



## Surrey Hills Historical Society Inc Newsletter: August 2022

Meetings of the Surrey Hills Historical Society are held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month (February to November) at 8pm.

**Venue: Chandler Room of the Surrey Hills Neighbourhood Centre at 157 Union Road, Surrey Hills.**

Note that parking is no longer available in the railway car park, due to LXRA works. Supper follows the presentation; a contribution of \$5.00 goes to the Neighbourhood Centre.

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Members of the Society and others are committed to documenting the history of the area of Mont Albert and Surrey Hills through the Surrey Hills Neighbourhood Centre Heritage Collection. We meet most Mondays, 10am-3pm. The collection is open to the public at this time. For further details email: [heritage@surreyhillsnc.org.au](mailto:heritage@surreyhillsnc.org.au)

Items and stories from the collection appear on the Surrey Hills History Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/Surrey-Hills-History-887879524593056/> and on Victorian Collections at <https://victoriancollections.net.au>

**Surrey Hills Historical Society committee:**

President / newsletter: Sue Barnett

Vice-President: Euan Walmsley

Secretary: Max Beaton

Treasurer: Alison Dews

Newsletter editor: Sue Barnett

Address for postage: C/o Surrey Hills

Neighbourhood Centre

157 Union Road, Surrey Hills, 3127

### Forthcoming meetings

**NB/ meetings are now to be held in the Chandler Room**

### Tuesday, 16 August at 8pm - Judy Archer – “Duneira”, my Grandmother and the Smith Family

Judy is a passionate family historian, who has meticulously traced her grandmother’s story. Annie Gold was born in 1883, was abandoned in Collingwood aged 2 days and raised by foster

parents. Her fate was to leave school aged 13, even before the end of the school year, to work in domestic service.

Domestic service brought Annie to ‘Duneira’ and the Smith family, of whom Judy says: “Benjamin Smith and Maria Dewson, both English born, married in Williamstown in 1862. They kept moving up in the

world, from rented accommodation finally to luxuriate in a beautiful home ‘Duneira’ in Highfield Road. The Smith daughters married well. Alas, tragedy struck, resulting in no male Smith descendant. The only son died young and ‘Duneira’ was demolished, leaving no trace of that respected Smith family.”

This story and the house named ‘Duneira’ are part of the history of Canterbury and Surrey Hills. Members of the Canterbury History Group have been invited to join us.



## Tuesday 20 September at 8 pm – Malcolm Barnett: The story behind Surrey Hall'



The Surrey Hall building is now the premises of Ross Hunt Real Estate, but since its erection in 1891 it has had many and varied uses. For many years it was a key community hub. Lodges met there, a Library and Literary Institute opened, a Ladies School had rooms there temporarily, as did Surrey Hills State School during a period of extensions to their buildings. Classical musical concerts and other entertainments were held there regularly and for part of its life it housed the Surrey Theatre (or Rex Theatre).

Member Ken James traced part of Surrey Hall's history in his book "Surrey Hills Literary Institute: A History". Ken begins: "The two storied Surrey Hall

was erected in 1891 by Mrs Elizabeth Ellerker (Elleker) of St Kilda as a private enterprise." Statements with similar wording are used in the pictorial history "Surrey Hills in Celebration of the Centennial, 1883-1983" and in Lovell Chen's "Surrey Hills and Canterbury Hills Estate Heritage Study, June 2011".

The right to own property was given to married women in 1884. Who was Elizabeth Ellerker and how was it that she was in a position to undertake such an enterprise? Malcolm has investigated the story behind Mrs Ellerker.

### What lies behind our street names – Erasmus Street

Erasmus Street was created in 1885 as part of the Chicken Farm Estate and was proclaimed a public highway in 1905. It was named for Desiderus Erasmus, the Dutch humanist, whose scholarly work has perhaps been largely forgotten.

