

# Newsletter

MARCH 2023 I SERIES 5 I NO. 9

## President's message

Dear members and friends

The Society held another successful AGM on 19 February 2023. Thanks to the committee members, the meeting was smoothly organised. All positions on our governing committee were filled in an election conducted by Cr Mark Drury as the nominated returning officer.

I welcome Nerida Thiering and Lucille McKenna to the committee. They will add to the strength of an already able group. The Society has entered its 50th year in a strong position.

Our guest speaker, Alan Croker, gave a rousing address which in part, was a rallying call to renew the fight to save our built heritage. A reminder that while many battles have been won in the past, the battles return to be fought again. Urban and natural settings are dynamic and 'market forces' speak loud'.

But that does not mean we cannot respect and conserve our heritage.

As a consultative architect for the refurbishment of the Sydney Opera House, one of the world's most amazing and iconic buildings, Alan illustrated how sensitive adaptation of such an important building can be achieved which, while meeting contemporary needs, can respect Utzon's original designs and maintain the integrity of our heritage.

It still astonishes me that the ADHS remains an important local institution, as strong as ever, after fifty years.

***We are custodians of our history and heritage to pass on to future generations.***

## President's message

In other news, we have formed a sub-committee to plan and organise the Fiftieth Anniversary lunch. Planning is well under way.

At the AGM, we also launched a new publication detailing the life and achievements of Frederick Clissold, and his wonderful *Glentworth* mansion - an important addition to the historic record.

The publication is an interesting and thorough history from which I've already learned much. Thanks to Chris Pratten and Ann O'Connell, who wrestled this wonderful journal to its conclusion.

Bernadette Williamson and volunteers are continuing to hold our stall at the Summer Hill Mill markets once a month. I hope to see you there.

**Alex Lofts**



The Flour Mill of Summer Hill Markets

Source: [Flour Mill of Summer Hill to host new Sunday farmers' markets - Summer Hill Flour Mill](#)

## Annual General Meeting

### *The Ashfield and District Historical Society's AGM was held on Sunday 19 February 2023*

The Pratten Park Community Sports & Bowling Club was well attended for the Society's Annual General Meeting.



Reports on the activities of the Society in 2022 were presented by the President **Alex Lofts**. The healthy financial position was outlined by **Carolyn Carter**, Treasurer.

The reports are on our website:

<https://ashfieldhistory.org.au/past-events-2023/>

**Councillor Mark Drury** presided over the elections for the new office bearers and committee for 2023.

**Alex Lofts** was once again elected as President. Alex congratulated the incoming office bearers and Committee and reminded everyone that 2023 is the Society's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, see *Save the date*, later in this Newsletter.

## Annual General Meeting

The new Executive and Committee for 2023 are:

<b>President</b>	Alex Lofts
<b>Vice President</b>	Lois Gray
<b>Treasurer</b>	Carolyn Carter
<b>Membership Secretary</b>	Carolyn Carter
<b>Public Officer</b>	David Rollinson
<b>Heritage Officer</b>	David Rollinson
<b>Activities Coordinator</b>	Jan Williams
<b>Activities Coordinator</b>	Paul Williams
<b>Rooms &amp; Collection Officer</b>	Clare Herscovitch
<b>Minutes Secretary</b>	Bernadette Williamson
<b>Newsletter Editor</b>	Heather Warton
<b>Research Officer</b>	Ann O'Connell
<b>IT Coordinator</b>	Phil Burne
<b>Web Manager</b>	Colin Webb
<b>General Committee Members</b>	Mark Sabolch
<b>General Committee Member</b>	Murray Cleaver
<b>General Committee Member</b>	Ronda Gaffey
<b>General Committee Member</b>	Nerida Thiering
<b>General Committee Member</b>	Lucille McKenna
<b>Honorary Architectural Historian</b>	Bob Irving



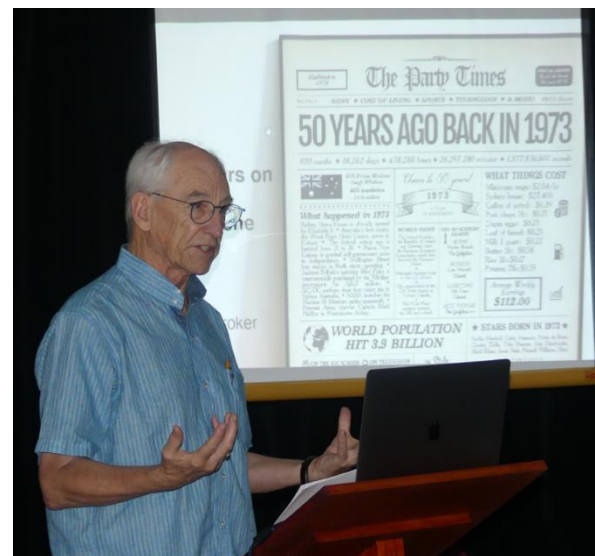
A sumptuous afternoon tea was enjoyed

Alex then handed over to the guest speaker, **Alan Croker**.

