CAMBERWELL HISTORY

RECORDING THE HISTORY OF CAMBERWELL AND DISTRICT

Camberwell Historical Society



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Principal Patron: Professor Emeritus Geoffrey Blainey, AC

Patron: Her Worship the Mayor of Boroondara, Cr Cynthia Watson

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

George Fernando

Our meetings for 2020 started with a talk on the Mallee region by Emeritus Professor Richard Broome AM, FAHA and FRHSV but, due to the Covid 19 pandemic, we have been unable to hold any more meetings since then. We hope that members are continuing to stay safe and healthy during the pandemic.

Recent news from Boroondara Council indicates that the proposed redevelopment of the Tuck Stand will be delayed until 2025. Thank you to Peter Beer for the record of his search for an ancestor, to the Carey Baptist Archivist Joanne Horsley for the article on Leading Aircraftsman Arthur William Brown, and to Val Goldsworthy for further information on Anthony George Maldon Michell. We look forward to resuming meetings when it is safe to do so.

THE LOST LANGFORD

By Peter Beer

In September 2019, I wrote a short piece on East Camberwell Tennis Club for the Camberwell Historical Society newsletter. 2020 is our centenary year, I was looking for more information on some of the Club's founders. My interest in the Club's history was piqued when I joined the centenary sub-committee, and saw Clements Langford, my great-grandfather, listed as one of three inaugural vice presidents of the Club.

Information I received from Peter Harms helped with my centenary research, and at the same time it opened a whole new research project. Peter wrote that he was now living in a house previously owned by a John Langford. He believed that John and my great-grandfather Clements were related as indicated by the title documents. Peter stated that Clements had partial ownership of the house after John died in 1902. John Langford was not listed in our family history.

After searching Ancestry.com, I found John Langford. He was an uncle of my great-grandfather Clements. He was the brother of George Langford, my great-great-grandfather (i.e. Clements' father). This revelation gave rise to many more questions. When did he come to Australia? What did he do here? Did he have children? Why did he seem to be "lost"?

More research in Ancestry.com, and Trove, the vast store of digitized newspapers provided by the National Library, and other sites like the Public Records Office Victoria (PROV) helped to uncover some information about John Langford's life.



John Langford was born on 21 October 1824. In 1841 he was living in St Mary Street Southampton, in England, with his mother and siblings. His father Henry had died in 1840. From his father's will, it appears that he was a well-off builder and entrepreneur. He had numerous properties he rented out and had probably built. John's older brother Charles was listed as a carpenter in the 1841 census. In February 1849, aged 24, John married Louisa Hill, at Shirley, in Southampton. Louisa had been born in 1826.

A note on researching names: John and Louisa had no middle names, which was both good and bad when searching for information about them. Likewise, Clements Langford had no middle name. Clements' given name was actually his mother's maiden name as she was Betsey Dyer Clements. His name was often listed as the more common Clement in various places, including the electoral roll. The tradition of ancestors' surnames used as middle names helps research a lot!

Two years after their marriage, John and Louisa cannot be found in the 1851 Census. This suggests they had left England sometime between March 1849 and March 1851 (when the 1851 Census was taken).

There are no records I could find to suggest that they moved to Australia around 1850. The only records suggest they went to America in 1849/50, and then John came to Australia in 1852, Louisa following three years later. I found records of an English John and 'Loisa' Langford living in Wisconsin in 1850. It seems far-fetched, but vaguely possible that these people were "our" John and Louisa. Their ages are very close to correct.



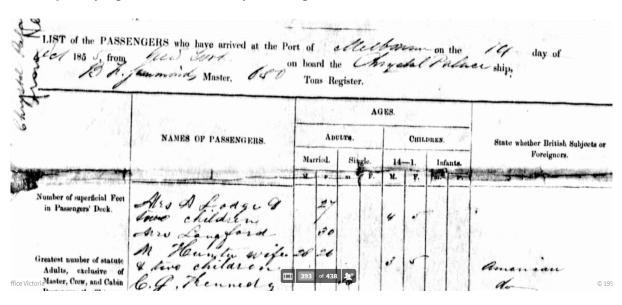
In a death notice in *The Argus* in February 1902, it says John was "a colonist of 50 years". This implies he came to Australia in about 1852. There is only one likely arrival around that time, and it was a John Langford, in November 1852. He arrived alone from New York on the *Magnolia*, was listed as English, and it appears he worked on that trip as a "cabinet maker". Perhaps he and Louisa travelled to the US because of the goldrushes, and likewise moved to Melbourne to "follow the money".



