

CAMBERWELL HISTORY

RECORDING THE HISTORY OF CAMBERWELL
AND DISTRICT
Camberwell Historical Society



No 7

December 2011

ISSN 1838-0875

SEASON'S GREETINGS

The President and Committee wish all members and their families a joyous Christmas and a very happy, healthy, and prosperous 2012.

THE BAILLIEU FAMILY IN CAMBERWELL 1890-1915

Dr Peter Yule & Rachel Goldlust

Peter Yule is a research fellow of the School of Historical and Philosophical Studies at the University of Melbourne. He has written numerous books on economic and medical history as well as Western District local history. He has recently completed a biography of WL Baillieu, which will be published early in 2012.

Rachel Goldlust has studied environmental history alongside environmental planning and has a keen interest in all areas of local history and Australian environmental history. She has travelled extensively and is currently in New Mexico studying alternative housing styles for sustainable living. At other times she calls Melbourne home.

For a short time at the turn of the twentieth century when their fortunes were at a low ebb, members of the Baillieu family made their homes in Camberwell; in Waterloo Street, Brinsley Road and Wattle Valley Road. With fortunes revived, family members, led by WL Baillieu, gradually relocated to other suburbs. Peter Yule and Rachel Goldlust describe this short-term residency.

The Baillieu family is one of Melbourne's best-known dynasties. Since the family rose to prominence in the land boom of the late 1880s, its members have been prominent in business, politics, society and the arts



WL Baillieu, 1895

and the family's name has long been a synonym for the Melbourne establishment. Originally from Liege in what is now Belgium, two Baillieu brothers emigrated to England in the 1790s where they worked as music and dancing teachers. The family's Australian story began in February 1853 when a young seaman, James George Baillieu, jumped ship at Portsea and swam

the Port Phillip Heads to Queenscliff. Later the same year he married Emma Pow, a 15-year-old girl from Somerset, recently arrived on a migrant ship. For many years, James Baillieu worked as an oarsman on the health officer's boat and the family lived in a small cottage on the beach at Queenscliff. James and Emma had sixteen children, of whom fourteen survived to adulthood. The third child, William Lawrence Baillieu (WL as he was widely known), was the primary architect of the family fortune, aided by his five younger brothers, Edward (Prince), Arthur, Rupert (Joe), Norman and Maurice (Jac), who all worked for E.L. & C. Baillieu or Baillieu Allard, the stockbroking and real estate businesses set up by WL.

WL had an imposing physique, a sharp brain and a gift for leadership. He left school at the age of 14 and got a job in the Queenscliff branch of the Bank of Victoria. In 1881 he was posted to the bank's Maryborough branch and the following year he moved to Melbourne to work for the Federal Bank, recently established by leading landboomer and politician, James Munro. In 1885 he set up a real estate agency, Baillieu & Munro, in partnership with James Munro's son Donald, and this rose quickly to become the leading real estate business during Melbourne's astonishing land boom of the late 1880s.

While still in his teens, WL had become friendly with Edward Latham, the wealthy proprietor of the Carlton Brewery, and in 1887 married Latham's daughter Bertha. Latham joined WL in many boom-time land ventures, borrowing large sums from the Federal Bank, the Real Estate Bank and other land-boom financial institutions, to finance ever more extravagant subdivi-

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sional schemes on Melbourne's outskirts. In the mid-1880s Latham also built a mansion in Studley Park Road, which he called Knowsley, but is now known as *Raheen*, the home of the Pratt family.¹

The bigger the boom, the bigger the crash, and the crash in Melbourne in the early 1890s was of epic proportions. Australia's gross domestic product fell an almost unbelievable thirty per cent between 1891 and 1895 and in Victoria the fall was even greater, leading to massive unemployment and widespread distress. Recovery was slow and real income per head did not pass its pre-depression peak until about 1909.²

With the crash, WL's fortune disappeared as quickly as it had grown. In common with many Melbournians he had borrowed heavily to speculate in suburban subdivisions and the sharp fall in property prices left him with what today is called 'negative equity' on a grand scale. In July 1892 he was forced to make a composition with his creditors, declaring debts of nearly £50,000 on which he paid sixpence in the pound.³

The 1890s was a decade of gloom and depression in Melbourne. Some ruined land boomers committed suicide, others fled to the goldfields of Western Australia or South Africa; most of the remainder lived quiet lives of genteel poverty. Baillieu was a rarity in fighting back from insolvency to build a new and lasting fortune. By 1900 he was again a wealthy man. How he achieved this so quickly and in such adverse circumstances has always been a mystery. The cash flow came from his new 'variety business' of W.L. Baillieu & Co., which was involved in real estate, auctioneering, debt collection, winding up insolvent estates and agency work of many types, and the sharebroking business of E.L. & C. Baillieu. These businesses provided the cash to invest in the real money-making ventures, of which the most important was gold mining, with the greatest part of the family's new fortune coming from the Duke mines at Maryborough and the Jubilee mine at Scarsdale.

