

HISTORY

MAGAZINE OF THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Catie Gilchrist – Before the Sheriff: The Provost Marshal in the Colony of New South Wales

James Lesh – Establishing Australia's 'Heritage Mafia'

Ben Woods – SDN Children's Services 1905-2022

Gretta Logue – Tunnels, Torpedoes and Tags: Sydney's Hyde Park Air Raid Shelter

Peter Hobbins – Severe Turbulence: Unravelling the Botany Bay Airliner Crash of 1961

Maie Barrow – Estonian Archives in Australia

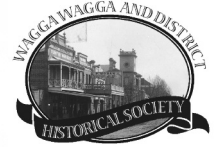


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21-22 October 2023

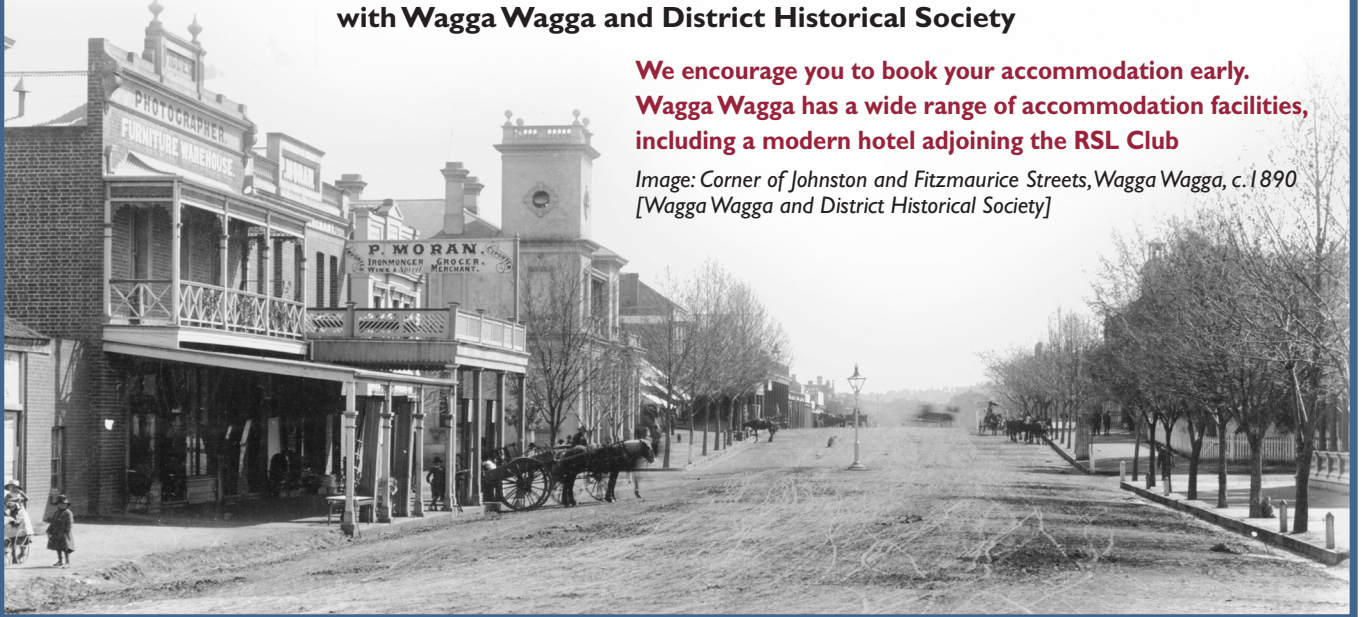
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*Image: Corner of Johnston and Fitzmaurice Streets, Wagga Wagga, c.1890
[Wagga Wagga and District Historical Society]*



ROYAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY KEY DATES

2023 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the RAHS Annual General Meeting will be held **Tuesday 18 April 2023**. Any financial member is entitled to attend and vote. A member may appoint a proxy to attend and vote in his or her stead. The proxy must be a financial member of the Society at the time of voting.

Members wishing to submit notices of motions to be included in the agenda for the Annual General Meeting should submit them in writing by 4.00 pm on **Monday 13 February 2023**.

2023 RAHS COUNCIL NOMINATIONS

By order of the Council, members are invited to nominate candidates for election to the Council at the Annual General Meeting. Nominations must be signed by two financial members and the nominee. Completed forms must reach the Society's Returning Officer at History House, 133 Macquarie Street, Sydney, 2000, by 4.00 pm on **Monday 13 February 2023**.

A candidate may supply a factual statement as instructed on the nomination form. Only financial members of the Society are eligible to be nominated. Only those members who are financial at the close of nominations are eligible to vote. Contact admin@rahs.org.au to receive a copy of the nomination form.

Under the RAHS Constitution passed in 2013, of the 12 positions on the Council, only **four** are available for election in 2023. These will have 3-year terms. Full details may be obtained from the Constitution, available from the RAHS website at: <https://www.rahs.org.au/welcome-royal-australian-historical-society/our-responsibilities/>



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RAHS Editorial Dr Peter Hobbins

What a treat you have in your hands to wrap up 2022! There is definitely something for everyone in this issue of *History*, from early colonial New South Wales through to a deadly airliner accident.

These are interesting times for the study of history, with the new Museums of History NSW and State Records Authority NSW coming into being on 31 December. Replacing and expanding the former Sydney Living Museums and State Archives & Records NSW, these two new organisations will certainly change how and where we access our history in the new year.

In the meantime, enjoy this issue of our perennially popular magazine. Archives always offer surprises and Maie Barrow's piece about the Estonian Archives is no exception. If you are interested in post-World War II Displaced Persons, and in migration and the establishment of new community identities, their extensive collection is well worth visiting. Likewise, SDN Children's Services has a large archive relating to childcare in Sydney and indeed across the state. As Ben Woods demonstrates, the provision of reliable childcare had positive flow-on effects for women in the workforce and indeed the social cohesion of neighbourhoods.

Two rather different forms of 'policing' are captured here, too. Dr Catie Gilchrist shares with us the largely forgotten post of Provost Marshal as an early lawman in the nascent colony of New South Wales. Her account makes it clear that his task was far from easy, taking its toll on incumbents until the role was replaced by the Sheriff's Office in 1824. In more recent times, Dr James Lesh explains how the community-based heritage activism of the 1970s was superseded by a problematically professionalised 'heritage mafia' by the 1990s.

My own article on Sydney's tragic airliner crash of 1961 includes a map of the wreckage sites around Botany Bay. Even a quick perusal shows how fortunate it was that the Ansett-ANA Vickers Viscount did not fall into the Kurnell oil refinery or La Perouse, Mascot or Maroubra. A rather happier tale is shared by heritage expert Gretta Logue, who invites us into the byways of Sydney's underground railway system. The transformation of empty tunnels into air raid shelters has left us with intriguing wartime traces and research tasks.

All the best for the holiday season. Whatever you do, make it historic!

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Front Cover: Crowds leaving the Hyde Park Air Raid Shelter after the 'all clear' has been given c1942, State Library of Victoria H99.201/3739.

Back Cover: TAA poster showing a Lockheed Electra, Fokker Friendship, and Vickers Viscount at Sydney's Kingsford-Smith Airport, c1962 (Civil Aviation Historical Society/Airways Museum).

Before the Sheriff: The Provost Marshal in the Colony of New South Wales

Catie Gilchrist

In 2024 the Office of the Sheriff of New South Wales commemorates its bicentennial. This article examines what came before the appointment of that judicial role. For the purposes of brevity, the article is confined to the mainland of New South Wales from 1788 to 1824, and does not include Norfolk Island or Van Diemen's Land.

On 7 February 1788, British rule and its laws were formally declared on the sandy shores of Sydney Cove. The reading of the commission was colourfully recorded by Captain Watkin Tench in his vibrant account of the early days of the penal colony. As he noted:

On that day all the officers of guard took post in the marine battalion which was drawn up and marched off the parade, with music playing and colours flying, to an adjoining ground which had been cleared for the occasion, whereon the convicts were assembled to hear His Majesty's commission read, appointing His Excellency Arthur Phillip Esq. governor and captain-general in and over the territory of New South Wales, and its dependencies together with the act of Parliament for establishing trials by law within the same, and the patents under the Great Seal of Great Britain for holding the civil and criminal courts of judicature, by which all cases of life and death, as well as matters of property, were to be decided.¹

New South Wales was established as a far-flung open prison on the remote shores of Sydney Cove, but it was also founded with two courts of justice; a civil court and a court of criminal jurisdiction. The document authorising their creation was the *New South Wales Court Act, 1787*, which became known as the First Charter of Justice. In the civil court, a Deputy Judge Advocate presided with two men appointed by the Governor. In the criminal court, he officiated with six military officers.² The Governor was required to give his permission to any death sentence imposed by the court, and was also empowered to exercise the royal prerogative of mercy. In England, the role of the executive officer of the courts was an ancient one and had long been performed by the office of the Sheriff. However, prior to 1824, New South Wales did not have a designated Sheriff; rather the duty for

supervising the colony's courts was undertaken by an officer called the Provost Marshal.

Traditionally, the Provost Marshal was a military officer belonging to the Royal forces, naval or land, in charge of prisoners taken at sea or on the battlefield. His responsibilities included the command of a camp's military police, the punishment of offences, and the execution of sentences of courts martial. In the early penal colony, with its large military contingent sent out to guard the convicts, the duties of the Provost Marshal were widened to include the civilian (mostly convict) population. Prior to the departure of the First Fleet, George Alexander had been appointed; however shortly before the fleet sailed and 'for reasons unknown' he withdrew from the enterprising expedition. On 26 January 1788, Governor Arthur Phillip conferred the office on Henry Brewer, a midshipman on HMS *Sirius* who had acted in a similar capacity during the voyage.³

During the first two years at Sydney Cove, Brewer's official duties were not too burdensome. However as the settlement grew, his work increased accordingly. The First Fleet comprised eleven ships and had arrived with some 1,500 people, including more than 750 prisoners of the Crown. By the time the Third Fleet landed in October 1791, the population had expanded to some 4,000 people. As well as his court duties, Brewer directed the convict constabulary, oversaw the maintenance of good order in the fledgling community and acted as an impounding officer. Towards the end of 1795, his health began to fail, and he became incapable of carrying out his 'very considerable duties'.⁴ On 9 April 1796, Governor Hunter replaced him with Thomas Smyth, who had arrived as a Corporal in Captain Tench's company of marines in 1788. Writing to the Duke of Portland on 26 August 1796, Hunter requested that Smyth be officially appointed to the role, informing Portland that he 'has been bred in the Army, and served long in his Majesty's marine corps. He has done the duty of his present appointment so very highly to my satisfaction, and with so much spirit and activity, that I beg to recommend him to your Grace as a very fit officer for that station in this settlement'.⁵



Dawes Point Battery c. 1821, Richard Read Senior, DGXVI/23, Dixon Galleries, State Library of New South Wales.

