***Killowen*, home of the Hungerford family from 1885 to 1916 when it was demolished**

Another new photographic acquisition is from **Robert Mills**. Robert has generously shared some of his rare postcards pertaining to our local area from his collection with us. Like hundreds of other enthusiasts, he is an active member of the NSW Postcard Collectors Society which holds four 'Postcard Fairs' each year in the Imar Community Hall, 2A Fitzroy Street, Croydon. For details go to: <https://postcardnsw.com>

This time, Robert has shared a hand-coloured image showing a streetscape of the Railway Station and shops at Grosvenor Crescent, Summer Hill which gives great insight:



Thank you again, Robert.

# William Abbey – a dreadful end

by Clare Herscovitch

Recently I spent an excellent day with friends in the quiet ambience of Rookwood Necropolis.

Wandering near the Serpentine Canal, and in fact a bit lost, my eye was taken by a large and handsome memorial inscribed:

*In loving memory of Wm. Abbey  
Born at Loughborough England  
Accidentally killed at Summerhill Station  
25<sup>th</sup> Sept 1891  
Age 59*

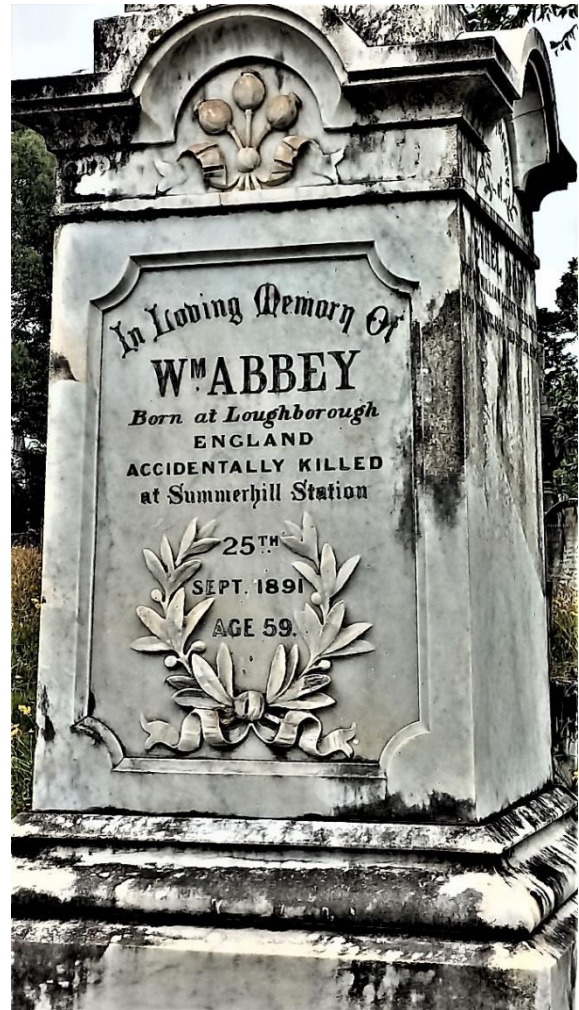


**William Abbey's memorial at Rookwood**  
Image: Clare Herscovitch

Of course, curiosity took hold. Who was this William Abbey and what happened? Was "Summerhill Station" a rural property or our Summer Hill?

A search in Trove soon revealed the demise of Mr Abbey, "the well-known bootmaker of George-street<sup>1</sup>".

*The Evening News* reported "it would appear the unfortunate gentleman met his death through foolhardiness"<sup>1</sup> as he ran for the 11.33pm train departing Summer Hill station and fell between the carriage and the platform.



**Detail of William Abbey's memorial**  
Image: Clare Herscovitch

Severely crushed, he was carefully removed from the tracks and carried by stretcher to the Summer Hill Hotel where two doctors were called. "Everything that medical skill could do was done"<sup>2</sup> but he died of dreadful injuries in the early morning<sup>3</sup>. The *National Advocate* report carried the grizzly subheading "A well-known citizen ground to pieces<sup>3</sup>".

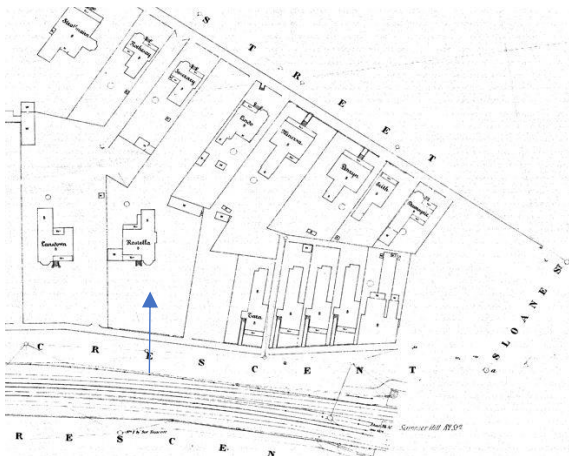


## William Abbey – a dreadful end

Of the many newspapers carrying the story of this tragedy, only one referred to his family, reporting “it is understood he was a married man<sup>4</sup>”. Only one paper mentioned a Summer Hill residence<sup>5</sup>.

It was reported that William Abbey had been “on a visit to Summer Hill to take part in the breaking-up of a club” and was returning to his residence at The Metropolitan Hotel in King Street, Sydney, where “he had lived ... for some time past<sup>6</sup>”.

However, Mr Abbey, indeed a married man, owned a fine house less than a block from Summer Hill station. *Rostella* sat within large grounds on Grosvenor Crescent.



