



## Surrey Hills Historical Society Newsletter – May-July 2019

### Forthcoming meetings and events



#### Looking back – In the news in June 1930

##### PROGRESS OF SURREY HILLS.

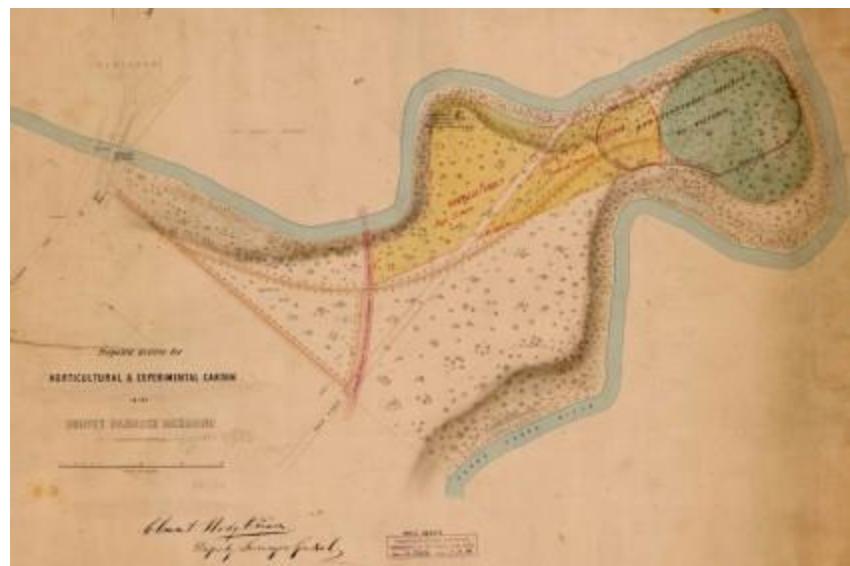
Health Centre and Memorial.

Two ceremonies of unusual interest took place in the pleasant surroundings of the Surrey Hills Gardens on Saturday afternoon in the presence of a large assemblage. The first was the unveiling of a drinking fountain that has been erected to the memory of Mr Arthur Brooks, one of the first movers in the formation of the Surrey Hills Progress Association and one of its most enthusiastic members. He was described as the founder of the Empire Day movement, afterwards launched as an Empire-wide movement by the Earl of Meath. The chief speaker at the ceremony at the drinking fountain was Mr James Sneddon, a lifelong friend and associate with Mr. Brooks in public work.

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#### Tuesday 21 May: Jane Wilson, Archivist at Burnley Horticultural College – ‘The history of Burnley and the wealth of its archives’.

The history of Burnley College is almost as long as that of the State of Victoria. It began as the Richmond Survey Paddock in 1850 and today is part of the University of Melbourne and one of the oldest Colleges in the country.



The gardens we associate with Burnley were opened on 1st January 1863 under the management of the Horticultural Society of Victoria. The next significant date in their history came in 1891 when the site was transferred to the Victorian Department of Agriculture. As a teaching college, Burnley specialised not only in production and ornamental horticulture but also many areas of agriculture, so that at one time Burnley had its own dairy herd, poultry trials and beehives.

In 1988 Burnley became part of the University of Melbourne and its focus is now more on postgraduate research including forest science, waterways ecology and management, environmental horticulture and soil science. The state significance of the gardens was recognised when

they were added to the Victorian Heritage Register in December 2003.

Jane Wilson is the Burnley Campus Volunteer Archivist within the School of Ecosystem and Forest Services of the Faculty of Science, University of Melbourne. She will explore the rich history of Burnley and give us an insight into its archives.

[Acknowledgement - Map: Proposed Reserve for Horticultural and Experimental Garden in the Survey Paddock, Richmond, PROV, VPRS 8168/P2, Unit 3514, MELBRL23.]

## Tuesday 18 June: Louise Blake – Marion Miller Knowles



It was Louise Blake's interest in women's history that led her to explore the life of Marion Miller Knowles, a teacher, poet, writer and a committed community worker.

Born at Woods Point, Marion was the eldest child of Irish immigrants and was educated at home until family finances dictated that she become a pupil-teacher at the local primary school. This led to a number of positions around the state, which in 1893 brought her to Box Hill. Here she remained until her marriage in 1901 to widower Joseph Knowles. After some years this marriage resulted in a legal separation and Marion was left to bring up 2 sons. She worked from home on a women's column she had started in the *Advocate* before she married. She was also 'Aunt Patsy' of the 'Children's Corner'.