Thomas Smyth appears to have done an exceptional job as the colony's Provost Marshal and when he died in December 1804, the *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser* noted that he was, 'uniformly respected for his humanity in acquitting himself of the duties of his office, the generosity and benevolence of his heart, the affability of his manners and the placidity of his disposition'.⁶

Garnham Blaxcell, merchant and trader, became the next incumbent. He had arrived with the Navy in October 1802 and quickly found favour with Governor Philip Gidley King, RN. On 20 December 1804, King wrote to the Colonial Office informing them of the death of Thomas Smyth and his appointment of Blaxcell as acting Provost Marshal until 'His Majesty's Pleasure is received'.⁷ Despite King's recommendation, His Majesty had other ideas and Blaxcell was replaced in August 1806 when the official British appointee, William Gore, arrived in the colony. His commission had been promulgated on 1 August 1805, with fees and emoluments in addition to his annual salary of £91 5s.

Unlike Thomas Smyth's successful and popular tenure as Provost Marshal, however, Gore's was to be an utter disaster.

William Gore was an Irish landowner who travelled to Sydney with Governor Bligh and took up his duties on 6 August 1806. Gore assiduously carried out Bligh's instructions which earned him the esteem of the military martinet, but he was loathed by Bligh's opponents and was often referred to as 'the odious Gore'. Many believed him to be little more than an unprincipled swindler, and in October 1807 he was charged at the Criminal Court with having uttered a forged note to the value of fifteen shillings and with having stolen an ornament. He was acquitted on both charges, which infuriated his opponents yet pleased his few supporters who believed

the allegations had been trumped up to cast aspersions upon his honour as a gentleman. According to Governor Bligh, 'never was there more villainy attempted to ruin the character of a gentleman than in [this] attack made of Mr. Gore the Provost Marshal'.⁸

In his official capacity, Gore was involved in the arrest and imprisonment of John Macarthur in January 1808. When the New South Wales Corps under Major George Johnston released Macarthur and deposed Bligh, they arrested Gore and on 21 March 1808 charged him with 'wilful and corrupt perjury'.⁹ Gore denied the authority of the court and refused to plead; as a result, he was kept in gaol without trial for more than two months. On 30 May he was again brought before the court and 'having contumaciously disputed the legality of the Court, and refused to plead to the Indictment, there remained no alternative but to pass the Sentence of the Law upon him'.¹⁰ He was subsequently transported to the Coal River (Newcastle) for seven years.

On 31 December 1809, Lachlan Macquarie arrived in the colony with the 73rd Regiment and declared all trials held and appointments made since the overthrow of Bligh invalid. Gore was released and restored to his former office. He left Sydney in May 1810 as a Crown witness at the trial of George Johnston in London and did not return until May 1812. Yet his sentence to a penal station in 1808 and his later absence from the colony, meant that pecuniary difficulties would blight the rest of his career. Gore had seven young children and his salary remained static at the original amount of £91 5s. Pleading letters to the Colonial Office for a rise in his trifling salary were sent, alas to no avail.¹¹ He was imprisoned for debt in 1818, escaped from Sydney Gaol and clandestinely made his way to Van Diemen's Land. The fugitive was later caught, arrested and sent back to Sydney.¹²

The 'highly reprehensible circumstances of his conduct' forced the Governor's hand and on 6 March 1819, due to 'the disagreeable necessity which has been imposed upon me', Macquarie suspended Gore from office.¹³ The citizens of New South Wales were duly informed of the sensational news on the front page of that day's *Sydney Gazette*.¹⁴

Macquarie immediately appointed John Thomas Campbell as acting Provost Marshal.¹⁵ Campbell had sailed to Sydney with Macquarie and the Governor had engaged him to be his Secretary. In 1819 Macquarie wrote in glowing terms of his 'long, laborious, faithful and able services' and his 'firm Upright Mind, Unbiased by Prejudice or Party and a decent Composure of Conduct'.¹⁶ So decent in fact, that upon his appointment as Provost Marshal he presented Mrs Ann Gore with his additional salary for the support of herself and her family for as long as he continued to hold the two offices of Secretary and Provost Marshal.¹⁷ In 1823 Commissioner John Thomas Bigge noted that 'considerable improvement has taken place in the office and mode of conducting the

business of the Provost Marshal since the appointment of Mr. JT Campbell on 6 March 1819'.¹⁸ Yet Campbell was to serve as the last Provost Marshal of New South Wales and the position was abolished in 1824.¹⁹

In part this transition reflected the changed and changing nature of colonial society and the move away from a military to a more civilian-based jurisdiction. By the 1820s, great social and economic progress had been made in the colony. It was no longer merely an open prison populated by convicted criminals in need of firm control by the military. Rather, it now enjoyed a free settler and increasingly emancipist population desirous for civil laws and political institutions such as representative government and the extension of trial by jury.

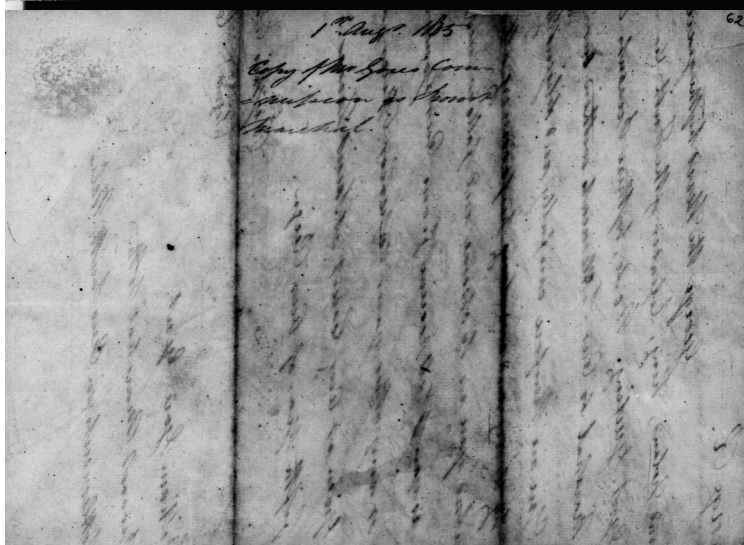
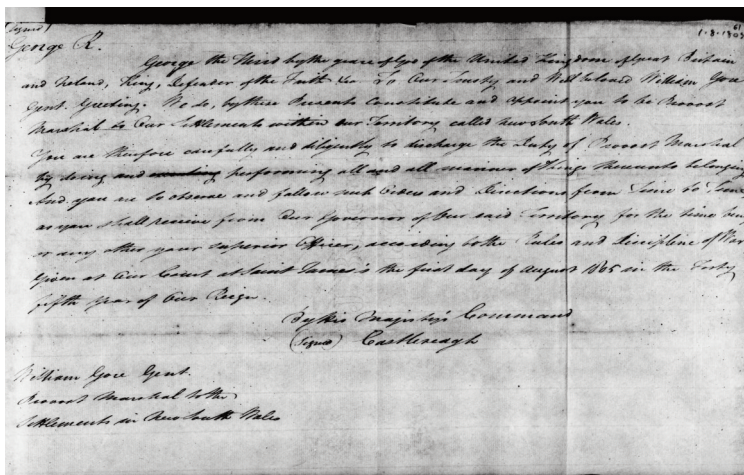
A Third Charter of Justice, the *New South Wales Judicature Act of 1823*, became law in 1824.²⁰ It established a nominated Legislative Council of five to seven men. The Act abolished the old courts and replaced them with a single Supreme Court under a Chief Justice. The appointment of Court Officers and the admission of barristers were also legislated. It made

limited provision for trial by jury and it was also given ecclesiastical jurisdiction to decide such matters as probate and letters of administration. Under the new Charter, the duties of the Provost Marshal were to be henceforth carried out by the Sheriff's office, just as they were 'back home'. And although the colonial Sheriff was to be nominated by the Governor, in practise the Colonial Office in London would continue to oversee appointments to the office until 1843.

At noon on 17 May 1824, the Royal Charter was promulgated at Government House in Sydney in the presence of the colony's magistrates and civil and military officers. A Royal salute was fired from Dawes' Battery on Sydney Harbour to honour the very momentous occasion in the colony's legal and political history.²¹ Much had changed since the First Charter had been read on the sandy, canvas-tent-lined shores of Sydney Cove on 7 February 1788.

About the Author

Dr Catie Gilchrist is a Sydney-based historian who has published widely on convict, colonial and military history. Her first book *Murder, Misadventure and Miserable Ends: Tales from a Colonial Coroner's Court* was published by HarperCollins in 2019. Catie is the Exhibitions Research Officer at the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park, Sydney, and is an Honorary Affiliate in the Discipline of History at the University of Sydney.



Mr William Gore's Commission as Provost Marshal, Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, Safe 1/45.



A View of the Cove and part of Sydney, New South Wales, taken from Dawes Point ca. 1818, water colour drawn by convict artist Joseph Lycett, State Library of New South Wales, SAFE / PXE 1072.

References

¹ Watkin Tench, *1788: Comprising a Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay and a Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson*, ed. Tim Flannery, The Text Publishing Company, 1996, p.46.

² David Collins was appointed as the first Deputy Judge Advocate. In 1814, a Second Charter of Justice overhauled the entire colonial legal system when it introduced three new courts; the Supreme Court, the Governor's Court (New South Wales) and the Lieutenant-Governors Court (Van Diemen's Land).

³ Phillip to Dundas, 9 October 1792, *Historical Records of Australia*, Series 1, Volume 1, p.396 (hereafter *HRA*).

⁴ Brewer died on 8 July 1796. His name lives on in Brewer Street, Concord, the southern boundary of the fifty acres granted to him in 1793.

⁵ Hunter to Portland, 26 August 1796, *HRA*, Series 1, Volume 1, p.601.

⁶ *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 23 December 1804, p.2 (hereafter *Sydney Gazette*).

⁷ King to Lord Hobart, 20 December 1804, *HRA*, Series 1, Volume 5, p.236.

⁸ Bligh to the Right Hon. William Windham, 31 October 1807, *HRA*, Series 1, Volume 6, p.151.

⁹ Bligh to Viscount Castlereagh, 30 June 1808, *HRA*, Series 1, Volume 6, pp.535–6.

¹⁰ Foveaux to Viscount Castlereagh, 4 September 1808, *HRA*, Series 1, Volume 6, p.629.

¹¹ Gore to Earl Bathurst, 13 August 1813, *HRA*, Series 1, Volume 8, pp.81–2; Gore to Earl Bathurst, 17 December 1817, *HRA*, Series 1, Volume 9, pp 812–14; Under Secretary Goulburn to Gore, 2 July 1818, *HRA*, Series 1, Volume 9, p.814.

