# CAMBERWELL HISTORY RECORDING THE HISTORY OF CAMBERWELL AND DISTRICT Camberwell Historical Society

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**Principal Patron:** Professor Emeritus Geoffrey Blainey, AC **Patron:** His Worship the Mayor of Boroondara, Cr Jim Parke

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome to another year of the Camberwell Historical Society as we endeavour to pursue, understand and record the history of the former City of Camberwell.

At our next meeting Professor Miles Lewis will give a talk on the subject "Melbourne Mansions" on 22 March at 8pm. Professor Miles Lewis AM FAHA is an architectural historian with a special interest in the cultural history of building, and his on-line Melbourne Mansions Data Base is a fundamental resource for researchers in this area. This talk will survey the evolution of the Melbourne mansion in the broader context.

The Royal Historical Society of Victoria has written a book on the lost buildings of Melbourne - to be published as *Melbourne Remembers*. Camberwell Historical Society together with Hawthorn Historical Society and Balwyn Historical Society has contributed as have many other historical societies.

The RHSV is holding a seminar on Saturday 19 March titled, *The end of history as we know it?* What is the future of historical societies in the digital world? I recommend this seminar to all historical societies to learn the skills that technology has to offer as we adapt to the digital age.

George Fernando

## IN SEARCH OF STROUD LANGFORD

#### **Catherine Tiernan**

Catherine Tiernan is a researcher, writer and presenter with particular interests in history, theatre and biography. Since completing a first-class honours degree in History at Monash University, much of Catherine's work has focused on individual Anzac narratives. She has conducted extensive research into the lives of post-WW1 soldier settlers for the National Centre for Australian Studies; edited biographies of Anzacs for the new National Anzac Centre in Albany, Western Australia, and has continued to independently research and present the lives of little-known Anzacs.

Catherine first set foot on this Anzac research path with the chance discovery of a particular grave at Gallipoli – the grave of Stroud Lincoln Langford...



Australian War Memorial Roll of Honour Photograph by Adele Fernando-Swart Emblazoned across the proscenium arch of the Soldiers' Memorial Hall in the Melbourne suburb of Canterbury were the words, 'Their name endureth for ever'. This monument, completed in 1923, commemorated the soldiers from Camberwell and Canterbury who died in the Great War.<sup>1</sup> The hall was a venue for public rallies, political speeches and flower shows, and was used as a picture theatre and polling booth. Over time, however, a different purpose, and arguably more practical form of commemoration, was found for the site. In 1979, the hall was demolished to make way for home units to accommodate widows of ex-servicemen.<sup>2</sup> The hall's proud proscenium proclamation no longer exists, and the only remaining feature of the original hall is a memorial plaque, which until recently was located outside the Canterbury Memorial Home Units that now accommodate pensioners from the broader community.

One of the 197 names listed on the plaque is that of Stroud Langford. My interest in Stroud Langford began in 2010 when, as a Monash University student, I walked the battlefields and explored the peaks, ridges and gullies of Gallipoli's haunting and memorable landscape, learning about the Anzac campaign. World War I official historian Charles Bean advocated the preservation of Gallipoli as a 'storied landscape', with the battlefields, ridges and gullies becoming a memorial to the dead. Respecting Bean's wish, student pairs were assigned the task of presenting the story of a site at Gallipoli. Having been allocated Anzac Cove, my partner and I began by revisiting Beach Cemetery, at the southern tip of the cove, where 391 soldiers are buried. It was there that I came across Stroud Langford's grave. I had never heard of SL Langford and, although his epitaph was one of many I'd found moving, I resolved to find out more about this particular young soldier. I began my search for him by viewing his service record, now digitised. Remarkably, this document revealed that Stroud Langford's family home was the house in suburban Melbourne that I had bought the year before I stood at his grave.



**The Langford family (c. 1910–1912):** (back, l–r) Frederick, Frank, Constance, Robert, Stroud; (front, l–r) Charles (Linc), Frances, Septimus, Charles Snr, Walter. Image courtesy of Julie Roberts As a result of this extraordinary coincidence, I felt compelled to find out all I could about Stroud Lincoln Langford. I trawled the internet and studied electoral rolls attempting to locate a family member, eventually making contact with a distant relative of the Langford family through a genealogical website. She forwarded me a photograph of Stroud's parents, Charles and Frances Langford, and their eight children, and arranged for me to meet Marjorie, one of Stroud's nieces. Over the following year, as I spoke with members of each branch of Stroud's family, it became apparent that Stroud had left no narrative of his own.

