

CAMBERWELL HISTORY

RECORDING THE HISTORY OF CAMBERWELL AND DISTRICT

Camberwell Historical Society



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PRINCIPAL PATRON PROFESSOR EMERITUS GEOFFREY BLAINY AC

Camberwell Historical Society has much pleasure in announcing that Professor Blainy, has graciously accepted our invitation to become the Society's Principal Patron.

Professor Blainy is well known as a leading historian and prolific writer who has links with the former City of Camberwell. His book, *A History of Camberwell*, published in 1964, with a second edition in 1980, set a pattern for what was considered to be 'good' local history.

We are grateful to Professor Blainy for so generously acceding to our invitation to become our Principal Patron.

George Fernando
President

THE CAMBERWELL CHORALE Dr John Gregory

John Gregory, who was awarded his PhD by the University of Melbourne in 1979, retired recently after a long career lecturing in art history and theory at Monash University. He has taught and written extensively on both European and Australian art. His major monograph on Melbourne painter Howard Arkley was published by Cambridge University Press in 2006. He has sung tenor with the Camberwell Chorale since 1987, has served on the committee (including terms as Vice-President and President), and currently edits the Chorale's newsletter.

The Camberwell Chorale, one of the oldest community choirs in Australia, celebrates its 68th year of uninterrupted music-making this year. This remarkable achievement is founded on the dedication of its numerous choristers past and present, and the creative contributions of the many talented répétiteurs, soloists, and orchestral players who have collaborated in its performances (often for negligible financial reward). Above all, the choir's continuing vitality and success can be credited to the talent and energy of the two remarkable men who have guided the choir's fortunes ever since 1944.¹

APPLICATIONS are invited by the City of
Camberwell Philharmonic Society for posi-
tions of a Conductor and also a Pianist.
State qualifications and salary required.
Applications close Sept. 2 with Secretary, F.
Harber, 41 Monmouth av., Canterbury, E.7.

The Argus, Saturday, 26 August 1944, p21

The founding director of the Chorale – originally named the City of Camberwell Philharmonic Society –

was Dr Hermann Schildberger, who came to Australia in the late 1930s as a refugee from Germany, where he had already established a successful musical career prior to the rise of Nazism. In Melbourne, he quickly became active in a wide range of positions including musical



Dr Hermann Schildberger, MBE (1888-1974)
Image courtesy Nick Schildberger

director for the Temple Beth Israel, director of the National Theatre Opera School, conductor of the State Service Orchestra, occasional conductor of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, and director of several other choirs. Under Dr Schildber-

CONTENTS

Meetings for 2012	Page 6
The Baillieu Family in Camberwell	3
Book notes	4
Thematic Environmental History	5
Progress of Camberwell	5
New Members	6



ger's leadership, the Chorale performed many classical and contemporary choral works (some performed for the first time in Australia), in various Melbourne venues including St Paul's Cathedral, the Melbourne Town Hall, and the Great Hall of the National Gallery of Victoria.

Soprano Gwen O'Brien, one of the Chorale's foundation members, reflected later on its early history. She recalled that people were generally starved for good music, after the privations of wartime, and there was fierce competition for the best seats at concerts.² The Chorale flourished in these challenging circumstances. As one commentator remarked in 1949:

*Camberwell may well be proud of the Philharmonic Society conducted by Dr Hermann Schildberger... everywhere there is social, industrial and racial trouble, and the excellent music provided under the baton of the eminent conductor gives us, at least temporarily, a delightful rest in peace.*³

From the start, Dr Schildberger's programmes were ambitious and demanding for singers and audiences alike. The opening concert, held at the Camberwell Town Hall in March 1945, featured a choir of 100 women and 26 men, accompanied by a string orchestra. They performed works by a variety of composers, from Purcell to Holst, with Mendelssohn's cantata *Lauda in Sion* as the centrepiece. In April 1946 came *Israel in Egypt*, the first in a long line of performances of Handel's oratorios (several of them Australian premieres) for which the choir became renowned.

Opera also formed an important element of the choir's early programming, featuring a number of concert performances of complete operas, including *Carmen*, *Il Trovatore* and *Faust*. Camberwell singers joined the chorus for *Aida* and other National Theatre opera productions in this period. Camberwell members also sang with several large choirs formed for significant Melbourne events during the 1940s and 50s, including a thanksgiving service at the Shrine of Remembrance to mark the end of World War II, a reception at the Exhibition Buildings for the Queen's visit to Melbourne in 1954 (under the baton of Sir Bernard Heinze), and the opening and closing ceremonies of the 1956 Olympic Games.