¹² Macquarie to Earl Bathurst, 8 March 1819, *HRA*, Series 1, Volume 10, pp.40–1.

¹³ Macquarie to Earl Bathurst, 22 March 1819, *HRA*, Series 1, Volume 10, p.65; Macquarie to Earl Bathurst, 8 March 1819, *HRA*, Series 1, Volume 10, pp.39–40.

¹⁴ 'Government and General Orders', *Sydney Gazette*, Saturday 6 March 1819, p.1.

¹⁵ Macquarie to Earl Bathurst, 8 March 1819, *HRA*, Series 1, Volume 10, p.42.

¹⁶ Macquarie to Earl Bathurst, 22 March 1819, *HRA*, Series 1, Volume 10, p.66.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p.67.

¹⁸ JT Bigge, *Report of the Commissioner of Inquiry on the Judicial Establishments of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land*, (1823), Australiana Facsimile Editions No. 69, Libraries Board of South Australia, 1966, p.12.

¹⁹ Lord Glenelg to Gipps, 28 August 1838, *HRA*, Series 1 Volume 19, p.561.

²⁰ The Act also provided for the separation of Van Diemen's Land from New South Wales, which occurred in 1825.

²¹ 'Government and General Orders', *Sydney Gazette*, 13 May 1824, p.1.

Establishing Australia's 'Heritage Mafia'

James Lesh

In 1992, Barry Cohen wrote in the *Australian* newspaper of the 'heritage mafia', who were imposing their narrow conservation perspectives on Sydney and its development, planning, and architecture.¹ Within the heritage mafia, Cohen identified the National Trust and the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, politicians including Clover Moore, and 'green ban' unionist Jack Munday.

Cohen was no opponent to conservation. He had previously served in the Federal Parliament for two decades, including as Minister for Heritage in the Hawke Labor Government, overseeing the Australian Heritage Commission. Cohen was, however, incensed by the response of heritage groups to the proposed redevelopment of the Woolloomooloo Finger Wharf.

The battle over the Woolloomooloo Finger Wharf

A disused early-twentieth-century maritime industrial site, the Woolloomooloo Finger Wharf had been subject to a heritage assessment. Archaeologist Don Godden identified its aesthetic, historical, technological and social values and urged that any 'adaptation of the place [must] involve no change to culturally significant fabric'.²

State authorities in Sydney, including the New South Wales Heritage Council, first placed a provisional conservation order over the site, but then decided in 1990 to demolish it for a new development.³ According to its critics, the Heritage Council's 'membership tends to reflect the interests of various government agencies and departments rather than strictly heritage concerns'.⁴

The future of the Finger Wharf triggered a major heritage dispute and attracted national attention. Sydney Lord Mayor Jeremy Bingham (a property developer), Liberal Premier Nick Greiner and Prime Minister Paul Keating endorsed the demolition. The ambition of these local, state and federal politicians was to return the area to its 'natural state',⁵ an 'environmentally pure' outcome.⁶

In opposition, a citizen group called the Friends of the Finger Wharf formed and barricaded the site. Construction unions placed a green ban on it, preventing its development for environmental and social reasons. Director of Conservation at the University of Sydney, Trevor Howells, wrote in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of the need to democratise public understandings of

heritage: 'aesthetic, architectural or historical appeal' need not only apply 'in high cultural terms'.⁷ During visits to Sydney, international star architects Philippe Robert, Richard Rogers and Patrick Heron endorsed this position too.

The Finger Wharf was taken to be ideally suited for adaptive reuse, reflecting the shift to postmodernism and contextual awareness in cities and architecture.⁸ In 1992, quite remarkably, following an inquiry, state



Photographs of Woolloomooloo Finger Wharf, Sydney, ca. 1982. Courtesy of Paul Scott.

authorities u-turned to endorse this position. They accepted a tender to adaptively reuse the Finger Wharf – by then, ravaged by fire – into a luxury apartment, hotel and hospitality complex. In 1994, in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, Cohen questioned how this outcome preserved ‘forever the heritage of arriving migrants and departing service personnel?’⁹

At the time, contemporary historians interpreted the dispute as a case of development and political priorities trumping community and conservation interests.¹⁰ From the late 1980s, urban development was, indeed, accelerating across Australia’s capital cities. This left many people within conservation disheartened that the wins of the 1970s heritage movement and the green bans were seemingly being eroded. Yet the Finger Wharf dispute also enabled the public airing of the growing cynicism towards heritage and its conservation among politicians, authorities, sections of the architecture and planning professions, and members of the public.

Critiquing heritage conservation

In the final two decades of the twentieth century, urban heritage remained a disputed terrain, despite the institutionalisation of conservation in the 1970s. The aim of the field’s new values-based approach, embedded within the Burra Charter (1979), was to professionalise and rationalise conservation: to take the heat out of decision making. In fact, conservation still was a contested, subjective and contextual activity.

The turn of phrase, ‘heritage mafia’, became a powerful moniker to encompass frustrations and grievances held towards the conservation field. It conjured imagery of a cabal or closed shop exercising a hidden or malign influence over cities and places.

As with much of the Australian heritage lexicon, the phrasing had come from the United Kingdom. In 1987, British cultural critic Patrick Wright evoked the conservative ‘heritage mafia [who] may want to turn the country into a totalitarian theme park in which the locals are expected to play the part of loyal yokels’.¹¹

The Australian ‘heritage mafia’ incorporated the broadly progressive politics of the conservation field, which lacked Britain’s conservative flank.¹² Other than, perhaps, the development-oriented private-sector heritage consultant.

In 1990, historian David Dunstan wrote of ‘Melbourne’s heritage mafia [whose] principal vehicle was, and is, the typed and photocopied document – the heritage study’.¹³ In Dunstan’s rendering, had the conservation field achieved its objective of political ambivalence and technical rationality? The public debate suggested otherwise.

The criticisms of conservation were not merely a complaint with the field’s propensity to question rampant

commercial development. It was also driven by the perception that conservation opposed incremental and reasonable urban change by valorising old buildings for their own sake.¹⁴ Critics did not typically suggest that conservation was unimportant, but rather brought into question how it was being practiced, particularly in its relationship to other urban, design and social concerns. That the phrase ‘heritage mafia’ ultimately stuck suggests the acrimony around conservation.

Heritage and the community

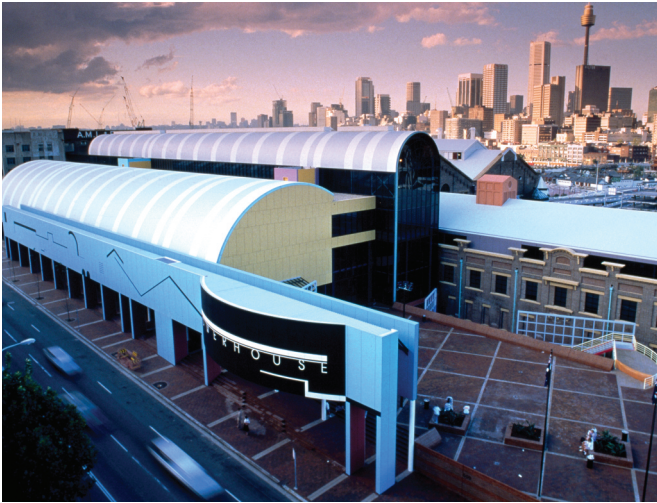
Meanwhile, among heritage groups, a perspective circulated that public and political interest in urban heritage was in decline. In 1990 in Melbourne’s *Age* newspaper, the state-based National Trusts identified a growing complacency towards conservation among authorities and communities.¹⁵ Rodney Davidson said, ‘I thought that the war had been fought and won ... But there are new skirmishes almost every week’.¹⁶

In the long shadow cast by 1970s heritage movement activism, Davidson’s comment was not only a response to growing development pressures. The problem was that places of cultural significance or heritage value, from the perspective of conservationists, could still be demolished. Responsibility was attributed to unsympathetic authorities, self-interested property owners and the wider community.

His comment also reflected the difficulties that the National Trusts had adapting to the institutionalisation of conservation as a profession and within law, policy and planning systems.¹⁷ Their membership numbers levelled in the 1980s and then fell in the 1990s.¹⁸ Their financial positions also deteriorated. Some of these state bodies teetered on the edge of bankruptcy, beset by mismanagement and scandal.¹⁹

Although difficult to measure, there was little evidence to corroborate the claim that communities were no longer interested in heritage. In 1990, in the *Age*, journalist Suzy Freeman-Greene wrote, ‘Public awareness of Australia’s European cultural heritage has grown enormously in the past 20 years. Inner-city terraces now sport heritage colours when once they displayed their owners’ football allegiances’.²⁰

Newspapers frequently reported on heritage contests at sites such as Sydney’s Finger Wharf, Geelong’s Bow Truss wool stores, Melbourne’s Federation Square and Perth’s Swan Brewery.²¹ The public appetite for visiting, living in, working in and enjoying heritage places – in neighbourhoods such as Sydney’s Paddington, Melbourne’s Fitzroy or Hobart’s Battery Point – appeared to only be increasing. The adaptively reused Jam Factory entertainment complex in Melbourne, alongside the



Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, 1988. Courtesy of National Archives of Australia, A6135, K28/9/88/29.

Powerhouse Museum at Sydney's Ultimo Power Station, were roaring successes.

When claims of community apathy towards heritage were made, conservation appeared bound to the assumptions, conditions and motivations of bygone days. The 1970s, the era of the heritage movement and green bans, had been a transformative decade characterised by widespread popular protest, remarkably sympathetic political leadership, and beset by an economic crisis that halted urban development. Before then, in the 1950s and 1960s, the conservation field led by architect Robin Boyd had also held the view that the public restrained conservation.

If conservation had only ever truly inspired the community for a single decade in its history, then that spoke to the need for more responsive agendas that addressed evolving community aspirations for heritage places. The apparent failure of conservation to evolve with the times and adapt its outlook and approaches was captured by Cohen in conjuring 'the heritage mafia'.

Extract from James Lesh, *Values in Cities: Urban Heritage in Twentieth Century Australia*, Routledge, 2022.

About the Author

Dr James Lesh is an urban historian and Lecturer in Cultural Heritage and Museum Studies at Deakin University. His research explores the theory and practice of heritage conservation in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. He has also published widely in Australian urban history.

References

- ¹ Barry Cohen, 'Heritage mafia not the people's choice', *Australian*, 20 April 1992.
- ² Don Godden & Associates, 'Woolloomooloo Finger

Wharf Heritage Report', 1987, p.27.

³ From 1977, the New South Wales State Heritage List was a compilation of permanent conservation orders. A standing heritage register, allowing proactive nominations, was introduced in 1998–99. See also New South Wales, *Government Gazette*, No. 93, 23 July 1990.

