

WILLOUGHBY HISTORY CHATTERS

MAY 2011

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

CHURCHES UPDATE Part 7	2
HISTORY OF NORTHBRIDGE	3
SOCIETY NEWS	3
HISTORIC PHOTO	4
CONTACT DETAILS	4
COMING EVENTS	4

SPACE, PLACE & IDENTITY: New Directions for NSW museums

Three WDHS management committee members, Chris Lattimore, Judy Peters and Bob McKillop, attended the Museums Australia (MA) NSW symposium *Place, Space & Identity* held at Macquarie University on 18-19 April. There were many interesting and challenging speakers and it offered the opportunity to meet and catch-up with a wide cross-section of the museum community, including those involved in the museums studies programs at Macquarie University.

Core themes were the challenges facing the museum sector with reduced public funding, and the explosion in information technology with the associated rise in the use of social media. The keynote speaker, Professor Amareswar Galia, highlighted the need to recognise diversity in all its forms and this theme was taken up throughout the event. There was recognition that we need to provide our indigenous peoples with their own space to capture National Indige-

nous knowledge and culture, backed by a network of sites of cultural interaction.

Adapting to changes in technology was covered by a number of speakers. Museums have been slow in embracing technologies that help them to remain relevant and sustainable. For local museums, a key challenge is managing information—the keeping of records and sharing of information—but there is also the need to engage visitors before, during and after a visit to the museum.

Chris and Judy attended a demonstration of a Microsoft 'light table' for museum use, which they found to be an exciting application that can help make museums more interactive for visitors.

Peta Knott of Museum Victoria generated a lot of interest with her description of the 'Victoria Collection' project, which has developed an

online catalogue system specifically for small community museums, enabling them to catalogue their objects with links to supplementing archives to research their material and build links with other museums.

We had the opportunity to visit three museums on campus and learn about the challenges facing the small Australian Tennis Museum from curator Aimee Deaves. They face similar problems to us at the Willoughby Museum and we felt considerable pride that our new Tales of Flat Rock Creek exhibition is of a high standard compared with our counterparts.

Thanks are extended to Museums Australia, especially Paul Bentley for his support to the WDHS. For further information about the Symposium please speak to any of us.

Judy Peters, Chris Lattimore and Bob McKillop

The Willoughby Museum is open each Sunday afternoon from 1-4pm

Check out our topics at the monthly meetings at the Dougherty Centre and come along (p 4)

RIGHT: A demonstration of the Microsoft 'light table' at the MA symposium was a highlight.



UPDATE ON OUR RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS, Part 7

St Stephens Anglican Church, at the corner of Mowbray Road and Sydney Street is one of the three Willoughby churches whose foundation stones were all laid in 1871. The Methodist Church on the corner of Mowbray and Pacific Highway is now in the Lane Cove Municipality, while the original 1871 Congregational Church in Penshurst Street has been a private residence for many years.

Consequently St Stephens, now grown and developed, is the oldest church in the municipality. There is a Heritage Conservation Order on the church which was initially designed by the leading architect Edmund Thomas Blacket in the transitional Romanesque-Early English manner, but completed by his son Arthur (and partner in the firm) after his father's death in 1883. Updating the development of the church since 1988, a further addition to its buildings was opened in early 2002. This new building has provided a much needed church office with additional space for staff, a crèche, and modern toilets.

Ministers since 1988 have been Rev. Paul Bayliss, Ross Nicholson and currently Graham Wintle. He is supported by an assistant minister, a youth

worker and a parish administrator. In addition there are volunteers helping in the office and with the logistics of weddings, funerals etc. Administrative work for churches has become more demanding and complex because of the requirements of legislation such as the GST, safety and fire regulations. An additional burden is vetting and formally clearing all people working with children.

The once famous St Stephens church choir no longer exists on a permanent basis, but is brought together for specific occasions. The organ, built by Hill Norman and Beard in 1929 (and enlarged and renovated by that firm in 1968,) is still used for some services, but there is now a piano and an instrumental group. The church's musical tradition is maintained by the volunteer music director who arranges instruments to suit the needs of the day. The director is a paid office assistant who undertakes this additional role on a voluntary basis. She organises the monthly organ recitals, encouraging young people to perform at an early stage of their careers.

St Stephens contribution to the Bicentennial celebrations in 1988 was a huge Anzac/Bicentenary Service. It laid the foundations of an important tradition, the annual Anzac Service normally held on the

Sunday before Anzac Day. This year, because of the clash of Easter with Anzac Day it was held a week earlier. In the past it has been attended by prominent citizens including General Cosgrove, Governor Marie Bashir and the Archbishop of Sydney.

Church facilities are used by several organisations including a tennis club, a garden club, ballet classes and a play group of ten to 20 children organised by mothers and church volunteers, which meets for two hours in the morning on week days. The church also organises musical, youth and church events and Alpha, an international course that St Stephens hosts two or three times a year. It uses videos, tapes and discussions usually held around a friendly get-together meal.

My thanks to Don McPhail, current voluntary archivist, for the generous time he spent helping me put together this information.

Mollie Shelley



St Stephens Anglican Church on the corner of Mowbray Road and Sydney Street in Willoughby, photographed on 22 April 2011.

Mollie Shelley photo

HISTORY OF NORTHBRIDGE PRESENTATION

At the general meeting on 9 April, WDHS member Pam Clifford presented the second of the lecture series for 2011 covering 'Aspects of the history of Northbridge'.

Pam pointed out that the area now known as Northbridge was only accessible by water via Middle Harbour for much of the nineteenth century. With the estate developments and housing just prior to the First World War the district had become associated with the Suspension Bridge built during the land boom of the 1880s. Once the government electric tramway was extended across the bridge from Cammeray, the way was open for develop-

ment and the naming of the new suburb of Northbridge in 1913.

