

# WILLOUGHBY HISTORY CHATTERS

JUNE 2016

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<b>MUSEUM UPDATE</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>MEMBERS' CORNER</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>SPEEDO PHOTO COLLECTION</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>O'DONOGHUE PHOTOS</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>FROM THE ARCHIVES</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>CONTACT DETAILS</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>COMING EVENTS</b>	<b>6</b>

## REMEMBERING RURAL WILLOUGHBY EXHIBITION

Our new exhibition for the 2016 National Trust Heritage Festival was formally opened by our patron, the Mayor of Willoughby City Gail Giles-Gidney, on Sunday 17 April with some 30 or so members and visitors in attendance.

The exhibition was developed by our curator Bob McKillop, with assistance from Rob Wilson, Margaret McNaught, Terry Fogarty and Paul Storm, over the preceding weeks. It explores the role of Willoughby's Chinese market gardeners from the 1880s through to 1949 on the one hand; and examines the influence of the changing ethnic character of the Municipality of Willoughby (now city) on the types of food we consume and where we eat.

The story of the Chinese market gardeners is told in panels, supported by large photographs on loan from Ian Rannard and items from the museum's collection that relate to the gardening practices of the past.

The influence of ethnic diversity on our food and eating habits is also covered in the panels, telling the story of our food, backed by items received through the generous support of the various cultural groups that engage with the MOSAIC program of Willoughby Council. They have loaned items from Armenia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan and Malaysia. These items have been supplemented by objects from the museum collection and loans from WDHS members, to give the exhibition a broad selection of objects and stories about the food of yesterday and today.

Following the opening on 17 April, there has been a steady stream of visitors during our regular Sunday opening hours, while tour groups have visited during the week. They include five Year 9 classes from Willoughby Girls' High School on 3 May, 16 visitors from the Ku-ring-gai Historical Society on 12 May and 43 Year 3 students from Our Lady of Dolours School on 31 May.

## COMING EVENTS

**Saturday 11 June:** Kere-ma-Gae Topp speaking on the Parramatta Female Factory (see p6).

**Saturday 18 June:** 'Trash & Treasure' event at the Willoughby Museum (see p6)

**Saturday 3 September:** 'Meccano Day' at the Museum, 10am-4pm



Mayor Gail delivers her presentation at the museum (left), and (above) Crs Lynne Saville and Wendy Norton with Paul Storm and Gail at the museum on 17 April 2016. Mary Thom photos

## MUSEUM UPDATE

Our new exhibition, Rediscovering Willoughby's Rural Legacy, focuses on the Chinese market gardeners who worked in the municipality from the 1870s. The exhibition tells the stories of individual Chinese market gardeners, the tools they used and recollections from the past of the interaction between European residents and their Chinese neighbours. Photographs from the era loaned by Ian Rannard show a selection of the gardens.

The exhibition also explores how post World War II immigration, initially from war-torn Europe and subsequently from Asia, profoundly changed the character and style of the food that Willoughby residents now consume, the way food is prepared and the manner in which it is consumed.

Our thanks are extended to Rita Leung, the Multicultural Services Director at Willoughby Council, for mobilising members of the MOSAIC ethnic groups to loan items relating to food preparation and consumption in their respective cultures. We also thank Marina Avagyan (Armenia), Sophia Huang, Helen Lau, Dr Kenny Lau, Zhang Ye, Chang Yan (China), Saro Krishnan (India), Chizuku Annakin (Japan) and Marianne LaGrasse (Italy) for their support.

As documented on pages 4 and 5, we have also received two donations of significant photographs for the museum collection in recent months. The first were over a hundred 35mm negatives taken by local architect Martin O'Donoghue for his post-graduate studies. Practically all of them were taken of streets, buildings, parks and parking lots in the Chatswood CBD in spring or autumn 1978. We have scanned these images as high resolution tiff files and they provide an important record of the changes occurring in the Chatswood business district at this time.

The second group of images are from George Simpson, the nephew of Jessie Simpson who worked at the Speedo knitting mill in Artarmon for 46 years. George found the link to our Speedo collection on the internet and offered to provide scans of the images that have been passed on to him by Jessie Simp-

son's family. He has scanned 21 photographs and documents pertaining to Jessie's career at the Artarmon Speedo factory, including a number of workers on the 'cutting floor' at the factory and the presentation ceremony on her on retirement.