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⁵ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 March 1991.

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SDN Children's Services 1905-2022

Ben Woods

We have always wished our mothers to take an interest in the Nursery, and to feel that it is no cold charity, but an institution started by fellow women, who fully realise the difficulties that beset the paths of working mothers – Ethel J. Ranken, Sydney Day Nursery Association Honorary Secretary, 1918.¹

Kindergarten teacher and advocate, Amelia Crowley, had been trained in progressive childcare theories in England before she arrived in New South Wales in 1881. She tried to introduce public kindergartens in the colony in the 1880s and 1890s, but the government was wary for budgetary and ideological reasons.² At around the same time, in 1891, young female graduates founded the University of Sydney Settlement, where students would live alongside local people 'in an attempt to improve the lot of slum dwellers in suburbs immediately adjoining the campus'.³ Upper-class women in Sydney's eastern suburbs had similar concerns.⁴ It was from these ranks that the Kindergarten Union was founded in 1895, followed by the Sydney Day Nursery Association (now SDN Children's Services) in 1905.⁵

The two key events that inspired the creation of the Sydney Day Nursery Association (SDN) were undoubtedly the Kindergarten Union's decision in 1903 to exclude children under three from its kindergartens and the 1904 Royal Commission on the Decline of the Birthrate and on the Mortality of Infants in New South Wales.⁶

The New South Wales government was becoming aware that to maintain a thriving constituency, the state needed to address the wellbeing of children. One MP declared, 'If we want to build up a higher standard of civilisation in the future, we must begin with child life'.⁷ A witness at the Royal Commission, Dr Charles Clubbe, who would later be involved with SDN, told the commission that it 'would be well to establish a creche in connection with all large factories'.⁸

The group of women who formed SDN soon after this inquiry aimed 'to relieve the [working] mothers of their overwhelming burden of care and anxiety, to give the little ones wholesome and loving care ... and to enable them to keep the home and family together'.⁹

The Sydney Creche Association opened its first day

nursery at 126 Dowling Street, Woolloomooloo, in December 1905. The term 'creche' was not well understood, and the name was changed to Sydney Day Nursery Association in January 1906.¹⁰

In 1906 the Association published a pamphlet signed by its President, Ethel Davenport, on behalf of the 'Day Nursery for Babies of Working Mothers' that outlined their 'Regulations for Parents'. The first paragraph outlined the ethics of the Association at the time:

No child will be received in the Day Nursery until satisfactory proof has been given to the committee that, by taking charge of the child, the mother will be enabled and intends to use her time in earning her living. It shall also be necessary for the parent to bring a letter from a responsible person, known to the Committee, showing the case is a genuine one, and giving a reasonable guarantee that the child will be removed at the end of the day.¹¹

The first Sydney Day Nursery Association annual report of 1906 lists Her Excellency Lady Northcote as the Patroness, Mrs Frank Davenport as the President, and Mrs Richard Binnie, Mrs Wilfred Fairfax and Miss Whiting as Vice Presidents. There was also an Honorary Secretary, an Honorary Treasurer, an Advisory Committee and a General Committee.¹²

Mrs Wilfred (Marguerite) Fairfax devoted 57 years of her life to the Sydney Day Nursery Association. She was born Mary Marguerite Lamb in 1882 and married Dr Edward Wilfred Fairfax from the Fairfax media family.¹³ She was Vice President of the Sydney Day Nursery Association from 1905 to 1909 and an Executive Committee member until 1917.¹⁴ In 1924 she became President of the Branch at Forest Lodge (now known as a Centre) – a position she would retain for thirty-six years. Her husband served as an Honorary Medical Officer of SDN from 1905 to 1916. Other family members who volunteered with SDN include Elsie Fairfax, Lady Nancy Fairfax and Ruth Armytage (Fairfax), who was made an SDN Life Member in 2013.¹⁵

Marguerite Fairfax put together a booklet in 1958 entitled *Memories of Sydney's First Day Nursery*. It details conditions in the early day nurseries and recounts her impression of her fellow committee members. One of them was the young Dorothea Mackellar, who would



Committee and staff members at Surry Hills Day Nursery, 16 August 1934. Left to right: Mrs McElhone (later President); Lady Gowrie (holding basket of flowers); baby June McAuley and her mother; Lady MacCallum (Patron, holding posy of flowers); Mrs Orwell Phillips (former President); unknown staff member and child; Mrs Alfred Phillips; unknown [SDN Archive Collection, Album 10, P73].

go on to be a prominent poet, but alas Fairfax passed no comment on her.¹⁶ Mackellar was just nineteen when she joined SDN's first General Committee. Her connection to children's welfare initially came through her father, Charles, who chaired the 1904 Royal Commission.¹⁷

President Ethel Davenport, Fairfax wrote, was 'a beautiful, gracious lady, in her early thirties, who presided with great charm'.¹⁸ Fellow Vice President, Sylvia Whiting was in 'her teens and enthusiastic from the very start'. Of herself, Fairfax admits she herself was 'very inexperienced and nervous when I had to take the chair'.¹⁹

An independent report was provided by a Sanitary Inspector and Health Visitor on the Forest Lodge Day Nursery for the New South Wales Department of Health in 1914. It notes that the fee for attendance was 3d per day and the average daily attendance was 'twenty-four and is on the increase'. It records that for meals:

The children were provided with breakfast, dinner and early tea at the nursery; the older children getting bread and milk for breakfast and soup and milk pudding for dinner, and milk and bread and treacle etc for the late afternoon meal.

The infants are fed on condensed milk and barley water, this food agreeing with the babies, and is within reach of the mothers.²⁰

One of SDN's significant achievements was its pioneering of early childhood pedagogy. SDN established the first training centre for nursery school teachers in

Australia at Woolloomooloo Nursery School in 1931. This was followed by the Nursery School Teachers College, first in Linthorpe Street, Newtown, and eventually at Burren Street, Newtown in 1945. In 1975 this institution merged with Sydney Teachers College to become the Institute of Early Childhood Studies within the Sydney College of Advanced Education.²¹

An individual who perhaps could be said to have personified SDN's contribution to early childhood pedagogy is Joan Fry. She was an alumna of the Nursery School Training Centre at Woolloomooloo and became the Director of the Woolloomooloo centre.

Fry received a scholarship to study at the Child Development Department at the University of London. On her return she joined the staff of the Nursery School Teachers College in a senior role, becoming Principal in 1966. She resigned her position in 1973 after being given the chance to chair the Federal Government's Pre-School Committee, which was tasked with investigating the state of early childhood education in Australia and putting forward ideas for reform. Its recommendations included government provision of a year of preschool education for all children.

The recommendations in the committee's final report, christened the Fry Report, were not adopted in what was a bitter blow to Fry and the committee. Nevertheless, she continued working with the Commonwealth, with the goal of implementing progressive change in early childhood education.²²

In 1999 the Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association, its name since 1937, was changed to SDN Children's Services Inc 'to reflect the entirety of our early childhood care and education services'.²³ This range includes early childhood intervention for children with disabilities, family support services and work with First Nations families.

The new name also recognised that SDN was no longer tied to Sydney. SDN has branched out across regional New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, boasting a total of twenty-seven centres. Among them is SDN Beranga at Rooty Hill in Western Sydney, a purpose-built preschool for children with autism. SDN's expansion began with a centre in Bathurst in 1951 and SDN Lady McKell in Goulburn in 1954. The organisation also has centres in Belconnen in the Australian Capital Territory, as well as Crookwell and Batemans Bay.

Despite this wide reach, critical to SDN's success is its relationship with the City of Sydney. SDN took over the running of what became SDN Lois Barker at Waterloo from the City of Sydney in 1984. Other

premises are leased from the council at Pymont, Chippendale and Surry Hills, the latter in a continuous relationship on the same premises since 1922.²⁴

It was possible to compile this history because SDN created an archive in 2002. In 2000 a Federation Grant had enabled SDN to engage Siller Systems Administration to list its historic documents. Between 2002 and 2004, the work was enhanced by grants from the RAHS and the National Library of Australia, coupled with private donations. These funds enabled the History Committee (which ran from 1995 to 2010) to secure archival advice. Nevertheless, much of the early heavy lifting in compiling the archive was undertaken by SDN History Committee Chair and SDN Life Member, Effie Bland.²⁵ In 2005 SDN marked its centenary with the publication of *For the Little Ones, the Best: SDN Children's Services 1905–2005* by Dr Leone Huntsman.²⁶

The next chapter in SDN's history will have to include changes brought about due to the Covid-19 crisis and promises made by governments of all hues in multiple constituencies to deliver 'universal access to preschool'. Watch this space.

About the Author

Ben Woods has backgrounds in journalism and information management, and holds a Masters degree in Human Rights. He is the Archives Officer at SDN Children's Services and the Senior Archivist at Australian Mutuals History. Ben is also writing a history of Traditional Credit Union, which will celebrate thirty years of operation in 2024.

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Students observing teaching practice at Nursery School Training College, Burren Street, Newtown, 1962 [SDN Archive Collection].

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Tunnels, Torpedoes and Tags: Sydney's Hyde Park Air Raid Shelter

Gretta Logue

There exists a silent, subterranean space that tells the story of Sydney's transportation and military history like no other. Rarely accessed by the public, it remains on bucket lists across the country whenever a public tour is offered. This special place is the disused St James railway tunnels under Hyde Park, also known as the Hyde Park Air Raid Shelter. The place is close to what is imagined – a vast poetic labyrinth of cobwebbed caverns.

Tunnels

In modelling plans for Sydney's railway system on the London Underground, engineer John Bradfield delivered St James and Museum underground railway stations in Hyde Park as the first phase of the proposed City Circle. Both stations were built via the 'cut and cover' construction method. When opened in 1926, they finally connected the city with Central Station by rail. It was the first electric underground system in Australia.

St James Station was planned as a busy interchange with four platforms for the City Circle line and an east-west suburban line. By 1926, sufficient platforms and tunnels were in place to allow Bradfield to pause, expecting to extend the network after the Sydney Harbour Bridge opened.

This strategy meant that surplus tunnels ran from St James Station under Macquarie Street, past the State Library and under the Botanic Gardens, then out to the Quay. There were also about 600 metres of 'stump' tunnels running north from St James Station, which terminated near the Governor Phillip Fountain just inside The Domain. This line was to curve around towards O'Connell Street and then off to the western suburbs via Town Hall Station. To the south of St James Station were about 300 metres of 'stump' tunnels that ran directly under Hyde Park, past Park Street and terminating near the site of the Anzac Memorial. This line was planned to go under Oxford Street and service the Eastern Suburbs.

