



## President's message

Dear Members

The Society has been, as usual, very busy, as is reflected in the newsletter.

You will see in the following pages that the recent talk about Land Titles by Carol Liston was most successful and many thanks to Ann for the successful completion and launch the publication, *John Jasper Stone* which significantly adds to the local historical record.

In August the Society was awarded a community recognition certificate by the Hon Jo Haylen, MP in light of the ADHS as a builder of community connection and its outstanding contribution to recording local history for 50 years and counting.

The Society's Committee and others attended a simple ceremony held at our meeting place in The Little BIG House, Summer Hill.

We also attended two ceremonies to unveil a Blue Plaque at *Gallop House* Ashfield in memory of Quong Tart. The first was in August for the initial unveiling of the plaque by the Hon Penny Sharpe MLC, Minister for Heritage. A second ceremony was held on 8 September 2023 to enable family, descendants, residents of Uniting Aged Care and representatives of our Society to attend.

In this Newsletter we also have a report on the Society's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary luncheon held in June. Thanks to all who attended for a wonderful day of celebration and sharing of memories of the Society and life in Ashfield over the past 50 years.

## President's message

I also had the sombre honour of again speaking in memory of John Ward at a memorial held in late July for neighbours, friends and colleagues.

John's contributions to heritage, his service to the community as a Councillor and Mayor are outstanding. A really good moment was a speech by Noel Pearson who the Wards befriended, which led to him returning to his Sydney home for a year.

The memorial event for John was attended by about 150 people.

John was a wonderful neighbour and mentor after my own election. We often talked in what John termed the 'authentic Victorian gloom' of the sitting room of the Wards' terrace house.

He had a great sense of humour, once telling me of his most failed public campaign, that of trying to save the Bennelong Point tram sheds. When I pointed out that the Sydney Opera House hasn't turned out too bad he said 'But Alex you should have seen the tram sheds!'

**Alex Lofts**



Alex at the Society's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Lunch

## 50th Anniversary of Ashfield and District Historical Society

The Society began in 1973, during a time of changing fashions, bold music and raised environmental consciousness.

Fifty years later, we are still in times of change. The Society is thriving and is still actively involved in what is now the Inner West community.

### ***A fabulous luncheon to commemorate the Society was held at Wests Leagues Club on Sunday 24 June 2023***

Distinguished guests included:

- The Hon **Penny Sharpe**, MLC  
Minister for Heritage
- **Darcy Byrne**, Mayor of  
Inner West Council
- Councillors **Mark Drury** and **Phillipa Scott**
- **Suzanne Holohan** General Manager  
and Company Secretary, Royal  
Australian Historical Society
- **Gail Ward and Hilton Ward.**

**Denny Burgess**, from the iconic 1960s & 1970 band *The Masters Apprentices* was also a special guest. Denny is a board member of Wests Ashfield Leagues and chairman of the Australian Songwriters Association.

A reflection of the life and times of the Society was presented by President, **Alex Lofts**.

**Mark Sabolch** was the MC.

There was a display of 1970s memorabilia including retro fashions worn by the guests! We enjoyed a lovely meal and had fun with the 1970s trivia quiz.

# 50th Anniversary Celebrations

Photos by Colin Webb



Fashionable Celebration guests



Cake cutting by special guest Gail Ward



The Hon Penny Sharpe, MLC



Denny Burgess

*More photos of the event and a short history of the Society are on our website, see:*

**[Past Events 2023 – Ashfield & District Historical Society \(ashfieldhistory.org.au\)](http://ashfieldhistory.org.au)**



## 50th Anniversary Celebrations



Clare Herscovitch



Darcy Byrne



Bernadette Williamson

# 50th Anniversary Celebrations



Lois Gray

*The event was a huge success!*



Distinguished guest at the luncheon  
Photo: Lois Gray



More distinguished guests, including Life Members Bob Irving and Chris Pratten  
Photo: Lois Gray