A section of the display of tools, artefacts and photographs pertaining to the Chinese market gardens in Willoughby (top), and the Japanese and Armenian items for preparing and consuming food (below). Bob McKillop photos



## MEMBERS' CORNER AND THE APRIL MEETING

The general meeting on 9 April was attended by 24 members and visitors with president Paul Storm in the chair.

The acting treasurer Bob McKillop reported that as of 31 March the cheque account balance was \$2619.65 and term deposits amounted to \$46,990.68. Bob also advised that he was negotiating with Antonia Connolly of Kameruka Bookkeeping to manage the day-to-day EDHS transactions at a rate of \$90 per month.

Bob also presented a museum update, noting that the current exhibition would be dismantled the following day in preparation for setting up the new exhibition, 'Remembering Rural Willoughby', in readiness for the official opening by the Mayor on Sunday 17 April. Bob also noted the recent donation of the 1978 Chatswood photographs by Martin O'Donoghue, an architect who grew up in Johnson Street, Chatswood.

The Secretary presented proposed changes to the constitution foreshadowed at the AGM in February to incorporate recent changes to the 'Model Rules' by Fair Trading NSW. These included a revised quorum for committee meetings and a motion for their adoption was moved and agreed. In a second motion, an increase in WDHS membership fees for 2017 to \$30 for individuals and \$50 for a family was approved.

Paul Storm then introduced Doug Zihurul as the guest speaker. His presentation was initially hindered by technical problems with the AV projector, but thanks to action by Councillor Lynne Saville, Chatswood library staff came to the rescue with its projector.

Doug's presentation explored the history of artists' prints such as woodcuts, etchings and lithographs. Doug had prepared a PowerPoint presentation covering the various methods of print-making. He gave particular attention to the papers and equipment available to print-makers in different eras. These were supplemented by a selection of prints, including some from the Willoughby Museum collection. Several of these were passed around the room for inspection and, following the presen-

tation, attendees spent time viewing a collection of large prints brought along by Paul Storm.

The meeting rounded off with enthusiastic discussion over refreshments.

Please note the forthcoming events listed on page 6, particularly the 'Trash and Treasure' garage sale at the Museum on Saturday 18 June and the 'Meccano Day' on Saturday 3 September. We hope you can come along to these events and bring your friends.

### 'Trash and Treasure' at the Museum

Saturday 18 June

9.15am to 12 noon



Doug Zihurul make his presentation on the history of art prints at the Willoughby DHS general meeting at Chatswood Library on 9 April 2016. Bob McKillop photo

## NEW PHOTO COLLECTION: Speedo factory, Artarmon

George Simpson has provided the museum with scans of 17 photographs and four documents from the collection of his aunt, Miss Jessie Simpson, who retired from the Artarmon factory marked by a special ceremony on 11 November 1971. She worked for the Speedo Company for 46 years.

In addition to Jean's farewell function, the photographs depict women employees on the cutting floor at the Artarmon factory, including one of Jean in her office. These add significantly to the museum's collection relating to the Speedo head office and factory at Artarmon.



Jessie Simpson (left) posed with two other female employees and Speedo officials at the official opening of the Artarmon factory in 1957.



Jessie Simpson and a fellow employee in their office on the cutting floor at the Speedo factory in Artarmon.



Jessie Simpson poses with the McRae brothers at her award ceremony on 11 November 1971.



LEFT: An overview of the cutting floor at the Speedo factory in Artarmon. The workers, predominantly women, laid out the fabrics on the long tables and then used electric cutting machines to cut out the patterns.



## CHATSWOOD IN 1978—The O'Donoghue collection

As reported on page 3, Castlecrag-based architect Martin O'Donoghue loaned his collection of 35mm negatives of the Chatswood Business Centre to the Willoughby Museum and we have scanned these as high-resolution TIFF files.

Martin grew up in Johnson Street, Chatswood and, following his graduation and employment as an architect, he undertook post-graduate studies in urban design. The photos were taken for a major assignment under this course during 1978.

A small selection of the images are reproduced here. We are planning a display featuring Martin's images.



Railway Street from Chatswood railway station with Kings Theatre and the Hotel Charles in the background.



The office building at 615 Pacific Highway in 1978.