JOHN LANGFORD, from New York, will learn of his wife, Mrs. Louisa Langford who arrived here in the ship Crystal Palace, from New York, at No. 23 Smith-street, Collingwood. She is most anxiously awaiting advices from her husband. 030 oct 30

In 1855, a Mrs Langford, aged 30, sailed from New York on the *Crystal Palace* to Melbourne. The given age of 29 would be the "right" age, but ages seem to have been a bit flexible in those days. For example, English censuses

rounded ages down to the nearest five-year multiple. This passenger was confirmed to be Mrs L. Langford in a brief newspaper article listing passengers, and a few days later she put notices in *The Argus* saying she was "anxiously awaiting" contact with her husband John.



Louisa's death certificate in 1918 lists her as being resident in Australia for 66 years. This seems to contradict the above hypothesis. It largely confirms that John arrived in 1851 or 1852, but it implies that Louisa also arrived here then. Perhaps the records for their arrivals are lost, or digitally unclear, or her arrival in Australia was later but was always remembered based on John's arrival year.

ALLMAN—HILL.—On the 2nd inst., at the residence of Mr. Langford, Rowens-parade, Richmond, by the Rev. H. Higginson, William Dowden Allman, of Richmond, to Emily, youngest daughter of the late Mr. Frederick Hill, of London.

The next reference to John Langford comes in 1864. As the suburb of Richmond's records for this period are not in Ancestry, I had to go to the

Public Records Office of Victoria to investigate those years. In 1864 a J. Langford is listed as living in Rowena Parade, Richmond, and in 1866, Louisa's sister, Emily, married William Allman at that house in Rowena Parade.

The year 1864 was a landmark. Clements, my great-grandfather, was the son of George Langford and nephew of John. Clements was born in 1853, and in 1864 he and his family sailed from England to Tasmania, and then in 1868 came to Melbourne. He started his building career soon after. Over the course of the next 60 years he built many major buildings in Melbourne including Myer, Georges, the Herald building in Flinders Street and the Comedy Theatre. His major claim to fame was building the spires of St Paul's Cathedral, at cost. At one point he was the President of the Master Builders Federation. He also loved tennis. He had courts at his house in Richmond as well as at his beach house on the cliffs of Sorrento. He moved to Camberwell in 1919. In the 1920s, Clements Langford was chauffeured around Melbourne in his Rolls Royce, and when he died in 1930, the Lord Mayor of Melbourne was one of the pallbearers.

Starting in 1869, a number of advertisements can be found posted by John Langford, living at "Shirley" (named after the place in England where he got married), Rowena Parade, Richmond. He was clearly a builder by this time, as these ads were looking for carpenters, masons and plasterers etc. to build houses. Then in the late 1870s, he is listed as living at Erin Street, Richmond.



The two houses on the corner of Bowen and Lennox streets in Richmond were built by John Langford in 1870, and one was then owned and occupied by his wife Louisa's sister Emily and her husband William Allman, a house Emily would live in for 60 years. That site is now 138 Lennox Street. In the 1870s it appears John Langford also became a landlord or real estate developer. A number of advertisements were found of him looking for tenants.



In 1876 John and Louisa Langford moved to Hawthorn, likely following the eastward population growth, which also brought residential building opportunities. They lived on the east side of Power Street, a couple of doors south of Wattle Road (known then as Weinberg Road – it changed name around WWI). They lived there until 1884. Please note the beautiful handwriting in the Rates Book pictured below.

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	Mooare	Samuel		Ratz, Mrs.	d. d.	1
516	Langford	John		Langford, John	d. d.	
	Ellis	George		Bickerdyke	de de	
518		. ,		Farridge	land de	3
519	Scholer	Theodow		Scholar, Therdow	house Weinberg Road	
520				Ratz, Mrs.	land do	

In March 1883, John bought two lots in Burke Road, Camberwell, immediately south of Alma Road, again on the east side. The total frontage to Burke Road was 155 feet, as per the title document provided by Peter Harms.



Then, in August 1883, John Langford put an advertisement in *The Argus*, selling a house in Burke Road, "opposite Fordyce Esq.".