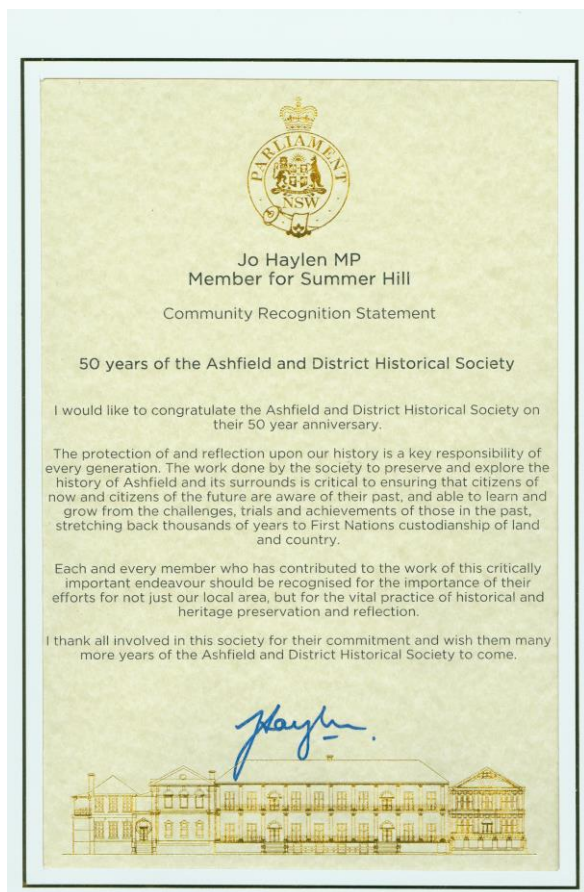
*The event was organised by:  
Carolyn Carter, Lois Gray,  
Alex Lofts, Jan Williamson,  
Paul Williamson, Colins Webb and members of the  
ADHS Committee*





# NSW Parliament recognises Ashfield and District Historical Society

Further to our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations, a number of the ADHS Committee attended the Little Big House at Summer Hill on the 11 August 2023 to receive a **Community Recognition Certificate** and congratulations from our State Member of Parliament and Minister for Transport and Roads in New South Wales, the **Hon Jo Haylen**.



The function was quite informal and relaxed but also enjoyable. We were able to sit and chat with Ms Haylen. She also asked to be kept informed of our activities. We invited her to come along to some of our gatherings.

She showed great interest in the offer of an afternoon tea at one of our Pratten Park functions and joining the ADHS.



Jo Haylen with members of the Committee

The Certificate identifies that the ADHS 50th Anniversary was noted in Parliament House and, on that basis, the occasion was recorded in the State's transcripts of parliamentary proceedings, Hansard.



Jo Haylen with Murray Cleaver

**by Murray A. Cleaver**

**Photos by Jan & Paul Williams  
and Lois Gray**

## Future events

# An overview of the State Archives by Christine Yeats

**Sunday 15 October 2023**  
**Summer Hill**  
**Community Centre**  
**at 2pm**

**Christine Yeats**, former Archivist with State Records Office, will present an overview of Resources of the State Archives.

Christine will share some of her extensive knowledge of the resources available online through Museums of History NSW. Please register to attend on our website:

[State Archives/ Museums of History – Ashfield & District Historical Society \(ashfieldhistory.org.au\)](http://ashfieldhistory.org.au)

This is a Members Only event.

Please note the change of venue, the talk will be held at the **Summer Hill Community Centre** in Smith Street Summer Hill.

Christine will be happy to answer questions provided in advance of her talk.

Please send any questions or topics you would like to be live covered by email to [admin@ashfieldhistory.org.au](mailto:admin@ashfieldhistory.org.au)

***Houses* journal launch**  
**Sunday 19 November 2023**  
**Venue TBC**

Join us for the launch of our second *Houses* journal. As with our first *Houses* journal this publication contains many interesting stories about houses in the Ashfield area and the lives of the families in times past.