Dr Schildberger's adventurous programming was exemplified by a 1949 performance of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's setting of Longfellow's *Hiawatha*, at which, according to a reviewer, 'the grand choir, as always, sang gloriously'.⁴ Nine years later, Camberwell choir members participated in a spectacular staging of the same work, again conducted by Dr Schildberger, at the recently-built Olympic Swimming Pool, as part of the 1958 Moomba Festival. This performance in-

volved a huge cast including, besides musicians, members of the Victorian Amateur Swimming Association and the Malvern Lacrosse Players! The *Australian Women's Weekly* ran an enthusiastic story ('Hiawatha on the Water – Colorful Redskin wedding in Olympic pool'); and Australian composer Dorian Le Galliene, reviewing the opening night in the *Melbourne Age*, commented that although the music-lover might come away a little unsatisfied, 'the large audience obviously loved every minute of it'.⁵

In 1963, Dr Schildberger conducted the critically-acclaimed Australian premiere of Ernest Bloch's *Sacred Service (Avodath Hakodesh)* at the Melbourne Town Hall, performed by the Camberwell choir together with singers from the Brighton Philharmonic Society, Temple Beth Israel and Toorak Synagogue, the Victorian Symphony Orchestra, and a group of soloists led by Frederick Lechner, Cantor of New York's Central Synagogue. Bloch's 1933 composition, which transforms ancient Jewish themes and rhythms into a modern and universal work, has since been performed on several occasions by the Camberwell Chorale.

Dr Schildberger, who was awarded an MBE in 1970 for his services to music, helped celebrate the choir's 30th anniversary in September 1974, but died shortly afterwards. His memory is preserved through the Hermann Schildberger Award (established with the proceeds of a memorial concert held in 1975), still awarded annually at the Boroondara Eisteddfod, to a promising young singer. Dr Schildberger's son Michael (well known in his own right in media and business circles) continued his family's long association with the Chorale, serving as President from the 1970s until 1998, and maintaining an active interest in the choir until his death in 2010.

To be continued

End Notes

1 The City of Camberwell Philharmonic Society was formally constituted on 12 September 1944.

2 Mention should be made here of an earlier choir, called the Camberwell Choral Society, directed by a Mr WJ (Grenville) Semmens, who died at the age of 53 on 24 January 1936 (clippings of death notices and obituaries in the Camberwell Chorale archive). Further research needs to be conducted into the history of this group, which apparently ran from 1921 to 1935, then being absorbed into the Malvern Choral Society. However, Dr Schildberger's Philharmonic Society appears to have been a completely new venture.

3 Gwen, who died in January 2011, aged 84, sang with the Chorale from 1944 until the late 1990s; and her husband Ted also sang bass with the choir for many years. Gwen shared these reminiscences,



and some valuable early press clippings, in connection with an extended history of the Chorale I wrote for the 50th anniversary concert on October 15, 1994 (programme in Chorale archive). Gwen was also an original member of the Brighton Philharmonia Society, also founded by Dr Schildberger, which ran from 1943 until its later demise (exact date uncertain).

4 WH Phipps, "Philharmonia Society – 'Hiawatha' success" (unidentified press clipping dated April 20, 1949; from Chorale archive).

5 The inaugural performance on Tuesday, 20 March was repeated on the following Thursday, 22 March 1945.

THE BAILLIEU FAMILY IN CAMBERWELL 1890-1915

Dr Peter Yule & Rachel Goldlust

Continued from Issue No7

'Merrylands'

Surprisingly little is known of 'Merrylands'. There is no certain picture of the house and the only description was made when it was sold in 1927. During the 1890s James George and Emma Baillieu lived there with all their unmarried children, but the household was slowly dispersed by death and marriage until by 1914 only Prince remained.



E.L. 'Prince' Baillieu

In 1915 Prince chose to subdivide much of the land that originally went with 'Merrylands'. A notice in the *Argus* in November 1915 advertised ten lots at 'Merrylands' Paddock – perfect building land being sold by Baillieu Allard Auctioneers'.⁶ By 1919 the unsold lots were being marketed as 'Merrylands Estate with lots nine and ten 50 yards off Riversdale Rd tram section, partly fenced and adjoining residence of E.L. Baillieu Esq'.⁷

In 1927 Prince offered 'Merrylands' itself for sale, when he moved to a flat in 'Cliveden Mansions'. The advertisement for the auction described the internal layout of the house;

*Spacious two-storied brick residence
Containing on ground floor 4 reception rooms,
full sized billiard room, bedroom, and bath-
room with lavatory, kitchen and extensive of-
fices. Upstairs are 6 large bedrooms and bath-
room, also maids' quarters of 3 rooms and
bathroom. A hot-water service is installed. Out-
side there is Stabling &c. Garage for 3 cars*

*and Man's room. Baillieu Allard Pty Ltd.*⁸

'Merrylands' was demolished before the 1970s.