There were no letters. There was no diary. Other than the undated family portrait, no relevant documents or photographs appeared to exist and, although a number of Stroud's nieces and nephews were able to share their memories of his parents and siblings, none was able to recount any story about him. Thus, within one generation, Stroud's story could no longer be told.

I considered the Anzac narratives that I'd read. They were invariably based on soldiers' writings or the testimonies of survivors, accounts preserved by a grieving generation and passed for safekeeping to the family that followed. But what if a family had no such papers, and any stories told were long forgotten? Was it possible to restore the narrative of a soldier who had died leaving no narrative of his own?

#### Anglo-Saxons under the Southern Cross: the Langfords of Kingsley Street

My starting point was determining Stroud's background, and the context in which he enlisted. In the absence of personal documentary sources, and to augment the family's limited oral testimony, I turned to contemporary rate books, census records, cartographic material, church records and newspapers for insight into Stroud's home and family background. Local and church histories provided an overview of the environment and society in which the Langfords lived.<sup>3</sup> These secondary sources helped to support primary documentary material and place the Langfords in the context of conservative and protestant middle-class family life in Camberwell from the 1880s until the onset of World War I.

An important early discovery was an 1882 poster held by the State Library of Victoria advertising building allotments in the Prospect Hill Estate. The allotments boasted 'Magnificent Views and Pure Country Air<sup>34</sup> and, in 1888, Charles Langford purchased a home on one of them in Kingsley Street for his English wife Frances, and their baby daughter.<sup>5</sup> By 1900, Charles had extended this home to eight rooms to accommodate his growing family as, by 1899, Frances had borne seven further surviving children, all sons.<sup>6</sup> School records confirm that Stroud and his siblings were educated at Camberwell School 888 up to 'merit' level and the age of 14.<sup>7</sup>

Throughout this period, Camberwell's population was rapidly increasing and, as a result of burgeoning enrolments, the school was seriously overcrowded. The Victorian Education Department records contain a litany of complaints regarding school conditions, and requests for improvements to the accommodation, ventilation, drainage, sanitation and other facilities, in the interests of student health.<sup>8</sup>

Fortunately Stroud and his siblings were not entirely dependent on school for their physical, intellectual and social progress as Charles and Frances evidently encouraged their children's self-development. Like many Camberwell residents, Frances was a devout member of the Church of England. A short walk from home, the family's parish church – St John's in Burke Road, Camberwell – offered an impressive range of activities for youth: a literary and debating society, a cricket club, a girls' athletic club, the St John's Dramatic Players, and a field naturalists club, the latter involving excursions such as trips to the snow and a five-day camp to the Mornington Peninsula.<sup>9</sup> Stroud played lacrosse with the Canterbury Lacrosse Club, and brother Septimus earned his bronze medallion in surf lifesaving, aged 16.<sup>10</sup>

There was also music. The family owned a piano, and the children's early exposure to organ music at St John's may have influenced Constance, who by 22 years of age had attained her licentiate of the Associated Board of The Royal Academy of Music and The Royal College of Music.<sup>11</sup> Constance was to make a career as a musician, but I wondered about her brothers.

As Stroud recorded his occupation as 'Electrician' on his enlistment papers, I was curious to learn of his training and experience in what was, at that time, a new trade. Through the archives of RMIT University (at the time the Working Men's College of Melbourne) I learned of other technical educational institutions operational in 1910, including the Eastern Suburbs Technical College (subsequently Swinburne University), established in 1908. Although the college was yet to offer electrical training, Swinburne's archives revealed that five of the Langford brothers were enrolled there. Four, including Stroud, studied carpentry at night school at a cost of 10 to 15 shillings each per term, a considerable sum on their father's clerk's salary.<sup>12</sup>