Erasmus is said to have been born in Rotterdam in the late 1460's, most probably 1466. Although associated closely with Rotterdam, he only lived there for four years. He was the second illegitimate son of Roger Gerard, a Catholic priest and curate living in Gouda, and Margaret, a physician's daughter. Although both he and his older brother Peter were born out of wedlock they were cared for by their parents until their early deaths from the Plague in 1483.

Erasmus was well educated in a series of monastic or semi-monastic schools. In 1475, at the age of nine, he and his older brother Peter were sent to one of the best Latin schools in the Netherlands, located at Deventer. Erasmus would remember this school only for the severe discipline which he believed was intended to teach humility by breaking a boy's spirit. Having little other choice, both brothers entered monasteries. Erasmus seems to have remained about seven years (1485–92) following which he became an ordained priest. In later years, he alleged that he had been pressured into taking the vows. He would have preferred to go to university.



In 1495 he saw a chance to realize this goal when Bishop Hendrik of Bergen sent him to the Collège de Montaigu in Paris and promised him financial support. However when the promised financial support did not materialize, Erasmus left the college, and supported himself by tutoring wealthy young men. He was

able to travel extensively, returning to France, making a number of journeys to England, and travelling to Italy where he obtained a doctorate in theology at the University of Turin. Little is known of Erasmus's long stay in England (1509–14), except that he lectured at Cambridge and worked on scholarly projects, including the Greek text of the New Testament, a work which was eventually published. As a biblical scholar he promoted the study of the biblical languages Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.

In his writings Erasmus often reflected on philosophical subjects such as the influence of nature versus nurture, the relationship between word and thing, the ideal form of government, the nature of faith, and the theory of knowledge. Sometimes described as a 'Christian Humanist', he combined Christian thought with classical traditions. He embraced the humanistic belief in an individual's capacity for self-improvement and the fundamental role of education. In politics, he promoted consensus, compromise, and peaceful cooperation, ideals which he advocated during the acrimonious times leading up to the Reformation.

Many considered Erasmus to be a forerunner of the Reformation; he railed against this, but his clerical critics blamed him for inspiring Luther. Towards the end of his life, Erasmus wrote prolifically refuting critics of his New Testament edition and battling the accusation that he had inspired the Reformation and was a supporter of Luther. In 1529 he was living in Basel when it turned Protestant and as a result Erasmus moved to Catholic Freiburg. Essentially a critic from within, Erasmus maintained his Catholic beliefs, however even after his death in 1536, his works were placed on the Index of Prohibited Books by the Catholic Church.

Portrait of Erasmus of Rotterdam (1523) by Hans Holbein the Younger

REF: Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy; Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy Wikipedia;

## House histories – 'Yielima', 29 Erasmus Street



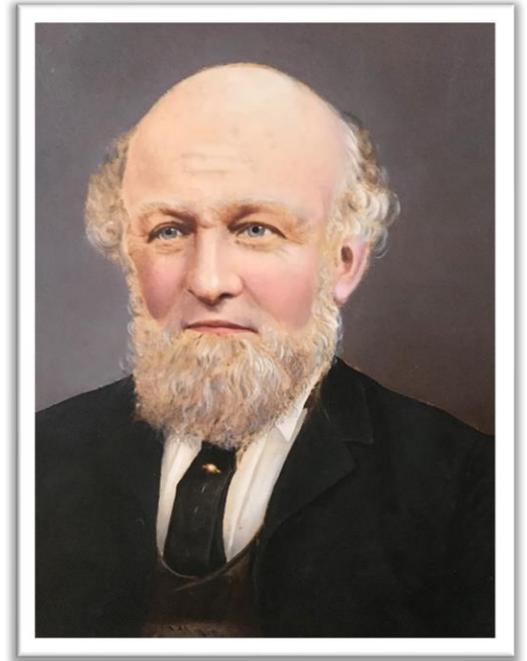
Source: Abercromby's Real Estate advertising, July 2022

See: <https://www.realestate.com.au/property/29-erasmus-st-surrey-hills-vic-3127>

This property was known as 'Yielima' from 1888-1922 and as 'St. Aubins' from 1922-1956. It was built about 1887 for Edward Kellett, who was born in Chorley, Lancashire, England. It is now being advertised for sale by private auction on 31 August by Abercromby's Real Estate. It is expected to set a record price for a property in Surrey Hills. From private house to convent and in more recent years sold and renovated

several times, with sale prices of \$1.625M in 2009 and \$2,225M in 2015, it is on the Whitehorse Heritage Register and is one of relatively few mansions built (and remaining) in 3127.