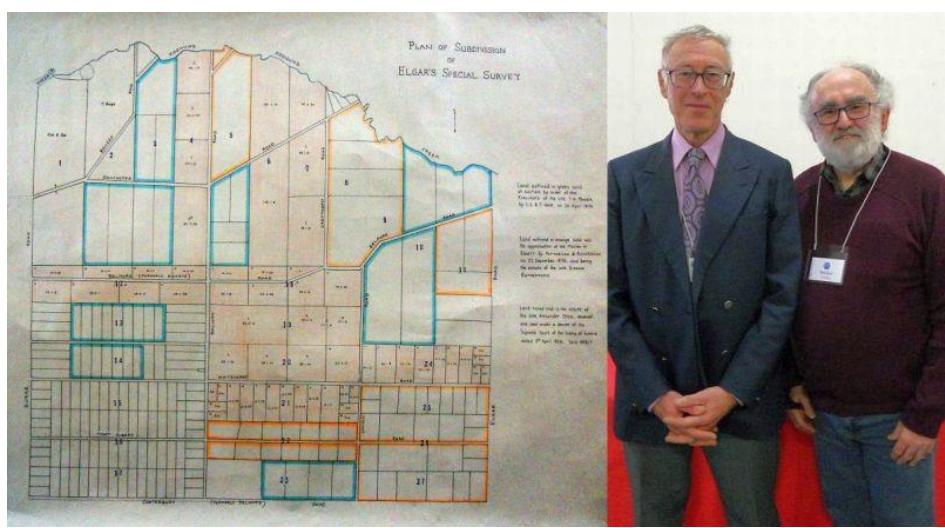
Marion Miller Knowles played a leading part in the organization of the Catholic laity before, during and after World War I – she was the foundation president of the Catholic Women's Club, she helped to form a social club for single Catholics, she organized parcels for Catholic soldiers and in 1919 chaired the committee responsible for welcoming them home. She was also honorary secretary of the committee for St Joseph's Home for Destitute Children in Surrey Hills, and after World War II, its patron. She was appointed M.B.E. in 1938.

[REF: ADB entry by Cecile Close. Photo acknowledgement: Marion Knowles (1865-1949), by unknown photographer, 1920s, National Library of Australia, nla.pic-an24041715.]

## Tuesday 16 July: Bob Kerr - The Mysterious Henry Elgar

Bob Kerr, on the right in the photo at right, is a Mont Albert resident, who lives on land which was part of Elgar's Special Survey, and who for the past 3 or 4 years has become fixated upon trying to find out more about Henry Elgar - the man who is chiefly remembered for Elgar's Special Survey.

In 1841 Henry Elgar purchased 5,120 acres in the Port Phillip district. Elgar's Special Survey,



which covers part of the parish of Boroondara and part of a then un-named parish (later to be named Nunawading) is well known. But what of the man? Bob discovered that the few references to Elgar in local history texts tell very little of the man. He decided to search for details of his life through official documents and records in repositories including the Victorian Public Record Office and the British Archives. Bob will present what he has discovered of Henry Elgar's life story.

## Can you help? - The Canterbury & Surrey Hills 50/50 Social Club

Recently a large format photo of a group of 98 people posing in front of some shops was brought into the Box Hill Historical Society by Ian McKay, the last owner of Doherty's Fuel & Fodder, which closed in October last year, ending an era started when John (Jack) Werner Doherty opened the business in 1926.

Jack Doherty lived for part of his life in Surrey Hills and this unframed photo hung in his work office for many years. One assumes that he was a member of the Canterbury & Surrey Hills 50/50 Social Club.

As you can imagine, it's not in fantastic condition, but it's still a wonderful record. The faces of the men, women, girls and boys are quite clear despite the surface being a bit crazed. The back of the cardboard mount is inscribed: " Canterbury & Surrey Hills / 50/50 Social Club / 1930ies / JW DOHERTY & SONS"

The background shops strongly suggests that it was taken in Maling Road. There's a drapery and a grocer's able to be detected. Frances Barrett of the Canterbury History Group has advised that there was a grocer at 116 Maling Road from 1931-1962 and for most of that time it was owned by Mr Lawson.

I've included close-ups of each end of the photo, as well as the whole, and hope someone can shed further light on the people or the club they belonged to; there are no references to it on Trove. A great snapshot of days gone by.





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The important part that the Surrey Hills Progress Association plays in the affairs of the Camberwell district was further emphasised in the opening of the new baby health centre in the gardens, which had been built by the voluntary labour of the members of the association, of which Mr Arthur Darby is president and Mr J G Wood head secretary. For 10 years Sister Thompson, who is in charge of the centre has conducted her work in a room beneath the band rotunda in the gardens under very difficult conditions. Explaining the circumstances which led to the building of the new centre, Mr Darby said that Surrey Hills was the Cinderella of the Camberwell Council. When the members of the progress association realised that there was no possibility of obtaining the money for the erection of the building that was so seriously needed, they decided to build it themselves, beginning in April and spending even Saturday and public holiday on the work. With the exception of the roofing, all of the work has been done by the association.