## Alan Croker: 50 years on

**Alan Croker** is a director and the principal of Design 5, an architecture practice in Sydney, that specialises in the conservation, adaptive re-use and heritage assessments of old buildings.

Alan commenced his talk reflecting on the Australian heritage conservation movement over the last 50 years, starting with the announcement in 1973 of the Committee of Enquiry into the National Estate, culminating in the 1974 Hope Report. The 1970s saw the establishment of the Australian Heritage Commission, the Register of the National Estate, ICOMOS, the NSW Heritage Act and Heritage Council (1977) and Burra Charter (1979).



Alan Croker, guest speaker at the AGM

This is still referred to as a turning point for heritage conservation, and to some extent we are now at a new turning point.

The then Department of Main Roads had proposed to demolish swathes of Glebe, and the Federal Government purchased the land instead for public housing, the Glebe Estate.



## ***50 years on***

However, little has changed, and there is still a culture of demolition, such as occurred with the Sydney Football Stadium, and now the questionable future of the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo.

The current crisis is global warming and Alan spoke passionately about the need to include the way we regard architecture into our thinking about sustainability. The mentality of smash it up and salvage nothing, is tragic – look at any current demolition site.

He cited the 2021 Pritzker Prize winners **Anne Lacaton** and **Jean-Philippe Vassal**'s transformation of a 1960s block of 96 social housing units into a light-filled and uplifting place to live. Lacaton and Vassal's philosophy is:

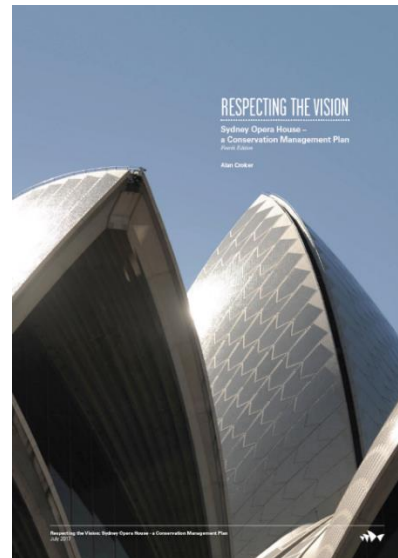
***Never demolish. Never subtract, remove, or replace. Always add, transform, and utilize, with and for the inhabitants***

He used this example to promote the alternative that many architects hold today – to demolish and replace buildings as an easy and short-term solution - rather than to adapt, repair and restore them.

Demolition is a waste of materials which our future cannot afford whereas keeping our old buildings and their history can be achieved by careful thinking which will add another layer to their history, is more sustainable and strengthens our cultural environment.

Alan then spoke about his recent work on the **Sydney Opera House** and linked the building's 50-year history to our Society's anniversary.

The Opera House was built before current access standards were in place, and as a very busy public domain, it needed to be upgraded to include provisions for persons with mobility and other issues. There was also a great need to improve the acoustics of the Concert Hall. Alan and his team's approach was to make the changes without destroying the character of the building.



Source: [PROJECTS • Design 5 - Architects](#)

He described how the access was brought up to standard by creating a side foyer and cutting a passage through the stairs which curved its way to the northern foyer and a glass lift was built to Level 3, a space where visitors can look across the Harbour. These changes caused minimal interruption to design lines of the building.

His work proved that inserting these things out of need were not detrimental but added to the 'performance' spaces within the building. After much thought and testing, the approach to improving the acoustics was tackled with the same expertise with several changes made which resulted in successfully adapting the space to meet requirements.