Pam suggested that for much of its history, Northbridge was a suburb of modest bungalows. Only in recent years have much larger mansions predominated.

Pam illustrated her history of the development of Northbridge through illustrations and clips of film drawn from 'newsreels', home movies, and promotional features from the National Film and Sound Archive collection in Canberra. These included opening of the new electric tramway in 1913, rebuilding the Suspension Bridge in the 1930s; Middle Harbour and Castlecrag

in the 1920s, Sir Edward Hallstrom feeding parakeets; and modern architecture in Northbridge after the Second World War. Pam kindly left on short loan to the Society the DVD 'Sydney North of the Harbour Moving Memories 1899-1970s' which contains historic photos and moving images of the North Shore.

Pam Clifford is researching a book for the centenary of Northbridge in 2013. Peter McNair, President of the Northbridge Progress Association, has written to the Society seeking support for the 2013 centenary celebrations.

Geoff Sherington

SOCIETY NEWS

We have had good attendances at the Museum on our regular Sunday afternoons opening days since the opening of the Tales of Flat Rock Creek exhibition. Visitors receive an overview of the museum and then generally prefer to explore it in depth in their own time. A significant proportion of visitors have revived their own memories of excursions to the Flat Rock Tip and similar subjects covered in the exhibition.

Following a debriefing session on the planning and implementation of the Tales of Flat Rock Creek exhibition, the volunteers working with our museum consultant, Helen Tierney, moved to workshops on the procedures and skills for effective collection management. These steps are being documented into a Collection Management Manual as we proceed. Additional volunteers are always welcome (see p4).

The WDHS has made arrangements to host a training course on using the MOSAIC collection cataloguing software on 7-8 July. We have invited par-

ticipants from other North Sore historical societies to take up this opportunity. Following completion of this course, Helen Tierney will provide further hands-on training in cataloguing our actual collection objects.

We have a number of groups scheduled to visit the Museum over the coming weeks. These are:

- The Willoughby City MOSAIC Community Representatives will be holding its next meeting there on Friday 6 May;
- Spinners & Weavers group, 10am on 9 May; and
- Inner Wheel group at 10.30am on 19 May,

Assistance with the tasks of preparing for and handling these groups is always welcome. Please contact Judy Baird on 9438 5352.

As part of the process of enhancing our financial accounting and reporting systems to better reflect the assets and liabilities of the Society, we had a

valuation of our property at 58 Johnson Street undertaken during April. This valued the land and buildings at \$1.1 million and the contents, excluding the museum collection, is valued at \$72,000. In response to this valuation, our buildings and contents insurance have been upgraded to reflect their actual value.

Geoff Sherington has developed a most interesting program of talks and workshops for our monthly Saturday general meetings during 2011, with a much stronger focus on Willoughby history (see page 4). Please come along and bring your friends. Visitors are most welcome to join us and then chat over refreshments after the presentation.

Please note also our forthcoming tours. We hope to see more of you on these outings, which offer a good opportunity for meeting with friends and learning about our history.



The dramatic image of the Flat Rock Tip in 1964 is featured in the current exhibition at the Museum. The Hallstrom refrigerator factory is in the middle distance with first Channel 9 TV tower behind.

CORRECTIONS

The guide in the caption for the Carisbrook House photo in the April issue was Terry Eakin, not Derek Smith.

COMING EVENTS

Members' Meetings

The second Saturday of the month at the Dougherty Centre, commencing at 2.30pm.

14 May, One-on-One with Paul Storm. The first in a series of discussions with long-time Willoughby residents.

11 June, Ralph Hawkins, Society of Australian Genealogists. 'Black-mailing the Governor? Australia's first successful strike. Ralph is currently researching timber getters along the Lane Cove River and will cover their strike.

9 July, Geoff Sherington. Geoff Sherington will show how school records can help us understand 19th century settlement patterns and the aspirations of families.

Tours & Events

Wednesday 18 May: Bob McKillop will lead a walking tour of the Griffin Conservation Area in Castlecrag. Commencing outside the Griffin Centre shops at 10.15am, the tour will take 2-2½ hours, returning to the shops for lunch. 267 or 275 bus from Chatswood, 207 from City/North Sydney or Lindfield, 203 from City/North Sydney. **Bookings:** Bob or Kerry on 9958 4516; cost \$5 per head (\$3 for members) - please book early.

Wednesday 13 July: Tour to the Jewish Museum at Darlinghurst. Details next issue.

Willoughby Museum

'Tales of Flat Rock Creek: Rugged, Ruined and Reclaimed. Our new exhibition

explores the impact of urban development on a pristine natural environment since the European settlement, through the eyes of Willoughby residents.

CONTACTS

Willoughby Museum

Our museum is located at *Boronia*, 58 Johnson Street, Chatswood.

Opening hours: 1-4pm each Sunday. Admission \$4 adults; \$3 concession; \$2 child, \$8 family.

Patron: Pat Reilly, Mayor of Willoughby

Management Committee:

President: Paul Storm (9419 7354)

Vice-Presidents Mary Thom and Judy Baird

Secretary: Chris Lattimore

Treasurer: John Levings

Museum Curator Bob McKillop

Committee Members: Joan Antarakis, Betty Doggett, Harry Fox, Judy Peters, Geoffrey Sherington.

Volunteers required

We have a range of interesting and rewarding tasks at the museum. Please contact Bob McKillop (details below) for more information.



WILLOUGHBY DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

58 Johnson Street, Chatswood

Phone: (02) 9410 3203

E-mail contact:

Secretary: info@willoughbydhs.org.au

Editor: rfmckillop@bigpond.com