



Surrey Hills Historical Society Newsletter: June 2022

Meetings of the Surrey Hills Historical Society are held on the 3rd 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.

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@surreyhillscnc.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

General Committee: Keith Wilson

Newsletter editor: Sue Barnett

Address for postage: C/o Surrey Hills

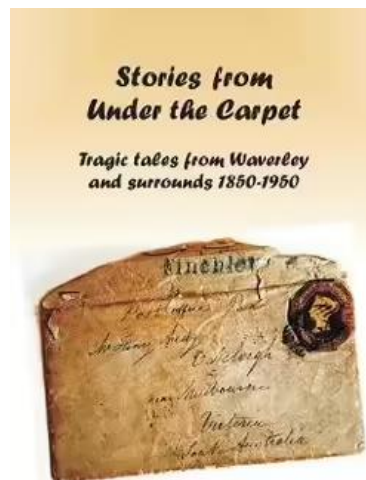
Neighbourhood Centre

157 Union Road, Surrey Hills, 3127

Forthcoming meetings

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

Tuesday, 21 June at 8pm – Jane Turton will speak about “Stories from Under the Carpet”



Jane Turton & Lynn Mather

Jane is a member of the Waverley Historical Society and joint author along with Lynn Mather (a former resident and family history researcher) of a small collection of true and sometimes tragic historical events that occurred between 1850 and 1950 in the Waverley area. They include crimes, murders and mysteries.

The authors have researched the events in an attempt to understand the background of how the events occurred and why – in order to help paint a picture of how the area looked during those years, and how people lived.

Tuesday, 19 July at 8pm – Matthew Ety-Leal of Balwyn Historical Society will speak about George Selth Coppin



Coppin was born on 8 April 1819 at Steyning, Sussex, England. He grew up in the uncertain world of the itinerant theatre, first appearing on the stage as an infant. He attended village day schools between demands of the theatre and learned to play the violin.

In 1842 Coppin left England and, since a toss of a coin decreed Australia and not America, left England in the ‘Templar’ arriving

in Sydney, before going to Hobart, Melbourne, and then Adelaide.

In 1856 George and Gustavus Brooke, an English tragedian, went into partnership. They held jointly the Olympic, the Theatre Royal - where they presented alternate seasons of drama and opera - and the Cremorne Gardens Amusement Park.

George was involved in local and state politics, was a philanthropist, a land developer and promoter in Sorrento and the St John's estate in Hawthorn.

What lies behind our street names – Nuttall Lane

You could be forgiven for not recognizing the name Nuttall Lane. Apart from those living very close by, few would have the need to pass along it. It runs parallel to Mont Albert Road, between Leopold Crescent and St George's Avenue. It was an un-named laneway for many years, but when the then City of Box Hill sought to better identify some of the laneways in the municipality, Jocelyn Hall, then Secretary of this society, suggested the name. It recognizes Egbert John Nuttall (1866-1963) who was born at Growlers Creek (Bright) in NE-Victoria.



each combined and augmented by a further £50 donated by Havelock Tobacco Company. The competition attracted a massive 32,823 entries, many of which featured the Union Jack, the Southern Cross, or native animals.

On 3 September 1901, Lady Hopetoun, wife of the Governor-General, opened a display of the entries in the competition at the Royal Exhibition Building. There were five almost identical entries which shared the £200 prize money. The other winners were Ivor Evans, a fourteen-year-old schoolboy from Melbourne; Leslie John Hawkins, a teenager apprenticed to an optician from Sydney; Annie Dorrington, an artist from Perth; and William Stevens, a ship's officer from Auckland, New Zealand.

Nuttall became an architect with the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works. An internet search reveals nothing about his career, but there are many references to him in relation to him being a co-designer of the Australian flag.

In advance of Federation, the Review of Reviews of Australasia actually pre-empted the Federal Flag Design Competition announced by Prime Minister Edmund Barton in 1901. The two contests merged with the £75 prize money of



On this day, the new Australian flag flew for the first time from the top of the Exhibition Building well in advance of it being formally approved by the Imperial Authorities in England. It was not until late in 1902 that the Australian Government was formally notified that the flag had been approved by King Edward VII and not until 20 February 1903 that this approval was officially gazetted.

At the time of the competition Egbert Nuttall lived at 47 Wandsworth Road, Surrey Hills. From 1952 until his death in 1963, aged 91 years, he lived at 4 Albert Crescent. He named his homes 'Mirabooka' meaning Southern Cross in an Aboriginal dialect.