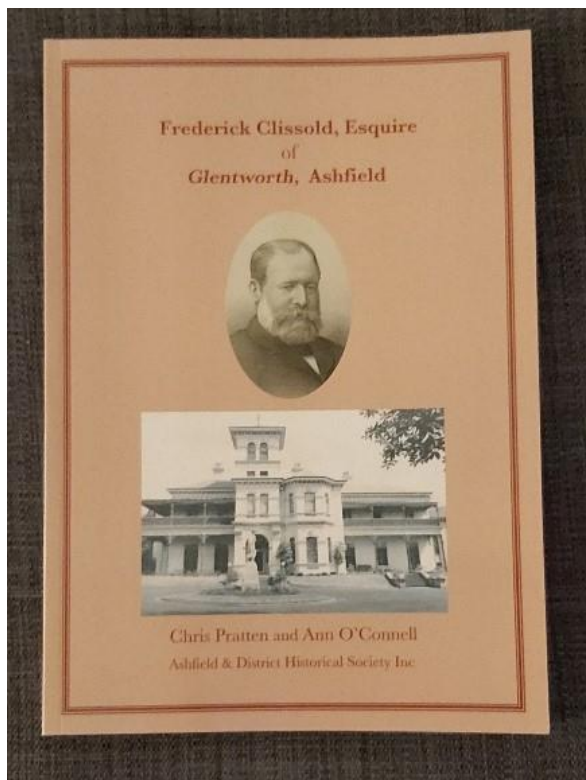
Alan concluded by stating that we cannot ignore what is occurring in our community, that we need to be vigilant, and the time has come again to stand up and fight!

## Book launch

Following the formalities, another special event took place at the AGM meeting, **Alan Croker**, launched the Society's latest book:

### *Frederick Clissold Esquire of Glentworth, Ashfield*

The authors **Chris Pratten** and **Ann O'Connell** were congratulated on their work.



Authors Ann O'Connell & Chris Pratten with Alan Croker at the launch of *Frederick Clissold Esquire of Glentworth, Ashfield*

By Ann O'Connell & Heather Warton  
Images: Colin Webb & Heather Warton

## Upcoming events

### The Haberfield Association: Conservation Forum

**Tuesday 14 March 2023**  
**7.30 pm**

#### Michael Maher Room, beside the Haberfield Library

The Committee of the Haberfield Association believes that there should be more focus on the issue of heritage conservation in the March 25 State election.

Consequently, the Committee has organised a Heritage Conservation Forum and has invited local candidates to address topics on the theme of:

#### *The role of government in heritage conservation in NSW.*

The candidates will be also given the opportunity to present their policies on heritage.

The Haberfield Association invites all members of the Ashfield and District Historical Society to attend.

Supper will be provided.

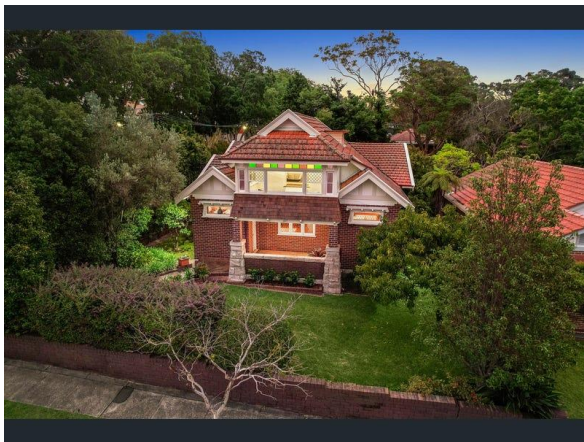
For more information see:

[Haberfield Association](#) | [Haberfield NSW](#) | [Facebook](#)

## House Inspection in Summer Hill

**Sunday 19 March 2023  
2:30 pm - 4:00 pm**

An opportunity to learn more about the Californian Bungalow architectural style through a visit to this unusual home, with fabulous joinery and other original features.



Source: Realestate.com

A remarkably intact property, generously made available by its current owners.

Numbers limited to 25, Members only.

When you register the address of the house will be provided.

Registration is essential:

[Californian Bungalow: House Inspection, Summer Hill – Ashfield & District Historical Society \(ashfieldhistory.org.au\)](https://ashfieldhistory.org.au)

**Cost: \$5, Members only.**

## A saunter down Smith Street, Summer Hill

**Sunday 23 April 2023  
and  
Sunday 7 May 2023  
2:00 pm - 4:00 pm**

This event will be run in conjunction with the National Trust Heritage Festival.

**Mark Sabolch** will delve into the history and heritage of Smith Street Summer Hill.

The walk will commence at John Paton Reserve, corner of Henson and Smith Streets, Summer Hill.

The same walk will be held on two separate dates, please book for either date.

Numbers limited to 25 on each date.