For updated information and registration:  
[Launch of Our New Houses Journal – Ashfield &  
 District Historical Society \(ashfieldhistory.org.au\)](http://ashfieldhistory.org.au)

## News from Marrickville Heritage Society

**Richard Blair** of the Marrickville Heritage Society (MHS) invites ADHS members to the **Built Environment Awards Ceremony 2023** to be held on **7 October 2023**.

To register, please follow the link below and register through Eventbrite:

Built Environment Awards Ceremony 2023

We look forward to celebrating the unique and rich built environment of the Inner West and coming together with colleagues to share ideas and stories.

# Vale Shiley Hilyard

Richard also advises of the recent passing of MHS Life member **Shiley Hilyard**. An event to celebrate the life of Shirley will be held on **Saturday 30 September** at 11am to 12.30pm at the Annie Wyatt Room, National Trust Centre, upper Fort Street Observatory Hill, Millers Point



Shirley Hilyard 1929-2023  
(photo: Lorraine Beach)

From the MHS Newsletter September -October 2023



## Past events

### Launch of journal: *John Jasper Stone* (1848-1921) *Engineer, Architect and Baptist* Held on Sunday 23 July 2023



Ann O'Connell with Christine Yeats

The launch of the Society's latest journal, researched and written by **Ann O'Connell** was held at the Summer Hill Community Centre on 23 July 2023.

**Christine Yeats**, RAHS Senior Vice President launched the book.

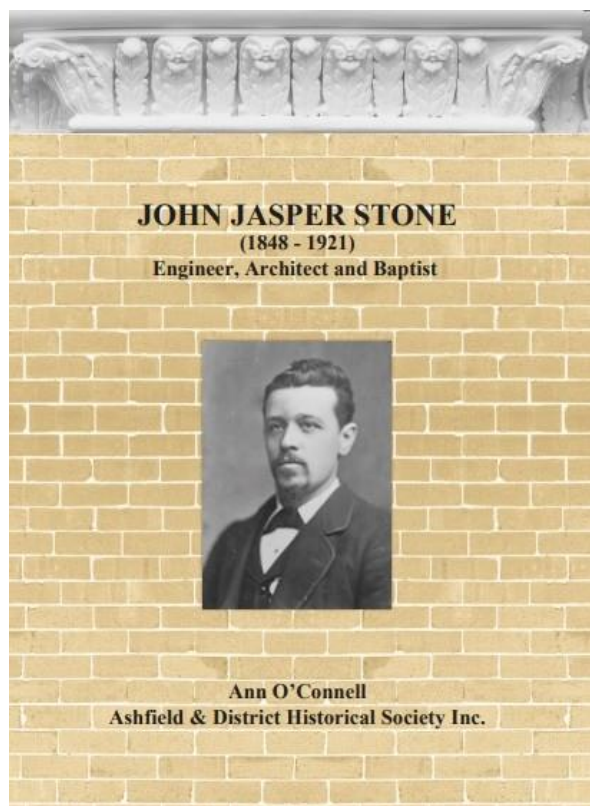
Following an introduction from Alex Lofts, **Ann O'Connell** welcomed Christine, and spoke about her long career in government archives, particularly as the Manager of Public Access, NSW State Records. She thanked Christine for attending and supporting so many of the Affiliated Societies in the work they do.

Christine said that reading about the variety of projects that John Jasper Stone undertook in his lifetime, she was amazed that she had not heard of him before in her work over many years. She was impressed by his work as a Baptist, designing churches that were not nearly as austere as she had imagined.

Christine also spoke about the quality of the Society's publications: the number of images, maps and documents laid out within the text and that they include comprehensive indexes and are fully referenced which shows the attention to detail that is applied.

She stated that the book was a wonderful example for other Societies to aspire to.

The book was published with the assistance of a grant from the **Royal Australian Historical Society**. A gift was presented to Christine by **Susan Thompson**, and then everyone enjoyed a lovely afternoon tea.



