

# CAMBERWELL HISTORY

RECORDING THE HISTORY OF CAMBERWELL  
AND DISTRICT  
Camberwell Historical Society, Inc.



No 11

December 2012

ISSN 1838-0875

**Principal Patron:** Professor Emeritus Geoffrey Blainey, AC

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

It is with much pleasure that I inform you that Camberwell Historical Society has now acquired a home!

As you know, for a long time we have been negotiating with the Council the possibility of finding an "office space" for our society. Our quest has at long last had a very happy ending with the Council announcing that we will be able to take up residence in a room at the former Camberwell Library at 25 Inglesby Road, Camberwell. I'm very happy and excited about this prospect. Plans are being made for us to occupy the premises in February next year. I shall be looking forward to sharing my elation with you by inviting you to join me in celebration when our room is made available to us.

The Committee and I wish you all a happy Christmas and look forward to a most enjoyable year in 2013 as we celebrate 50 years since Camberwell Historical Society was formed.

Yours sincerely

George Fernando



25 Inglesby Road, Camberwell where the Society's office will be located

## CAMBERWELL ARTS SOCIETY

### A brief history

#### Bruce McBrien OAM

Bruce McBrien was the foundation Secretary/Treasurer of Camberwell Arts Society and has donated their minute and cash books to CHS.

In July 1967 a meeting was called for representatives of cultural groups etc. operating within the City of Camberwell to consider the formation of an Arts Advisory Council following the approaching completion of the new Camberwell Civic Centre which was to be officially opened in 1969. Designed by the architectural firm of Mockridge, Stahle and Mitchell it was to contain an extremely large auditorium with balcony, a fully equipped theatre seating 450 with orchestra pit and balcony, function room, council chamber and council offices. The whole complex envisaged to operate for the benefit of the citizens of Camberwell.

From that initial meeting a steering committee was formed to be known as the Camberwell Arts Advisory Council Steering Committee, with the initial purpose of co-ordinating the cultural activities of

such groups operating in the City of Camberwell with the further recommendation that a Camberwell Arts Society be formed with individual and/or corporate financial membership.<sup>1</sup> The Camberwell City Council donated \$100.00 for the financing of establishment costs. Consequently in September 1967 it was recommended that a Camberwell Arts Festival Committee be formed to encourage the community in sponsoring and supporting an Arts Festival and other cultural and educational activities.

With the official opening of the Civic Centre on 12 April 1969 various cultural organisations operating within Camberwell were called upon to assist in a programme of entertainment over a period of fourteen days which would lead to a full scale Festival of Arts to be known as "In Pursuit of the Arts" being undertaken. This was duly organised for September 1969

### CONTENTS

Meetings for 2013	Page 6
Last Meetings	2
Report on Excursions	5
Book Launch	2
New Camberwell Library	2
History of Fintona	3
Mayor of Boroondara	6
New Members	6



and consisted of a multitude of performing arts, music and visual arts. Whilst of high standard it failed to draw sustainable audiences and suffered a substantial loss which led to the conclusion that "Camberwell residents were either too close to the City (of Melbourne) for their entertainment or they were not interested in the arts"!! Another Festival was not undertaken. From then on the Camberwell Arts Society simply acted as a co-ordinating body for all the Societies etc. which were operating in the boundary of Camberwell and promoted, physically assisted and financed those activities the best way it could. Finance was always a problem and operated on a series of Grants from the Council which were infrequently repaid. In-

terest in the Arts Society gradually waned particularly when the Camberwell Council rented out the facilities to commercial enterprises which were a far greater paying proposition. The Camberwell Arts Society gradually faded into oblivion in the late 1970's.

**Editor's Note:** Following the initial meeting in July the Camberwell Arts Advisory Council Steering Committee was officially formed at the meeting on 16 August 1967: it was chaired firstly by Mayors Cr HFW Dawson then Cr WG Boundy.

The formal establishment of the Camberwell Arts Society occurred in September 1967 and Cr J B Jackson was appointed president and Bruce McBrien appointed secretary at the following meeting . Both retained these offices for the life of the organisation.

## NEW CAMBERWELL LIBRARY

The Camberwell Civic Centre is gone, replaced by Council offices and a state-of-the-art library. The new Library was opened on 14 September 2012. At about \$20 million it is the most expensive of the library renovations. (Ashburton library is presently being enlarged.) The new library has books, of course, but electronic retrieval facilities, meeting rooms and a café.

The Camberwell Library moved into temporary premises at 25 Inglesby Road where it remained for six years before relocating in the old Civic Centre. The Inglesby Road building will now be made available to community organisations and as reported elsewhere CHS has been allocated space.



Building the Camberwell Civic Centre  
CHS 0000-56-6

The Civic Centre was opened on 12 April 1969 and provided council chamber and council offices, an auditorium, theatre and a function room.