Registration is essential:

[A Saunter Down Smith Street, Summer Hill – Ashfield & District Historical Society \(ashfieldhistory.org.au\)](https://ashfieldhistory.org.au)

**Cost: Members \$5; non-members \$10.**



Heritage items, 160 & 162 Smith Street

Source: [Summer Hill, New South Wales - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Summer_Hill,_New_South_Wales)

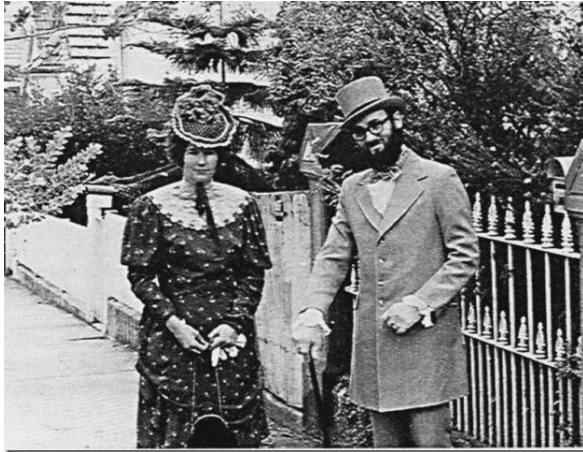


## Save the date

### 50th Anniversary of Ashfield and District Historical Society

**Saturday 24 June 2023**  
**The Lounge**  
**West's Leagues Club**

The Society began in 1973, during a time of changing fashions and bold music. Fifty years later, we are again in times of change, so join us at a luncheon and entertainment as we celebrate and discuss the events over those 50 years.



Society founders, John Ward & June Durie, in celebratory attire, 1974



Nora Peek (research officer) with Ashfield Council's Ann Stevens in the early 90s

Images: ADHS Journal no. 10.

## Book launch

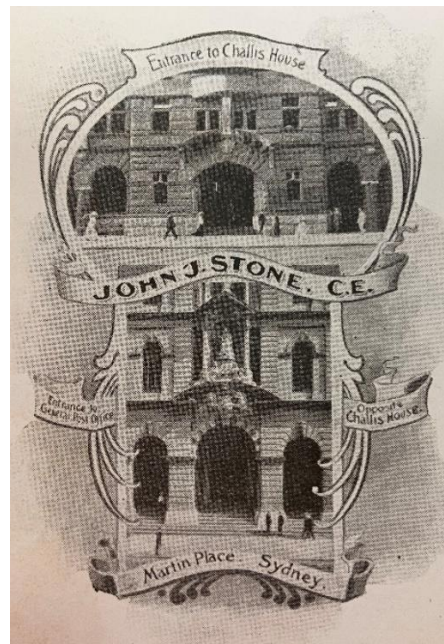
### *John Jasper Stone*

**Sunday 23 July 2023**

John Jasper Stone was born in Shoreditch, a poor part of London, and arrived in Australia at age seven, with his parents in 1855, settling in crowded Surry Hills. As a lad, he joined the Public Works Department in Sydney and trained as a draughtsman, later becoming a civil engineer. In 1888 Stone branched out on his own as a Consulting Engineer, Patent Attorney and Architect and over his working life was involved in many projects across New South Wales.

**Ann O'Connell** has researched and written a book about Stone, with information and images of his buildings, industrial works and patents that have been identified. Among these are several houses in Ashfield.

An event to celebrate the work will be held in July. Please join us for this event, see our website for details of the venue and registration:



John Jasper Stone's letterhead featured an image of the grand location of his office in Challis House, Martin Place Sydney - opposite the GPO; Source: Baptist Church Archives

## Ceremonial trowels

**Anna Ross**, descendant of **Herbert Edward Pratten**, writes about the re-discover of one of the trowels used to lay foundation stones for the pavilion at Pratten Park, Ashfield.

The Pratten Park grandstand, or pavilion as it tends to be called in the historical records, was opened on 18 December 1920 by Senator Herbert Edward Pratten and by Alderman Frank Owen Hedger, Mayor of Ashfield. Two foundation stones were laid, each man using a ceremonial trowel.



Two trowels, prepared for the purpose, were engraved with the men's names and a description of the event. Both Pratten and Hedger were presented with the trowels they used, after the ceremony.

Ann O'Connell has fully detailed the building and opening of the pavilion in the Journal of the Ashfield & District Historical Society, *Pratten Park 100 Years*, Ashfield History No. 19, (pp. 117-127).