**Story and photos by Colin Webb**



## Past events

### Land Titles talk

by Carol Liston

Held on 20 August 2023

On Sunday 20th August, Associate Professor **Carol Liston AO** from The Royal Australian Historical Society delivered a detailed and useful lecture to members of ADHS on techniques for researching Land Title records.



This information is particularly helpful for those wishing to research the ownership history of their own home or the legal and social history of fine houses and blocks of land in NSW.

Carol described land records as the great untouched historical records and encouraged us to learn how to use them.

The first land grant was in 1791 to James Ruse in Parramatta. From 1791 to 1831 land grants were a free gift from the British Crown.

Payment for land grants began in 1831. Registration of land grants is known as Old Systems Title. All Old Systems Title records are available online at Historical Land Records Viewer (HLRV) for free, as well as on Ancestry online and in person at State Records Kingswood.

Torrens Title replaced the chaotic Old Systems Title in 1862 and those records are available free from HLRV.



Carol recommended some websites as sources for research:

[Home - Geographical Names Board of NSW](#) for history of place names

[Title Search](#) ✓ [Land Title Search](#) ✓ [NSW - QLD - VIC - WA - SA - NT \(propertyregistry.com.au\)](#)

NSW Land Registry Services – free access – click on NSW Online Portal

Carol's talk generated quite a few questions and she graciously responded to individual's issues over afternoon tea.

She has also provided an edited version of her presentation slides for participants.

A very informative and interesting presentation.

by **Nerida Thiering and  
Lois Gray**  
Photos by **Colin Webb**

# Inner West Music Fest at Pratten Park Bowling Club

Recently the ADHS was invited to participate with a stall at the Inner West Music Fest held at Pratten Park on Sunday 13 August 2023.

It was a grey and windy morning when at 10.30am we set up our stall with our publications available for sale, alongside the artisan and food stalls. Barefoot bowls, a jumping castle, and facepainting, provided activities for the young and not so young. But what was missing was the much - needed coffee.



Ten bands were showcased with music ranging from rock to jazz and indeed anything that got your feet tapping. The talent line up featured youngsters under 10 to those of much greater maturity. There was no age barrier. Indeed, even the youngest of performers presented works they had composed themselves. What a delight!

The compere of the day introduced each stall, and in our case gave a brief overview of the work of ADHS. Mark Sabolch, Alex Lofts, David Rollinson, Clare Herscovitch and Phil Burne and Lois Gray did duty on the stall.



People expressed quite a lot of interest in our work. It was particularly noted that residents from other areas spoke about the lack of such resources or societies for their neighbourhoods and expressed interest in joining our Society and attending our functions.

Nevertheless by 3.1 pm with a biting wind and the commencement of a fine drizzle, we decided to call it a day even though the Fest continued on till 6 pm.

**Inner West Neighbour Aid** was the charity chosen to benefit from the funds raised on the day.



It was great to be part of this community activity and to see the Pratten Park Bowling Club facilities being so actively utilised.

**Story and photos by Lois Gray**

# Commemoration of Quong Tart

## *Philanthropist, merchant, and Chinese-Australian community leader*

A Blue Plaque, an initiative of the Environment and Heritage Group, part of the NSW Department of Planning and Environment, has been installed at *Gallop House*, the former home of distinguished resident of Ashfield in the 1890s -to early 1900s, **Mei Quong Tart**.

*Gallop House* is now used as a residential care facility, **Uniting Quong Tart Ashfield**. The plaque is located at Arthur Street entry gate.



The plaque unveiling on 8 September 2023 by Renee England, Head of Sydney Services, Uniting Care and John McEvoy, Quong Tart's great grandson

On initially presenting the Plaque, NSW Minister for Heritage the Hon **Penny Sharpe, MLC** said:

*I am proud that we have a Blue Plaques program in New South Wales that celebrates diversity and encourages people to learn about historical moments and stories that shaped the state.*

*Quong Tart was selfless in his charity work and political advocacy and this Blue Plaque is a wonderful tribute to his contribution.*



Quong Tart display, including the dictionary and cup and saucer from his Tea Rooms

Following an earlier event, on **8 September 2023** at **Uniting Quong Tart Ashfield**, several family members, representatives of Uniting Care, and from Heritage NSW gathered for further commemorations. Society members and President, Alex Lofts also attended.