There were three Fordyces in Burke Road at the time, all on the west side, with two of them being just north of St Helen's Road, i.e. opposite the present 522 Burke Road. It appears that John Langford built a house at the southern end of his two lots, then sold it and kept two (narrower) lots for himself. He built that first house in about four months. From the title document, it can be seen that he sold a part of his property to a Richard Gardener Howden, in October 1883. The 1884 Rates Books show clearly that that house is next door to John's two remaining lots.

As of 1884 John was living at one of those lots, while a second house was being built on the other lot. In today's terms, John and Louisa Langford were living at 524 Burke Road, and they called that house "Shirley", as they had their house in Richmond, to commemorate where they got married in Southampton. The house he built next door is today's 39 Alma Road. This house was an investment property. He rented it out to numerous tenants over the next 18 years. The first tenant appears to be Herbert Barnett, a barrister, and others included Frank Pritchard, an engineer, and an Ernest Mair in 1900.

Richard Howden did a similar thing with the house he bought from John Langford, today's 522 Burke Road. In 1885, a Thomas McGee, mariner, was living there, and in 1890, a Rev. A. Jones, of the Congregational Church, but it was still owned by Richard Howden.

No. ox the Rute.	Surname of of Person Rated.	Christian Names of Person Rated.	Trade or Occupation,	Name of Owner of Rateable Property.	Is Person Occupying, Owner, Lesson, Antigone or Occupying Towari.	Description and Situation of Ratuable Property,
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The search for answers on these properties has been challenging, compounded by Burke Road house numbering, which has seen massive changes over the years. As an example, John Langford's property at today's 524 Burke Road was listed as 269 Burke Road in the 1910 Sands & McDougall Directory, and as 613 Burke Road in the 1930 Sands & McDougall Directory.

It appears that John Langford moved into a quieter lifestyle from about 1885, when he was listed as a builder

in the Sands & McDougall Directory. Nothing concrete can be found about his latter years, apart from being a landlord. He died in February 1902, and as can be seen from the death notice, perhaps his health had deteriorated in his last years.

John Langford's will was very interesting. His wife Louisa inherited most of the assets, however there were other beneficiaries.

LANGFORD.—On the 16th February, at his residence, Burke-road, Camberwell, John, the dearly believed husband of Mrs. John Langford, aged 77 years.

A patient sufferer gone to rest.

LANGFORD.—On the 16th February, at his residence, "Shirley," Burke-road, Camberwell, John, the beloved husband of Louisa Langford, builder, late of Richmond, aged 75 years. A colonist of 50 years.

- Emily Allman (Louisa's sister)
- Alice Allman (Emily's daughter)
- Ernest Allman (Emily's son)
- George Dickason (a grand-nephew of John. George was the son of Harriett Langford, Clements Langford's sister)
- Mary Ann Hall (John's niece, Clements' sister)

They all received £100. Clements Langford himself got £50, as did his sister Harriett, and Clements' son George got £50 also. But Clements' other seven children were not remembered in John's will. They ranged in age from 2 to 19. It appears that only George Langford was close to John and Louisa Langford. He was almost 12 when John died. When Louisa died in 1918, it was

stated that John was a "Master Builder". It certainly looks like he did well with his building and perhaps real estate developer career, given the generous amounts left in his will.

LANCEORD.—On the 9th July, at Berrigan, N.S.W., Louisa, relict of the late John Langford, master builder, late of Camberwell, in her 93rd year.

Louisa died in Berrigan in the Riverina District of New South Wales, where she had presumably moved to for the last few years of her life, supported by grand-nieces Isabella and Grace McNair. Isabella and Grace were the two eldest daughters of Clements' sister Mary Ann (Hall). They both married men named "McNair", and both couples lived in Berrigan or nearby Finley in 1918. Both Grace and Isabella were remembered in Clements' will in 1930, suggesting he was grateful for their support of Louisa in her final years.



In Louisa's will, Clements received £100, and his son Fred was also remembered, but none of Clements' other children were. Apparently only a small subset of the Clements Langford family were close to John and Louisa Langford. Maybe it was because they didn't live close by - John in Hawthorn and Camberwell for the last 25 or so years of his life, and Louisa in the Riverina District in her final years. Clements and his family lived in Richmond. Clements moved to "Riversmount" at today's 612 Riversdale Road, Camberwell after building it in 1919. Whatever the reason, John and Louisa were lost from the family records for many years. Now the story of The Lost Langford has been documented, if only briefly.

