

Newsletter

JUNE 2024 I SERIES 5 I NO. 14

President's message

Welcome to our midyear newsletter. As you will read in the following pages, the Society has, as usual, been busy.

I'll allow you to discover that for yourselves - because I want to use this space to outline some implications of the State Government's planning and housing reforms, which are meant to address a growing housing shortage.

In particular I want to focus on the Transport Oriented Development (TOD) Program.

The planning reforms have caused significant community concern, particularly because of the need to protect built heritage and amenity

Transport Oriented Development (TOD) has been a planning principle for some time. Under this principle areas near transport hubs are favoured for increased density to reduce the need to travel by car and to encourage the use of public transport. This will be implemented via an already gazetted State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP).

The SEPP is the result of sustained pressure to act on the housing and rental 'crises'.

The following is a summary only. For more detailed summaries follow this link to the Department of Planning website:

<https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/policy-and-legislation/housing/transport-oriented-development-program/transport-oriented-development>.

President's message:

TOD Program

The SEPP is a substantial change to current planning controls. The original draft SEPP has been modified (after public reaction and negotiation by bodies such as the Inner West Council) to allow councils to propose where increased density should be zoned through the LEP process.

For the Inner West, the implementation of the SEPP has been delayed, effectively until January/February 2025, to allow Council to undertake better place based planning.

Also modifications to the SEPP now specifically recognise heritage listings and Heritage Conservation Areas.

However, the TOD SEPP itself makes no reference to heritage. There is a guide written by the Department which mentions heritage and how Councils/applicants are to deal with it, but this 'guide' is NOT part of the SEPP, so it has no real weight. Councils are left to deal with any TOD DAs in heritage conservation areas as best they can, using their existing Local Environmental Plan (LEP) and Development Control Plan (DCP) provisions.

It is likely that disputed applications will be determined by the Department or the Land and Environment Court.

TODs are favoured as infill development near transport hubs to counter urban spread on the perimeters of Sydney, where infrastructure is lacking and commuting times are long.

The 400m parameter of the TOD SEPP, applies to 37 listed railway and metro stations. The max height for an apartment building is 22m; the max height for a shop top housing development is 24m. There is a minimum site width requirement of 21m.

The separate Housing SEPP contemplates greater heights (on merit) where affordable housing is proposed but that is not part of the TOD policy.

In the Inner West, streets around Croydon, Dulwich Hill and Marrickville stations, are affected. Ashfield station is also listed. Streets on the north side of the station and streets near the Mall are within the 400m radius.

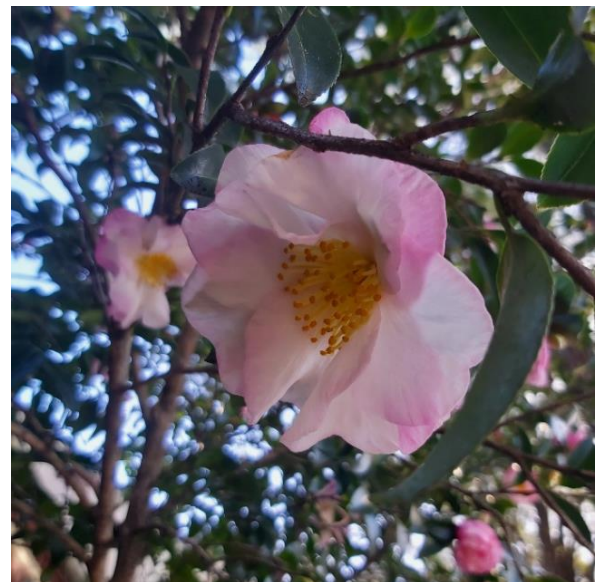
However, the current Inner West LEP already permits buildings of up to 8 levels, in the CBD and immediately adjacent streets, subject to listed conditions. Previously 6 levels were allowed and 8 if affordable housing was included.

There has been reference to a 'Pattern Book' of endorsed housing design that will be available to developers. If applied, the idea is that there would be an accelerated approval pathway. However, the detail of this has not been released yet.

Further reforms under the Well Placed Low to Medium Housing SEPP, which will affect town centres, will be gazetted later this year.

We will keep you informed.

Alex Lofts



In this newsletter we report on the recent heritage walk along Smith Street Summer Hill, passing gardens including Camellia trees in flower.

