

CAMBERWELL HISTORY

RECORDING THE HISTORY OF CAMBERWELL
AND DISTRICT



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BOROONDARA ARTISTS

AMALIE AND ARCHIBALD COLQUHOUN

Val Goldsworthy

Val Goldsworthy is a member of the committee and a former President of Camberwell Historical Society.

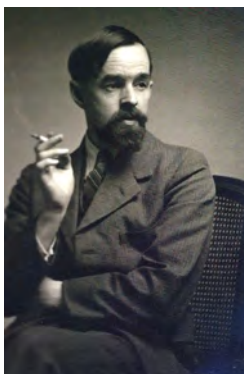


Swinton 25 Swinton Avenue, Kew

Historic Kew house *Swinton*¹ is fortunate to have been occupied by Archibald and Amalie Colquhoun who have been described as 'two of Melbourne's finest painters of the 20th century'.²

A charming story has it that Archibald used to have *dreams about a fairy-tale house with a tower, which peeped above the trees*³ on the banks of the Yarra at Kew. That house was *Swinton* built around 1859; only its tower was visible as Archibald rode in a nearby cable tram.

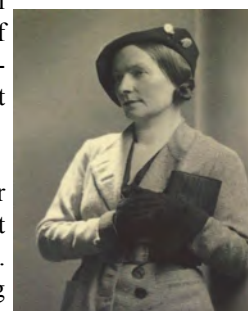
Archibald Douglas Colquhoun was born at Heidelberg in 1894, and studied with Frederick McCubbin and Max Meldrum. Following a period of study overseas Colquhoun established an art school at 131 Little Collins Street, Melbourne in 1927;⁴ one of his students was William Dargie who went on to win the Archibald Prize eight times.



Colquhoun's palette and canvasses produced portraits (including self-portraits), landscapes, still life and figurative paintings during a long professional career. In 1933 he won the Crouch Prize

and in 1934 the Melbourne Centenary Historical Prize.⁵ He also exhibited in Paris (1925-1926) and London (1935-1936).

Amalie Sara Colquhoun née Feild, born in Murtoa in 1894, was a student of Meldrum and Colquhoun; she married Archibald in 1931. She was well known for her portraits of children, and also produced landscapes and still lifes. Her career embraced the teaching of pottery at Melbourne Technical College, and the design of stained glass windows for Ballarat churches, including St Andrew's Cathedral.⁶



The Colquhouns lived in their city studios until they bought *Swinton*, their first real home. The house was in a shocking state of disrepair and had not attracted any offers until the Colquhouns found it was for sale. The prominent tower was a wreck and, despite advice to pull the structure down, the new owners repaired it as a final touch to the restoration of the grand old house.

Archibald and Amalie taught students at *Swinton*, and its twelve rooms displayed portrait and landscape paintings, and reproductions of famous sculptures; most of the paintings were by the Colquhouns but some were works by their pupils. The couple also owned a beach house at Lorne and were noted for their seascapes.

The State Library of Victoria has an unpublished work written by Archibald. Titled *The Nature of Art*, the 240 typed pages feature pen and ink drawings by Amalie. In a short paragraph which clearly illustrates his thinking, Colquhoun wrote

Anything which gets between the artist and his artistic objective such as prize winning

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plans or any anxiety about the future of the work before it has even been done is like a bad pre-natal influence. Painting must be done under conditions of reasonable serenity; it cannot be done with anger in the heart or envy, or with cynicism, or the tongue in the cheek.

Archibald Colquhoun died in Fitzroy in 1983. Amalie died in Melbourne in 1974.

The National Gallery of Victoria owns five works by Archibald and three by Amalie. None is presently on view.