## BOOK LAUNCH

Volkhard Wehner, *OLD HARTWELL THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE VILLAGE THAT LOST ITS NAME*, Glen Iris, 2012

After several years researching the story of Hartwell, Volkhard Wehner, CHS member, former President and local historian has published this extensive history.

The book was launched by Mr Don Kinsey following a brief address by the Mayor, Cr Heinz Kreutz. Mr Kinsey, an old resident of Hartwell, duly entertained us with countless reminiscences of the area.



Left to right; Don Kinsey, Cr Kreutz, and the Author

## LAST MEETINGS

### 13 September Sidney Myer

Stella Barber is well known as the author of eight histories. As a former archivist of Myer Melbourne she is well qualified to talk on the life of businessman and philanthropist Sidney Myer. Her biography *Sidney Myer: a Life, a Legacy* was published in 2005. Stella illustrated her talk with an extensive PowerPoint presentation and fully covered Myer's life and career.

Myer archives are now in the State Library although some early records of Myer Emporium Ltd are held by University of Melbourne Archives.

### 28 August The Architecture of Boroondara

Professor Conrad Hamann, Senior Associate with heritage consultants Lovell Chen gave a well received and wide ranging commentary on building style in Boroondara, but principally Camberwell. His extraordinarily detailed knowledge of building stock in Camberwell was complimented by extensive illustrations. Professor Hamman debunked the title 'Queen Anne' for early 20thC buildings and gave an explanation of what he considered Australian architectural style.

Anita Brady, an Associate Director also from Lovell Chen, and who has qualifications in cultural heritage management gave a brief summary of current heritage issues in Boroondara.



## PRIVATE SCHOOLS OF CAMBERWELL NO 5

### A HISTORY OF FINTONA

Ann Hawker

Ann Hawker is the Archivist at Fintona Girls' School

Fintona Girls' School was co-founded by Miss Annie Hughston and her brother in 1896. The name Fintona came from a village in Northern Ireland, where Miss Hughston's mother was born. The first school was housed in Mayston Street, Hawthorn, where fourteen girls, including six boarders studied under the guidance of Miss Hughston, her brother William, her sister Violet and Miss Muriel Davidson.



67 Mayston Street, Hawthorn.

In 1896 fourteen pupils were enrolled by Miss Annie Hughston in the dining room of this Victorian mansion.

Born in 1860 and educated at Daylesford Grammar School and later at Presbyterian Ladies' College, Miss Hughston taught Mathematics at PLC before starting her own school in Camperdown and then

establishing Fintona in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne.

In 1898 the school was moved to a site on the corner of Burke and Victoria Roads, Camberwell.

By 1901 there were one hundred pupils and the school was acknowledged for its academic excellence and for

its close allegiance to the Presbyterian Church. The Reverend PJ Murdoch exerted a very strong influence in the school and boarders and day students attended his church, Trinity Presbyterian Church in Camberwell. Rules were strict, academic standards were high and the curriculum was advanced and progressive. Fintona seems to have enjoyed a history of progressiveness for Louisa Clarke, one of the first pupils of Miss Hughston wrote, 'Although belonging to a conservative age, she was particularly receptive to new ideas and most progressive in her methods.' Current events and Biology were studied and Physical Education was strenuously pursued. The school magazine, *The Fintonian*, was published in 1896 and has been published every year since 1911.

The increase in school numbers, as a consequence of its excellent reputation, necessitated larger premises. Consequently, the campus was expanded into houses in neighbouring Victoria Road.



During the Great War 1914-1918 the girls of Fintona undertook the accepted role of women in war, supporting the Australian troops in a number of ways. The work of the school continued during this difficult time. When peace was restored the Fintona girls joined with the boys of Camberwell Grammar in a joyous march along Burke Road.

Fintona celebrated the Armistice 11 November 1918 with a march along Burke Road.

Miss Chilvers began her long and devoted career at Fintona in 1919. Miss Hughston retired as Headmistress in 1921 but remained as Principal. She had, in-



The Fintona campus at Burke Road and Victoria Road, Camberwell. The functions of the buildings are shown: 1 Headmistress' Study, 2 Boarders' Dining Room, 3 Kitchen, 4 Open Air Classrooms, 5 Music rooms



deed, been a 'noble character of rare sweetness and simplicity.'

Miss Isobel Macdonald became headmistress and the school now had four hundred and fifty pupils and accommodation was strained to the limit. The House system was introduced in 1923, and in 1924 a specially cast bell was presented to the school by Mr Hastings, father of Burne Hastings, first captain of Maxwell House. The uniform changed from blue to brown in 1928. In 1929 Miss Marjory Black became the Headmistress of the school and once again, many innovations to the curriculum were introduced. She was succeeded by Miss Jeannie McCowan who remained at the school until 1934. In the interim, Miss Margaret Cunningham had been appointed to the staff as an assistant Science mistress, and House Mistress of Ower in 1929. Margaret and Miss Chilvers pondered deeply their pedagogy and discussed how this might be implemented successfully.