Future events

Conformity and individuality in the Californian Bungalow

Sunday 23 June 2024

2pm - 4.30pm

Summer Hill Community Centre

This presentation by **Colin Webb** will look at the ubiquitous Californian Bungalow prevalent in the Inner West with a particular focus on Ashfield and Ashbury.

Colin will look at some of the features of Californian Bungalows that make them unique and how they conform.

Are Californian Bungalows 'unimpressive and uniformly dull?'

Colin has taken numerous photographs of Californian Bungalows in our local area to illustrate the points he will make in his presentation.



Please register on our website:

[Conformity and Individuality in the Californian Bungalow – Ashfield & District Historical Society \(ashfieldhistory.org.au\)](https://ashfieldhistory.org.au)

Researching with Trove

Sunday 21 July 2024

2pm - 4.30pm

Summer Hill Community Centre

Christine Yeats will present a follow up to her talk in October 2023 on the State Archives, with a talk on undertaking research using the **Trove** website. Trove is indeed a treasure for researchers, giving access to digital copies of newspapers, government gazettes, maps, magazines and newsletters and many other collections



Source: [Home | mysite \(christineyeatsconsulting.com\)](https://home.mysite.christineyeatsconsulting.com)

Christine was the Manager Public Access at State Records NSW and is the Senior Vice President of the Royal Australian Historical Society as well as holding positions in several other history related groups.

Please join us in Summer Hill for a talk followed by afternoon tea.

Please register on our website:

[Effective Use of Trove – Ashfield & District Historical Society \(ashfieldhistory.org.au\)](https://ashfieldhistory.org.au)

A walk through London Streets in search of the origin of our Victorian Italianate legacy

Sunday 18 August 2024

2pm - 4.30pm

Summer Hill Community Centre

Mark Sabolch's pictorial presentation will explore the varied examples of the Italianate architectural style as seen in London.

The Italianate style was very popular and versatile. Taking in the housing forms seen around Regents Park, Belgravia, Pimlico and Bloomsbury just after the turn of the nineteenth century and evolving as new estates extended into the Victorian growth areas in London's south-east and north-west suburbs.

To what extent are the Victorian Italianate house styles we see in the Inner West derived from London housing? Mark will explore how the Victorian Italianate style evolved and consider possible translations from London to Sydney.

This event is co-hosted by Marrickville Heritage Society.



Please register on our website:

<https://ashfieldhistory.org.au/event/theitalianates-origins-in-london-a-presentation-by-mark-sabolch/>

Guided tour and historical outline of Trinity Grammar School

Saturday 14 September 2024

Meeting location TBA

Alison Doran is the Archivist at Trinity Grammar Summer Hill. Alison will conduct a guided tour and historical outline of Trinity Grammar School for History Week.



Trinity Grammar School site Victoria Street/Prospect Road Summer Hill and Yeo Park in 1943

Source: Six Maps

Limited to 30 participants.

Please register on our website:

[A guided tour and historical outline of the Trinity Grammar School site. – Ashfield & District Historical Society \(ashfieldhistory.org.au\)](https://ashfieldhistory.org.au/event/a-guided-tour-and-historical-outline-of-the-trinity-grammar-school-site-ashfield-district-historical-society)

Past events

Who do you think you might be? - the nuts and bolts of genealogical methods

On 24 March 2024 we had a very informative presentation at the Ashfield Civic Centre from our new Committee Member, **Kerry Barlow**, entitled 'Who Do You Think You Might Be? - the nuts and bolts of genealogical methods'.

As usual, the Civic Centre presented a bit of an access challenge for attendees, but we managed to get everybody into the room for the very useful information from Kerry.

Kerry is an experienced presenter on researching family history and had condensed a full day workshop into one hour!

Her major point was that all information should continually be confirmed using primary sources such as government Births, Deaths and Marriages records and she outlined the potential for errors with transcription errors, incorrect spellings, nicknames, pet names etc.

She listed some of the major resources available and that libraries are an excellent free access point for many of them.

There were some cautionary tales about using family trees from websites such as Ancestry.com and the considerations that should be made before doing a DNA test! Do you really want to know the answer?

Her other major hint was that if you are very serious about researching your family history you should join the Society of Australian Genealogists as they can provide excellent technical assistance plus their resources are available to members.