Swinton is at 25 Swinton Avenue, Kew and is said to have been built

Endnotes

- 1 *Swinton* is said to have been built for Edward Laskey Splatt. It was bought in 1876 by Frank & John William Johnson who came from Swinton in Yorkshire.
- Saunders, David [ed]. *Historic Buildings of Victoria*, Melbourne, 1966, p155
- 2 Perry, Peter W. Catalogue, *Archie & Amalie Colquhoun*, Castle-maine Art Gallery and Historical Museum, 2010
- 4 Unsources newspaper cutting
- Smith, Bernard with Terry Smith. *Australian Painting 1788-1990*
- 5 *The New McCulloch's Encyclopedia of Australian Art*, Melbourne 2006
- 6 Rogers, Dorothy. *A History of Kew*, Kilmore, 1973

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THE MEMORIES OF A HARTWELL LAD

Donald Hirst

Donald Hirst was born in 1946 and lived for twenty years in Glyndon Road, Hartwell near Immarna Road. His early school years were spent at Canterbury Primary School and Camberwell Central School before completing his education at a St Kilda Road branch of the Junior Chamber of Commerce. A professional musician, actor, journalist and broadcaster (he once performed under the stage name, 'Glyndon Rhode') Donald has appeared in numerous stage, film, television and radio productions throughout Australia and Europe. He now lives in St. Kilda.



Donald Hirst, Grade 6B
Canterbury Primary School

This is the first part of a three-part article in which Donald Hirst describes life in Hartwell in the 1950s.

Hartwell Junction

Those who lived in the area called it "The Tyrone", named after the Tyrone Hotel that once stood near Tyrone Street and Toorak Road, the intersection that made up the shopping strip of Hartwell Junction. From the mid 1930s to the late 1960s it was the symbol of well mannered, middle class Camberwell before, to quote the area's most celebrated son, Barry Humphries, "the rot set in".

Mr Rando, from Taranto on the instep of Italy, ran the fruit and veg shop that was staffed by his ever growing family of female relations who seemed to be arriving each month on successive waves of immigrant ships where they were immediately plunged into the per-

plexing Anglo-Australian world of twelve pennies to a shilling, twenty shillings to a pound and sixteen ounces to a pound weight, confusingly abbreviated to *lb*.

Awaiting them on the shop floor was the particular language of the 1950s Camberwell housewife with their orders for six "nice" apples or two lbs of "nice" potatoes. Signor Rando, a kind and jovial man who spoke limited and heavily accented English, was a source of delicious Italian bread from unseen relations in Carlton, recipes for minestrone soup and boxes of vegetable scraps to feed my ever expanding family of guinea pigs. He occasionally got me to total the bill, which was as difficult for me as it must have been for his recently arrived relatives.

Over the road, on the corner of George Street, stood Morgan's Bakery. Owned and operated by the Morgan sisters, they were two plump, rosy cheeked endorsements of their wares, which they displayed under glass bells in the windows. All the bread was baked daily on the premises with household deliveries made from their livery of brightly painted, horse-drawn bread carts. School boys could hitch a ride home from school on a cart in exchange for 'helping' the bread carter by holding the reins as he, wicker basket on arm, ran from door to door delivering his High Tins, Poppy seeds and Vienna loaves. For our 'assistance' he might give us tuppence each which later at the Fordham Avenue milk bar presented us with the hard choice of quality versus quantity. Did you buy *one* sherbet bomb, or *two* clinkers, or *eight* raspberries or *sixteen* bullets?

A few doors down from Morgan's bakery was the Hartwell Shoe Shop where sensible sturdy school shoes were purchased for young feet. Putting your foot under the X-Ray machine you could see the outline of your shoe and the bones of your foot wriggling



inside as they were zapped with cobalt rays while the salesman praised your mother for her wise selection of footwear for her son. Ironically the shop next door was the shoe repairman, with the words "Late AIF" written in gold letters on his window, a declaration that was presumably meant to carry a guarantee of the quality of work therein. Inside, the shop was stacked high with pairs of shoes awaiting repair or retrieval. A lathe apparatus was the main piece of equipment which at one end had a circular sandpaper belt that shaped the new leather sole while at the other end was a buffer which brought a high gloss to the leather. In the 1950s the cut of a man was measured by the shine of his shoes. Upon pick up, your shoes would be wrapped in brown paper and tied with string.