While the economy was collapsing in the early 1890s, the Baillieu family moved *en masse* to Camberwell. A family enclave was set up in East Camberwell, with almost all the family of James George and Emma Baillieu settling within a few blocks of each other, along with Edward Latham, who had married WL's sister Emma in St John's Church Camberwell in 1895. By 1903 there were eleven Baillieus listed on the electoral roll for Camberwell:

Amy Adelaide	Home Duties Wattle Valley Road
Arthur S	Accountant The Broadway
Bertha	Home Duties Brinsley Road
Bessie (widow of Lambert)	Home Duties Wattle Valley Road

Edward L (Prince)	Stock Broker Wattle Valley Road
Ethel (wife of Arthur)	Home Duties The Broadway
Emma	Home Duties Wattle Valley Road
Florence	Home Duties Wattle Valley Road
Maurice HL (Jac)	Sharebroker Wattle Valley Road
Norman	Sharebroker Wattle Valley Road
William Lawrence	Auctioneer Brinsley Road

The move to Camberwell was probably linked to one of WL's disastrous boom-time investments, the Camberwell Estate Company. Formed in 1888 to subdivide 196 acres in East Camberwell, the company missed the peak of the boom and was left with large tracts of unsold land when the market turned down. As the economy worsened, land in East Camberwell could be bought very cheaply and WL took advantage of this to buy land for his family.

In 1890, with most of their children now living in Melbourne, WL's parents decided to move from Queenscliff. They bought lot 10, Wattle Valley Road and soon after began to build a two-storey house, which they called *Merrylands*. WL's accounts show that on 12 February 1892 he paid £400 being the balance of the purchase money. Also in 1890, WL's elder brother Lambert, in partnership with M Tuohy, bought lot 24 between Glyndon and Wattle Valley Roads, and also began building a house, which he called *Warrambine*. On 20 November 1891, WL also paid a £10 deposit for lot 18 Wattle Valley Road, which was purchased in the name of his mother and on 22 December he paid £50 deposit to the Camberwell Estate Company for an unidentified block on behalf of his father-in-law, Edward Latham. These were the first houses along Wattle Valley Road and the Baillieus had few neighbours before the First World War.

WL contracted the services of Alfred Dunn, then a renowned architect, to draw up plans for *Merrylands* and *Warrambine*. Dunn, who arrived in Australia in 1883, had quickly become a popular designer of family homes in suburban Melbourne. His project for WF [sic] Baillieu Esq was listed in the *Australasian Builder and Contractors News*.⁴ Dunn called for separate tenders for the erection of a large brick villa and a two-storey dwelling house at Camberwell on several occasions between February and August 1891. A builder called W. Park was contracted to build the houses for WL's parents and his brother Lambert, with surviving accounts showing that WL paid all the building costs from his personal account, even while his own financial position was unravelling. Between September 1891 and April 1892 he paid Park a total of



£3,550, indicating they were substantial family homes although not in the ‘mansion’ category.⁵

To be continued

Endnotes

1 The story of *Raheen* is surrounded by myths and misconceptions, largely arising from the fact that Sir Henry Wrixon, who purchased the property in December 1888 and changed its name to *Raheen*, had used the same name for his previous home, which was also in Stud-

ley Park Road.

2 EA Boehm, *Prosperity and Depression in Australia, 1887-1997* Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1971, ch. 10.

3 Michael Cannon, *The Land Boomers: the complete illustrated history*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1995, ch. 35. (The *Land Boomers* was first published in 1966; the 1995 edition is considerably expanded.)

4 *Australasian Builders and Contractors' News* 14 November 1891, p.395.

5 WL Baillieu, personal accounts, June 1888 to July 1892, Baillieu Allard Papers, 5/27, University of Melbourne Archives.