**Extract from 1890 Waterboard plan showing *Rostella* in Grosvenor Crescent, extending to Gower Street**

It would appear he did not spend much time there, though Sands Directory from 1887 to 1891 indicates he was in residence. Prior to that, he was listed as a boot manufacturer at *Rosebank* on Victoria Road, Marrickville

William had married **Emma Hillard** in 1854 in Sydney and they had a daughter, Annie. By the time of William’s death Annie was married with three children to Theodore Wiesner, who was an optician, scientific instrument maker and jeweller.

After her husband’s untimely and awful death, Emma moved from *Rostella* to *Wilcannia* in Smith Street.

She then bought land in Prospect Road from David Elphinstone. The house that Elphinstone then built on the property has survived, now 27 Prospect Road. Emma named it *Abbeyville*, in memory of her husband, it would appear.



***Abbeyville* today at 27 Prospect Road, Summer Hill**

Source: ADHS collection

Whatever her devotion to her husband William, Emma married again in November 1894, at the age of 58 years.

Her marriage to **Herbert Sherwin** of Tasmania was somewhat less than blissful, as can be seen from a report of rather lively divorce court proceedings in 1899<sup>7</sup>.

It was Emma who filed for divorce from Herbert who was, it seems, less than half her age when they married, indeed he was 10 years younger than Emma’s daughter. The couple had been separated for some years and Herbert Sherwin was now running a successful photography business in Queenstown, Tasmania.

He clearly had no intention of returning to Emma.



## William Abbey – a dreadful end

*I would never live with you if each hair of your head was a diamond*

he wrote, and

*I am only too happy for my dear mother's sake that she will know I am a free man before she goes to her grave, and I think she will live five years longer for the great rejoicement of it.*

The judge refused to grant a divorce as Emma was unable to satisfy the judge that she was a deserted wife, in part because she had given Herbert 100 pounds to leave. However, she resumed using Abbey as her surname.

She died at *Abbeyville* in 1910, at the age of 74.



**Emma Abbey's (Sherwin's) gravestone at Rookwood**

Image: Clare Herscovitch

William and Emma's daughter, **Annie**, and her family, including her parents-in-law, are buried with William Abbey.

Perhaps it is not surprising that Emma's grave is elsewhere in Rookwood.

What is surprising however, is that although Abbey was the surname Emma used, as well as in her death notice and in her death in the Rookwood Cemetery data base of burials, her gravestone is inscribed Emma Sherwin.

### References:

1. *Evening News*, 25 Sep 1891, page 4.
2. *Evening News*, page 4.
3. *National Advocate*, 26 Sep 1891, page 2.
4. *Evening News*, page 4.
5. *National Advocate*, page 2.
6. *Evening News*, page 4.
7. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 May 1899, page 5.

## News from other societies

The **Maryborough Family Heritage Institute Inc** are producing books on arrivals on Immigrant Ships:

MARYBOROUGH FAMILY HERITAGE INSTITUTE INC.  
cnr Wharf & Richmond Streets, Maryborough, Qld 4650  
PO Box 913  
Phone: 07 4123 1620  
Email: [heritageresearch@bigpond.com](mailto:heritageresearch@bigpond.com)

## 140<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

of the arrival of Immigrant Ships

Scottish Admiral

Scottish Wizard

Silver Eagle

Western Monarch

If you have ancestors who arrived on any of the above ships, please contact us. Any photos or stories about the families and their lives in the new country would be greatly appreciated, they would be included in our new or updated books which will be available in the last quarter of 2022.

## Membership matters

### 2022 membership subscriptions are now due:

- \$40 for standard household membership – no postage or
- \$30 for concessional household membership– Centrelink, DVA, fulltime student– no postage.

If you require your newsletters and/or other publications to be printed and posted, please pay the additional \$10:

- \$50 for standard household membership with postage or
- \$40 for concessional household membership – with postage.

Payment covers members of a household for each calendar year.

### How to renew

Please complete the form on our website:  
<https://ashfieldhistory.org.au/membership-application/> together with payment:

- **EFT payment:**  
BSB: 062-257  
Account No: 0090 0855  
Ashfield & District Historical Society  
Ref: *[Your name and initials] subs*  
or
- **Cheque:** Payable to:  
Ashfield & District Historical Society.  
Post to ADHS,  
PO Box 20, Ashfield NSW 1800.

You can check your membership status by emailing the Treasurer:

[treasurer@ashfieldhistory.org.au](mailto:treasurer@ashfieldhistory.org.au)

## Research Rooms

The Society's Research Rooms at *Thirning Villa*, Pratten Park, Arthur Street Ashfield are open to visitors for research.

The Rooms are open on the second and last Saturdays of each month from 11am until 4pm.

Please bring a face mask.

## Contact the Society

- Postal address:  
PO Box 20 ASHFIELD NSW 1800
- Email:  
[adhs@ashfieldhistory.org.au](mailto:adhs@ashfieldhistory.org.au)
- Website:  
<https://ashfieldhistory.org.au/>

## Newsletter contributors

Thank you to:

**Murray Cleaver, Clare Herscovitch, Lois Gray, Ann O'Connell, David Rollinson, Mark Sabolch, Colin Webb & Bernadette Williamson.**

**Edited by Heather Warton.**

14 March 2022



**Yeo Park rotunda, Victoria Street Ashfield will feature in our walk on 20 March 2022**

Image: Mark Sabolch