The trowel used by the Mayor returned to Ashfield, after passing through several hands, courtesy of a generous purchase by the Wests Ashfield Club, in 2013.

Unknown to Ann O'Connell, at the time she wrote the account, the other trowel used by H.E. Pratten had remained in his family. I assume that it was passed down to his daughter, Ethel Margaret Stevens nee Pratten. I know that it was then in the possession of her daughter Margaret Enid Banks nee Christian. It was passed to her son Colin Banks and then to me, his sister, Anna Ross nee Banks.

I have had Senator Pratten's trowel examined by a jeweller who identified it as being made of silver with gold embellishments. The trowels are valuable in their own right, apart from their historical significance.



I have little to add to Ann O'Connell's account except to wonder what lay behind the decision to have two foundation stones. Ann records that the Ashfield Council had the intention of laying two stones when they wrote to H.E. Pratten requesting he lay one. I have heard this spoken of by people in the community with long memories.



## Ceremonial trowels

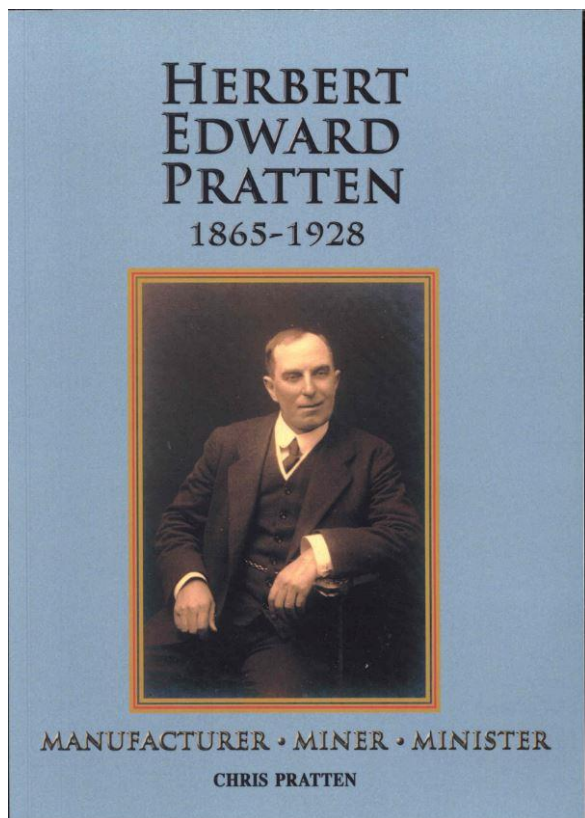
It is said that the Mayor and the Senator could not agree on who held precedence and should lay the stone and thus the two stone solution.

I, a great granddaughter of H.E. Pratten, am very pleased to donate the trowel, on behalf of the Pratten family, to the Wests Ashfield Club, so that it may be placed in the good care of the archivists of the Club and the two trowels may be displayed together.

**By Anna Ross**

**Images: Anam Pasha, Marketing Officer,  
West's Leagues Club**

Read more about H. E Pratten in the book:



## Heritage Report

The Inner West Local Planning Panel has approved the rear two storey addition to the modest cottage at 9 Wellesley Street Summer Hill but fortunately adopted a Council condition to require the 'monument black' ribbed metal walls to be changed to a colour that will be less prominent in the heritage conservation area, and to the immediate neighbours!

ADHS and Council's own heritage advisors time and again raise concern at the use of ribbed metal walls particularly ones in 'monument black' yet we continue to see DAs following this fashion and colour. This month a DA for a two storey addition to the bungalow at 20 Clissold (cnr Fairleigh) Street Ashfield was lodged. A double garage with a first floor flat is also proposed. The external cladding is ribbed metal, 'monument black'. ADHS will be lodging an objection – the property is in a heritage conservation area with heritage items nearby.

An objection has been lodged to a very large two storey (plus basement) rear additions to a prominent Federation bungalow at 19 Leopold Street Croydon Park. While the site is large, the proposed additions will overpower the original dwelling; they will also be readily seen from the street and the neighbours.

The Friends of Callan Park contacted the Society seeking a letter objecting to a DA from TPG to install a telecommunications tower directly adjacent to the northern boundary of Callan Park. The tower at over 30 metres would be well above the tree-line and compete with views to and from *Kirkbridge*, *Rozelle* and *Iron Cove*. Callan Park and its buildings are State Heritage and many ADHS members know and use the area – it is highly valued. Council refused the DA but an appeal to the Land & Environment Court has been lodged. The Society has made a submission.