PRIVATE SCHOOLS OF CAMBERWELL NO 3

STRATHCONA - THE ORIGINS OF THE NAME AND THE SCHOOL

Glen Turnbull

Glen Turnbull is Archivist at Strathcona Baptist Girls Grammar School and has a wide involvement in Victorian local history and archivy. In 2008 Glen edited *Triangle of Tranquillity 150 Years of the Boroondara (Kew) Cemetery 1859-2009* for Friends of Boroondara (Kew) Cemetery Inc. He was involved in the Public Record Office Victoria's 'Sir Rupert Hamer Records Managment Awards' 2011 in which Knox Historical Society received an award for the digitisation and indexing of photo collections of local primary schools, secondary schools and kindergartens.

There has been much speculation about the naming and the history of Strathcona Baptist Girls Grammar School in Canterbury over the years. Frequent questions asked are: ‘Was it named after a ship?’, ‘Was it named after a person?’ and ‘Why choose the name Strathcona?’

The origin of the Strathcona name is a mixture of all the above, but in reality the name used for the school was one of convenience and one that occurred out of a chance meeting of professional minds.



Mrs Florence Livingstone with her daughters, c1906

The Strathcona school idea really commenced when two brilliant teachers met at Toorak College, which was then located in Glenferrie Road. The pair formed a friendship that was to continue for the rest of their lives.

In 1921, Mrs Florence Mabel Livingstone, joined the staff at Toorak College. There, she met Miss Henrietta Hughes who had been teaching at that College since 1905.

Mrs Livingstone, or ‘Liv’ as she was known to her friends, was born in New Zealand in 1880. Her maiden name was Watkins. In 1901, she married Robert Livingstone¹ and the couple had four children (Florence, Muriel, Edna and Stanley). Miss Hughes, or ‘Hen’, as she preferred to be called, was born in Collingwood in 1879.² She did not marry.



Miss Henrietta Hughes, 1919

At the time of their meeting in 1921, Mrs Livingstone was a widow and would have had to work to support her children. In any case, this instant friendship bought about a business partnership. The two ladies must have spoken openly to each other about commencing their own school whilst teaching the young ladies of Toorak College. Within 3 years of that meeting, the two ladies had purchased a large house on a large block in Scott Street Canterbury and opened their own school.

This is where the name of the school comes in. “*Strathcona*” was the name of the residence the two ladies purchased in Scott Street. According to Camberwell Council Rate Book records,³ the name of this residence dates back to at least 1901. Prior to 1901, these rate book records only state the property description; not a house name nor a street number.

The *Strathcona* house was originally part of the 'Claremont Park Estate', a sub-division of part of Michael Logan's farm and was constructed about 1887. Logan had a 100 acre property that he had owned since the 1850s; hence the naming of Logan Street, the next street to the west. The area bounded by Logan Street, Prospect Hill Road, Bryson Street and Claremont Crescent was surveyed in 1885. Sub-division took place shortly afterward and the blocks were sold at differing times over many years. Likewise, houses were constructed at differing times over the following decades.

The house at 34 Scott Street was a 12 room brick house on four blocks of land;⁵ two lots facing Scott



Street and two facing Bryson Street - the property was a perfect rectangle.

In 1901, the *Strathcona* house and four blocks were owned by George Guthrie McColl.⁶ Prior to World War One, McColl was a businessman and a broker who had directorships in several companies. McColl was also involved with the Victorian Colonial Defense Force prior to Federation. He must have been quite a patriot of the British Empire.

In 1901, the British Empire was at war with the Boers in South Africa. One of the regiments that served in the Boer War was the 'Strathcona Regiment', which was funded by Lord Strathcona of Canada. So, it is likely that McColl named the house at 34 Scott Street about this time. Of course, this cannot be confirmed without a descendant coming forward.

McColl's future residences were also named *Strathcona*. By 1914, McColl lived at 15 Nelson Street Surrey Hills.⁷ In the 1930s, he resided at 34 Stanhope Grove Camberwell.⁸

During World War One, McColl held the significant position of Victoria's Chief Censor and as Australia's Deputy Chief Censor. He was given the military rank of Colonel⁹ and controlled all the propaganda that the citizens of Victoria were told relating to the war. In late 1918, McColl was appointed a Commander of the British Empire (CBE) for his efforts.¹⁰

The large *Strathcona* house at 34 Scott Street was an ideal size for a small boarding and day school. The grounds were of sufficient size for recreation pursuits, with tennis being the most popular sport with the girls. Mrs Livingstone and Miss Hughes purchased the property from Henry Moorhead Osborne who had owned the property since 1919.¹¹ Mr. Osborne's daughter Una was enrolled as pupil number one. As such, Mrs Livingstone and Miss Hughes named one of the student houses 'Osborne'. Pupil number two enrolled was Jean Austin, so the other house was named 'Austin'. During sport, the girls of 'Austin House' wore a temporary 'A' affixed to the front of their tunics, whilst the 'Osborne House' girls were unlabeled. These two student house names remained until the end of 1942.