However, Bradfield retired in 1933, soon after the Sydney Harbour Bridge was opened. During the Great Depression, transport priorities changed and more significantly, in 1939, war with Nazi Germany broke out.¹ The planned extension of the underground via these 'stump' tunnels was set aside forever.

When Prime Minister Robert Menzies announced that Australia was at war with Germany on 3 September 1939, the NSW government queried whether Sydney's underground railway system – stations, platforms, pedestrian tunnels and disused railway tunnels – were suitable for use as public air raid shelters. They were.

As most of these underground spaces were publicly accessible, they did not require special changes. However, rapid adaption of the surplus railway tunnels to Circular Quay was approved by the NSW Department of Railways for an emergency ramped entrance on 26 September 1939.² By October 1940, a few weeks after the German Blitz on London started, Sydneysiders were reassured that sufficient air raid shelters existed in tunnels and underground stations for the city's static population. Nearly 60,000 people could be accommodated in the system during an emergency, providing six square feet of space for each person.³

In an emergency, signage would direct people from the street through existing station entrances to safety. Additional entrances were soon needed to rapidly channel



World War II reinforced-concrete baffle wall in a single-track tunnel south of St James Station in 2019 (Image courtesy of BeThere for Sydney Trains).

people into the shelter. The Department of Railways approved plans on 18 November 1940 for a major new portal to the southern 'stump' tunnels, allowing access from Hyde Park near Anzac Memorial. Given the urgency of war, works to pierce open the new entry commenced the very next day.⁴

The Hyde Park Air Raid Shelter was deemed 'ready' in January 1941, although flooring, electric lighting, drinking water, sanitary conveniences and a ventilation system were not installed until the following year.⁵ By February 1941, *The Daily News* reported that Sydney's unused railway tunnels were now capable of sheltering 90,000.⁶ With the effectiveness of such temporary shelters proven during the Blitz, these figures were reassuring when the Pacific War commenced in December 1941.



ARP paper poster on baffle wall in 2021 (Image courtesy of Julian Bickersteth, International Conservation Services for Sydney Trains).

A major adaption of the space was the construction of thick, double-heighted, reinforced-concrete 'baffle' walls which were installed every thirty metres along the length of the tunnel. They were designed to stop blasts sustained from above travelling laterally into adjoining chambers. Their installation commenced by January 1942.⁷

When reports of enemy attack off the coast in March 1942 instigated an air raid alert for the city and suburbs, the railway tunnels were opened and quickly filled.⁸ Although it ended up being a false alarm, 232 air raid posts across the city were manned in just eight minutes.⁹ Sydney seemed ready.

Torpedoes

Singapore fell in February 1942 and Sydney became one of the largest allied port and repair facilities in the region, bringing with it increased risk of enemy attack from the Imperial Japanese Navy Air Force. A month later, US General Douglas MacArthur arrived in Australia as Supreme Commander of the southwest Pacific area.

On the evening of 31 May 1942, Maritime Services Board nightwatchman, James Cargill, was carrying out his inspections along the anti-submarine net in Sydney Harbour. At about 8 o'clock he spotted a dark tubular submerged vessel stuck in the net and raised the alarm with naval officials.¹⁰ The events that unfolded would become known as the night of the Japanese midget submarine attack.¹¹

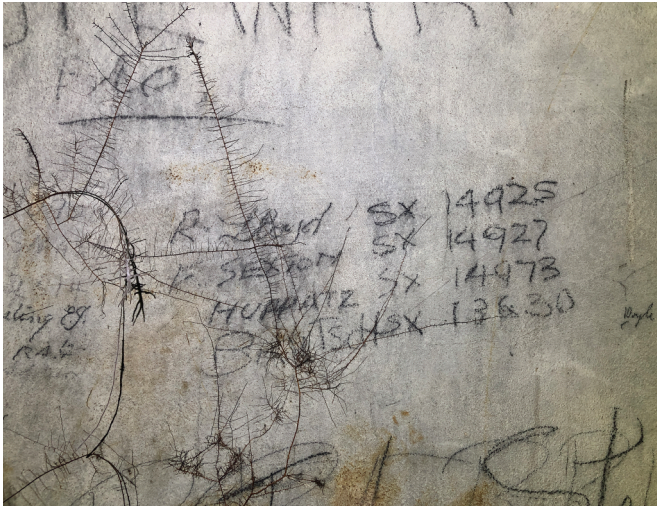
Three hostile midget submarines launched their attack in Sydney Harbour. They fired torpedoes which hit the Garden Island Naval Base and destroyed HMAS *Kuttabul*, killing twenty-one people.¹² An open battle in Sydney Harbour ensued until the early morning of 1 June 1942. War had arrived in Sydney.

Even though the Hyde Park Air Raid Shelter was the largest public shelter in the country at the time, it is unknown if it was used that night.¹³ A few days after the attack, on 5 June the Minister for National Emergency Service (NES), Bob Heffron, reassured Sydney residents that it was the 'finest deep shelter in Australia'.¹⁴ Further reassurance came from Conrad Hamann, Deputy Chief Engineer, Ministry of Home Security in Great Britain: 'Your underground railway tunnels are splendid air-raid shelters. In this respect Sydney is better off than London'.¹⁵

During the war, the Hyde Park Air Raid Shelter was used for several drills coordinated across the city by the NES. They also became a rendezvous point for servicemen far from home and were sometimes used for romantic meetings – an amorous 'emergency' deemed inappropriate by authorities.¹⁶

Lockable mesh doors were installed to control access, with keys provided to Air Raid Protection (ARP) personnel. By June 1945 the Hyde Park Air Raid Shelter was reported as dirty and neglected, with the locks torn off the gates and park benches having been dragged inside. At the same time the NES, due to their lack of manpower, advised that it was a Department of Works responsibility to dismantle the shelter.¹⁷

After the war ended in August 1945, the Hyde Park entrance was backfilled and the gardens remediated in preparation for the visit of Queen Elizabeth II in 1954.¹⁸ Once this entrance was sealed, it created a time capsule of this significant period of Sydney's history.



The South Australian sapper inscription in 2021: Lloyd (SX14925) Sexton (SX14927), Huppertz (SX14973) and Bartsch (SX13630) (Image courtesy of BeThere for Sydney Trains for Sydney Trains).

Tags

Today six monumental concrete baffle walls, rare ARP posters and several metres of World War II-era graffiti survive in perfect silence. The compacted ramp from Hyde Park, the wall-mounted electrical conduits and shatter-caged light fittings still stand to attention.

On stepping into the tunnels from the station platform, one comes across the first of three posters: 'Public Air Raid Shelter – Warning – No Person in this shelter except during an air raid – Offenders will be prosecuted'. It is not a sign to direct civilians into the space like the one found in Town Hall Station in 2014.¹⁹ Rather, these signs warn against misuse – a reminder perhaps of unauthorised entrants when the gates were unlocked. All three posters (two paper and one stencilled) are located in various places along the shelter, and all require conservation cleaning, recording and protection.²⁰

Passing further into the tunnel, visitors leave behind rail corridor lighting. Gumboots sloshing, they enter pitch darkness. Now only hand torches guide the way. Large double-track caverns turn into single-track narrow tunnels. Pushed air from the adjacent operational line becomes faint and stillness descends. A parallel dimension exists here: above is a bustling city and picturesque park, while below is a space that recalls the height of military tensions in 1942.

Post-war attempts to remove the baffle walls left large swathes of rubble in situ, with exposed and bent reinforcement bars. It would not seem surprising if an ambulance siren rang out and some injured soul stood up and dusted themselves off.

At the dead end, where the former Hyde Park entrance was located, the walls have been rendered and painted white. Here, an extensive zone of historic graffiti offers the chance to explore untold stories. Fine root tendrils reach down from the park and grow over the damp surface where inscriptions include names, dates and military service numbers. The earliest dated inscription is from 1941 and the latest World War II inscription is from 4 January 1944 (Private Robert Dunaley, SX31624). Most other military graffiti dates to 1942. Inscriptions also include messages of hopeful love matches with instructions from a lonesome soldier to 'Please write ... only girls'. Of course, after the war, railway staff, visitors and vandals all contributed successive inscriptions, often over-writing historic ones.

Military inscriptions are mainly by members of the Second Australian Imperial Force who were transiting through Sydney.²¹ An example is four South Australian sappers who enlisted in Adelaide in 1941: Reginald Lloyd (SX14925), John Sexton (SX14927), Keith Huppertz (SX14973) and Normon Bartsch (SX13630). Lloyd's military records reveal that he was absent without leave on 4 February 1942 when stationed at Liverpool, 'due to unfortunate circumstances returning from leave'. Purportedly, he and other South Australians were separated from their unit.²² These inscriptions tell a potential story of comrades opportunistically exploring Sydney and the shelter together as friends. Lloyd was then transferred to Darwin in May.

Today the Hyde Park Air Raid Shelter is believed to be the largest World War II shelter in Australia and is included in the State Heritage Register listing for St James Station (SHR 01248). The space has significant interpretative value, including cultural tourism and immersive learning potential. In recent years, access for heritage tours has stopped, yet wartime posters and inscriptions continue to be tagged and vandalised. Archival recording, material conservation and research into the military graffiti authors is needed here. A public marker may also remind us of where the entrance to the Hyde Park Air Raid Shelter once stood.

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Sapper Reginald Lloyd's enlistment photo (NAA: B883, SX14925).

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Severe Turbulence: Unravelling the Botany Bay Airliner Crash of 1961

Peter Hobbins

In mid-1974, a series of severe storms hammered the New South Wales coast. Even sheltered harbours were not safe, with massive waves demolishing both the Kurnell and La Perouse ferry wharves in Botany Bay.

Several months earlier, a local resident had noticed an odd object underwater just off Kurnell beach. Although relatively light, the battered relic was metallic, corroded and studded with marine growths. The rounded end was faded red while the wider section sported a band of deep blue, against which white letters spelled 'VISCO' on one side and 'COUNT' on the other.¹

Soon identified as aircraft wreckage, it was passed to the Air Safety Investigation Branch of the Commonwealth Department of Transport. They confirmed that this was the top section of the rudder from an Ansett-ANA Vickers Viscount airliner which had crashed into Botany Bay on 30 November 1961. Fifteen people died that night, making it the deadliest flying accident associated with Kingsford-Smith Airport at Mascot.² Had the flight been fully booked, the death toll might have exceeded fifty.

Yet the Botany Bay crash is largely forgotten, in part because many aboard the Viscount lived in Canberra and – naturally – Sydney Airport has little interest in commemorating this calamity. Indeed, there is no monument to the event in either Kurnell or Mascot. Many victims have no headstone, but individual memorials span the country, from Springvale in Melbourne to Canberra's Woden Cemetery, as well as Casino, Cooma, Rookwood and Woronora.