**By David Rollinson**

## Quong Tart treasures

In December 2022, Dr Josh Stenberg visited our research rooms at Thirning Villa seeking historical information about Chinese people living in the local area and anything written in Chinese symbols in Ashfield's past. Dr Stenberg is a senior lecturer in Chinese Studies in the School of Languages and Cultures at Sydney University.

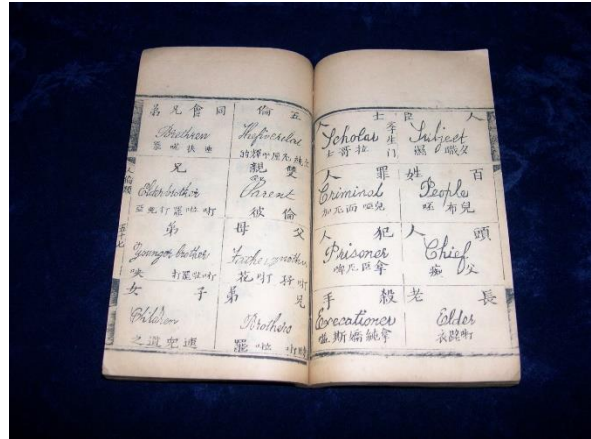
He was interested in an article written by Norma Oong about the Chong Family in Milton House, and of course he had already heard about Quong Tart.

At the time, the Society's highly valued items: **The Quong Tart Tearooms, cup saucer and spoon and the Chinese – English Dictionary** which Quong Tart had given to one of his employees, were still being stored at Thirning Villa, and so these were unpacked for Josh to inspect. He was most impressed, took photographs and promised to get back to us with his evaluation of the items.

Later in December, Dr Stenberg, emailed us, stating that the Powerhouse Museum had a cup and saucer (but no spoon) the same as our set, in their collection. He interpreted the Chinese stamp on the underside of the items as 'Made in Tongzhi Reign (1862-73)'. This came as quite a surprise as we previously had no information about its 'age'.



When looking into the history of the Chinese – English Dictionary, at first, Dr Stenberg thought that he would probably find another held in a collection in Hong Kong, Peoples Republic of China or Australia. While he found some items by the same publisher, he did not find 'our' one, which means that our dictionary is extremely rare.



After gaining the benefit of knowledge from Dr Stenberg, these valuable items are now stored in a more secure location. However, the Society will be very pleased to allow the items to be exhibited by reputable organisations for the public to appreciate them.

**By Ann O'Connell**

**Images: Ann O'Connell**



Quong Tart, ca. 1880s by unknown artist, Oil painting

Source: State Library NSW, see

[The life of Quong Tart | State Library of NSW](#)

## ADHS bookstall at the Flour Mill Market

Did you know that you can browse and buy ADHS publications on the first Sunday of every month at the market at the Flour Mill of Summer Hill?

Do drop in - we enjoy chatting to our members!

***Upcoming market dates are***

***2 April, 7 May, 4 June***

***9.00am to 1.00pm***

## Membership matters

Membership fees for 2023 are now due. Only financial members will be eligible to receive our next publication.

If you are unsure whether you have paid, contact us at:

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

See our webpage for full details:

<https://ashfieldhistory.org.au/membership-application/>

Fees are \$40 per household and \$30 for concession (Centrelink, DVA and full time student). If you need postage for either the newsletter and/or publications please add \$10.

Please pay:

- by EFT to our account with your name, initials and reference 'Subs':  
BSB 062-257  
Account Name ADHS  
Account number 0090 0855
- or post your cheque to PO Box 20 Ashfield NSW 1800
- or we accept both card and cash at the Flour Mills Market stall.

Members who have paid their fees for 2023 can pick up their copy of *Frederick Clissold Esquire of Glentworth, Ashfield* from our Rooms at Thirning Villa.

Alternatively, the publication can be picked from our Market Stall at the Flour Mill in Summer Hill between 9am and 1pm.

***We anticipate producing two more publications this year; one on John Jasper Stone and another Houses of Ashfield book...membership is excellent value!***

## Research Rooms

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

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

## Contact the Society

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

## Newsletter contributors

Thank you to: Carolyn Carter, Ann O'Connell, Lois Gray, Alex Lofts, David Rollinson, Anna Ross, Jan & Paul Williams, Bernadette Williamson and Colin Webb for their contributions to this Newsletter.

**Heather Warton**

Newsletter Editor  
11 March 2023