The school opened on 12 February 1924, but the Certificate of Registration for the School was dated 26 February 1924.¹² In the application for the school, the co-Headmistresses classified for a sub-primary, primary and secondary school, where 31 subjects were proposed including French, Latin, German, Singing, Scripture and Physical Culture. According to reports of the day, the total enrollment in the first year was 43, including thirteen junior boys.¹²

Mrs Livingstone and Miss Hughes along with Miss Mavis Dumbrell were the only permanent staff. Miss Hughes taught the secondary classes whilst Mrs Livingstone taught the sub-primary and primary classes. Ten other part-time teachers also assisted when the school opened, most teaching Physical Culture, Singing, Music, Drawing and Dressmaking.

The school had only three classrooms on opening. The rest of the building had to house Miss Hughes and Mrs Livingstone including her children. Her son Stanley attended Melbourne High School in 1924 whilst residing at *Strathcona*. The building also housed an office and a room for the boarders.

Mrs Livingstone was regarded as the cuddly and sweet motherly figure according to the former students of the era, whilst Miss Hughes was the strict disciplinarian. Mrs Livingstone and Miss Hughes retired together as co-Headmistresses at the end of 1940, but remained co-owners of the school and the property until late 1942, when the Baptist Union of Victoria purchased the school adding the name 'Baptist'. But that is a story for another time.

The last word on the name *Strathcona* is that, in theory, all usage of the name ultimately leads back to Lord Strathcona. Lord Strathcona was born Donald Alexander Smith at Forres, Morayshire in Scotland on 6 August 1820. In 1838, he went to Canada to work in the Hudson's Bay Company. He went into Canadian Provincial and Federal Politics, later becoming High Commissioner for Canada in the United Kingdom. However, he is better known as a businessman in various companies, especially the railways. Lord Strathcona was present to hammer in the last spike in the Canadian east-west railway at Craigellachie on 7 November 1885. He was knighted the following year and elevated to the peerage in 1897, styling himself as the 1st Baron Strathcona and Mount Royal.¹⁴ Lord Strathcona was a leading philanthropist of his day, donating large sums of money to various organisations. One of the organisations he supported was the work of Sir Wilfred Thomason Grenfell. Grenfell managed hospital ships that sailed along the east coast of Canada, commencing in 1899.¹⁵ In recognition, Grenfell named his ship 'Strathcona'.¹⁶ When the ship sank in 1922, the 'Strathcona II' was commissioned in 1924.¹⁷ Lord Strathcona died in London on 21 January 1914 and he has a memorial window dedicated to him at Westminster Abbey.¹⁸

George Guthrie McColl must have held Lord Strathcona in high regard to name his house *Strathcona* at 34 Scott Street Canterbury around 1901. Twenty three years later, Mrs Livingstone and Miss Hughes used the name for their new school.



End notes

- 1 Victorian BDM Index.
- 2 Victorian BDM Index.
- 3 Camberwell Council Rate Books.
- 4 Parish of Boroondara map.
- 5 Camberwell Council Rate Books.
- 6 Camberwell Council Rate Books.
- 7 Victorian Electoral Rolls.
- 8 *The Argus*, 16 Jun 1938 p8.
- 9 *Who's Who in Australia*, 1935 p301.

- 10 *The Argus*, 5 Oct 1918, p6.
 - 11 Camberwell Council Rate Books.
 - 12 Registration application form to the Council of Public Education.
 - 13 Rev. John Morley's notes in 1969 (Strathcona Archives)
 - 14 Dictionary of Canadian Biography online [www.biographi.ca]
 - 15 *London Times*" 20 May 1899.
 - 16 *London Times*" 5 Oct 1922.
 - 17 *London Times*" 7 Oct 1924.
 - 18 Westminster Abbey web-site [www.westminster-abbey.org]
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LAST MEETINGS

3 September 2011

Excursion — Heidelberg Town Hall and Heidelberg Historical Society

Members were privileged to be guided through the superb art-deco Heidelberg Town Hall by Robin Grow, president of the Art Deco and Modernism Society. Robin explained the history of the building and pointed out the many design features of the building. We then moved to the Court House headquarters of the Heidelberg Historical Society where we were shown through the museum and entertained with a slide show of Heidelberg art-deco buildings. We were then shown the extensive collections of the Society and how they were managed. Our very generous hosts provided us with a thoroughly enjoyable morning which we completed with a lunch at the Old England Hotel, Heidelberg.