Left: John and Louisa Langford's grave, at Boroondara (Kew) Cemetery, directly behind Clements Langford's grave. The headstone looks too fresh to have been untouched for 100 years. Maybe someone, somewhere, knows more about The Lost Langford.

LEADING AIRCRAFTSMAN ARTHUR WILLIAM BROWN

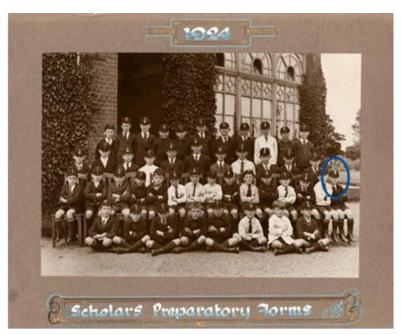
From Carey Baptist Grammar Anzac Day Service Wednesday 29 April 2020

Joanne Horsley Archivist, Carey Baptist Grammar



Leading Aircraftsman Arthur William Brown was the eldest son of Mr William Robert and Mrs Blanche Evelyn Brown of Rathmines Road, Auburn. He was the brother of Pearce, also an Old Carey Grammarian and a lieutenant in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF). His uncle was Air Commodore Arthur William Murphy DFC. Arthur attended Carey from February 1924 until December 1932.





On leaving Carey, Arthur was apprenticed to H. A. Braithwaite Pharmacy in Camberwell. He qualified in 1937 and became a member of the Pharmaceutical Society in 1938. He was married to Miss Elsie Yates at Camberwell Baptist Church in 1940 and joined the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) the same year.

He left Australia for Singapore in 1941 and was taken prisoner in Java, Indonesia in March 1942. The Japanese high command had decided to build a railway linking Thailand and Burma to supply its campaign against the Allies in Burma. Arthur was transported by the Japanese as part of captive forced labour on the infamous and tragic Thai-Burma Railway. Relentless labour, malnutrition, and physical abuse on inadequate rations in a deadly tropical environment caused huge losses. The railway construction earned the nickname 'Death Railway' during its 16-month construction. By the time the railway was completed in October 1943, at least 2,815 Australians, 11,000 other Allied prisoners, and perhaps 75,000 Asian prisoners of war (POWs) were dead.

As a qualified pharmacist, Arthur used his knowledge and skill to attend to the dire needs of the patients in the dysentery ward at Beke Taung camp on the Thai–Burma Railway. Most labourers on the railway died from exhaustion, dysentery, infection, cholera, malaria and malnutrition, and Arthur himself would succumb to dysentery and die aged 25.

The Carey school magazine, the *Carey Chronicle*, reported the sad news of Arthur Brown's death in December 1945. Letters donated to Carey by Arthur Brown's brother, Pearce Brown, which were preserved by the family in sad memorial, attest to Arthur's bravery and courage. These letters, from his commanding officer at the camp, Flight Lieutenant Donald Hackett, and from Australian journalist Rohan Rivett who was also interned at the camp, demonstrate Arthur's dedication and valour.

Rohan Rivett would later write a memoir, *Behind Bamboo*, of wartime internment, including unflinching descriptions of the appalling conditions faced by the POWs on the Thai–Burma Railway. In this book he describes Arthur:



Animo et Fide. Lest we forget.

"Arthur Brown was indefatigable in his care for his sick mates long after he himself had been stricken by the disease. He died for others with a courage and resolution beyond praise."

Other Old Carey Grammarian POWs were part of the forced labour who worked on the Thai–Burma Railway. This last sad roll call includes:

Private Eric Sandell, Sergeant Francis Knight, Private Ion Richardson and Leading Aircraftsman Rupert McClelland who sent his family an Imperial Japanese Army card from Moulmein in Burma. The card reports that he was working for 15 pence a day and was with his old school friend Arthur Brown. He writes in his final emotional message 'remember me to everyone, fondest love to all ...'



Private Eric Sandell entered eternity on the 26 November 1943





Private Ion Richardson entered eternity on the 18 August 1943



CAPTURAL LABORATORY

(in among) on a Principal Control of the Cont

Leading Aircraftsman Rupert McClelland entered eternity on the 12 September 1944



ANTHONY GEORGE MALDON MICHELL

Val Goldsworthy



Anthony George Maldon Michell (1870-1959), as mentioned in the previous edition of this newsletter, owned the house "Beulah" on Prospect Hill Road from 1939-1949. He was an internationally renowned inventor and engineer.