Pictured at right is Edward Kellett who married Selina Wells in 1852 at St Peters, Eastern Hill. She was born in c1827 in Aston Clinton, Buckinghamshire, daughter of William Wells and Elizabeth Allan. The family arrived from Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire on the 'Osprey' on 22 March 1849. Edward and Selina had 8 children - 5 girls and 3 boys, who were all born in Collingwood before the family came to Surrey Hills. Three died in infancy.



Edward's funeral notice in The Argus of 11 July 1893 states that he was a corn merchant of Exhibition Street. His property was sworn at £1512, £1232 in realty and £280 personally. He was buried in Melbourne General Cemetery (CofE Compartment K, No 306).

After his death, Selina continued to live at 'Yielima'. In the electoral rolls 1903, 1905 and 1908 she is described as a boarding housekeeper. She died at Surrey Hills on 22 October 1911. In her will she left realty valued at £900 and personally at £220 to her surviving children. She was buried with her husband. 'Yielima' was sold on 19 February 1919 with a sale of contents on 18 March 1919.



At left is a sampler worked by Selina, aged 14 before she and her family came to Australia. It is still treasured by her descendants.

From 1922-1947 Thomas Daniel O'Callaghan (c1871-1962), a police magistrate, made his home at 'Yielima'. He is described as of 'soldierly demeanour, with a flowing mane of hair'. He always carried a walking stick and wore a flower in his buttonhole. His wife was Florence (nee Harling, c1873-1933) pre-deceased him. They had previously lived in Essendon, Moonee Ponds and Stawell before coming to Erasmus Street. After moving out of Erasmus Street he is listed in the 1949 and 1954 electoral rolls at 90 Durham Road, Surrey Hills.

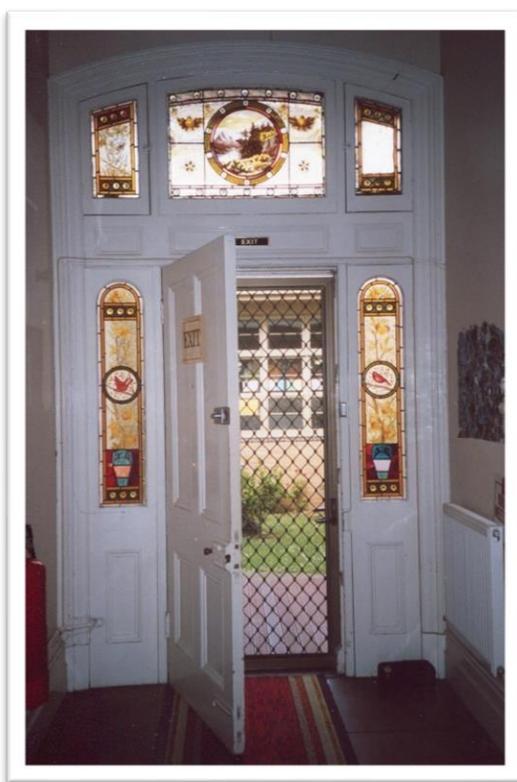
In 1952 the property was purchased by Father Timothy Fitzpatrick, Parish Priest of Our Holy Redeemer Parish, Surrey Hills. It consisted of a large two storey house, a coach house and stable, and an acre and a half of land.