22 September 2011

Baillieu Family — David Baillieu

Mr David Baillieu graciously stepped in to deliver this talk when the Premier was unable to present the talk due to a visit to China. David spoke to a large audience of over 100 members and friends about modern day Baillieus and their family connections. A surprising number of family members had distinguished war records. Others made, and continue to make, major contributions in the business world. Many family members were in the audience as was Dr Peter Yule, author of the soon to be published biography of WL Baillieu.

29 October 2011

Excursion — Maling Road — Don Gibb

Inclement weather cleared to allow Don Gibb of Canterbury History Group to lead this tour. From railway station platform three we were able to see iconic Canterbury buildings in context. We then walked along Maling Road with Don's descriptions of major buildings helping us to piece together the story of the Road's history. Don Gibb is a co-author, with Stuart Warmington of *Visions of A Village Canterbury Shops and Shopping 1880s-1990s* which is available from the newsagency and the bookshop in Maling Road.

6 November 2011

Excursion — Villa Alba — Jessie Serle

The two-storey *Villa Alba* in Kew was built in about 1882 by banker William Greenlaw. Mrs Jessie Serle, the acknowledged expert on the house's history, led a group of CHS members on a tour of the house, explaining its fairly tumultuous history and describing its sumptuous decoration. The house is regarded as 'being one of the most important examples of late nineteenth century decoration in Australia.' The over-painted decoration in *Villa Alba* is slowly being revealed by conservators and the house, which is open on the first Sunday in the month, will become 'a museum and resource centre of nineteenth century interior decoration'.

24 November 2011

Writing a history of Hartwell: The trials and tribulations of a researcher — Volkhard Wehner

Next year, if all goes to plan, we will have a history of the 'neighbourhood' of Hartwell. CHS member Volkhard Wehner described the many problems in writing such a history. These ranged from finding a definition of the area (no authority has designated just what the area of Hartwell is) to difficulties with source materials caused, he said, because of the area's lack of definition. Even the name Hartwell has been incorrectly attributed in past years. Volkhard showed that the use of the name precedes the naming of *Hartwell House* after which the area is supposed to be named. He described the development in Toorak and Camberwell Roads and how, at one stage, Hartwell equalled the Camberwell village in size. The arrival of supermarkets saw the demise of the extraordinary number of butcher shops and green-grocers.

Although several thematic works covering Boroondara have been published in recent years, eg Jennings' *Telling Lives* in 2002, no major history of a district has appeared since Gibb and Warmington's history of Maling Road in 1995 (the important *The Alameiners* is not a formal history rather reminiscences).

Judging from the extent of his research, Volkhard Wehner's history of Hartwell will be a history to look forward to.



MEETINGS FOR 2012

Boroondara Council advised on 18 November that building works will commence at Hawthorn Town Hall in 2012 and that our meeting bookings, which had been confirmed several months before, have been rescheduled from Thursday to Tuesday and relocated from Hawthorn to Ashburton (except for the September meeting which will be at Kew). As a consequence, scheduled speakers need to be contacted to re-arrange appropriate dates. Members will be advised of meeting details when available.

Dates for meetings in 2012 are:

28 February	Special General Meeting to consider the adoption of updated rules. Ashburton Library Meeting Room
27 March	Ashburton Library Meeting Room
22 May	Ashburton Library Meeting Room
24 July	Ashburton Library Meeting Room
28 August	Ashburton Library Meeting Room
13 September	Phyllis Hore Room, Kew Library
27 November	Ashburton Library Meeting Room

Meetings will be held on the fourth Tuesday of February, March, May, July, August and November at the Ashburton Library Meeting Room. The September meeting will be held on the **second Thursday** at the Phyllis Hore Room, Kew Library.

The Ashburton Library Meeting Room is at **154 High Street, Ashburton.**

All meetings commence at 8.00pm

PLEASE ADVISE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS

Many members now receive the newsletter and notices by email. This helps to reduce costs to the society and provides speedier communication to members. If you have an email address and are prepared to accept communications electronically from the Society would you please advise your email address to the Secretary at enquiries@chs.org.au.

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members:

Ordinary

Ms A Carina
Mr Leonard Coe
Ms NA McHaffie
Mr G Turnbull
Cr J Wegman

Family

Mr & Mrs LM Chambers
Ms J Fenton & Mr W Araons

Corporate

Camberwell Grammar School

CAMBERWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC

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