Thank you to Kerry who stepped in at relatively short notice – she really knows her stuff! If you want a repeat or for more information you should sign up for one of her WEA workshops.

Carolyn Carter



Images: Colin Webb & Heather Warton

Smith Street Walks

Mark Sabolch led three walks in April and May 2024 exploring the value of the local heritage of Smith Street, Summer Hill. This was part of the National Trust's 2024 Australian Heritage Festival. The theme of the walk was: "Connections, characters and commerce".

Smith Street is extraordinary in that it passes through five separate Heritage Conservation Areas, and there are over 30 gazetted local heritage items along its path.

With the continuing pressure for greater urban density and re-development, there is a need for greater awareness in our community of our local history and our local heritage. This walk was designed to share that awareness.

Mark started the walk at the site of the former flour mills (2 Smith Street), and explored through maps, pictures and a visit to the adjacent stormwater Canal, the original lay of the land.

Mark provided information on the former Sheep Quarantine Station, many of the local characters (including early developers, speculative builders, business owners, doctors and nurses, local politicians and of course residents) and the interesting architecture within which they housed themselves. As always, there is more than what meets the eye.

The results of the walk were a better appreciation of the interplay between historical key characters, their cultures and values (to the extent we can glean that information), and also the continuing interaction between people and their geographical and economic environment.

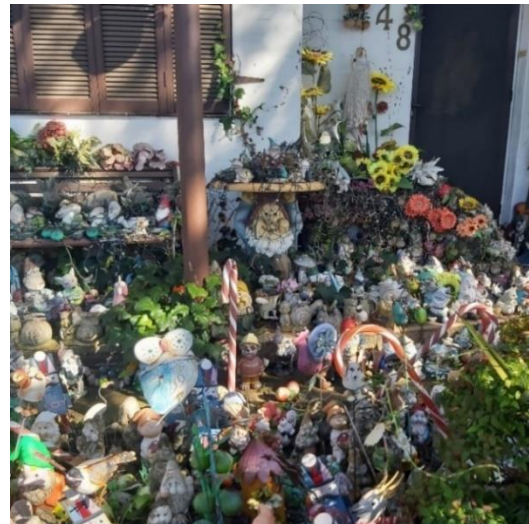
It is this complex interplay which makes Summer Hill the interesting place it is today.

There were three walks delivered and each well patronized and appreciated.

Mark Sabolch



The Walk started at the Flour Mill of Summer Hill development, adjoining Hawthorne Canal



Past the quirky gnome collection



A stop at Carrington Street to discuss interesting former light industrial uses and sheep quarantine grounds

Smith Street Walks



Towards the Post Office and St Andrews Church



Past the stylish Art Deco Apartments



Images: Heather Warton

Taken on the walk rehearsal, April 2024

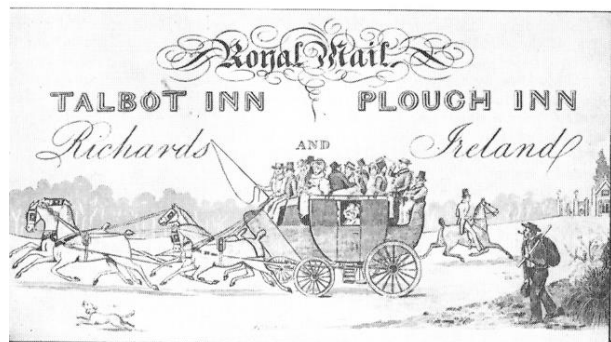
John Ireland Bicentennial Family Reunion

Kerry Barlow and **Colin Webb** who both have been researching aspects of John Ireland (of the *Plough Inn* fame) and the history of his time in Ashfield attended the **John Ireland Bicentennial Family Reunion**. This was held on 9 March 2024 at the historic St John's Church, Ashfield.

The morning started with a guided tour of the Ireland family graves. These included the graves of John and his wife Sarah (nee Blades), their son James, daughter Mary Ann McCulloch, her husband Thomas McCulloch and his father Thomas and mother Sarah McCulloch, and Mary Ann and Thomas's daughter Sarah Amy McCulloch.

John and Sarah Ireland's daughter Sarah's second husband John Heterick, their daughter Isabella Heterick and her ½ sister Mary Ann Heterick are buried there and another daughter of John and Sarah Ireland, Ellinor Mulliner is also buried there.