In retrospect, the arrival in 1957 of the American Maid ice-cream shop on "The Tyrone" opposite Summerhill Road next door to Dr Sanguinetti could have been seen as the beginning of "the rot setting in". "Over 50 Flavours!!" screamed the sign above the door, painted in 19th century Wild West font, "flavor" deliberately spelt the American way. On the candy striped walls inside hung framed pictures of US Marines storming ashore onto some South Pacific island in WW2. The American family who ran the business had the wholesome

glow of the Mormons which they were and their son, who was about the same age as me, wore a...CREW CUT. For some Hartwell mothers, mine included, this was the end of civilised living as they knew it and strict instructions were given to our barber, Mr Luscombe, on the corner of Wattle Valley and Toorak Roads, that on **no account** was I to be given such tonsorial treatment should such a request be made. Although the American Maid was a peep into the world of America which was only now beginning to make itself known to us through early US television shows, the shop's other attraction was the local beauty Shasta Robb, who was a *figure splendide* to we eleven-year-olds. Miss Robb would glide into the shop of a Saturday afternoon, perch herself on a counter stool and order an exotically flavoured milk shake as we, the gang, huddled at the other end of the counter sniggering. Using one straw and, as per the instructions written above the counter, loudly consume her lactal delight "because we don't mind the noise!" Shasta would then slide graciously from her perch and glide out the door to return to whence she came somewhere up on Summerhill Road, all the while ignoring the gazes of the gang taking in the firm budding shape beneath her cashmere sweater.

To be continued

PRIVATE SCHOOLS OF CAMBERWELL NO 1

CELEBRATING 125 YEARS OF SCHOOLING IN CAMBERWELL – THE BEGINNINGS OF CAMBERWELL GRAMMAR SCHOOL

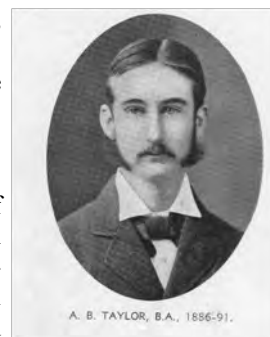
Trevor Hart

Trevor Hart is school archivist at Camberwell Grammar School, and a member of the committee and past president of CHS.

On Tuesday 2 February 1886 Arthur Bertram Taylor BA opened his 'Camberwell Grammar School'. The prospectus stated that it was *destined to supply a want felt by the rapidly increasing population of Camberwell, Upper Hawthorn, and the surrounding districts.*¹

Arthur Taylor was born in London on 16 Aug 1857, the seventh child of ten born to George Henry Taylor, solicitor, and his wife Maria neé O'Brien. He was one year old when his family arrived in Melbourne in 1858 on the *Blackwall* from London. He was schooled at Scotch College from Feb 1864 to Dec 1875 and passed the Matriculation exam in October 1872. Taylor

signed the Matriculation Roll in the University of Melbourne on 10 March 1874 and sat for his first subjects in a Bachelor of Arts degree at the October 1874 examinations. He may have been a poor scholar, or perhaps distracted, as it was not until February 1877 that he passed the first year, completing his degree in February 1880: at six examinations he failed eighteen times in thirty subjects. His BA, which was the 209th in the University was awarded on 3 April 1880.²



This dapper, slender man of 5 feet 9 inches (175cm) with dark hair and blue eyes married Alice Russell in April 1880³ and between 1883 and 1891 they had four children, one of whom died in infancy. Arthur taught at All Saints Grammar School, St Kilda then from 1878 to 1885 was assistant master at Kew High School. He was 29 when he opened his own school.

Camberwell Grammar School began *with the most modern furniture* in the lofty and well ventilated new brick hall of St John's Church of England. By the end of the year it had over sixty pupils. The school had a regular staff of seven and visiting teachers taught such



specialised subjects as drawing and gymnastics. Taylor had four boarders lodged in his family home but demand for boarding places increased. To answer the demand he built a new house in Fermanagh Road⁴ to accommodate forty boarders, and weatherboard school buildings. The school moved to this site in 1887. Enrolments started to decline and Taylor must have read the economy well because he sold the school in 1891. He had already established a farm at Lilydale that supplied the boarding house with fresh produce so when he left the school he took up farming fulltime at Lilydale.