In 1954 the coach house and stable were converted into the Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour and the following year Father John Kelly was appointed parish priest. and resided in the house. At the time of this purchase the house was not in good repair. "The gentleman who had lived there alone since his wife died many years before, lived in the servants' quarters and the rest of the house had been badly neglected. (REF: <https://ourholyredeemer.cam.org.au/history>) At the beginning of 1957 the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart opened the school next door. Initially they travelled from Balwyn each day until the property at 301 Elgar Road was purchased as a presbytery and 'Yielima' became a convent. The stables continued to

be used as a church until 1964 when a new church was completed and opened by His Grace Archbishop Simmonds on the 20th of March.



SHP1291



Photos of interior doors taken by Robin Kelly at the time of an earlier sale.

### **Vale Bill Chandler- 1943-2022**

To say that Bill Chandler was well-known in Surrey Hills would be an under-statement. Sometimes referred to as 'Mr Surrey Hills', he and wife Ros came as a young couple to live in one of the few individually listed heritage homes in this area. Located in Vincent Street, it had originally been built as the day school of Dr Darling's Surrey College. Here Bill and Ros raised their 4 children.

Bill trained as an architect, town and regional planner and in transport. He worked for all levels of government, the private sector, institutions and the community sector. In later years he had his own consulting company, but earlier roles included Director of Planning and Urban Design and Director of Marketing and Public Affairs with Melbourne Docklands Authority and as a Director of the Loder and Bayly Consulting Group, Bill was awarded an Order of Australia Medal for service to urban design and planning

and made a Life Fellow of the Planning Institute of Australia, from which he received a Lifetime Achievement Award.

Bill was passionate about many things. An early demonstration of this was his forefront role in the grass roots community action against the Country Roads Board's plan to link Warrigal and Union Roads. The protests were successful, the plans were shelved and the resultant camaraderie resulted in community members coming together in a rented shop in Union Road – know originally as "S.H.O.P." (Surrey Hills Our Place). In time this became the Neighbourhood Centre, which the Chandler children came to regard as their second home.

A spin-off was Surrey Hills Day, a multi-faceted community celebration which ran annually throughout the 1980's. Bill had a flare for the theatrical and some will remember him leading the parade down Union Road in his top hat.



Collecting material evidence of local history was one aspect of Neighbourhood Centre activities undertaken from its beginnings. Bill supported and encouraged the members who formed the History Nook and by 1983 they had amassed sufficient material to publish the pictorial history 'Surrey Hills – In celebration of the Centennial, 1883-1983', which Bill edited.

Another enduring legacy was of course the establishment of the Surrey Hills Neighbourhood News, edited from the beginning and until very recently by Bill. A regular feature was an update on the comings and goings in business along Union Road in particular, but also in Hamilton Street and at 'The Terminus' and Wattle Park. Delivery of this to every property in 3127 was organized through the Neighbourhood Centre and several volunteers have loyally undertaken a delivery round for almost as long as Bill was editor.

In more recent years Bill's passion for the environment found one outlet through his membership of 'Lighter Footprints' and even candidacy as an Independent for Kooyong in the 2019 federal election.

Bill's funeral was held at Habitat Uniting Church, Canterbury on Monday, 1 August. One always learns more about a person at a funeral and so it was at Bill's. To add to many other talents, Bill was a poet and song writer.

### **Wattle Park – an overview by Euan Walmsley**

As well as being a long-time member of our Society, Euan is President of the 'Friends of Wattle Park' group.