Left: A. G. M. Michell (Source: State Library of Victoria)

Michell was born in England while his parents were visiting there from Australia. He was educated at Melbourne and Cambridge universities, and held various posts as a consulting engineer in Melbourne. In 1905 he patented the Michell Thrust Bearing which greatly increased a ship's power and efficiency. In 1907

Michell put his invention to practical use on a centrifugal pump at Cohuna in northern Victoria. It was widely ignored until it was adopted by the Germans for their submarines in WWI. The pump later led to the development of the modern turbine. Michell installed hydraulic transmission gear on his own car, the forerunner of the system in later cars, and developed the Michell Crankless Engine. He formed a company and designed demonstration cars. In the USA, both Ford and General Motors admired the system, but thought it too expensive to re-tool their companies. Michell investigated the possibility of hydro-electric power from the Kiewa River for the Victorian Government.

In 1934 Michell was elected a fellow of the Royal Society. In 1938 he was awarded the Kernot Memorial Medal from Melbourne University for "Distinguished Engineering Achievement in Australia", a medal which has been awarded annually since 1926. In 1943 he received the James Watt Medal for excellence in engineering, an international award established in 1937, and conferred on him by the Institution of Mechanical Engineers in the United Kingdom. Today,

Melbourne University honors him with an annual award – the A.G.M. Michell prize in Mechanical Engineering.



THIS BUILDING (C1896) IS THE
ORIGINAL WORKSHOP OF
GEORGE MICHELL MCE FRS
INVENTOR AND PATENTEE OF THE
'MICHELL THRUST BEARING &
CRANKLESS ENGINE'

Above: Michell Thrust Bearing and the

Crankless Engine.

(Source: Melbourne Museum)

Above: Plaque - corner of Prospect Hill

Road and Kasouka Road

Photographed by Val Goldsworthy

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J. Arnold and D. Morris (eds), *Monash Biographical Dictionary of 20th Century Australia*, Reed Reference Publishing, Melbourne, 1994

Rev. E. Nye, The History of Wesley College 1865-1919, McCarron, Bird, Melbourne, 1921

REPORT OF MEETINGS 2020

There have been no meetings since February. We hope to start meetings as per the government guidelines when possible.

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL FOR THE YEAR ENDING 30TH JUNE 2021

All membership subscriptions are due after 30 June 2020

Subscription renewal: to be returned to:

The Secretary, Camberwell Historical Society Inc., PO Box 1274, Camberwell, 3124.

Subscription Rate: Ordinary membership: \$30.00

Family membership: \$40.00 Corporate membership: \$40.00

Please include Name, Address, Postcode, Telephone, Mobile, Email

Details for direct or internet banking:

Camberwell Historical Society Incorporated, Bendigo Bank, BSB 633-000, Account No 142260678

enquiries@chs.org.au

DATES FOR MEETINGS 2020

Afternoon meetings are held at 25 Inglesby Road, Camberwell

Saturday 25 July 2020 2pm

All meetings are cancelled until further notice.

Saturday 22 August 2020 2pm (AGM)

Evening meetings are held at Camberwell Library Meeting Room, 340 Camberwell Road, Camberwell

Tuesday September 8pm

Tuesday October 8pm

Tuesday November 8pm

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.

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 SUBSCRIPTIONS RENEWALS 2018

Camberwell Historical Society's financial year operates from 1st July to 30th June. Subscriptions for the 2019 – 2020 financial year were due and payable on or before July 1st, 2019. Single \$30 Family \$40. Camberwell Historical Society, BSB 633-000 Account No 142260678 Cheques to Camberwell Historical Society, PO Box 1274, CAMBERWELL 3124

CAMBERWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC

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email address: enquiries@chs.org.au

President — George Fernando; Secretary - Adèle Fernando-Swart; Treasurer – Peter Huggan Committee members — Bryony Cosgrove, Alister Bennie and Jennifer McArthur Camberwell History: Editor — Adèle Fernando-Swart

The Society's logo is taken from an illustration by, and used with the permission of, Bill Beasley. Camberwell History is printed in the office of The Honourable Josh Frydenberg, MHR, Federal Member for Kooyong, Treasurer of Australia, Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party