He subsequently farmed at Lake Cooper near Colbinabbin where he died in 1938. He is buried in Boroondara Cemetery with his wife who died in 1929.



The new proprietors were Alfred Smith Hall MA and William Alexander Gosman who took over the school in July 1891 when it had thirteen students. Hall was the Headmaster.

Hall, educated at Geelong Grammar School, had taught at Queen's College St Kilda and Toorak College before moving to Scotch College to teach classics. William Alexander Gosman, son of a Congregational minister was a student at Scotch College⁶ where he subsequently taught. By 1893 the enrolment had fallen to six and the small number of students made the school unviable. In 1896 Gosman retired from the partnership to become a metallurgist and Hall moved the school back to St John's Church hall.

The Fermanagh Road buildings, then vacant, were still owned by AB Taylor who let them to Old Boy Walter Murdoch. He had started his Camberwell College in the Wesleyan Sunday School hall before moving to Fermanagh Road.

This school closed in 1900 with a large number of pupils transferred to Camberwell Grammar School. The buildings then became the home of Milverton Girls' School before that school moved across the road.

Hall didn't believe in pushing the boys too fast and preferred to encourage them to be interested in their work as a counter to the need for punishment although he was prepared to liberally use a leather strap when

needed. He was aware of cost and prescribed text books that could be used from year to year in order to save parents the cost of change. 'The Boss,' as he was called, was a fair but strict disciplinarian, but he was approachable and got on well with the boys. He covered his grey suit, with its heavy gold watch chain across a waistcoat, with an academic gown, but his slightly baggy trousers might have impacted somewhat on a military bearing that commanded respect. Hall persevered with his policy of developing 'intelligence, observation and application' and by 1901 he had 100 students, some of whom came from Murdoch's closed school.

With the school prospering at last, Alfred bought a property in Burke Road in 1908, built new school premises⁷ and moved the school from the church hall. The school continued to grow by both enrolment and acquisition: in 1910 Hall acquired the goodwill of Hawthorn College and in 1912 Canterbury Grammar School.

Into the 1920s the school was physically deteriorating and an approach by a number of Old Camberwell Grammarians to buy the school was well received. A company was formed and agreement reached for the school be taken over on 1 January 1926 as a Church of England Public School. By the time Hall retired at the end of 1926 there were some 230 students on the roll. AS Hall died in Hawthorn in 1940.⁸



P192 The whole School, Burke Road, 1911

The lean times of the 'Great Depression' caused much anguish for both Hall and the school council with the school consistently demanding a reduction in the terms of payment. By the time good times came again there was ill-will between the two. This was exacerbated by the council's decision to abandon Hall's rented premises and purchase the Macneil's property *Roystead* in Mont Albert Road. The school moved to this present



site in 1935.

Endnotes

- 1 Prospectus 1886, CGS Archive
- 2 Student record, University of Melbourne Archives
- 3 Victorian BDM Indexes
- 4 The house remains at 8 Fermanagh Road, Camberwell
- 5 *The Argus* Wednesday, 16 November 1938
- 6 Student Scotch College 1879-1884

- 7 A plaque in the footpath just south of Hallcroft Place marks this site
- 8 Victorian BDM Indexes

Much of the material for this paper is taken from the school's centenary history, *By Their Deeds: A Centenary History of Camberwell Grammar School 1886-1986* by IV Hansen
 The assistance of Paul Mishura, Scotch College Archive is acknowledged with thanks.
 Illustrations from Camberwell Grammar School Archive.

FROM THE COLLECTION OF CAMBERWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Maling Road and Canterbury Road looking west. Date unknown

OBITUARY

The deaths late last year, within two months of each other, of two brothers-in-law and former residents of Camberwell who distinguished themselves in the local history world are noted with regret.