St John's Cemetery is worth a visit at any time but anyone interested in the Ireland family will be able to see these graves and the wealth of information they record.



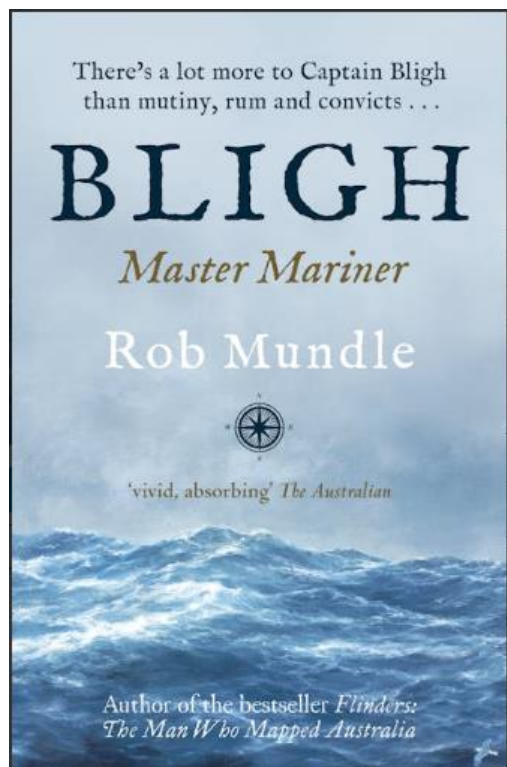
1847- 1849 advertisement for the Talbot and Plough Inns. John Ireland was the licensee of the Speed the Plough Inn at the time

Kerry Barlow & Colin Webb

Book review

Bligh: Master Mariner by Rob Mundle

Another fabulous review by avid reader of history, ADHS Committee Member Murray Cleaver:



How much do you know of William Bligh?

You might have read a little of 'the mutiny'. You might have known that he was Governor of NSW at a critical time. Well, **Rob Mundle** has filled in all of the gaps.

The man we know as Bligh was born into a fairly ordinary family in 1754, likely at Plymouth on the south coast of England. His father, Francis, was a customs officer and his mother, Jane Pearce (née Balsam), a widow, married for the second time at age 40.

Bligh was signed for the Royal Navy at age seven, at a time when it was common to sign on so young, simply to record the experience at sea required for a commission. He joined HMS Hunter as an able seaman in 1770.

In 1776, Bligh was selected by Captain James Cook, accompanying him on the Resolution on Cook's third voyage to the Pacific Ocean, during which Cook was killed. The result was that Bligh was placed in charge of navigation in exploring for the North West Passage, from the north Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic Ocean. Bligh then played a significant role in navigating the expedition back to England in August 1780.

Bligh married Elizabeth Betham, daughter of a customs collector, in 1781. The couple had eight children together: six daughters and twin sons (died in infancy). Elizabeth died in 1812.

Shortly after the wedding, Bligh was appointed to serve on *HMS Belle Poule* as master and in 1781 he fought in the Anglo Dutch Battle of Dogger Bank, which won him his commission as a lieutenant. For the next 18 months he was a lieutenant on various ships. He also fought with Admiral Howe at Gibraltar in 1782. This war was against the Spanish who had allegiance with the French at the time. The Spanish and French tried to take Gibraltar from the British. Do understand the enormous conflicts at the time between various nations including France, the Netherlands, the Spanish and the British and that this conflict was happening on the water. Hence the enormous importance of being part of the Royal Navy – a career Bligh had aspired to since he was a small boy.

In 1787, Bligh was selected as commander of His Majesty's Armed Transport *Bounty*.

The Royal Society was pushing for experimenting with the use of breadfruit as a food crop for enslaved Africans on British colonial plantations in the West Indies.

Bligh: Master Mariner

Breadfruit, a carbohydrate food source, was being grown at Tahiti and collection of breadfruit plants with delivery to the Caribbean was the objective of *Bounty*'s journey. There is some conjecture as to whether this was the true reason *Bounty* headed to Tahiti and that this 'intention' was misleading, the real reason being the territorial contention between France and Great Britain at the time.

Bounty never reached the Caribbean as we all know, as mutiny broke out shortly after the ship left Tahiti. A number of actions on board *Bounty* resulted in Bligh and 18 crew men being cast adrift in a 23 foot long open boat by Fletcher Christian and his mutineers on an epic 47 day voyage from Tonga to Timor with very limited rations and navigating equipment.