Tourmont at the time of purchase in 1934

of Fintona from Miss Hughston and became the Principal and Headmistress.

In 1936 the school was transported in charabancs to the new site where the



From 1936 to 1939 new classrooms, administration offices, a laboratory, an art room and an assembly room were added to Tourmont. The inset photograph shows the additions in construction.

school currently resides. New classrooms were built as well as an assembly hall and an art room.

St Duthas School in Mont Albert Road sold the goodwill to Miss Cunningham at this time and she leased the premises and accommodated the junior school therein. In addition, in 1937 the Glencairn property, a neighbour to *Tourmont* was leased and then bought in 1939 to be used as a boarding house. The lifting of wartime building restrictions enabled the development of the Junior School and Buick Hall on the Mitiamo site in Balwyn Road which had been purchased in 1939.

In the aftermath of a fire which partially gutted the school the Junior school girls were taught in the remaining rooms, the assembly hall and under a marquee. The main development of the early post war years was the building of the Junior School and Buick Hall which were opened in 1953 by Dame Pattie Menzies, an Old Fintonian.



Mitiamo and Glencairn were used for boarding houses. The land was cultivated for vegetables to feed the boarders and resident staff.

The 1950s saw an increase in student participation in the running of the school. With the introduction of the Senators system, Miss Cunningham enabled each senior girl to be actively involved in the leadership of the school. In 1960 Miss Cunningham was awarded an OBE<sup>1</sup> for her services to education. On the occasion of the opening of *Tourmont* in 1936 Miss Cunningham had told of her plans to bequeath the school to the Old Fintonians. A company, composed of past pupils and past and present staff was established and, in 1961, Miss Cunningham transferred the unencumbered deeds of the school to a former President of the OFA and a member of the Board of Management, Mrs Gwen Dyson. After thirty four years of dedicated service, Miss Cunningham retired and Miss Elizabeth Butt was appointed as her successor.



The new Junior School building was opened by the Prime Minister of Australia the Right Honourable (later Sir) Robert Menzies and the ribbon cut by Mrs (later Dame) Pattie Menzies, on Saturday 21 November 1953.

Miss Elizabeth Butt assumed this office in 1963 and one of her early achievements was to raise funds for and oversee the substantial building extensions to the Senior School. By 1966 a new wing was finished, comprising three science rooms, a library, staff rooms, an assembly hall and a tuckshop.



View of the new wing on the site of the old tennis court and Andrew Murray's vineyard - 1860s-1960s

This new amenity, named the Margaret Cunningham Wing, was opened in 1967 by Senator John Gorton who later became Prime Minister of Australia, 1968-1971. Extensions to the Junior school were completed by 1975.



The 1980s saw further development with the addition of a multi-purpose room to the Junior school and further expansion of the Senior school with the completion of the Elizabeth Butt Building which comprised extra classrooms for English, Mathematics and Computer Studies. A new Library, Theatre and Year 11 and 12 Common Rooms were also included in this building.

In 1991 Miss Butt retired after twenty nine years as headmistress and has subsequently been awarded the Order of Australia<sup>1</sup> for her services to education. Dr Deborah Seifert was then appointed as Principal. Dr Seifert introduced many exciting developments to Fintona, through considerable building work to the Junior School, refurbishment of the Science laboratories and the Centenary Music Building. It was also the time when the school implemented the Middle school which was then established in *Tourmont*. An Early Learning Centre was also developed during this time and the subsequent development of the site on Balwyn Road is testament to its success.

In 2000 Dr Seifert resigned and Dr Karen Starr became Principal until 2005 and the school continued its reputation for academic excellence during this time.

Mrs Suzy Chandler has been Principal since 2006 and has overseen a refurbishment and re-landscaping of the beautiful Fintona gardens. Cherry Road House has also been refurbished as a staff area. In addition, 2010 saw the opening of the Margaret Ross Centre for Health and Well Being which provides a gymnasium, dance studio, staff areas and additional classrooms. Moss House which is in Cherry Road has recently been developed as a centre for the students of the Middle School to enjoy. Under her stewardship Fintona has continued its reputation for academic excellence as well as a fine commitment to extra curricula programs.

Fintona is a strong reflection of its motto in every way:  
*Age Quod Agis* – do what you do well.

#### Sources

Much of the material for this paper has been taken from Chilvers, Beatrice, *The History of Fintona 1896-1948*  
Reiche, Phyllis, *Fintona 1986-1996 The Story in Pictures*, 1986  
Illustrations are from the Fintona Girls' School Archive

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Mary Elizabeth Butt was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in 2001 'For service to education, particularly through the independent schools sector, and to the community through cultural and charitable groups' [Ed.]