Dr Edward Warren Owen Perry, MBE, LittD, banker, soldier (he held the rank of Major), archivist, public servant (during which time he worked for ASIO) and historian died on 7 November 2010 at the age of 101. Warren Perry was a member of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria (RHSV) council from 1957, vice-president 1975 to 1977 and editor of the Victorian Historical Journal from 1959 until he retired from the council as editor in 1977: he continued to act as editor for the next three issues. Author of three commissioned histories, his particular interest was military history. Perry was a previous resident of Camberwell and a foundation members of CHS until he and Mrs Perry resigned their membership in 1974 following a move to Eaglemont.

Dr Murray Linton Verso, MB, BS, FRACPA, pathologist, historian, and former deputy director of the Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service died on 14 September 2010 at the age of 94. He was president of the RHSV from 1974 to 1978 and had been a member since 1957, a councillor of the society from 1961 and vice president from 1969. Murray Verso was also a member of the Medical History Society. He wrote extensively on medical history for both technical and lay readers. He lived in Camberwell where the Verso family had lived for over 80 years.

Both men were Fellows of the RHSV.

Other members of CHS who have been councillors of the RHSV were: William (Bill) J Cuthill former Chief Stipendiary Magistrate and former vice-president RHSV, John Wilton Collings, Kathleen (Kitty) McEwan who was superintendent of the Womens' Land Army 1942-1946 and a journalist with *The Sun* for 28 years, E J Shelden and Harold E Williams. Your editor has also served on the RHSV council.



MEETINGS FOR 2011

24 March	"Court Houses of Victoria"	Michael Challinger, barrister and author of <i>Historic Court Houses of Victoria</i>
16 April	"Heritage Week Walk"	Walking Prospect Hill
21 May	Excursion	Camberwell Grammar School
26 May	Dame Nellie Melba	Ann Blainey
15 June	Excursion	Johnston Collection, East Melbourne
Mid July	Excursion	Tour of churches
29 July (Friday)	Being a Mayor in Boroondara	Cr Jack Wegman
18 August	Annual General Meeting	
3 September	Excursion	Heidelberg Historical Society
22 September	Baillieu Family	Hon Ted Baillieu, MP
September	Excursion	Villa Alba
15 October	Excursion	Maling Road — Don Gibb FRHSV
24 November	Meeting	To be announced

Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of March, May, July only (fourth Friday), September and November

All meetings held at **Meeting Room, Hawthorn Town Hall (side entrance via car park)**
360 Burwood Road, Hawthorn at 8.00pm

COMMITTEE

We regret to advise that, since the Annual Meeting, our secretary, the Honourable Wendy Baden-Powell has found it necessary to step down from the position she has served in for over fifteen years. We thank Wendy for her hard work and dedication to ensuring that the Society survived through some very difficult times. We wish her well in retirement.

Committee member Adele Fernando-Swart has accepted the position of secretary.

We have one vacancy on the committee. Members interested in helping to guide the society into the future should contact the President, George Fernando on 9885 9927.

TRINITY UNITING CHURCH, BALWYN NORTH

Trinity Uniting Church in Doncaster Road held its final service on Sunday, 6 February. The first building, now the church hall, was built by the Methodist Church with the foundation stone laid on 30 November 1941.

The foundation stone of a new church was laid on 16 December 1961 and the new church opened in 1962.

The Presbyterian Church merged with the Methodists to form the North Balwyn Parish of the Uniting Church in 1977 and the Congregationalists joined the union the following year. During its 70 years six former parishioners became ordained ministers. The church buildings will continue to be used by other organisations.

The church had an ageing congregation and was unable to attract new members. Most parishioners will attend nearby St Aidan's Uniting Church. ⁱⁱⁱ

CAMBERWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC

A.B.N. 79 935 200 741 Incorporation No A0041541Y

Secretary: Adele Fernando-Swart PO Box 1274 CAMBERWELL 3124 Tel: 9885 9927

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President George Fernando; Secretary Adele Fernando-Swart; Treasurer Steve Watson;
 Committee members Jan Alexander, Val Goldsworthy, Trevor Hart