

WILLOUGHBY HISTORY CHATTERS

OCTOBER 2012

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**13 October: Jo Harris
talk Chatswood
Library—all welcome
(page 6)**

**21 November: Tour to
Arms of Australia Inn
Museum, Emu Plains
(page 6)**

UPDATE ON OUR RECENT ACTIVITIES

The WDHS management committee has been concerned about the ongoing viability of the society due to the decline in our active membership base and the overhead costs associated with our main asset, the *Boronia* cottage.

With this in mind, Bob McKillop and I met with Nick Tobin, Willoughby Council's general manager, on 7 August and we made a follow-up visit to the Council Depot with Nick and Jacky Talbot on 15 August. Jacky has been designated as the WCC contact officer with the society.

These meetings were very productive and we are pursuing various options for closer ties between the WDHS and Council. I will keep you informed regarding these initiatives.

Nick Tobin sees the society as having a key role in researching and interpreting the history of Willoughby City so as to better inform the community of its past. To this end, we are looking to work closely with the Local Studies Unit at Willoughby Library.

An initial outcome is that arrangements for the off-site storage of our collection items at the Council Depot have now been formalised.

We were saddened at the recent passing of Les

Vaughan, a foundation member and president of the society. Our tribute to Les is on page 2.

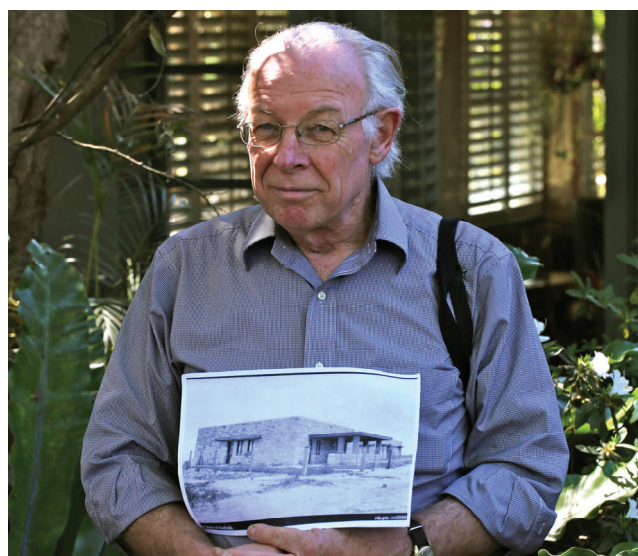
During September we held two important fund-raising events. Judy Baird was again the key organiser of our 'Trash and Treasure' stall in Chatswood Mall on 11 September. Our volunteers, Judy, Mary Thom, Harry Fox, Bob McKillop and Joan Antarakis were kept busy through the day selling a vast range of items and their efforts brought in a return of \$776.

Our contribution to the 2012 Spring Festival was a guided walk of Castlecrag led by Bob McKillop on Sunday 16 September. We had 15 adults and six children on the tour. The participants enjoyed an informative and entertaining insight into the

history of Castlecrag and the people who have contributed to the community over the past century.

Jo Harris, the celebrated family historian of the Ku-ring-gai Historical Society, will be our guest speaker at the general meeting on 13 October. Jo's enthusiasm for history will undoubtedly encourage participants to pursue their own family history. She will outline the basic methodology of family history research and highlight its rewards of surprise and factual knowledge. She will be using practical examples of using marriage records to explore the history of families and groups in the community. Visitors are welcome so please come along (see page 6).

Paul Storm



Paul Storm at the GSDA No 1 house during the Griffin tour.
Matthew Keighery photo

VALE ALFRED LESLIE INNIS ('LES') VAUGHAN (1915-2012)

Les Vaughan was a foundation member of the Society, an inaugural vice-president and life member. He served as president from 1986 until 2000, overseeing the establishment of the Willoughby Museum during this period. Les passed away peacefully in early September.

Les grew up in a challenging age with the Great War raging demanding community sacrifice and support for our armed forces. Then the privations of the Great Depression in the early 1930s made an indelible impression on Les who always preached the importance of thrift and saving.

Les trained as a motor engineer with Wakefield Castrol Limited. He rented a garage in Archer Street, Chatswood and saved his earnings until he purchased the property. He traded for several decades as Vaughan Bros Motor Engineers with a work motto, "for dependability and service".