The reasons behind the mutiny are still debated with some suggesting that Bligh was a tyrant and others supporting Bligh's position of an average naval officer having to deal with a crew that were corrupted by their recent five month stay in Tahiti.

I urge you to do some reading and make up your own mind on this matter. Bligh's logbooks documenting the mutiny were inscribed on the UNESCO Australian Memory of the World register in 2021.

I was nearing the end of the book and was well aware of a significant chapter in Bligh's life, and that Mundle had not yet dealt with it. That chapter was his Governorship of New South Wales. Certainly, such a chapter is worthy of more coverage than what Mundle gave it, but he succinctly covers this period and the major events of Bligh's life as Governor (1806 to 1808 - taking over from Governor King and preceding Governor Macquarie), including his dealing with the NSW Corps and John Macarthur.

For those wanting a summary of Bligh's tenure in this role, I suggest Mundle's book offers it.

In 1810 Bligh returned to England and his family as well as all the dealings with the Admiralty. Bligh was court martialled three times during his career, being acquitted in the three processes.

In 1811 he was elevated to Rear Admiral status and in 1814, he was promoted again to Vice Admiral of the Blue, a very senior naval rank. Bligh died on 7 December, 1817.

Mundle acknowledges that Bligh had a bad temper at times, often driven by his concern for the safety of his crew in very trying times. This was at a time when what may be considered completely unacceptable behaviour today, was common practice. Mundle also acknowledges his care for his crews and his gentleness as a husband and father.

Mundle, a prolific writer of Australian history, has written a quite readable book.

It was most enjoyable to fill in the gaps about a fellow that I have heard about and knew had a significant role in our Australian (European) history. Mundle also commends the NSW State Library as an extraordinary source of Bligh material (as well as material regarding Sir Joseph Banks). I agree that our State Library is a wonderful institution that is worthy of greater funding and reverence.

I liked the book so much that I got hold of a number of other books by Mundle and I read them with much satisfaction and enjoyment e.g. *Captain James Cook* (2014); *Dampier, The Dutch and the Great South Land* (2017) and *Flinders: The Man Who Mapped Australia* (2012).

For anybody who is interested in early Australian (European) history and some of the people who were there at the time, I strongly recommend Mundle's books.

Murray Cleaver

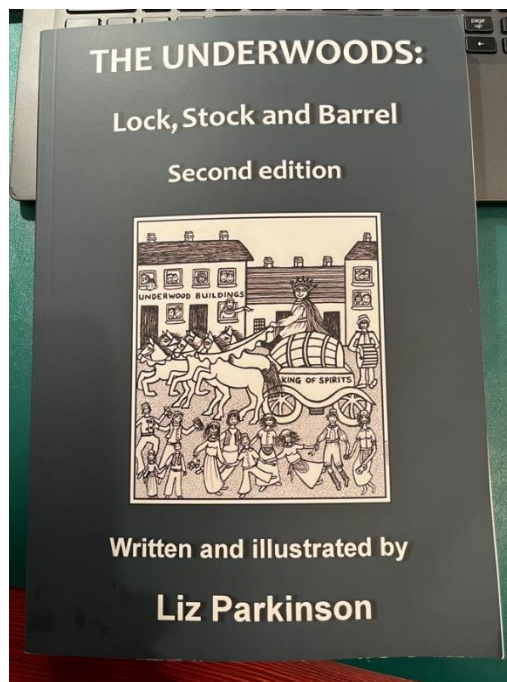
Recent acquisitions

The Underwoods: Lock, Stock and Barrel

by Liz Parkinson

Your Society is in receipt of a new publication: *The Underwoods: Lock, Stock and Barrel* (Second edition) by Liz Parkinson.

Liz forwarded us a copy recently and we thank her for it as it will sit comfortably with the rest of the very valuable ADHS collection of books, maps and the like that we hold at our rooms at Thirning Villa.



This is the second edition of the publication as the first edition (1989) was sold out and needed revision. Liz writes that she had contact with Chris Pratten last year and has included some material from Chris in this new edition.

While the book is about the Underwood family, it has much material about Ashfield as the Underwood Estate covered a very large area of Ashfield and district and had a formative influence on the development of the area.