The foundation stone of the building was laid at the entrance to the centre by the mayoress of Camberwell (Mrs Latham). The mayor (Councillor Latham) speaking on behalf of the Camberwell Council referred to the important part the association was playing in the life of the community. In this instance its effects would assist the future health and well-being of the children and mothers of the community. The council had already erected two centres at a cost of £1000 each, one at Hartwell and one at Burnley, and he had strongly advocated that they should go further and see that the whole city was properly provided with centres. He often wished there were one or two women on the council to influence those members who were not particularly anxious to spend money on such work.

Mr Menzies MLA who declared the centre open, said that the baby health centres were one of the best guarantees of the future of the race and those who were carrying them on were in the best sense of the term doing the work of the nation. The key was turned in the door by Mrs FE Bellmaine, president of the City of Camberwell Baby Health Centres committee, to whose active interest during the term of her husband as mayor of Camberwell the inauguration of the movement in that city was largely due. Among those present was Mrs J Fawcett, the honorary secretary of the centres, of which there are now seven in the city area. The total attendances for the year 1929 were 15083 representing an increase of 2176 on the figures for the previous year.

Despite the prominent role Arthur Brooks played in the Surrey Hills community in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we do not have a photo of him in spite of a thorough search of the internet. What do we know of him?



Arthur was born in Melbourne, possibly Carlton, in 1865 and died in Surrey Hills. His parents were English migrants who had initially settled in Perth. In 1890 Arthur married a Surrey Hills girl - Mary Jane Wilson. They lived in York Street and for 46 years Arthur worked as a warehouseman for Beath, Schiess & Felstead.

In his non-working hours Arthur was dedicated to community improvement and his name is frequently mentioned in the local newspaper, the Box Hill Reporter, and from time to time also in The Argus. He was a member of the Surrey Hills Australian Natives Association in 1901 and along with John Gray is credited with being one of the prime movers in the formation of the Surrey Hills Progress Association (SHPA) in 1906. He was one of its most enthusiastic members.

It was Arthur who organised a peace demonstration to mark the end of the Boer War and it was him who suggested the purchase of 2 canons to permanently commemorate Australians' service in the Boer War. The canons dated back to 1843, and were initially installed at the Canterbury Sports Ground in Guildford Road. In 1919 they were moved to the Surrey Gardens and placed either side of The Shrine erected in memory of WW1 servicemen from the area.

Locally, they humorously came to be known as 'Brooks' Babies'.

It was under Arthur's guidance that the SHPA organised the planting of trees in the Lorne Parade Park near railway line (1908). As noted on page 1, he was also a pivotal figure in the organisation of logistics and festivities of the Empire Day Celebrations for which Surrey Hills became famous. After his death his role in community improvement was recognised when a drinking fountain dedicated to him was placed in the Surrey Gardens.

Arthur and his wife Mary and son Moffat are buried in Box Hill Cemetery.

**Can anyone help with further information about Arthur Brooks, Mary Jane Wilson, Moffat Brooks or their other children or photos of them?**

**We would also value photos of Mr Arthur Darby and Mr J G Wood of the Progress Association, Sister Thompson, Cr & Mrs Latham, Mrs FE Bellmaine and Mrs J Fawcett.**



### **ANZAC Day Dawn Service in the Surrey Gardens – Thursday 25 April**



This year the Surrey Hills Neighbourhood Centre, in partnership with the Surrey Hills Progress Association and the Mont Albert & Surrey Hills Rotary Club (MASH), will host the Surrey Hills ANZAC Day Dawn Service at The Shrine in Surrey Gardens, 88-90 Union Road, Surrey Hills. Please arrive at 5.45am for a 6am start.

The Master of Ceremonies will be Peter Hall with guest speaker Rohan Hodges, the Boroondara Young Citizen of the Year, readings by the student leaders from Surrey Hills Primary School, Chatham Primary School, Our Holy Redeemer School and Ashwood School, a poetry reading by Nicole Osner, President of MASH, and Mel Constable reading 'The Ode'. Soprano Hannah Dahlenburg will sing and Benjamin Sametz will again perform 'The Last Post' and 'Reveille'. Local members of the Australian Defence force will again form the Catafalque party. Refreshments will be available at the conclusion of the service.

Limited priority seating is again available. To request this, please email Lynette Giddings at [Lj.2510@hotmail.com](mailto:Lj.2510@hotmail.com)