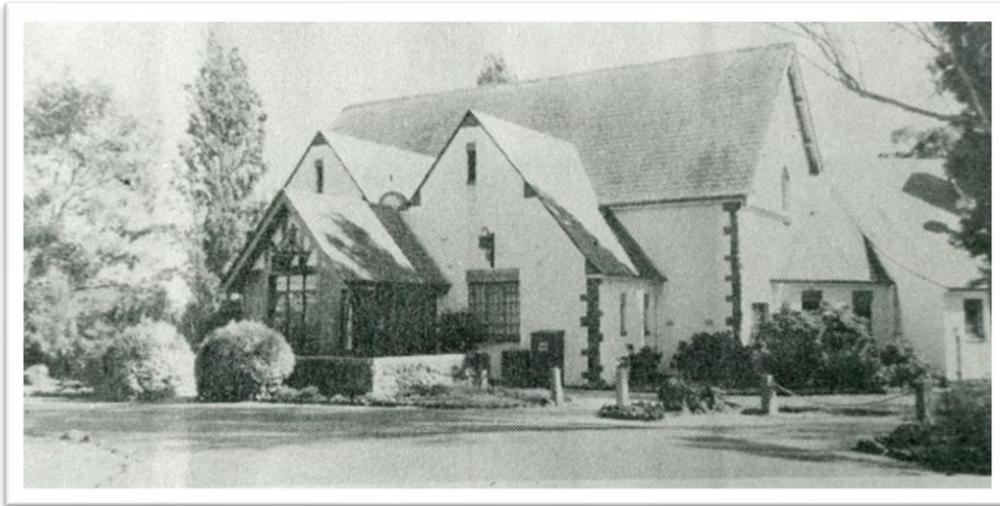
From 1852 to 1857 the area now called Wattle Park was compounded from 6 Crown allotments owned by James Atkinson, Walter Craig and Charles Taylor, who sold to Orlando Fenwick, the Lord Mayor of Melbourne, 1871/72 and a Councillor 1869/97. The area was later bought by Eliza Welch (of Ball and Welsch retailing fame). In 1915 Eliza chose to transfer ownership to the Hawthorn Tramways Trust "to be used as a park and for other purposes".

Following construction of the tramway from Camberwell to Warrigal Road along Riversdale Road, the park was opened on 23 December 1916 by Victorian Governor, Sir Arthur Stanley, who planted a Golden Wattle. Ideas for a perimeter of wattles stemmed from the A.N.A., which chose it as a patriotic emblem. It was also

recommended by the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria, whose members were responsible for the original plantings. The wattles, once just around the perimeter, are now found throughout the park.

Both the Tramways Shelter (1928) and the Chalet (1928) were designed by the tramways' architect, A G Monsborough, who studied with the famous English architect Seton Morris. His art-deco buildings are very akin to the design of the Chalet. In 1928 tramways cables were installed along the driveway. The Curator's Cottage was completed in 1932.

The Chalet was an instant success with afternoon teas, band performances and orchestral works, frequent weddings and about 500 patrons attending every weekend. Tennis courts, a croquet green and the golf course were increasingly popular during the 1930's.



SHP1815 – courtesy of Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board News 1966

According to this, the Chalet constructed largely of material from one of the old cable tram engine houses.

On one occasion (c1927) of a 'Trooping of the Colour' by the 24<sup>th</sup> Battalion, a lone pine was planted. This tree remains to this day, as well as a juvenile raised from its seed. Seeds have also been raised by arborists from the Royal Botanical Gardens for planting elsewhere. Crowds of about 20,000 people attended this occasion during the 1930's.

By the early 1950's it was estimated that there were 134,000 annual visitors. They came for a diverse range of activities: running, athletics, cricket, tennis, golf, dancing, social gatherings, scouting activities, Sunday School picnics, children's games and bush walking.



SHP0250 – Children from Wyclif Sunday School, Wattle Park, 1923

Ownership and management of the park transferred from Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Authority in 1983 to MMBW, then Melbourne Water and finally Parks Victoria. Maintenance around the park is a constant. Bridges over the creeks have been replaced twice.

Traces of past usage can still be seen. During a walk I went on earlier in 2022, led by Ray Peace, several early farmhouse building sites were described – near the Basket Members' Cottage (former Curator's Cottage), the 1860's stables, near Riversdale Road at the north of the playgrounds and near the Hercules Creek<sup>1</sup> on the west. There are also remnants of bricks, that once formed the base of a spectators' stand, to be found at the southern end of the oval, lying 10 metres from the oval's edge.

Since 1991, 'Friends of Wattle Park' have planted thousands of mainly indigenous plants and native grasses, as well as weeding and curtailing erosion. Currently there are 15 members of the group which meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of the month at 10am. New volunteers are always welcome.