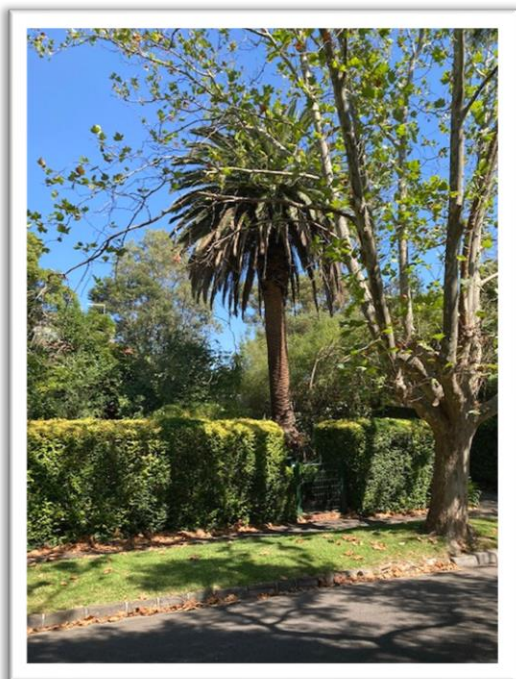


Left: 47 Wandsworth Road, Surrey Hills, May 2013 - <https://www.realestate.com.au/sold/property-house-vic-surrey+hills-113607543>

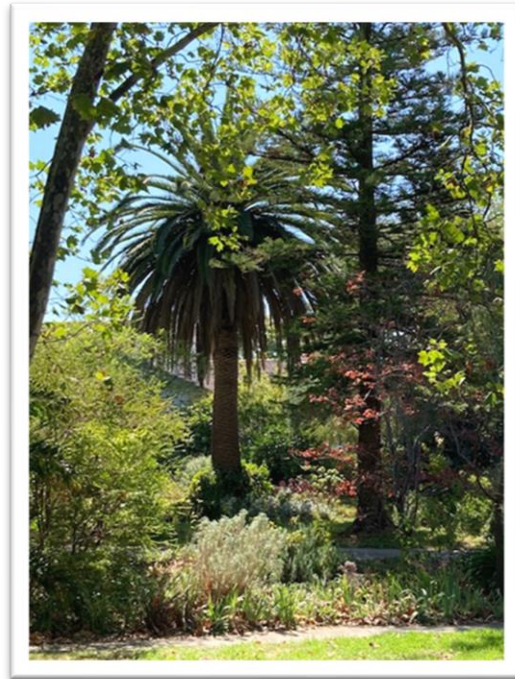
Right: 4 Albert Crescent, Surrey Hills - <https://www.propertyvalue.com.au/property/4-albert-crescent-surrey-hills-vic-3127/13397199>

Errata and further details regarding Phillip Dews' article on Kingston Road and surrounds, as published in the April newsletter -

Errata: Inadvertently the captions on the palm tree photos were reversed in the April newsletter. The mature palm trees situated on 12 Kingston Road and 1 West Road are thought to mark the entrance to what was the original farm house in Guildford Road.



Left: 12 Kingston Road



Right: 1 West Road

Further information provided by Phillip:

1. In relation to W Creek: The western end of Kingston Road, from Chatham Road to Junction Road, originally ran immediately adjacent to the railway line, however, the 1912 subdivision of the area

included the enclosure of W Creek in a brick barrel drain so that the road was moved down the hill and an access laneway was left behind the houses that were subsequently built. W Creek originates northeast of Union Road and is now fully enclosed, flowing in the gully behind the properties in Croydon Road and Sunbury Crescent, crossing Robinson Road diagonally into the Army site to run to the rear of the properties along Kingston Road as far as Junction Road, then dropping to the front of the western properties, running under Kingston Road to Chatham Road.

2. In relation to the Council Depot: . In 1917 part of the depot was gifted to the Army (with the proviso that it be returned to the Council if the Army no longer required the site) and the original Army building was constructed. The whole site became Commonwealth of Australia land in 1953, however, Sands and MacDougall has part of the site as still being used by the Council as late as 1965.

Phillip is continuing to research his local area with an article on the rifle club to appear in a future newsletter. A copy of his full article on Kingston Road and Surrounds will be deposited with the Boroondara Library Service Local History Collection.

House histories – ‘Brownmoor’, 14 Leopold Crescent

We are often asked by residents to help them with researching the history of their homes. Fortunately, Allan Holt’s wonderful records – his property indexes and individual file cards - are a great start to any search. Sometimes Alan compiled mini histories, presumably in response to a resident’s query. Recently I came across one such record and reproduce it here as it some interesting details of a number of early residents.

The property was sold on 26 February 2022 following a campaign by Marshall White in which sadly its land value was a feature of the advertising.