### **Alex writes:**

We displayed the highly significant Quong Tart memorabilia donated to and kept in safe keeping by the Society, images of which can be viewed on our website.

I spoke at both ceremonies about Quong Tart, including amongst other things, his significant contributions to Sydney Society, his philanthropy, his business acumen but also that he was NOT 'a man of his time', a phrase sometimes used in reference to those who may have held beliefs and opinions no longer accepted - because he was a man who showed an openness and tolerance, a generosity of spirit which all did and can respect.

**Ann O'Connell** also spoke wonderfully about the collection on display.

**by Alex Lofts**

**Photos by Colin Webb**

For more information on Quong Tart, see

<https://ashfieldhistory.org.au/quong-tart-memorabilia/>



# *Frederick Clissold, Esquire of Glentworth, Ashfield*

The Society has received several complimentary letters and reviews about the biography of Fred Clissold which we published this year. It has also been received well in our local area, particularly by those living in Victoria Street and in the Cardinal Freeman Retirement Village (also known as Glentworth).

**Jessica Buckton** wrote a review of our book in the June 2023 issue of *History*, the magazine of the **Royal Australian Historical Society**:

*Chris Pratten and Ann O'Connell of the Ashfield and District Historical Society have written a thorough and interesting account of the life and livelihood of Frederick Clissold Esquire (1831-1892. Drawing on a variety of different documentary sources and research, the work maps out the various roles, enterprises and family of Clissold. He was involved in a variety of primary industries, pastoralism and mining, local councils, and the horse-racing industry.*

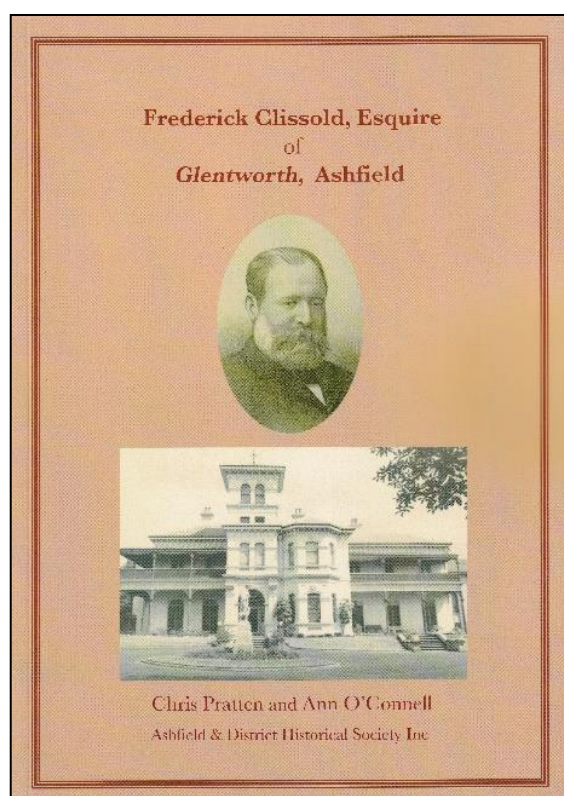
*The work emphasises Clissold's impact and influence in the development of various institutions in Ashfield and its surrounding regions and examines his continuing legacy in the area, including his residences, such as Glentworth, which is still standing and in use today.*

*The book is well illustrated and an easy and engaging read and would be an invaluable source for anyone undertaking local history in Sydney's inner western suburbs.*

An appreciated letter came from a long-time resident of Victoria Street, **Dr Crisetta MacLeod** who wrote:

*I am so delighted with your book Frederick Clissold, Esquire of Glentworth, Ashfield. You have researched it all so thoroughly and in such an entertaining way.*