Many references are made of Summer Hill, Ashfield, Homebush and Canterbury. There is even a reference to an early suggested name for what is now Summer Hill Railway Station: Underwood Platform.

The book is thoroughly researched and referenced and it contains an enormous amount of information. Clearly, the author has covered many miles in its preparation.

The book is available from the author (\$40 + postage)

Email: lizparkinson2002@gmail.com

Murray Cleaver

Heritage report

David reviews development applications lodged with Inner West Council that affect heritage items or are located in heritage conservation areas. David reports that it is fairly quiet on the heritage DA front:

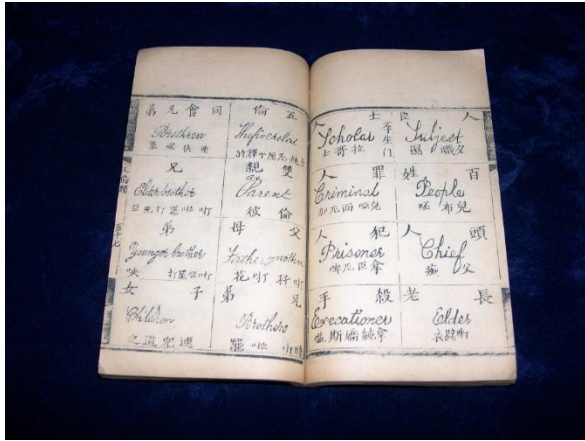
In fact, quiet on the DA front generally. I haven't seen a new application for a block of home units (or even a new generation boarding house) for over 12 months. Perhaps they are all waiting for Mr Minns reforms to bed down...but I have my doubts.

A DA was lodged to demolish a pair of semis (in a group of 4 pairs, ie 8 semis) at 27/27A Edwin Street South Croydon, to be replaced by a single new project home. I had lodged an objection but wasn't hopeful. Council staff went on to raise heritage as part of a list of things problematic with the DA - the DA was then withdrawn by the applicant.

Meanwhile another pair in this same group is the subject of a DA to erect rear first floor additions - this seems okay and Council has suggested the applicant of the withdrawn (project home) DA adopt this approach as well.

David Rollinson

Digistisation of the Quong Tart Phrase Book



ADHS's Quong Tart English Chinese Phrase book (Lexicon) has now been digitised and placed on Sydney University's 'Opening Multilingual Archive of Australia' project website.

The digital copy of the work is downloadable from the site which makes it accessible to every academic in the world interested in such things.

Through the online sharing with all members of the public this unique treasure held by our Society can be appreciated as a tangible facet of Chinese / English communication during a period of migration and assimilation of Chinese people in Sydney.

Our Web Master, Colin Webb, has placed the USYD abstract and link on our Society website for members and visitors. This says:

Ashfield & District Historical Society (NSW) holds a book of which the title page, below, is Huaying tongyu jiquan 華英通語集典 (A Collection of Common Phrases in Chinese and English), printed in the Jiashen year of the Guangxu reign (1884) in Hong Kong, by Wenyu tang 文裕堂. It is indicated that it is a "revised edition" (重訂). Neither an original of that title or this revised

Neither an original of that title or this revised edition have at present been identified in any library.

It is fortunate that there is some knowledge of the copy's provenance, since the (back?) cover is inscribed "Alf Hughes/From his employer/Quong Tart/City." Quong Tart (or Moy Quong Tart) was the Anglicised name of a prominent Ashfield citizen (pinyin Mei Guangda 梅光達). At present nothing more is known of Hughes, or why Mei would present him with this phrasebook.

This rare book can be viewed at

<https://omaa-arts.sydney.edu.au/texts/3614/>

Ann O'Connell

ADHS market stalls

Ashfield Primary School's P&C kindly provided us with stall space at their May Sunday market

In perfect weather, our stall attracted much interest from young and old, especially recent purchasers in Ashfield concerned about the state government planning proposals.

Fortunately, with both David Rollinson and Alex Lofts lending a hand, their questions could be answered knowledgeably.

Visitors expressed amazement at the quantity and quality of our publications.

ADHS returns to Summer Hill Flour Mills market

Our bookstall will next appear at the Flour Mill Market, Summer Hill on **Sunday 7th July from 10 am to 1.30 pm**. If you're at the market, please come and say hello to us!