The seven Langford brothers served as cadets in the compulsory Citizen Military Forces, where discipline was 'strongly inculcated'.<sup>13</sup> It was also the modus operandi at home. Stroud's mother Frances, 'a fine woman in many ways', reportedly 'ruled the family with a rod of iron'.<sup>14</sup> Frances was also, by all accounts, fiercely patriotic, and her grandchildren recall dutifully standing to attention at the base of the flagpole in her garden, as their grandfather hoisted the Union Jack.<sup>15</sup>

Frances was not alone. In 1914, as talk of war intensified, the patriotism of Camberwell's residents was palpable. Archival material underscores the depth of patriotic sentiment to which Stroud was exposed. A newspaper account indicated Stroud's membership of the Australian Natives' Association (ANA) and I liaised with the archivist at its successor, Australian Unity, to enhance my understanding of his involvement with this organisation.<sup>16</sup> The Langford boys, as native-born Australian males, were eligible and became members of the ANA at 16.<sup>17</sup> Primarily a provider of health insurance and funeral cover, the ANA organised rifle competitions, debating nights and various social activities for its members. But the association had a further agenda. It was a patriotic, nationalistic, political organisation that promoted a 'white Australia' and had been committed to the federation of the Australian colonies. Featured at the ANA National Fete in 1910 was a song entitled 'White Australia: march of the great white policy' – the stated intention of which was 'to express the life, character, and aspirations of the Australian born ... [and] the patriotic spirit of the race'.<sup>18</sup>

As the new nation announced its commitment to send a contingent in support of the Empire, songs of this type fuelled the patriotic fervour with which Australians responded.<sup>19</sup> Camberwell and neighbouring Canterbury hosted patriotic parades, church services, fundraising meetings and concerts.<sup>20</sup> Patriotism was preached from the local pulpit, roused by marching bands and promoted through visual displays.<sup>21</sup> The venue for one local Red Cross benefit was reportedly 'crammed to the door' with a crowd of 600. Decorations of red, white and blue, a Union Jack, and banners proclaiming 'England expects that every man this day will do his duty' and 'For God and Country' adorned the walls.<sup>22</sup> Two years later, this bastion of conservative protestant middle class voted a resounding 'yes' in the conscription referendum with a vote of 73.2 per cent in favour of conscription – over 21 per cent higher than the state average – a vote that was virtually unchanged in the 1917 referendum.<sup>23</sup>

Although there are numerous well-documented reasons why men volunteered to serve, <sup>24</sup> we cannot know Stroud's primary motivation for joining the queue to enlist. Almost inevitably, however, patriotism and prevailing community sentiments to serve 'King, Empire and nation in war' were key contributing factors.

#### **Endnotes:**

<sup>1 &#</sup>x27;The joys of office', Advertiser (Adelaide), 1 Aug. 1923, p. 9.

<sup>2 &#</sup>x27;Anzacs crumble', Eastern Standard, 25 April 1979.

3 Geoffrey A Blainey, A History of Camberwell, Melbourne: Lothian, 1980; Brian Carroll, Camberwell Sketchbook, Adelaide: Rigby, 1978; Margaret A Hookey, St Mark's Camberwell: The First Seventy-five Years, Camberwell, Vic: Vestry of St Mark's Church, 1988; RJ MacDougall, History of St John's Camberwell, Melbourne: Hall's Book Store, 1963.

4 'Prospect Hill estate', Batten & Percy Collection, SLV (handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/154796).

5 Victoria Certificate of Title vol. 1561, fol. 312139.

6 Camberwell Rate Book 1888, no. 799; Camberwell Rate Book 1900, no. 760.

7 Camberwell State School, Vic, file of official correspondence, 1891-1914, Boroondara Local History Collection, Boroondara Library;

Marjorie Starkey, interview with the author, 10 Dec. 2011.

8 Camberwell State School, Vic, file of official correspondence, 1891–1914, Boroondara Local History Collection.

9 MacDougall, History of St John's, 1963, pp. 20–28

10 Stroud's name is listed in the Roll of Honour, Annual Report, Victoria Lacrosse Association, 1918 (Doug Fox, archivist Victorian Lacrosse Association, email to author, 4 Jun. 2012); SF Langford, Bronze Medallion, Royal Life

Saving Society, 1916 (Nicholas Langford, photograph to author, 26 Aug. 2012).