“This captivating slate roofed Victorian family home is presented in comfortable order throughout yet offers endless scope to further modernise and extend if desired or potentially re-develop (STCA) on this substantial allotment of 920sqm approximately.

The home is set in established garden surrounds with an in ground pool and offers a forever home opportunity for a wonderful family lifestyle in the highly regarded Windsor Park Estate with train, bus, schools, Hamilton Street and Union Road village shopping and cafes literally at your doorstep.

Well-presented throughout it offers a wide double arched entrance Hall, elegant formal living room (OFP), separate formal dining room (possible 5th bedroom), 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, laundry, well equipped kitchen with adjacent meals and family room (OFP) overlooking pool area and established rear garden. Other attributes include double carport, gas ducted heating, possible ROW access and numerous period features throughout.”



Ref: Photos and quote - <https://www.realestate.com.au/sold/property-house-vic-mont+albert-138441295>

14 Leopold Crescent, Surrey Hills: Lot 170, being a portion of the third subdivision of Windsor Park Estate of 1884 (LP No 661) with a frontage of 53 feet 7 inches & depth average 151 feet.

The property originally consisted of four lots, Nos 169,170, 171 and 172 with a total frontage of 250 feet to Leopold Crescent.

The four lots were purchased in 1885 by Edwin Drewett Dyer¹, a retired hotel manager. He sold them in 1887 to H W Sinclair, an accountant who had the current house built in 1888. It was under mortgage to the Eastern Investment Company (of which Dyer was a director), which repossessed the property in 1889.

List of occupiers:

(Ref: Sands & McDougall's directories for 1887-1970 and rate books of Nunawading Shire Council, 1889-1910.)

1888	H W Sinclair (accountant)
1889	J Inch (gentleman), tenant
1890-1891	M Williams (broker), tenant
1892-1900	Harrison Rotherham (tea merchant), owner
1901	Mrs Lear, tenant; Miss Anne Wiseman, owner
1902	William Raff (banker), tenant; Miss Anne Wiseman, owner
1903	Frank Perks (clerk), tenant; Miss Anne Wiseman, owner
1904-1915	William Watchorn (teacher), owner
1916-1922	Rowland Henry Head (manager)
1923	James Hope
1924	Richard E Newton
1925-1926	Andrew Mason
1927-1937	'Ormiston' Girls School' (Heads: Misses Russell & Small)
1937-1939	George J Charlton
1940-1941	Arthur Wilson McFeeters (fibro-cement manufacturer)
1942-1949	Thomas Shaw Fitchett (publisher)
1950-1959	Mrs Edith Amy Fitchett (home duties)
1960-1975	Thomas Henry Bell (solicitor).

Edwin Drewett Dyer was one of the prominent subdividers of land at Surrey Hills during the land boom of the later 1890's. He was a Nunawading Shire Councillor (1886-1889), claiming at one time that he paid more rates than any other ratepayer in the Shire. He was born in Wiltshire in 1836. He migrated to Australia in 1853. When he retired, ostensibly to raise poultry in Surrey Hills, he was manager of Scott's Hotel in Collins Street². Owner of racehorses, his horse "Sibyl" won the Australian Cup of 1887.³ He died in 1889 at 'his country home' at Mt Macedon.

Harrison Rotherham was a prominent Surrey Hills resident from the early 1890's until his death in 1935. He kept goats while resident at Leopold Crescent. In the Box Hill Reporter of 11 March 1898, it was reported that he had "bitterly complained" to the Council that his goats had tice been wrongfully seized and impounded by the Shire Inspector for wandering on vacant land. In 1889 he was elected Chief Ruler of the

¹ Death registration gives his name as Edwd Drewett Dyer.

² Scotts Hotel was situated at 444 Collins Street, It was built in 1860 and was originally known as "the city home of country people". It stood on the north side of Collins Street opposite the western market of Melbourne. The site was first occupied by the Lamb Inn in 1837, renovated as the Clarendon Family Hotel in 1852 and then purchased by Edward Scott in 1860. Scotts Hotel was renowned for the pastoral property auctions held there, as the gathering place for racehorse owners and breeders, as the Melbourne residence of English cricketers like WG Grace and as Dame Nellie Melba's favourite hotel. The prestige of the hotel had diminished by the mid-20th century and ceased trading in 1961 when the building was purchased by the Royal Insurance Company, ending its claim to be the oldest continuously licensed site in Victoria. It was demolished in 1962.

Ref: <https://www.cbdnews.com.au/scotts-hotel-melbourne>

³ Internet records of winners of the Australian Cup do not support this statement.