---

## EXCURSIONS

### 29 September Lilydale Tour

Sue Thompson, supported by Wal and John, led the Lilydale tour. The visit started at the refurbished Old Court House, now the Lilydale and District Historical Society Headquarters, where we saw a display of local photographs, including significant local people such as Dame Nellie Melba.

After morning tea, we followed Sue and Wal in their Ford Prefect called "Dame Nellie" to various significant sites such as the Athenaeum Hall, the Mechanic's Institute, Old Lilydale Shire offices/Yarra Ranges Regional Museum, the David Mitchell Gates of Melba Park, the Mafeking tree, the Fire Bell, Cave Hill Quarry, Coombe Cottage, and then Lilydale Cemetery to see the graves of Dame Nellie Melba's and her

father David Mitchell. The tour concluded with a light lunch at the museum café.

### 27 October Camberwell Church Tour

This Church tour organised by CHS member, John Maidment OAM visited St John's Anglican Church Burke Road, St Christopher's German Catholic Church Trafalgar Road, and the Second Church of Christ Scientist in Cookson Street. John spoke of the churches and their pipe organs which were demonstrated by organist Rhys Arvidson.

### 18 November Labassa Tour

Members visited the National Trust house *Labassa* in Caulfield North and were guided through the more significant rooms of this 19thC mansion. by Trust volunteers

---

## CHURCH OF ENGLAND, CAMBERWELL

*On Sunday morning last the Rev. W. Wood, of Christchurch, Hawthorn, preached in the schoolroom, adjoining the Camberwell Hotel, and intimated at the close of the service that a meeting would be held on the following evening to take steps to establish a school and preaching place in connection with the Church of England. At the meeting on Monday evening W.H. Campbell. Esq., having been called to the chair stated the object for which they were assembled, and subscriptions to the amount of £100 were promised. A report of the proceedings will appear in our next issue. The Church of England has a Government grant of two acres of land at Camberwell, nearly opposite the above Hotel.*

*South Bourke Standard*, Friday 21 March 1862 p2



## MEETINGS FOR 2013

Meeting dates for 2013 have been confirmed. All **meetings will be held on the fourth Thursday** of each month with exception of April. The **April meeting will be held on the third Thursday** so as not to clash with Anzac Day. All meetings will be in the new Camberwell Library in Camberwell Road at 8.00pm.

The first meetings in 2013 are:

28 February **Dr Barbara Nichol** **Melbourne 1901-1914 as seen through the lens of its Chinese restaurants**

Barbara Nichol will speak on Melbourne 1901-1914 as seen through the lens of its Chinese restaurants. It was during this period that the Qing dynasty in China declined and fell to revolutionaries. In Australia during this period there were heightened fears of an invasion by Chinese or Japanese and the beginnings of the White Australia Policy.

28 March **Susan Priestley, FRHSV** **'There is properly no history, only biography' (Ralph Waldo Emerson): Reflections on writing the life of Henrietta Dugdale**

Susan Priestley is a biographer and local historian. Her article 'A Radical Camberwell Lady' appeared in *Camberwell History* No 10, September 2012

18 April **Lambis Englezos, AM** **Missing of Fromelles**

Lambis Englezos is well known for his work in discovering the burial place of the bodies of many unlocated Australian service men of World War I and for having them re-interred in a formal Australian war cemetery.

An introduction entitled **The impact of the war on the small East Victorian farming village of Strathbogie** will be given by CHS member **Helen Sleigh**.

Helen Sleigh's great uncle who was born and raised in Strathbogie died in no man's land at Fromelles and was never found.

## NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members:

### Family Members

Dr Ian and Mrs. Marie Donald

### Margaret Hughes

The society extends sympathy to her family following the death of CHS member Margaret Hughes.

## MAYOR OF BOROONDARA

The Society extends its congratulations to Camberwell resident Councillor Jack Wegman on his election to a record-breaking fifth term as Mayor of the City.

Although a number of City of Camberwell councillors served multiple terms none reached more than three terms.

Contributions to *Camberwell History* contain the opinions of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of Camberwell Historical Society, its committee or members.

## CAMBERWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC

ABN 79 935 200 741 Incorporation No A0041 541Y  
Affiliated with The Royal Historical Society of Victoria, Inc

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

Web address: <http://www.chs.org.au>

email address: [enquiries@chs.org.au](mailto:enquiries@chs.org.au)

President - George Fernando; Secretary - Adèle Fernando-Swart; Treasurer - Stephen Watson  
Committee members-Jan Alexander, Anna Carina and Val Goldsworthy.

*Camberwell History*: Editor-Trevor Hart