In 1945 Les married the love of his life, Eileen Bessie (nee Hillier — see *Willoughby History Chatters* Septem-

ber 2010). In order to live closer to work while seeking to pursue Les' love of sailing, the couple found a 'yachtsman's paradise' at Sugarloaf Point on Middle Harbour. Les purchased land at 371 Edinburgh Road, Castlecrag in 1946 and his father-in-law, Len Hillier, built the 'dream house' in 1948 where Les and Eileen lived for the rest of their lives (see the 2010 image below).

Les was strongly family orientated and they remember him as a gentle man, one of cheerful and positive nature, absolutely devoted to his family and caring of friends. The Society has extended its condolences to them.

We also thank John Vaughan for providing the background on his father's life that has been incorporated into this recollection.



MEMBERS' CORNER

We extend a warm welcome to new members, Ian Smith and Joji Vergara who worked in the information technology sector throughout their careers. Ian grew up in Chatswood, while Joji hails from Benquet City in Northern Luzon, the Philippines.

Ian and Joji are already assisting our small group of volunteers with various tasks at the museum on Thursdays, including accessioning collection items on the database, reshaping the office to improve work areas, and updating

our computer system. Their expertise and enthusiasm has been a big boost for our team.

As noted in Paul Storm's report (p 1), we held another successful 'Trash and Treasure' stall in The Mall on 11 September. It also provided an opportunity to promote the society to a wider range of people.

New material on the history of Willoughby is constantly being posted on our website so please check it out on a

regular basis to keep up-to-date on this process. We monitor the use of the website on a monthly basis and the results are most encouraging. We note that family history researchers and those seeking information relating to upcoming anniversaries are using our website as an authoritative source of information.

Please get in touch with us if you have any comments or corrections regarding items on the website; or if you can assist in researching information.

MUSEUM MATTERS

The collection management team has continued with various tasks over the past two months. Lack of storage space has been a challenge and the team has spent some time re-arranging the office and clearing out the garden shed to facilitate working conditions and improve storage arrangements.

We have also purchased a range of archival storage materials and other collection management items under a \$2500 Willoughby Council Community Grant. This includes studio lights and a photographic light box, which have greatly facilitated our task of photographing items being accessioned into the collection. Judy Peters has been undertaking this task, while Joji Vergara, Mary Thom and Bob McKillop have been documenting information about items and entering details in the MOSAiC database.

There has also been an increase in the number of research queries received from the public as a result of our website. These include a request for information on a local family from the Faroe Islands, a tiny Danish dependency in the Atlantic Ocean between Norway and Iceland—check that one out—and from the Castlecove Country Club and Willoughby Public School seeking historical information from us for forthcoming anniversaries. We were able to assist the Castlecove Country Club with information and images for its 80th Anniversary Heritage Exhibition at the clubhouse on 23-24 September. Arrangements to assist Willoughby Public School with its 150th anniversary celebrations are being finalised.

The Willoughby District Historical Society has an important anniversary of its own in 2013. Namely, our cottage and museum, *Boronia*, celebrates its cen-

tenary. To mark this significant event, we are planning a new exhibition on the history of *Boronia* and the South Chatswood Conservation Area within which it is located. We are currently negotiating with a video producer to prepare a DVD as a feature for this exhibition. If you are able to assist with information about the history of residential development in Chatswood from 1913 or, especially, if you can assist us in developing the new exhibition, please get in touch. Any assistance will be greatly appreciated.

Among the recent donations for the museum's collection are a 1960s Speedo beach towel donated by Denis Smith of the Lane Cove Historical Society, historical records from the Acadia Theatre from the Crisp family and an industrial Singer sewing machine used by Len Forsythe at Northbridge donated by John and Marlene Vaughan.



Results from our photo light box! This small souvenir for the 1927 opening of Parliament House in the Evelyn Whiting collection was recently photographed by Judy Peters for entry in our database.



Helen Kamenos with one of the panels she prepared on the history of the Castlecove golf course at the 80th anniversary Heritage Exhibition on 22 September.