*Thank you for your wonderful work, it is so good to know more of the background of the Clissolds, and of Glentworth.*



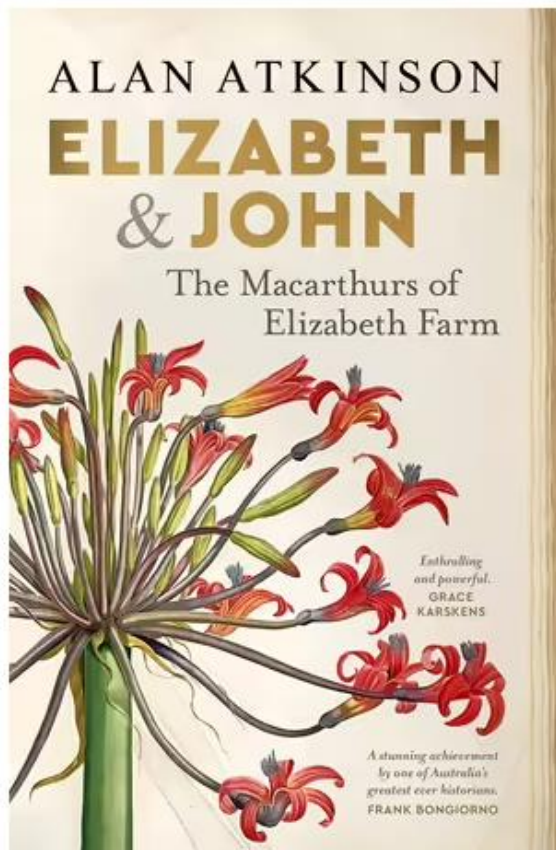
The Society has copies of this publication for sale at \$20 each, which can be purchased from our research rooms, our stall at the Summer Hill Mill Markets or online through our website.

**by Ann O'Connell**

# Book Review

## ***Elizabeth & John: The Macarthurs of Elizabeth Farm* by Alan Atkinson**

This book, the recent winner of the NSW Premier's History Award announced on 7 September 2023, is the culmination of a very long period of research and gathering of material by Atkinson.



It goes back to Elizabeth (1766-1850) and John Macarthur's (1767-1834) origins in the Tamar Valley of the English west country, toward Cornwall. Quite a bit of the history of the family forebears is also provided.

They grew up within a short distance of each other during the Age of Enlightenment, a period of enormous change, centred on the pursuit of knowledge and progress. They were married in 1788 and John brought his commission as an Ensign in a regiment in the British Army, formed to serve in the American War of Independence, to the marriage.

Atkinson's story gives good background on how Elizabeth and John came together and what drove them to come to Australia.

The War of Independence ended before John's regiment was ready for war and it was disbanded in 1783. On half-pay, Macarthur went to live on a farm near Devon, where he became interested in rural pursuits. He also contemplated a career in law – but the law was not for him. In April 1788, Macarthur returned to full-pay army duties and, in that year, married Elizabeth Veale of Bridgerule near Holsworthy (About 50km from Plymouth).

The offer of a position for John as lieutenant in the newly forming New South Wales Corps - on the other side of the world - resulted in them deciding, in July of 1789, to travel to Australia. John had a reputation for being somewhat hot-headed. Before they left Plymouth he entered into a heated dispute with Thomas Gilbert, the Captain of their vessel, the *Neptune*. John publicly denounced Gilbert as a great scoundrel.

The two fought a pistol duel on the Plymouth dock. Neither were injured. Macarthur's fellow NSW Corps officer on the ship was the brother of Evan Nepean, the Under Secretary of State for the Home Department. In a move that also became typical of Macarthur, he was aided by this political association to have Gilbert replaced as master of the *Neptune* before the ship's departure.

Arriving in Australia via the Cape of Good Hope in 1790, both aged 23, with one son (Edward) Elizabeth gave birth to four sons and three daughters (one of whom died) over the next two decades.