11 Royal Academy of Music and Royal College of Music certificates, John Clucas, email to author, 8 July 1913.

12 Swinburne University archives; Sara Jervis, archivist, email to author, 2 Oct. 2012.

13 Jane Ross cites Commonwealth Year book, 1918 (The Myth of the Digger: The Australian Soldier in Two World Wars, Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1985, p. 39).

14 Peter Langford, interview with the author, 13 Apr. 2012.

15 Marjorie Starkey and Frankie Ryder, interview with the author, 16 Feb. 2012.

16 'Camberwell Branch ANA', Box Hill Reporter, 18 Sep. 1914, p. 9.

17 Australian Natives' Association Victorian Board of Directors Members Ledger, Camberwell Branch, 1911–15, Australian Unity archive; Beryl Armstrong, archivist, Australian Unity/ANA, email to author, 9 May 2012.

18 WE Naunton, 'White Australia: march of the great white policy', sheet music, Melbourne: AM Dinsdale, 1910, nla.gov.au/ nla.mus-vn3118296

19 Bill Gammage, The Broken Years: Australian Soldiers in the Great War, Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1974, p. 4.

20 'Patriotic offers', Argus, 22 Aug. 1914, p. 16, trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/10803130, accessed 14 Jun. 2012.

21 'Church parade at St John's Camberwell', Box Hill Reporter, 2 Oct. 1914, p. 9.

22 'Canterbury's patriotic demonstration', Box Hill Reporter, 2 Oct. 1914.

23 'Referendum poll', Camberwell and Hawthorn Advertiser, 4 Nov. 1916, p. 5; 4 Jan. 1918, p. 2; Parliamentary Handbook, Part 5:

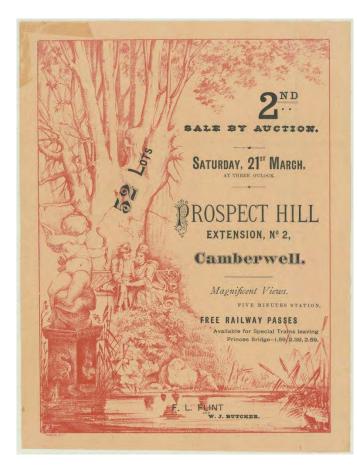
Referendums and Plebiscites, Plebiscite results, Parliament of Australia, parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo.

24 Ross, The Myth of the Digger, 1985, pp. 16-18; Gammage, The Broken Years, 1974, p.8.

This is an excerpt from an article published in the State Library's September 2015 edition of The La Trobe Journal. The remainder of the article deals with Stroud Langford's experience of war, and his family's post-war response to the loss of their son and brother.

The full text of Catherine Tiernan's article may be found at

http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/La-Trobe-Journal-96-Catherine-Tiernan 0.pdf



Prospect Hill Extension No 2 Camberwell. Troedel & Co lithographer 1885 State Library of Victoria http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/ 10381/85732

#### **NEW MEMBERS**

We warmly welcome the following new members: Brendan Tam and Jan Dimmick



Prospect Hill Estate (Prospect Hill Road, Kingsley and Moorhouse Street), 1883 State Library of Victoria http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/1

## CAMBERWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY DONATIONS TO THE COLLECTION

Camberwell Historical Society welcomes donations of the following items relating to the former City of Camberwell: photographs and prints, documents, letters, diaries, maps, plans, books, pamphlets, and reminiscences of former residents and people who worked in the area.

## THE CENTENARY OF THE EASTER RISING IN IRELAND

#### **Dermot Murray**

The year 2016 is very auspicious in the history of Ireland. It marks the centenary of the Easter Rising, which was the final rebellion in and a precursor to six years of social unrest, culminating in Ireland's ceding from British rule. In January 1922, the Union Jack was finally lowered and the Green White and Orange of the newly recognised Irish Free State was raised. The raising of the Irish Tricolour over Dublin in 1922 signified the end of a period of struggle against British Rule, which had started 250 years earlier.