RF McKillop photo

UPDATE ON OUR RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS, Part 18

Second Church of Christ, Scientists

The entry for this church in Willoughby Council's 1988 Bicentennial book is brief. It records only that the church on the corner of Albert Avenue and Victor Street had recently been approved for demolition. The heritage listed building in classical revival style fashionable in the US in the early 1900s, was built by Garvan Constructions Pty Limited in 1929 and seated 720 people. The WDHS Museum has photographs of the building and several artefacts rescued from its demolition, while the Willoughby library has reports, drawings and a photographic record prepared by Garvan.

Garvan Constructions had sought permission to build a 12 storey office block on the site. In exchange they had agreed to acquire a new site and build a new church complex. Subsequently the developer landed in financial difficulties and the old church stood forlorn and neglected for several years. The site was bought from the receivers by the Mandarin Club which received Council permission to build a retail, cinema and sporting complex on condition they provided accommodation for the Gordon Rugby Club whose premises next door had also been acquired. The Mandarin Centre was opened in August 1996.

The new church, located on the corner of Albert Avenue and Neridah Street was designed by architects Brewster Murray and holds about half the number of people that could be seated in the old church.

The Church of Christ Scientists does not have traditional clergy but uses lay people as teachers who travel to the

Mother Church in the US for ten weeks training. That church also distributes 26 lesson subjects for use at church services world-wide. There is an annual Get-Together of pupils, at which up to 200 people may attend, generally held at a church on a Saturday.

The church finds it difficult to estimate the size of its present congregation. It has embraced technology to such an extent that many of its people listen and learn on the internet or tune in to the Sunday evening service on radio. The Reading Room and Bookshop on Victoria Avenue in Chatswood is a core activity, serving as a lending library, a reading room with reference books and a computer streaming live services from Boston. It is a Drop-In centre, a study area, has children's stories, CD's and music. Bible readings open to the general public are held there.

Music is important at church services and the Chatswood church has recently acquired a new electronic organ. Several paid professional singers are employed to sing religiously based songs, not hymns, at services. The Sunday School for Healers is for children and youth to age 20 years.

Social activities include a Care Committee to visit the aged and disabled and an Easter Camp, 'Adventure Unlimited', for teenagers, but the main social activities seem to be centred on the Reading Room.

My thanks to librarians Anne Warr and Valerie Field, and also to media representative Carey Arber.

Mollie Shelley



The Second Church of Christ Scientist Church at the corner of Albert Avenue and Nerida Street, Chatswood.
Robyn McKegg photo

KEN DAY, A SIGNIFICANT AUSTRALIAN POTTER

The third son of Dorothy and George Day (Junior), Ken grew up in his parents' home at 5 Crick Street, Chatswood. His grandparents Alice and George Day (Senior) lived next door at number 7. George Senior had worked at the Doulton Factory in London, England and had immigrated to Australia in 1886 moving to the Chatswood area in 1891 where he became the Works Manager at Mashman Brothers Pottery in Victoria Avenue. Ken's father, George Day (Junior), began work at Mashman Brothers Pottery at the age of 13 years and worked there for over 50 years. Ken followed his father and grandfather, beginning work at the Chatswood pottery in 1936 at the age of 15 years, while also studying at East Sydney Technical College.

Three years later, Ken moved to Eric Lowe's new venture at Marrickville which was to become Diana Pottery. The small pottery at this stage was unnamed and the wares unmarked.

Ken was then called up for military training, and a few months later joined the Australian Army. He served for three years until being released early to Diana Pottery, which had defence contracts for drinking mugs, ware-jugs and teapots. On his return Ken fulfilled a variety of roles including clay slip maker, setting kilns, firing and glazing. He also resumed his evening classes at East Sydney Technical College.

Ken became a modeller, mould maker and designer of all new products for the company. The first vase he designed for Diana was the *Cornucopia* No. 1. He was also particularly pleased with his *Embryo* or "beginning of life" series. The shape V39 was designed by Ken, inspired by the Prince of Wales' Feathers as were a set of three



Grecian Key oven to tableware ceramics designed by Ken Day in 1970s.

Photo courtesy Judy Peters

kingfisher wall ornaments. He embossed a utility milk jug with flannel flowers, which inspired a range of pots with Australian Wildflower motifs at Eric Lowe's suggestion.