On his arrival in Australia John was placed in charge of a number of soldiers. He became an important part of the trading cartel that the NSW Corps, under Major Francis Grose, established over produce that entered the port colony.

## Book Review: *Elizabeth & John*

This included a monopoly on the liquor trade. When Governor Phillip ordered the return of a cask of spirits which Macarthur had taken from the government stores, Macarthur refused. Phillip threatened him with arrest. John later returned the cask but refused to associate with Phillip after this incident.

Phillip left in 1792, leaving the colony under the care of the commander of the NSW Corps, Francis Grose. Under Grose, the regiment, including Macarthur strengthened monopolistic control of the trade of spirits, food and convict labour. The NSW Corps became known as the Rum Corps due to their very profitable extortion of trade, especially spirits.

The book gives a good summation of his relationship with a range of military personnel including duels with some of them.

This quite readable history of the Macarthur family discusses John's employment as inspector of public works for three years and then taking possession of *Elizabeth Farm* at Parramatta, with John 'giving' himself, greatly assisted by Grose, a further 100 acres in 1794. However, aside from John's activities, it was Elizabeth who stayed in Australia while John went back home to England to be court martialled for some of his activities and explored and investigated his rural pursuits, including the development of wool and the best sheep to grow it on.

It was Elizabeth who "kept the home fires burning" and managed the property at Elizabeth Farm and further acquisitions at Camden.

John was appointed to the New South Wales Legislative Council in 1825. He served until 1832 when he was removed due to his failing mental health. John was officially declared a lunatic by Governor Bourke and was placed under restraint at his home in Camden. He died at his Camden Park Estate in 1834 and was buried on the property.

Elizabeth died in 1850, having survived John by sixteen years. During this time she lived to see the success of Australian wool exports and fulfilment of many of John's predictions about the development of the colony.

Atkinson identifies the importance, and enormous value, of the abundance of Macarthur family papers in the State Library of NSW. Indeed, Atkinson claims that "What they did with their sheep, in preserving the breed, they also did with bits of paper". This material provided a significant foundation, but not all of the material, for this excellent history.



Image: John Macarthur, unknown artist. The collections of the State Library of New South Wales.

[John Macarthur, c. 1850s \(nsw.gov.au\)](http://nsw.gov.au)

**Alan Atkinson** has written a number of books, including *The Europeans in Australia* (Early Australian settlement by Britain).

He is an academic and historian with links to both the University of Sydney and the University of Western Sydney.

**by Murray A. Cleaver**



# Heritage Report

An update on three DAs mentioned in the last newsletter:

**19 Leopold Street Croydon Park** – a fresh DA has now been lodged for a two-storey attached pavilion to the rear of this Federation dwelling. While still sizeable, it is an improvement over the original DA that was withdrawn. Attention is now being paid to keeping the two-storey original stables/storage building accessed from the rear lane.

Revised plans for **20 Clissold Street Ashfield** were submitted and have now been approved by Council's staff, subject to conditions. Further revised plans for **2 Federal Avenue Ashfield** have been assessed and were approved by the Inner West Local Planning Panel on 12 September 2023.

The Society has objected to a DA to demolish the w/b bungalow at **52 John Street Ashfield** and build a two-storey rectangular box-like house. The site adjoins a heritage item, while other items are nearby and a heritage conservation area (HCA) is opposite.

A similar design has just been lodged for **34 Armstrong Street Ashfield**, where the existing Federation brick bungalow (in mostly original condition) is proposed for demolition – it sits in a line of similar bungalows and the opposite side of the street is in a HCA. The Society will lodge an objection to this DA.

by **David Rollinson**

## Membership matters

Only financial members will be eligible to receive our next publication. If you are unsure whether you have paid for 2023 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**, which is held the first Sunday of the month.

## 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:

Murray Cleaver

Lois Gray

Alex Lofts

Ann O'Connell

David Rollinson

Nerida Thiering

Colin Webb

for their contributions to this Newsletter.

**Heather Warton**

**Newsletter Editor 24 September 2023**