The Easter Rising was an insurrection by a handful of Irish insurgents, mostly in Dublin, from 24-30 April 1916. The insurgents comprised about 1,200 men and women drawn from the nationalist militia, the Irish Volunteers and Cuman na mBan (Society of Women). The Rising was planned in secret by seven men: Tom Clarke, Sean McDermott, Padraig Pearse, Thomas MacDonagh, Joseph Plunkett, James Connolly and Eamon Ceannt (Kent). Secrecy was paramount as in many previous rebellions the British Secret Service had foreknowledge through a web of paid informers who moved freely through the country. Any revolt was quashed with ruthless efficiency. The Easter Rising was no different and the British authorities were alerted to a ship-load of arms bound for the Volunteers from the German Kaiser. This arms shipment was destroyed by the British Navy off the coast of Kerry. The Great War in Europe was in full swing and the Germans were only too happy the help the Irish be a thorn in the side of the British by tying up large numbers of troops who would otherwise be fighting on the Western Front.



Dublin GPO 1916 after the surrender

The seven leaders pressed on with the rebellion and took over a number of prominent buildings in Dublin. The General Post Office or GPO as it is known was the rallying point and at 12.45pm on Easter Monday 'The Proclamation of an Irish Republic', signed by the seven leaders, was read into history. It proclaimed a free Ireland, with Padraig Pearse as Commander in Chief. The insurgents took up armed positions in strategic buildings and prepared to take the fight to the British army. Over the next five days the British poured 16,000 troops into Ireland under the command of General Sir John Grenfell Maxwell, who ruthlessly suppressed the rebellion. On 29 April, in the face of overwhelming military might, Padraig Pearse surrendered. The British ordered courts martial be held immediately to try the leaders of the rebellion. By 12 May, the seven signatories to the proclamation had been executed and are forever remembered in the annals of Irish history as 'The Patriots'. It took another six years of social upheaval and civil war for Ireland to win its independence from the British. It was another twenty-seven years until *The Ireland Act* announced the Republic of Ireland to the world.

A number of publications have been released to coincide with the Easter Rising celebrations, and the *Irish Independent* newspaper printed an article by John Spain and Maurice Hayes listing these: *Children of the Rising* by Joe Duffy, *Grandpa the Sniper* by Frank Shouldice, *The Scrap* by Gene Kerrigan, *16 Lives; The full life stories of the major participants in the 'Rising'* by O'Brien Press, *To Speak of Easter Week* by Helene O'Keffee, *Trinity in War and Revolution 1912–1923* by Thomas Irish, *A Nation Not a Rabble* by Diarmaid Ferriter, *1916-The Mornings After* by Tim Pat Coogan, *Eamon de Valera: A Will to Power* by Ronan Fanning, *Years of Turbulence: Selected essays by historians* by UCD Press, *The Making of Irish Revolutionary Elites* by Tom Garvin, *Arthur Griffith* by Owen McGee, *A Woven Silence* by Felicity Hayes-McCoy, *Inside the GPO: A First-Hand Account* by Joe Good, *Easter Dawn* by Turtle Bunbury, *The Easter Rebellion 1916* by Conor McNamara, *1916 Patriots and Lives* by James Quinn, *The Abbey Rebels of 1916* by Fearghal McGarry

Camberwell Historical Society member Margaret Doyle Murray's great uncle was Thomas Kent, known as 'the forgotten volunteer'. He was executed in Cork on 9 May 1916 for his part in the Rising and buried in the grounds of Cork Prison. During a recent redevelopment of the prison, his body was exhumed and given a State funeral on 18 September 2015 with full military honours, ninety-nine years after his death.

## ARDEN - 1045 Burke Road

#### George Fernando



21 On August 2015 wreckers began demolition of 'Arden' at 1045 Burke Road, on the border of Camberwell and East Hawthorn. The demolition was not actually completed until much later. This beautiful Edwardian house was built in 1906 on the corner of Burke and Rathmines Roads. Cr Coral Ross. then Mayor of Boroondara. noted that 'Arden' was "notable for its unusual splayed corner on Queen Anne design, а

which took full advantage of its corner site". 'Arden' was also significant for its garden, designed in 1928 by Edna Walling (1895-1973), one of Australia's most influential landscape designers. St Mark's Anglican Church was built on the opposite side of the road.