Sadly, the Botany Bay crash was also overshadowed by other aviation tragedies of that era. In June 1960, twenty-nine died when a Trans-Australia Airways (TAA) Fokker F27 Friendship flew into the sea off Mackay in Queensland. The in-flight fire of an Ansett-ANA Viscount in September 1966 left twenty-four victims near Winton in Queensland. Two years later, on 31 December 1968, yet another Viscount – this time operated by MacRobertson Miller Airlines – came apart in the air south of Port Hedland in Western Australia. Its death toll of twenty-six marked the last major crash of an Australian aircraft in regular passenger service.³

Enforcing airline competition

Australian Governments have been heavily involved in civil aviation since the Commonwealth *Air Navigation Act* of 1920. Mail, freight and passenger services were supported to develop aviation capabilities and national infrastructure – and reduce accidents.⁴ In 1945 the Chifley Labor government attempted to nationalise commercial air services, a constitutional gambit thwarted in the High Court by Australian National Airways (ANA). Instead, Labor created TAA as a Commonwealth-owned competitor, soon developing an excellent reputation for its aircraft choices, marketing, safety and service standards.

When the Menzies Liberal regime came to power in 1949, it was philosophically opposed to nationalised carriers and alarmed that TAA's success might drive ANA to the wall. As state-owned railway experience suggested, a monopoly could potentially inflate airfares, retard innovation, diminish convenience and compromise safety. Ultimately, TAA and ANA consented to the *Civil Aviation Agreement Act 1952*, whereby 'uneconomic competition between the two major airlines was to be rationalized [sic] by agreement or by arbitration and the financial stability of the major airlines was secured by ... the Commonwealth'.⁵ This 'two-airline policy' nevertheless could not save ANA from a series of high-profile crashes and poor management decisions. The ailing airline was bought at a bargain price by Ansett Airways in 1957, thereby becoming Ansett-ANA.⁶

TAA's 12 Viscounts were central to these developments. One of the world's first airlines to order this British aircraft in 1952, TAA was also the first commercial operator of jet turbine technology in Australia. Unlike pure jets, the Viscount's turboprop engines turned propellers, balancing high speed with good fuel efficiency.⁷ By the mid-1950s, TAA's advertising capitalised on the smooth, quiet and rapid ride offered by its modern Viscounts, against ANA's noisy and slower piston-engined Douglas DC-6Bs. Viscounts were popular with the public and TAA planned to expand their fleet to 18 by 1962.⁸

The Liberal government, however, had other ideas.



TAA's marketing through the 1950s relied heavily on promoting its Vickers Viscounts, as illustrated on this 1959 ticket, which also boasts the company's 'The Friendly Way' motto (author's collection).

Determined to enforce 'fair' competition between TAA and Ansett-ANA, the *Airline Equipment Act 1958* meant that the two airlines had to purchase new aircraft types of similar capabilities, so that neither might secure a competitive advantage. The Minister for Civil Aviation – Senator Shane Paltridge – also pressured TAA to agree to a cross-charter agreement. The government airline had to lease three Viscounts to Ansett-ANA, while taking two of the latter's DC-6Bs into the TAA fleet.⁹

It was an extraordinary intervention into the market; as one commentator remarked, 'no government action in the airline controversy ever aroused such bitter feelings and remained such a source of criticism as this agreement'.¹⁰ By the end of 1961, a new *Airlines Agreement Act* went even further, ensuring that any new jets bought by the two airlines had to commence service on exactly the same day! This level of control was justified, Paltridge argued, because by 1961 the Commonwealth had 'spent about £70-million on aviation facilities and today Australia has about 600 aerodromes ... [and] a network of modern air navigation, radio and other safe flying aids'.¹¹

'Prang your way with ANA'

One Viscount that TAA was effectively blackmailed into leasing to Ansett-ANA in March 1960 was a model 720C aircraft, registered VH-TVC and named *John Oxley*. Meanwhile, animosities between the two airlines continued to play out in Parliament, the press and at airports. TAA staff were not above bastardising the advertising slogan 'Wing your way with ANA' to 'Prang your way with ANA', impugning both the maintenance and safety standards of their opposition. It must have been galling, therefore, to see VH-TVC repainted in Ansett-ANA colours, although the *John Oxley* name was retained.

Having just passed an airworthiness inspection, this was the aeroplane that stood on the tarmac at Kingsford-Smith on the evening of 30 November 1961. Ansett-ANA Flight 325 was set to depart at 7.10 pm for Canberra – a lucrative route that TAA had previously dominated. All based in Sydney, the crew were Captain Stanley Lindsay, First Officer Benjamin Costello and two air hostesses, Aileen Keldie and Elizabeth Hardy. As a trainee, Hardy's nerves were not helped by the terrifying premonitory dream that Keldie experienced a few nights earlier, about an airliner crashing in Sydney.¹²

The weather was appalling. Two thunderstorms were converging on Botany Bay, bringing high winds, thunder, lightning and tumultuous rain. A pilot taking off at 6.30 pm refused to fly south over Botany Bay due to the intense storm activity.¹³ Another captain, landing an hour later, stated that conditions were 'the worst that I have ever seen in my experience'.¹⁴ Indeed, they were so severe that some local residents still remember that night today.¹⁵ While some of the more recent Viscounts were fitted with onboard weather radar – which helped avoid severe conditions – TAA had not yet installed this equipment in *John Oxley*. Although it was also recommended that flight data and cockpit voice recorders should be fitted into all Australian turbine-powered passenger aircraft, this new 'black box' technology was not yet available in 1961.¹⁶

'This desperate situation'

At Kingsford-Smith Airport, Keldie and Hardy escorted the eleven passengers to *John Oxley* under umbrellas. All flying first class, they included Private Eric 'Snow' Cole from Casino, visiting friends at the Royal Military College in Duntroon, while Major James Gaylard was based in Canberra. Dr Jeffrey Harrington was an obstetrician and gynaecologist at Royal Canberra Hospital, while former nurse Bernice Ford was married to a local doctor. David Shaw led the wool section of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics; Alexander O'Neill was a researcher with the Department of Trade. Two Vacuum Oil Company executives were John Sutherland from Canberra and Richard Knight of Goulburn. Henry Lingard, a German immigrant, worked as a manager for Civic & Civil. Bruce Regan was an active Apex member who was employed by the Alliance Acceptance Company and Albert Soukieh ran his own business in Canberra. Almost all were married and most had children.¹⁷

Taking off at 7.17 pm, *John Oxley* soon disappeared into low cloud to the north-east, passing over Botany and Kingsford. The flight plan was to fly above Coogee, then turn through 180 degrees near Bondi, before heading southwest to Canberra. After one radio

exchange at 7.22 pm, nothing further was heard from the Viscount and it was not detected on the airport's basic radar display. Controllers hoped that the aircraft's radio had failed, but when the Viscount failed to arrive in Canberra a major search was launched.

Mercifully, the aircraft had not come down in Sydney's populous eastern suburbs. Few residents had been out in the wild weather, but witnesses from the fringes of Botany Bay reported hearing unusual noises about 7.25 pm. The next day, searchers located an oil slick, wreckage and human remains near Bunnerong Power Station. A scatter of debris was also collected at Kurnell and Cronulla. Royal Australian Navy and Police divers

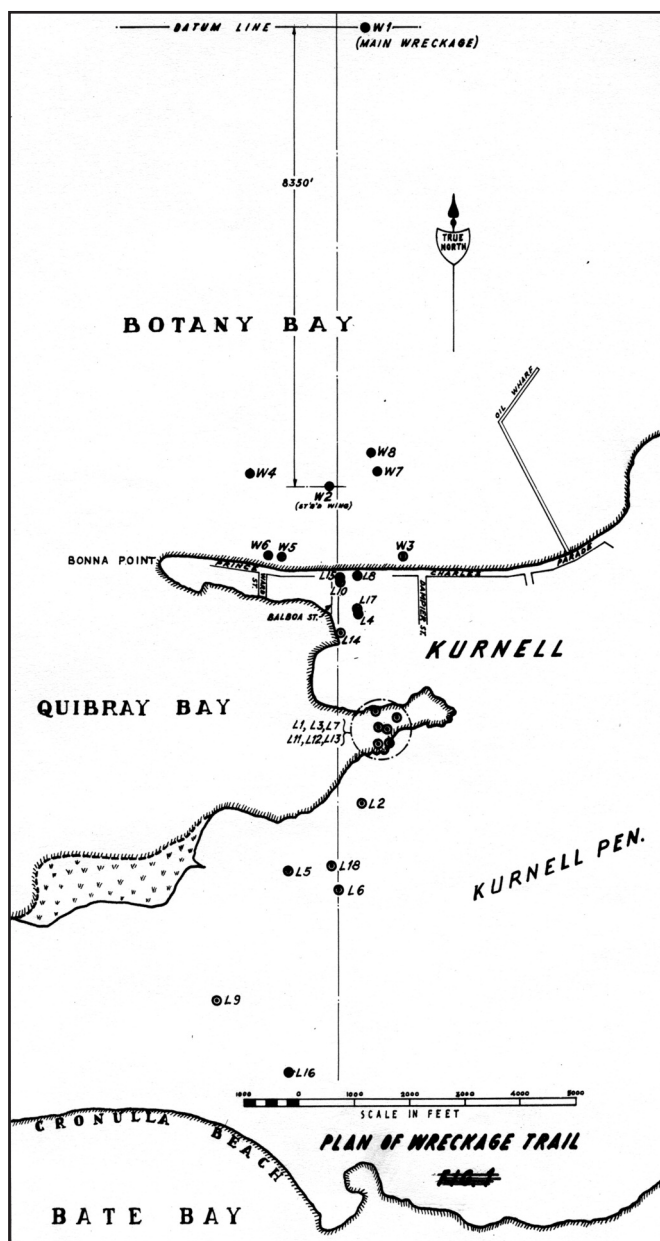
then found large sections of the aircraft off Kurnell Beach, while the main wreckage lay underwater about 3 kilometres west of La Perouse. For two more months, divers worked from HMAS *Kimbla* and *Walrus*, eventually recovering about 85 per cent of the aircraft's disintegrated structure.¹⁸ None of the fifteen crew and passengers had survived.

Three separate inquiries were launched. The Department of Civil Aviation's technical investigation centred on the wreckage collected in their hangar at Kingsford-Smith Airport. Senator Paltridge announced an independent Board of Accident Inquiry, whose collected evidence ran to six volumes. Finally, the City Coroner for Sydney also held an inquest.

With few witnesses, no radar track and no 'black boxes', a definitive conclusion could not be reached. All three inquiries, however, believed that the Viscount had come apart in the air at around 7.26 pm, about 1 kilometre west of the Kurnell oil refinery wharf. Blown well off course, it was flying north when the outer section of the starboard (right) wing snapped upwards under unprecedented stress. The starboard tailplane then also gave way and the ruptured fuselage scattered its unfortunate occupants across Botany Bay.