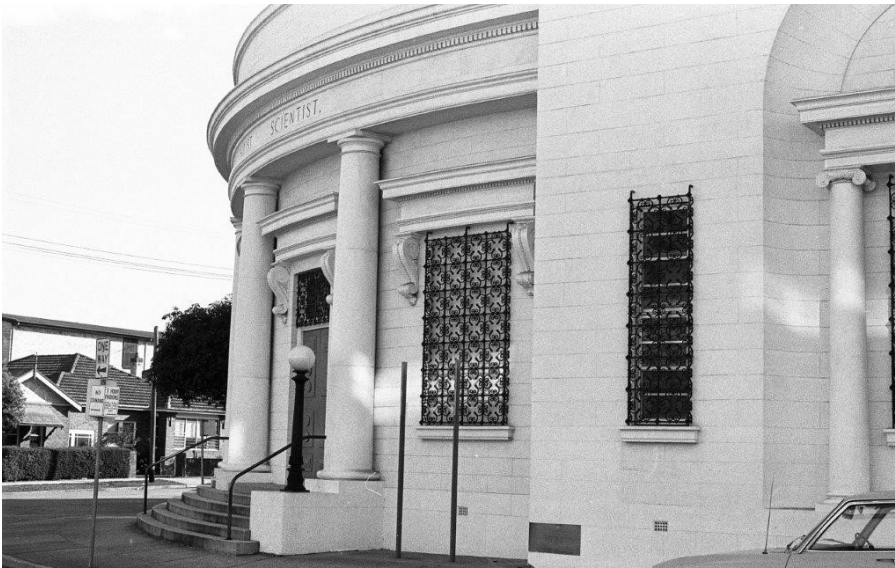


The shops in Sydney Street are now occupied by a large veterinary clinic. In 1978 they served their original purpose as neighbourhood shops.



RIGHT: A grade cricket match on Chatswood Oval.





Among the photos that Martin O'Donoghue took in 1978 were two of the former First Church of Scientists Church at the corner of Albert Avenue and Victor Streets. The site had been sold to developers at this time and the building was awaiting its fate.

## COMING EVENTS

### Members' Meetings

**Held at the Willoughby Room, Willoughby City Library at The Concourse, commencing at 2pm on the second Saturday of even months (except December).**

**Saturday 9 June 2016:** Members' meeting with Kerema-Gae Topp as guest speaker, on Female Factories during the convict era, particularly the Parramatta Female Factory. Kerema-Gae runs Topp Tours which provides regular tours of heritage sites at Parramatta.

**Saturday 13 August:** We anticipate that Ian Thom will be our guest speaker on Sir Henry Parkes. Further details next newsletter.

### Tours & Events

#### Remembering Rural

**Willoughby:** The new exhibition at the Willoughby Museum is open each Sunday afternoon from 1 to 4pm and group bookings are catered for during the week. It will run until September, so come along

the explore our rural past and our changing food cultures.

**Saturday 18 June, 'Trash & Treasure' day at the Museum:** We will be offering a wide selection of household items, personal effects, books and similar items at 58 Johnson Street, Chatswood, from 9.15am. Please tell your friends to come along and snap up a bargain or two!

**Poetry Circle at the Museum:** The Nascent Poets' 'PoetryCircle' meets monthly (7pm on the fourth Tuesday) at the Museum for poetry readings and conversations. For details, please contact: [nascentpoets@gmail.com](mailto:nascentpoets@gmail.com)

**Saturday 3 September, Meccano Day at the Museum:** Our friends at the Meccano Club will be back in action with their creations based on the new-era Meccano sets now available on display. From 10am to 4pm, admission \$5 adults, \$4

## CONTACTS

### WDHS Management Committee:

**President:** Paul Storm (9419 7354)

**Vice-President:** Mary Thom

**Secretary:** Terry Fogarty

**Museum Curator:** Bob McKillop

**Committee Members:** Joan Antarakis, Margaret McNaught, Don Swonnell, Rob Wilson

**Patron:** Gail Giles-Gidney, Mayor of Willoughby City

**Newsletter Editor:** Bob McKillop

### Willoughby Museum

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

**Opening hours:** 1-4pm each Sunday.  
Admission \$5 adults; \$4 concession; \$2 child, \$10 family.

### WILLOUGHBY DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

58 Johnson Street, Chatswood

Phone: (02) 9410 3203

E-mail contact: [wdhs58@gmail.com](mailto:wdhs58@gmail.com)

Editor: [rhmckillop@bigpond.com](mailto:rhmckillop@bigpond.com)

Website: [www.willoughbydhs.org.au](http://www.willoughbydhs.org.au)



The former School of Arts building in Victoria Avenue, Chatswood in 1978. Martin O'Donoghue