Illustration possibly 'Merrylands'

This photograph comes from the Ashburton local history catalogue. Its provenance is unclear but it was kept with the Baillieu clippings and listed as 'possibly' Wattle Valley Road; it fits the



size and features of 'Merrylands' as advertised in the sale advertisement. No other photographs of 'Merrylands' could be found in any existing sale records, auctioneers' posters or photographic collections. [This photograph has now been confirmed as 'Merrylands'. Ed.)

Warrambine

'Warrambine', the residence of James Lambert Baillieu, was bought as lot 24 and is now 125 Wattle Valley Road. James was a keen dog breeder and won many prizes both locally and even interstate with dogs whose names always included 'Warrambine'.⁹ An eight-roomed brick house, 'Warrambine' is still standing and listed in the heritage register of Camberwell. The lot size of 'Warrambine' is noted in the Camberwell conservation study as 170 x 300 but maps of the area show Baillieu and R Winter as owning all the land between Riversdale Road and Hunter Street, Wattle Valley and Glyndon Roads as of 1892.¹⁰ Previously the land had formed part of the Beavers Paddock Camberwell Estate (1889) and prior to that had formed part of Patrick Maloney and Michael Logan's extensive holdings in Camberwell from the first land sales of 1853.

The Camberwell Conservation Study states;

'Warrambine'

Built by James Lambert Baillieu in 1892 and



Michael Tuohy who was listed as an owner and occupier in 1895-96 (RB 1894-95, 339; RB 1895-96, 332). The eight-bedroom brick



'Warrambine' in the late 1960s and 2011



in 1930, was listed as having "9 splendid rooms, vestibule, scullery, two bathrooms. pantry, washhouse with reticulated water, gas, electric, light and sewerage."¹¹

house was owned by James Baillieu until his death when it was occupied by his widow and then a Mrs L Baillieu [the same person!]

in 1910 when it was purchased by John Johnson Smart, an architect (D1910; RB 1910-11). The house, upon resale

Described as "early English Tudoresque revival (may have been renovated by Smart) the house is multi-layered in plan, stuccoed with half timbered gables, return timber-framed verandah (turned posts, timber frieze and central gable) and slated roofs. Addressing two frontages with gabled bays, the main frontage is demarcated with twin gables and a third central gablet set into the verandah. The highly ornamental porch is reflected by ornate coloured glass at the door and side-lights. The garden is particularly impressive with individually notable mature species from the turn of the century."¹²

Lambert died in 1900 and his widow, Mrs Elizabeth Mary Baillieu, lived in 'Warrambine' until her death in 1910, when the property was sold.

To be continued

End notes

- 6 *Argus*, 10 November 1915, p.4
- 7 *Argus*, 2 April 1919, p.2.
- 8 *Argus* 26 February 1927, p.2.
- 9 *Launceston Examiner*, 26 August 1898, p.7.
- 10 Directory Maps of the County of Bourke, 1892. Maps Collection. State Library of Victoria.
- 11 *Argus*, 28 May 1930, p.9.
- 12 Camberwell Conservation Study prepared for the City of Camberwell by P. Sanders Pty. Ltd. and Graeme Butler & Associates, 1986, p.310.

BOOK NOTES

WILLIAM LAWRENCE BAILLIEU

FOUNDER OF AUSTRALIA'S GREATEST BUSINESS EMPIRE

By Peter Yule

Publication date: March 2012

The creator of a number of successful businesses, Baillieu founded and remained the unquestioned leader of the Collins House group, which by 1914 had grown to become the most powerful force in Australian industry. The group dominated Australian mining, contributing to the increased industrial capability of Australia in the Second World War through its metals processing and manufacturing capabilities. He played a central role in the rise of such companies as Rio Tinto, the Herald & Weekly Times, Electrolytic Zinc, Dunlop, and Carlton & United Breweries.

WL, as he was called, made a significant contribution to the development of zinc processing which positioned Australia at the forefront of flotation research and development within the global mining industry.

'Big Bill' Baillieu was a major figure in Victorian politics, and was also highly influential at the federal level.

Peter Yule's biography is the first ever of this significant Australian, arguably the most important individual in the development of the modern Australian economy.

EARLY HARTWELL: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE VILLAGE THAT LOST ITS NAME

By Volkhard Wehner

Publication date: May/June 2012

This local history by CHS member and Past President, Volkhard Wehner, is due for publication in May/June this year. At about 200 pages it will be the most comprehensive history of any part of Camberwell since Blainey's *A History of Camberwell* in 1964. Ranging from details of first inhabitants and through the 20th Century, this work will cover all aspects of Hartwell's history. Of particular interest will be the chapter on Hartwell's founders – the Irwin and Cobain families.

Members will be advised of publication details.



THEMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY (TEH)

Boroondara Council advised that, *The TEH was initiated in early 2011 to inform Council's future heritage studies and assessments. The TEH is also the first step in the preparation of a Heritage Strategy for the municipality. ... there are a number of areas in the municipality which require further heritage investigations to determine if they warrant planning protection. The TEH provides the necessary background information and context for these future heritage studies. The document is also a useful record of the history of the municipality as a whole as it combines the previous histories produced for the former Cities of Kew, Hawthorn and Camberwell.*

The TEH was prepared by Simon Reeves from Built Heritage Pty Ltd. He utilised a range of primary and secondary sources to compile the document.

Along with other historical societies in Boroondara, CHS made a submission to the original proposal and a further submission on the draft document in August 2011.

The draft was adopted by Council on 12 December 2011 subject to the changes listed in the Response to Public Submissions Report. These changes will be incorporated in the TEH which is expected to issue shortly. The updated document will be on the Council website and available at Boroondara libraries. A copy will also be sent to all submitters and historical societies.

PROGRESS OF CAMBERWELL THE PAST AND PRESENT

The gigantic strides of progress made by the different suburban districts has been simply marvellous, and none of the least wonderful by reason of the short space of time in which the changes have been accomplished. Perhaps in no suburb is this more apparent than at Camberwell, where but a few short years ago the whole district was merely the home of market gardeners and those engaged in agricultural pursuits. The streets, which are studded with magnificent edifices, were then heavily timbered with gum and other species of trees, and only frequented by the woodcutter who made Boroondara his home. The Camberwell of today is vastly different to that of only some 15 years ago. Along the Burke and Camberwell roads are erected some magnificent places of business, whilst numerous handsome private mansions have superseded the old slab huts of early Camberwell. Perhaps the most notable additions to the buildings in the suburb are the number of new places of public worship which of late have been erected. In the Camberwell-road the Wesleyan denomination have constructed for themselves a most imposing structure, and the Catholic body have been no less backward in securing a large and commodious building in which to pay their devotions. For a long time the worshippers at the Camberwell Anglican church were taxed for lack of suitable accommodation, but now extensive additions

have been made to their edifice, and the assiduous pastor (the Rev. A. W. Cresswell) ministers to his flock in a fine and well appointed building. The Congregationalists have some little time since had completed for them a pretty new church just on the rise of the hill in the Riversdale-road, where large congregations assemble each Sabbath. The Presbyterians, perhaps, are the only denomination which has not been called upon to erect a new building, and they still continue their devotions in a rather primitive looking building in the Riversdale-road. Turning from the churches, progress is written in no less plainer terms in the many different industries which have found their home in the suburb of Camberwell. In the Burke-road, between the station and the junction, several lofty structures have been erected, and the few private residences which had remained on this road are now being demolished to give place to more remunerative buildings. Premises have just been completed in this road for the Commercial Bank, [the branch opened on 6 November 1889. Ed] and only last week Mr. T. McAlpine, ironmonger purchased land at the high price of £40 per foot, upon which to erect a three story warehouse. With such rapid progress as has been made by Camberwell, it is only to be expected that the council have been unable with their limited income to keep pace with all the requirements, but the loan of £25,000 which has recently been floated, will effect many Marvellous improvements, and do so much to add attractions for business and private individuals to settling in that district.

The Boroondara Standard 1 November 1889



MEETINGS FOR 2012

General Meetings for the year will be held at Ashburton (except for the September meeting which will be at Kew on Thursday 13 September)

Dates for meetings in 2012 are:

27 March	Local History and Heritage: it's good for us!	Assoc Professor Don Garden
22 May	Historical landscapes of Boroondara	Dr Gary Presland
24 July	Recollections of living in Camberwell	Professor David deKretser AC
28 August	Annual General Meeting	
13 September	Sidney Myer	Stella Barber
	at Phyllis Hore Room, Kew Library	Note change of day to Thursday for this meeting only
27 November	To be advised	

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

The Special General Meeting held on 28 February relating to Changes to the Society's Rules and the talk Living in Archivy by Trevor Hart will be reported in the next issue.

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 Members

Ms A Carina
Mr Leonard Coe
Ms NA McHaffie
Mr P Doughty
Mr G Turnbull

Mr J Virgona
Mr J Wegman

Family Members

Mr & Mrs LM Chambers
Ms J Fenton & Mr W Aarons
Mr & Mrs J Young

Corporate Members

Camberwell Grammar School

CAMBERWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC

ABN 79 935 200 741 Incorporation No A0041541Y
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President – George Fernando; Secretary – Adele Fernando-Swart; Treasurer – Stephen Watson
Committee members–Jan Alexander, Val Goldsworthy, Trevor Hart (Editor)