The name Diana Pottery was inspired by Jack Christopher's interest in Greek mythology. Ken, however, suggested that DIANA be embossed into the base of their moulds to identify their work. Jack insisted on the words 'Diana Australia' be marked in signature style writing.

Ken then moved to Cula pottery where he was able to make moulds for Cula and other potteries. He started his own pottery there named 'Dayel', his surname plus the first two letters of his first wife Ella's name. This he operated from 1955–1957. Demand for his services increased and so he set up business in the former Martin Boyd pottery in Ryde. Here he established a successful business in contract modelling, mould making and designing for many Sydney potteries. These included Martin Boyd, Russell Cowan, Florenz Pot-

tery, Modern Ceramic Pottery and Commonwealth Ceramics.

Ken was contracted to work for Doulton Australia at Chatswood from 1970–1980. Working from a workshop in the backyard of his parents' home in Crick Street, he designed and made the moulds for the *Grecian Key* oven to tableware range for the company. He also instigated the making of a range of garden pots designing and making moulds for both Doulton Australia and later Caroma. He subsequently moved his workshop to Artarmon. One of his last models made for trade was a large pot for the factory in Chatswood in 1986. Ken and his wife Barbara retired to Tarbuck Bay in 1989 and he passed away in September 2012.

Judy Peters

References

1. Interviews with Ken Day and Brian Day 2011
2. Johnson, Dorothy *More People's Potteries*, 2002



Long-standing WDHS member Ron Cant worked with the Navy's Anti-Submarine Detection Unit (ASDEC) during World War II as a machinist making parts for the detection devices. He was delighted to see these items on display at the 'Peace and War' Exhibition at the Garden Island Heritage Centre during our May tour. Harry Fox photographed Ron inspecting the display and recalling his experience.

COMING EVENTS

Members' Meetings

At the Willoughby Room, Willoughby Library at The Concourse, commencing at 2.00pm.

Saturday 13 October: Jo Harris, the noted family historian of the Ku-ring-gai Historical Society, will be our guest speaker on researching family history. She will be using examples from local families to demonstrate how the use of marriage records and similar archives can be used to trace family links.

The meeting is in the Willoughby Room at the Chatswood Library, The Concourse, commencing at 2pm. Following a short meeting, Jo will make her presentation followed by questions and afternoon tea. All are welcome to attend this interesting event. Further details are available on our website.

Tours & Events

We conduct tours to places of historical interest each odd month of the year. Friends and members of fellow historical societies are welcome. Forthcoming events are:

Wednesday 21 November: WDHS tour to The Arms of Australia Inn Museum, Emu Plains. Housed in the former staging post inn (dating from 1826) the museum focuses on the lives and times of First Fleet marines, sailors, convicts and gentlemen. We will catch the 9.09 am CityRail train from Central to Emu Plains station and walk to the museum. We will be served morning tea after arrival and then have a guided tour of the museum. Lunch is available at a nearby hotel. Cost \$15 for adults, \$10 for WDHS members. Please contact us as per the details in the box.

Saturday 8 December: Members Christmas Party at the Willoughby Museum 58 Johnson Street, Chatswood, from 2.00pm. This is our annual get-together for members and special guests to enjoy a social outing with a participatory event and a special afternoon tea. Harry Fox is organising 'Kim's Game' as this year's entertainment and members are asked to bring a plate as a contribution to the afternoon tea. Please contact us as per the details in the box to confirm your attendance.

WDHS Management Committee:

President: Paul Storm (9419 7354)

Vice-Presidents Mary Thom, Judy Baird

Treasurer: Bob McKillop

Committee Members: Joan Antarakis, Betty Doggett, Harry Fox

Patron: Pat Reilly, Mayor of Willoughby

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:

Secretary: willoughbydistrict@bigpond.com

Editor: rfmckillop@bigpond.com

Website: www.willoughbydhs.org.au

Helping at the Museum

We are looking for volunteers to assist at the museum in the following areas:

Museum guides, collection management tasks and writing articles for the newsletter.

As discussed on page 3, there is a range of interesting tasks undertaken by the collection management team, which usually meets at the museum on Thursdays. We are also seeking assistance with research into various historical features and stories relating to Willoughby City. If you can assist in any of these areas, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Please contact us by phone or email as given above.