Bernadette Williamson

Ashfield

Palace Pictures

On mentioning old picture theatres of Ashfield, some will have heard of *Kings*, the classic Art Deco movie theatre which amply graced the south-western corner of Liverpool Road and Holden Street. Others would remember the *Hoyts Theatre*, found further west along Liverpool Road, also on the southern side of the road.

Much earlier than those theatres mentioned, was the **Ashfield Palace Pictures theatre**.

Late in 1909, a group of prominent citizens wished to bring 'biographic entertainment', otherwise known as moving pictures, to Ashfield. It was thought that this was something local residents should experience in their own suburb rather than pay for a train ticket to the city. The six partners in this new venture were: George Watson, Frederick Stirling Heighway, Percival Launcelot Green, James Wilson, Henry Hughes Hodgkins and Samuel John Service.



Ashfield Palace Pictures, opposite the Town Hall on Liverpool Road Ashfield. ADHS Collection

This photograph was taken about 1921 perhaps after it had closed its doors for the last time

Two advertisements to the side of the entrance were for the films: *The Plunger* starring George Walsh; and *Husband Hunter* with Miss Eileen Percy, which were both doing the rounds of the suburban theatres in 1921.

It was an impressive gesture which is greatly appreciated today, that the anonymous donor of the original photograph above, thought to write their personal recollections about the theatre on the back of the photo mounting

The Ashfield Palace Pictures stood on a site now occupied by a butcher, a greengrocer and a hardware store, on the opposite side of the Liverpool Road to the now demolished Hoyts Ashfield Theatre. Admission charges were front stalls sixpence, back stalls ninepence.

They registered the firm Ashfield Palace Pictures on 24 March 1910, and it became under the Companies Act on 5 January 1911 with a capital of £2,500 in shares of £1 each.

The financial history of the company was rocky but even so, Messrs Hedges Bros, the proprietor in 1914, supported the wartime fundraising for the Belgians. With debts mounting and company changes in 1917, the enterprise continued until 1921.

The Palace Pictures was half open air, only the back portion being covered. A screen was lowered at the end of the roof covering the back portion for matinees. At night, in wet weather, patrons sitting in the front seats would raise their umbrellas. Those without umbrellas would crowd up the back.

The orchestra (violin, piano and cello) were accommodated in a loft on the left serviced by a straight up and down ladder. The projection box was on the right.

A predecessor of the Palace was the Castle, a fully open air theatre on a site now included in the school grounds. When first incorporated into the school grounds the concrete floor and the front brick wall of the theatre were still extant.

Ashfield Palace Pictures

The pupils made use of the floor as a roller skating rink or tennis court. The location of the Castle was between the Headmasters' cottage and the shops next to Pedemonts removals and storage (now demolished).

Mr Hedges, who owned the Palace, sold out to Mr Hunter. Mr Hunter commenced in the very early 1920s to build an enclosed picture theatre opposite. Mr Hunter got into financial difficulties and the theatre subsequently opened as Ashfield Union de Luxe. The Palace closed and was converted to Ashfield Markets before being finally demolished in the 1930s.

Ann O'Connell

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 Saturday** of each month from 11am until 4pm.

Membership matters

Our membership subscriptions for each calendar are \$40 for a household or \$30 if you are a Centrelink or DVA pensioner or full-time student.

To join or renew (if you have not already done so for 2024), please complete the online form and submit to:

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

Please add \$10 to the membership fee if you require your newsletters and/or other publications to be printed and posted.

We try to hand deliver as many publications as possible in the local area as the postage is quite high (i.e. around \$13 per journal) but if you live outside the local area please add the \$10.

EFT Payments:

- BSB: 062257
- Account No: 00900855
Ashfield & District Historical Society
- Ref: [Your name, initials] subs

Cheque: payable to:

- Ashfield & District Historical Society
PO Box 20 Ashfield NSW 1800.

Cash payments can be made at our Rooms on the second and last Saturday of the month.

Contact the Society

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

Newsletter contributors

Thank you to:

- Kerry Barlow
- Carolyn Carter
- Murray Cleaver
- Ann O'Connell
- Alex Lofts
- David Rollinson
- Mark Sabolch
- Colin Webb
- Bernadette Williamson

for their contributions to this newsletter.

Heather Warton
Newsletter Editor
17 June 2024