## **Wattle Park Upgrade by Yvonne Bowyer**

Construction of a new playground and upgrades to trails in Wattle Park have commenced and are due to be completed by late 2022.

In February 2022, the Surrey Hills Historical Society and the Surrey Hills Mont Albert Progress Association made a joint submission in response to the proposed plans. Whilst we acknowledge the current playground and walking tracks in the park are overdue for an upgrade, this must not come at the expense of the park's heritage elements. Our view was that the upgrade should be postponed until the Conservation Management Plan by Lovell Chen is complete.

Heritage Victoria has now issued a conditional permit for the upgrades at Wattle Park which allows Parks Victoria to proceed with works. Fortunately, Parks Victoria has obtained additional funding for repair works to be undertaken on the Curator's Office, the Stables and the Curator's Cottage. A Conservation Management Plan is currently in development and will be finalised soon and a Master Plan will address priorities for heritage management and the area near the fountain. Further community engagement in relation to the Master Plan will take place in early 2023.

The latest information we have received about construction is:

- the park will stay open during construction, however some things will temporarily close
- the existing playground will close
- the BBQs and picnic shelters will temporarily close
- sections of the existing walking tracks will close in stages
- there will be fewer car spaces available as the car park will be used a construction lay down area
- Monsborough Drive will be upgraded with potentially some night works taking place
- general maintenance around the fountain and lily pond will take place.

Note: Parts of the fountain have been temporarily removed and securely stored while the long-term plan for the area is determined through the Master Plan.

The Surrey Hills and Mont Albert Progress Association and the Surrey Hills Historical Society will continue to advocate for preservation of the heritage elements of Wattle Park.

## **Whitehorse Heritage Week - 8 to 15 September 2022**

The theme for 2022 is 'We Came to Whitehorse'. This has been interpreted in a variety of ways.

**Key presentation: Thursday 8 September, 10am-10,45 - Emeritus Professor Graeme Davison, AO FAHA FASSA FFAHS.** Graeme is regarded as Australia's foremost urban historian, and is the author of a

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<sup>1</sup> This runs through the golf course, under Warrigal Road and eventually into Back Creek.

number of books including 'The rise and fall of Marvellous Melbourne'. In his presentation, entitled 'What did they look for then and now?', he will reflect on how COVID has led us to appreciate the values in our own streets and neighbourhoods. Using the Windsor Park estate (where he lives) Graeme will discuss how our forebears thought about these questions, and the more limited sense of community that such places embodied. He will then consider what we now look for in our suburbs and what heritage contributes to it.

Venue is the Matsudo Room, Box Hill Town Hall, 1022 Whitehorse Road, Box Hill.

Free. Bookings essential through Trybooking: <https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing?eid=918582&>

### **Cemetery tour: Friday 9 September, 10.30 am -12.30 pm.**

In a play on words, John Barnao of Box Hill Historical Society and Sue Barnett of Surrey Hills Historical Society will conduct a tour of Box Hill Cemetery entitled 'They stayed in Whitehorse'. This will look at the lives of people who came from overseas, and other locally-born individuals of interest, who are buried in this heritage-listed cemetery.

Meet near the Cemetery Office at 10,20 am.

Cost is \$15.00. Bookings are essential through Trybooking:

<https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing?eid=918386&>

### **Surrey Hills Historical Society Trivia Night – Friday 28 October, Chandler Room of the Neighbourhood Centre, 157 Union Road, 7.30 pm for 8 pm start.**

We all like trivia! And Trivia Nights can be great fun! This one is sure to be that as the wonderful Graham O'Rourke has agreed to be our Trivia Master! And of course there will be prizes.

Get together a table of 8 or join with others to form a team.

BYO nibbles for the table to share. There will be a bar with wine, beer and soft drink at reasonable prices.

Tea, coffee and cake provided.

Booking is essential through Trybooking – the link is <https://www.trybooking.com/CBLDP>

Further enquiries:

Sue Barnett on 0417 368990 or Alison Dews on 0417 967425