Surrey Hills tent of the Independent Order of Rechabites. He was active in the Surrey Hills Progress Association and took part in the annual Empire Day Celebrations. In 1900 he moved to “Ripley”, 41-45 Kent Road,⁴ Surrey Hills (once the Missionary Retreat of the Continuing Presbyterian Church)⁵, and then in 1912 to 24 Albion Road, Surrey Hills, where he built ‘Thurlecroft’, claimed to be the first Victorian home built of concrete bricks. He was also prominent in the establishment of the Canterbury “Model” State School.



SH2111: ‘Thurlecroft’, 24 Albion Road taken by Ken Hall in 2000.

William Watchorn – It was during his ownership of the property that it was first called ‘Brownmoor’. He was a prominent layman of the Methodist Church, and a son of Robert Watchorn, pioneer of “the village” of St Kilda, at whose home the first Methodist services were held in 1854.

Rowland Henry Head was also a prominent Methodist layman. His wife, Isabella, died suddenly during a church service in November 1921. They had six children, all four sons of which fought in World War 1; one son, William was killed in action. The two girls both married sons of local pioneering families; Deborah to an Aspinall⁶, and Isabella to Ernest de Graaff⁷, son of James de Graaff, one of the founders of the Australian Natives Association. The Head family renamed the property ‘Claremont’.⁸

⁴ This was apparently built for Harrison Rotherham and is also extant; current address is 41 Kent Road and it is now known as “Fernside”.

⁵ C1950-1970

⁶ Deborah Pratt Head to Clarence Aspinall -Vic 6341 / 1921

⁷ Isabella Head to Ernest James de Graaff – Vic 5946 / 1924

⁸ The October 2021 newsletter featured an article about the Head family in relation to the trees in Churchill Street that residents believe to be memorial trees. It is said that there were originally nine trees planted by citizens of Mont Albert to recognize the four Head brothers and five of their friends from the Mont Albert area who enlisted and served in the great war. The first of the nine to enlist was William Walter James (Will) Head, who lost his life in the first wave of landings at Gallipoli on the morning of 25 April 1915. The trees were not planted in the years following the cessation of hostilities, but purportedly on 25 April 1965, 50 years after Will’s death. It now appears that none of these trees will survive the LXRA project works.



Left: This photo shows the Head family before the move to Surrey Hills when they were living at Ferntree Gully. Parents Rowland and Isabella are seated. The 6 children from left to right are: William Walter James, Deborah Pratt (John's grandmother), Fawcett Dinsdale, Isabella jun. (seated), Gordon Alick, Rowland (jun.) Henry Jack. Photo courtesy of John Trevorrow.

Right: Gordon Head seated on the left with Ernest De Graaff of Charles Street, Surrey Hills, who later married his sister Isabella. It was taken in September 1917, following their enlistment in June.

This photo is from the Australian War Memorial collection: ref DACS1038

Ormiston Girls' School was established in 1849 in Lonsdale Street, Melbourne (close to where Myers Store is currently located) by a Miss Jessie Henderson and her mother. In 1872 it passed into the hands of Misses Elizabeth and Anne Singleton, who moved the school to Mont Albert Road in 1900. In 1927, under the supervision of Misses Russell and Small, the school was moved to No 14 Leopold Crescent. The main house was used for boarders. A wooden school room was erected on the adjoining lot (Nos 16 and 18). In 1937 the school was moved to 'Nyora' St John's Avenue, Mont Albert, the former home of Felix Lloyd, Managing Director of Buckley and Nunn Ltd.

The McFeeters family commenced manufacturing fibrocement at Surrey Hills during the building boom of the 1920's, being sub-contractors for W J Vine Pty Ltd who conducted a large timber yard at the time.⁹