A major consideration was whether the aircraft's structure was insufficiently robust, particularly as TAA had cross-chartered its three most heavily-used Viscounts to Ansett-ANA.¹⁹ However, extensive investigation revealed nothing wrong with VH-TVC's airframe, engines, instruments, systems or crew. The storm itself therefore seemed the most likely culprit. In particular, experts suggested that the aeroplane was thrown out of control – possibly even flipped upside-down – and plummeted toward the earth as its speed drastically increased. 'It is not difficult to imagine that in this desperate situation the pilot would endeavour by any means in his power to recover control', the Board proposed.²⁰ A combination of vigorous manoeuvres and wind gusts likely pushed the aircraft beyond its engineered limits.²¹

But Australian air safety investigators had never before encountered such severe conditions. They believed that soon after take-off, the Viscount entered extreme turbulence at a point where two separate thunderstorms met, possibly over Randwick or Maroubra. Extraordinary gusts may have led to a loss of control, which 'could so easily have carried the aircraft into the worst of the storm over Botany Bay, where even greater turbulence might be encountered'.²² Although the approach controller in the tower at Kingsford-Smith was criticised for directing *John Oxley* into danger, his indicators suggested that the aircraft's track would largely avoid both of the major storms.



This diagram from the 1962 Board of Accident Inquiry indicates where the main sections of Viscount wreckage were found in Botany Bay and Kurnell (Spicer et al., Report of Chairman of Board of Accident Inquiry, Appendix 2).

Unwittingly, he had vectored it into the heart of what today would be termed a 'severe weather event'.

TAA and Ansett-ANA were absolved of any fault, and by 1963 both onboard weather radar and recording devices were introduced into their aircraft. Air traffic control, radar and meteorological services were also upgraded and better integrated to minimise the risks of flying in severe weather. What the fifteen souls aboard *John Oxley* endured through those four hideous minutes is perhaps best left unimagined. But perhaps, somewhere in the Kurnell sandhills, they deserve a small marker of gratitude for the extreme conditions that we now so routinely avoid when aloft.

About the Author

Dr Peter Hobbins is an RAHS Councillor who is leading the Society's Reconciliation Action Plan working party. As a historian who heads the curatorial, library and publications teams at the Australian National Maritime Museum, his research interests include disease, quarantine, troopships, shipwrecks and aircraft accidents. Peter's research for this article was supported by Australian Research Council DECRA Project DE160101173 and Linkage Project LP160101232, which funded his movie on aviation safety at Sydney's Mascot Aerodrome:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Lw3wmla9T0>

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¹⁴ J.A. Spicer, C.A. Howard, D.B. Hudson and H.A. Wills, *Report of Chairman of Board of Accident Inquiry on Accident Which Occurred on 30th November, 1961, Near Sydney, New South Wales, to Viscount Aircraft VH-TVC, Operated By Australian National Airways Pty. Ltd.*, A.J. Arthur, 1962, p.14.

¹⁵ Personal recollections shared by residents during a presentation at Mascot Library for History Week 2018.

¹⁶ Neville Parnell and Trevor Boughton, *Flypast: a Record of Aviation in Australia*, AGPS Press, 1988, p.288.

¹⁷ 'Disaster Casts Gloom Over Canberra', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 December 1961, p.4.

¹⁸ 'They Deserved Praise', *Royal Australian Navy News*, 26 January 1962, p.12.

¹⁹ 'Viscount Accident', *Aircraft*, Vol. 41, No. 4, 1962, p.33; 'Report on Examination of Cracks in Viscount Lower Inner Wing Spar Booms', 1958, National Archives of Australia (hereafter NAA), Series SP916/1 Control [13].

²⁰ Spicer et al., *Report of Chairman of Board of Accident Inquiry*, p.13.

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Vickers Viscount 720C VH-TVC in Ansett-ANA colours, circa 1960 (Civil Aviation Historical Society/Airways Museum).

Estonian Archives in Australia

Maie Barrow

The Estonian Archives in Australia were established in Sydney in January 1952, at the first meeting of the Council of Estonian Societies in Australia. They were created to collect material relating to the lives and achievements of Estonians in Australia.

From a slow start and just a cupboard under the stage at Estonian House, the Archive blossomed to a large international collection of more than 100,000 items including personal papers, memoirs, organisational records, photographs, films, videos, CDs, DVDs, books, scientific papers, journals, magazines, newspapers and artefacts.

To accommodate the material, the Archive moved to the archivist's house. When the rooms there were filled to capacity, the archivist built a fireproof garage to store the material. Dr Hugo Salasoo was the archivist for

nearly 40 years and after his death the Archive moved back into Estonian House in Surry Hills.

The Archive kept growing and running out of space so, in the early 2000s, the Archives Council decided to only collect Estonian–Australian material. Much of the deaccessioned international material was sent to libraries, archives and museums in Estonia.

Amongst the Archive's special collections are records of life in the Displaced Persons camps in Germany after WWII, films, videos, photographs and albums of the 29 Estonian Festivals held in Australia since 1954, including the worldwide ESTO 88 held in Melbourne, and the oral history collection.

The Displaced Persons collection comprises photographs, programs of cultural activities, camp newsletters, student magazines and textbooks



Refugees at Tallinn Harbour, September 1944 [Estonian Archives in Australia collection].



Waiting to move to a new Displaced Persons camp [Estonian Archives in Australia collection].

reproduced for camp schools and a number of suitcases. These suitcases range from Estonian-made cases used to carry the treasured possessions of fleeing refugees, to bulky wooden cases made for the journey to Australia. Each suitcase has its own story.

The oral history collection, both on tape and on video, has been digitised. The collection has been included in the UNESCO Australian Memory of the World Register as *Migration Voices: Estonian Oral Histories 1952–2020*.

Family history research is very popular with the descendants of the refugees. The arrival cards from the pre-World War II Estonian Consulate in Sydney and Displaced Person camp records are often the start of long and fascinating research. Many post-war migrants did not pass on their stories to their children, most of whom had no relatives in Australia to approach for information. The records in the Archive are often the only source of information about the long journey from fleeing Estonia in 1944 to arrival in Australia.

The Archive is run by volunteers. As well as organising the collection, the volunteers arrange talks and

exhibitions. Researchers from Estonia regularly consult the archives as do students and academics from all states in Australia.

The Archive has just moved to a new, renovated room in Estonian House, at 141 Campbell Street, Surry Hills. Visitors are always welcome on Wednesdays from 10am to 3pm. The Archive has a website, <https://archives.eesti.org.au> which gives an overview of our activities. A catalogue of the personal papers is available online as is the catalogue of death notices. We are always happy to share our treasures.

About the Author

Maie Barrow grew up in the Estonian community in Adelaide. After a career in scientific research and university administration she became the Honorary Archivist of the Estonian Archives in Australia, a role she has held for 28 years. She graduated from UNSW with a MIM (Archives/Records). Maie is a member of the Baltic Heritage Network and has lectured at the conferences and summer schools, written articles, and curated exhibitions in Australia and abroad.

2022 CERTIFICATES OF ACHIEVEMENT

These awards honour the contributions made by members of affiliated societies to local and community history.

Gary Luke – Australian Jewish Historical Society

Gary has been a member since 1993 and served on the Committee from 2008 to 2015. He continues to dedicate many hours of voluntary work contributing to the ongoing historical research, record management, conservation and maintenance of heritage-significant Jewish cemeteries throughout NSW. His ongoing work as a member of the National Trust Cemeteries Committee, a member of the Maitland Jewish Cemetery Friends Group, a Trustee of the Goulburn Jewish Cemetery and his regular volunteer work at the Rookwood Necropolis Jewish Cemetery has made an outstanding and invaluable contribution. Gary also undertakes research and contributes his knowledge of Jewish family history records for the society.

Allan Douch – Bermagui Historical Society

Under Allan's leadership as President since 2016, and with the ongoing support of the Bermagui residents, the society has increased its collections of photographs, oral histories and local historical information. The society now holds more than 10,000 digitised images within its collection. Allan is a regular event speaker and museum volunteer and was instrumental in setting up and maintaining the society's website. He and his wife Wendy, the society's Secretary, work as a team in their various activities supporting the society. Allan's recent compilation and publication is the 'Bushfires 2019/2020 timeline impact on Bermagui and its surrounds'. The society acknowledges and appreciates Allan for his continuous and dedicated service to the history of Bermagui.

Robyne Ridge – Blue Mountains Historical Society

Robyne joined in 2013 and has taken on the roles of Publicity Officer, Management Committee member and Vice President. She is currently Senior Vice President, Catering Co-ordinator and Research Co-ordinator. In her role as Publicity Officer, Robyne is responsible for promoting the society through print and social media. She prepares a monthly historical article for the *Blue Mountains Gazette* on a topic of local interest and prepares publicity for the Monthly Talks. As Research Co-ordinator, Robyne has written several publications for the society and has undertaken research for the Blue Mountains City Council, the *Blue Mountains Gazette* and the public.

Dorothy Warwick – Friends of Linnwood

Dorothy has performed a significant role in researching historical aspects of the Cumberland Local Government Area (formerly City of Holroyd Council) and had a major role in leading the Save Linnwood Hall Action Group in 2001. She has worked tirelessly for the historic estate for twenty years as President and committee member. Dorothy assisted in establishing Holroyd Local History Research, which has published seven books. Her contributions to local history are often sought after. She is a guest speaker at various community organisations. The Friends acknowledge and appreciate her dedication, leadership and endurance for the Linnwood estate and the local history community.

Robert Nash – Huguenot Society of Australia

The society recognises Robert's achievements in Huguenot studies nationally and internationally. Robert is an accomplished researcher, speaker, author and recognised foremost expert on Huguenot studies in Australia. Robert regularly gives talks on the Huguenots and the contributions their descendants made to Australia. As an author and editor, Robert has several publications and articles to his credit on the Huguenots, their descendants and genealogy for Australians. Robert also maintains the society's library and assists members in undertaking Huguenot family history research. In recognition of his wider research work, Robert was made a Life Fellow of the Huguenot Society of Great Britain and Ireland.

Karen Eldridge – Lake Macquarie Family History Group

On becoming a member in 2002, Karen became enthusiastically involved with the project to transcribe and publish the Registers of St. Matthew's Church of England, Windsor. Over the years, she has held Treasurer and Membership Secretary positions and on the Publications Committee. Karen has represented the Group at many Family History Fairs, is a volunteer researcher at the Lake Macquarie City Library and is a leader and contributor to the Ryerson Index. Karen has also been instrumental in fundraising, face-to-face training and research programs and, with the advent of Zoom, online training and general research. A member who has gone above and beyond, her contribution and dedication to the Group's longevity is second to none.