What made Arden's demolition notable was that it was protected by a Heritage Overlay. This didn't stop the developer 1045 Burke Road Pty Ltd from asking Boroondara Council for a planning permit to demolish Arden and build a four-storey complex with 33 apartments. Council refused because of the Heritage Overlay. The developer went to VCAT. VCAT admitted 'that the building has a level of significance such that demolition is not justified in terms of purely heritage considerations', but went on to overturn Council's refusal because 'the loss of a

representative example of a type of building [Arden] is *balanced* [my emphasis] against other objectives sought by the planning scheme'.

Council argued that 'balancing' other issues against heritage was not appropriate and that VCAT should have considered heritage alone. Council took the case to the Supreme Court but in March 2014, the Supreme Court ruled in favour of demolition. Finally, the case was tried again at the Appeals Court. It upheld VCAT's original decision. We might think that heritage protection makes a building safe, but the court affirmed VCAT's balancing heritage against other planning benefits to the community for present and future generations. *The needs of our rampantly growing population, dire need for economic growth and providing jobs thus took priority over heritage*.

All too often, this is the case. Is heritage just another consideration or should it be regarded as special and a priority? RMIT Professor Michael Buxton, speaking earlier this year on 'protecting heritage' at a History Victoria Support Group seminar held at the RHSV, said that heritage is the poor relation and is considered last after all other competing priorities are considered. He implied that heritage should be on top of the list. Unless such priorities are drafted into the law, heritage will continue to take second place to other considerations.

This article was originally published in the Royal Historical Society of Victoria History News Issue No 320 Oct - Nov 2015 p6



Camberwell Historical Society meeting 23 February. Photo: John Pesutto, George Fernando, Brian McFarlane and Adele Fernando-Swart.

# 851 Burke Road Camberwell John Maidment

This is a very significant bank facade designed by the noted architects Sydney Smith & Ogg in Romanesque revival style. With the former ES&A Bank (now the Meat and Wine Company) this is the most important architectural heritage item in the Burke Road shopping precinct. The firm also designed other bank buildings in Swan Street, Richmond, Yarraville, commercial buildings and hotels but this is the major example of its work in Boroondara. It is unthinkable that it should be demolished and could be sensitively retained within a development of the site.

### MEETING REPORT 2016 FEBRUARY 23

**Brian McFarlane -** *Double Act: The remarkable lives and careers of Googie Withers and John McCallum.* Brian McFarlane had a long career as a teacher, academic and writer. A lifetime of obsession with the movies and writing about them was reflected in the witty stories and humorous presentation of this talk. The two remarkable actors, their marriage and their long careers was the basis of Brian McFarlane's recently published book and this talk.

Photograph by George Fernando



# **MEETINGS AND EXCURSIONS FOR 2016**

All meetings will be held on the fourth Tuesday of each month in the Meeting Room, Camberwell Library, 340 Camberwell Road, Camberwell at 8.00pm.

April and May meetings will be held in the Meeting Room Ashburton Library, High Street Ashburton.

- Mar 22 Professor Miles Lewis AM FAHA The Melbourne Mansion. We understand the larger houses of nineteenth century Melbourne mostly in terms of the grand rooms of few preserved examples, most of them in the eastern and south-eastern suburbs. Some are indeed very interesting, but what do we know of the servants' hall, the privy, the speaking tubes, the stables and the tennis court? What do we know about where these houses came from, what they imitated, or how they were financed? This talk will survey the evolution of the Melbourne mansion in that broader context. Camberwell Library Meeting Room
- Apr 26 Carolyn Landon Banksia Lady: Celia Rosser, botanical artist. Celia Rosser's achievement in painting the entire genus of Banksia, took twenty-five years and led to international acclaim. Award-winning author Carolyn Landon will speak about her biography of Celia Rosser. Books will be for sale on the night. Meeting Room Ashburton Library, High Street Ashburton
- May 24Ron Killeen Melbourne's forgotten Railway: The Outer Circle Railway<br/>Ron Killeen will speak about the making of the documentary about the Outer<br/>Circle Railway. Copies will be available for sale<br/>Meeting Room Ashburton Library, High Street Ashburton

## CAMBERWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE

Reminder that the Society's financial year operates from 1<sup>st</sup> July to 30<sup>th</sup> June and subscriptions are due and payable on or before July 1<sup>st</sup> each year. Thank you to those members who have paid their subscriptions.

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

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