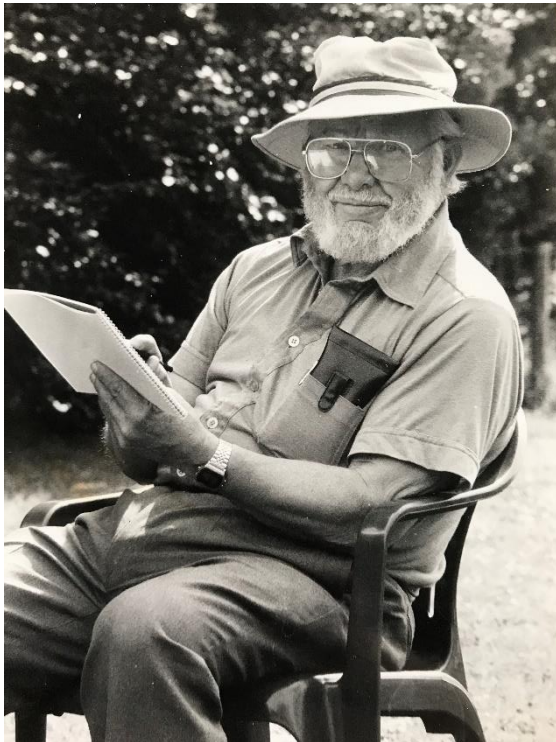
Thomas Shaw Fitchett – Until his retirement in 1945, Fitchett was Managing Director of Fitchett Bros Pty Ltd, printers and publishers of 360 - 370 Flinders Street, Melbourne. They published 'The Review of Reviews' (1900-1910) and were the original publishers of 'The New Idea' which they inaugurated in August 1902. It was taken over in 1945 by Southdown Press. Fitchett was also a prominent Methodist layman, related to the Rev Dr William Henry Fitchett, first principal of Methodist Ladies' College.¹⁰

⁹ Arthur Wilson McFeeters was born in Beechworth in 1905. Electoral rolls describe him as a fibrous plasterer or simply plasterer. His brother David William McFeeters is similarly described and lived with him some of the time. Arthur married a widow in 1931. They lived at a number of Surrey Hills addresses including 15 Charles Street and 9 View Street.

¹⁰ Arthur Wilson Fitchett (1874-1949) was the 3rd son of Rev Dr William Henry Fitchett and his first wife Jemima Shaw. He lived in Canterbury prior to moving to Surrey Hills.

According to Wikipedia, the magazine was subtitled 'A Women's Home Journal for Australia'. In 1911 the magazine was renamed as 'Everylady's journal', but in 1928 the title was changed to 'New Idea'. Fitchett Brothers changed the name of their company to Southdown Press (later renamed Pacific Magazines). Following World War 2 the company was acquired by Keith Murdoch.

Vale Arthur Ernest Tonkin: 1921-2022



The following tribute was published in the June/July edition of the Surrey Hills Neighbourhood News. Thanks to Arthur's daughter Helen for her assistance and for providing the photo of Arthur, which featured on the order of service at his funeral, depicting him with his sketchbook. Arthur loved drawing and watercolour painting; pencils, paints and a sketchbook were never far away. The tribute was entitled "Proud to be a local" and recalls that on many occasions Arthur remarked that he had lived most of his life in two streets in Surrey Hills.

On 28 April the Uniting Church in Canterbury Road swelled with a congregation gathered to pay tribute to and celebrate the long life of this gentle man, who was proud to have lived most of his life in 3127, first in Tower Street and after marriage in Windsor Crescent.

Arthur was five when his parents moved from Cobram to Surrey Hills, along with brothers Eric and Max; sister Lois was born soon after. Arthur attended Surrey Hills Primary, as did his children Thomas, Helen and Ted. He went on to Box Hill High School, leaving in 1937 to start work after gaining his Intermediate Certificate. His early jobs were in retail hardware.

With the outbreak of war, Arthur joined the army and served as a transport driver in the Northern Territory for 4 years, during which time he was granted leave to marry Nancy Powell, whom he had met at the youth group of the Surrey Hills Methodist Church. The church remained a corner stone of Arthur's life. He was active in all aspects of church life; lay preaching and the choir being particular passions.

Arthur's involvement in the wider community was recognized when he received the Surrey Hills Citizen of the Year in 2001. He was an active contributor to SHNC activities, in particular the 'Sing-Along' afternoons and as a driver of the community bus. He was also a foundation member and President of the Surrey Hills Historical Society. His knowledge and recall of local people, events and detail was quite extraordinary. He loved historical research and spoke and wrote on many topics, amongst his special interests were paddle steamers and early shipping. Historical Society meetings will not be the same without Arthur's insights.

Other forthcoming activities – Meeting of the Association of Eastern Historical Societies – Saturday 25 June, 1.30-4pm

Our society is a member of this umbrella body, which meets about 4-5 times a year. Member societies cover a broad geographic area from Camberwell to the Dandenongs, Lilydale and out to the Upper Yarra.

It is our turn to host the meeting at which Mandy Bede, President of the Ephemera Society of Australia, will be speaking on the topic of 'Why local history societies should collect ephemera'. There are also reports about recent activities and issues confronting members, with time to chat over afternoon tea – and a raffle!

As hosts, there are a number of tasks involved in running a successful meeting and assistance from some of our 'quiet' members would be greatly appreciated! If you can assist with provision of afternoon tea or on the day, please contact Sue on 0417 368 990.