Arthur Radford – Lake Macquarie Family History Group

Arthur joined the Lake Macquarie Family History Group in its inaugural year, 1999, where he became involved with many of the Group's activities, including Family History Fairs. Arthur was elected to the position of Vice President in 2001 and again in 2022-23, and to the role of President in 2016-18. When the Public Officer position became vacant in 2001, Arthur stepped up and has held this position to the present, diligently keeping the Group informed of changes and depositing information as required to the Department of Fair Trading. Arthur has carried out duties on the Group's Committee and the Publications Committee, as well as fundraising and assisting others with his knowledge of records and research.

Wendy Simes – Moruya and District Historical Society

Wendy has been an active member as Librarian, Journal Editor, website manager and executive committee member. Especially significant has been her work in supporting the society's core aim of communicating and preserving the local history of Moruya and its surrounding district for the wider community. Wendy has coordinated, written and prepared publications, established a specialised local history and genealogy research service, and introduced and maintained systematic cataloguing of the society's collections. Wendy, with her team of volunteers, has made an extraordinary contribution by building and maintaining a cultural resource that preserves the history of this district and its community for future generations.

Jenny Bryant – Shoalhaven Historical Society

Jenny has contributed significantly to the running of the Shoalhaven Historical Society. She has been a committee member for ten years and has undertaken bookkeeping duties as Acting Treasurer and Treasurer. She is a willing worker, attending the Nowra Museum every Tuesday, where she takes on many roles. Besides welcoming and guiding visitors, she keeps a vigilant eye on book stocks and sales. Jenny is also passionate about the appearance and cleanliness of the museum and ensures that the museum looks its best.

Brian Forrester – Shoalhaven Historical Society

Brian has been a member of the Shoalhaven Historical Society for twenty years and has served on its committee for sixteen years. He is passionate about volunteering and has for many years maintained the lawns and grounds of the Nowra Museum. Brian is devoted to undertaking duties at the museum and will volunteer for any stray shift available. During our recovery from Covid lockdowns, Brian has taken it

upon himself to open the museum on Sundays whenever possible, even though this is no longer a published opening slot. His dedication to the promotion of the society and his encyclopaedic knowledge of the personalities and commerce of Nowra over eighty years are invaluable.

Barbara Hinnrichsen – Shoalhaven Historical Society

As a member of the society for over thirty years, Barbara has served on its committee for sixteen years, stepping down last year. Barbara's input into meetings was always highly valued, and her extensive knowledge of Nowra's past residents is a valuable tool in preserving the history of the Shoalhaven. Barbara attends the Nowra Museum every Tuesday, welcomes visitors and meticulously seeks relevant local history articles in the local papers, which she places in our files for future researchers. She works quietly and efficiently and is an asset to the society and the museum.

Cathy Jones – Strathfield-Homebush District Historical Society

Cathy is the Secretary, editor and primary writer of the newsletter and Public Officer. Along with developing the society's website, Cathy developed and maintains the Strathfield Heritage website which provides information on the history and heritage of the district. She has written publications and articles on the Strathfield district, conducts walking and bus tours, and has been a presenter and speaker. Cathy has collaborated on recent exhibitions and public talks, all featuring original research, images and objects. She has been Chair of Strathfield Council's Heritage Committee and was a member of the National Trust Historic Houses Committee. She has worked consistently for twenty years to research, educate and promote community interest and local history and heritage.

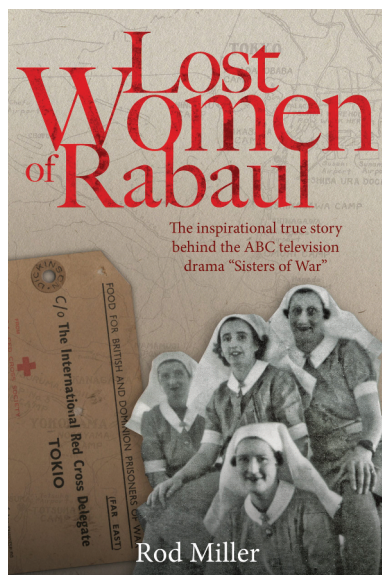
Daphne Salt – Wauchope District Historical Society

The society acknowledges Daphne's longstanding commitment, involvement and contributions since joining in 2014. She has researched local subjects and conducted interviews for oral histories. Having written and published several local history publications and articles, she has worked in consultation with historians and provided information and photographs from her collections to illustrate their works. Her research and work with the society archives, files and photograph collections have allowed her to prepare comprehensive presentations, exhibits and maps of the Hastings Valley, Wauchope, and the Oxley 1818 expedition. Daphne's passion and enthusiasm have enabled her to tackle any challenge and embrace this region by delving into its history.

Book Notes

Lost Women of Rabaul

Written by Rod Miller. Published by Big Sky Publishing, 2022.



Rod Miller's book, *Lost Women of Rabaul*, gives readers a unique insight into the wartime experiences of the seventeen nurses who were captured after Rabaul fell to the Japanese on 23 January 1942. When these Australian nurses were sent to Japan as prisoners of war, they were joined by the Australian

citizen from Rabaul, Mrs Kathleen Bignell, and Mrs Etta Jones, the US citizen who was captured on the island of Attu. By using the nurses' diaries, interviews with the six nurses who were still alive when he was doing his research about this Second War World history and historical documents, Rod Miller has given readers an understanding of what these women had endured during their internment by the Japanese, both in Rabaul and in Japan.

The author has also investigated why these women were referred to by the Japanese authorities as a 'special case' and were treated differently from the other prisoners of war upon their arrival in Japan. Despite the very limited official documentation, Miller has made a determined effort to find out why these women were taken to Japan and the politics behind their internment in Japan.

Miller has also included information in his book about the women's lives after they returned to Australia at the end of the war. The endnotes and the thirteen appendices are quite informative too.

Available from Big Sky Publishing.

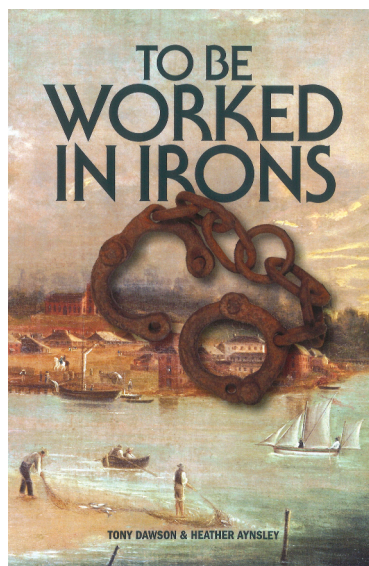
ISBN: 978-1-922615-93-0

369 pages; illustrations, maps, portraits, index and appendices; 24 cm

Book Note by Patrick Bourke, RAHS Member

This project was supported by the Create NSW Cultural Grant Program, a devolved funding program administered by the Royal Australian Historical Society on behalf of the NSW Government.

To Be Worked in Irons: Stories from the Port Macquarie Bench Books



Written by Tony Dawson and Heather Aynsley. Published by Port Macquarie Historical Society, 2022.

In 1821, Port Macquarie was established as a place of secondary punishment for recidivist convicts in New South Wales. This book uses the surviving Port Macquarie Bench Books held by the

NSW State Archives to tell some of their stories.

The book is divided into three parts. Sections one and two contextualise the history of transportation as a punishment, the justice system in New South Wales, why Port Macquarie was chosen as a punishment site, and how justice was administered there. Section three is the largest and delves into the individual cases from the Bench Books. The authors concede that their selection of cases 'should be seen as illustrative rather than representative' (p.39). This is understandable given that the Bench Books record more than 1,750 cases, so only the most interesting are discussed in the book.

Anyone interested in the administration of justice at the Port Macquarie penal settlement will find this book a valuable resource for their research.

Available from Port Macquarie Museum:
<https://portmuseum.org.au/>

ISBN 9780958039079

vi, 174 pages; 25 cm

Book Note by Phillip Jaworski, RAHS Digital Media and Membership Services



On the Shelf: Treasures in the RAHS Library

Donna Newton, RAHS Librarian

The RAHS Library includes a number of personal collections donated by its members and others. These often include a miscellany of items such as documents, news cuttings, photographs, glass slides, ephemera and even some objects. In this issue of 'On the Shelf' we highlight two of these collections.

The first is the Henry Gustav Hirsch Magaard Collection. Sydney accountant Henry Gustav Hirsch Magaard (c.1903–1982) was an enthusiastic photographer and record keeper. The London-born Magaard and his family arrived in Adelaide in 1913. Henry moved to Sydney in the late 1920s.¹

Although Magaard was not a member of the RAHS, he donated his collection to the Society in the 1980s. There are 317 photographs from his holiday travels and workplaces in Adelaide and Sydney. They include well-known Sydney sites, such as Vacluse House, and scenic views of the Wollongong escarpment, the Hawkesbury River and Berrima. Of particular interest are the photographs recording the sometimes-dramatic changes to Sydney over the past decades. In addition to the photograph prints, there are a number of glass slides depicting Orange and Canberra. The collection also includes a silver trophy awarded to Magaard by the Adelaide Rowing Club in 1927, shortly before his move to Sydney.

Magaard's collection includes the correspondence, quotations, construction photographs and papers relating to the house at Pymble that he and his wife built. This material provides an insight into domestic housing construction in the period. The house is still standing on the corner of Church Street and Mona Vale Road.

The second collection is that of John Metcalfe (1839–1923). His granddaughter donated it in 1993. John Metcalfe was born in Yorkshire and worked for the Electric Telegraph and Electricity Department at what is today the City of Sydney until about 1880. At the time, he was living in Llewellyn Street in Balmain.² After this he appears to have led a peripatetic lifestyle, moving around Sydney and its environs. He was the



Henry Gustav Hirsch Magaard (c.1903–1982), 1928 [RAHS Magaard Collection].



John Metcalfe (1839–1923) portrait [RAHS Manuscript Collection].

proprietor of a guesthouse at The Oaks, near Camden, but in 1890 he was listed as a pastry cook of 231 King Street North in Newtown.³ He returned to Balmain in 1892, but by 1895 he was at Thirroul, in charge of the country estate of 'S Bond of Sussex Street'. After six years, he returned to Birchgrove, where he remained until 1909 when he relocated to Blackheath, where he died in 1923.⁴

The Metcalfe Collection comprises notes about the family as well as birth, death and marriage certificates for the Metcalfe family. There are copies of portraits, photographs and even a Daguerreotype of Margaret Metcalfe née Hopper, housed in a protective leather case. In addition, there are papers relating to his work for the Electric Telegraph and Electricity Department. Included in the collection are the original keys for the house at Llewellyn Street Balmain and the Margaret Hopper Metcalfe bible from 1871, given on her wedding day to Metcalfe.

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