



Balwyn Historical Society Newsletter

March 2015

Meetings

Thursday 12 March 2015 – 8pm

Speaker: Chris Long

Topic: Films of Historic Events from the 1890s

Chris Long has compiled film clips of historic events which took place in Australia and world-wide dating from the earliest news films of the 1890s.

Venue: Balwyn Evergreen Centre, 45 Talbot Avenue, Balwyn

Thursday 9 April 2015 – 8pm

Speaker: Ken James

Topic: From Gold Mining to Market Gardening

Ken will speak about the Chinese of Lyall & Myrtle Creek north of Kyneton c.1880-1930s.

Venue: Balwyn Evergreen Centre, 45 Talbot Avenue, Balwyn

Thursday 14 May 2015 – 8pm

Speaker and Topic – To be announced

Email: balwynhistory@gmail.com website: www.vicnet.net.au/~balwynhs

Recent Speaker – Ted Baillieu

Ted Baillieu spoke most passionately about the opportunity which the ANZAC Centenary 2014-2018 commemoration gives for us to share Victoria's history and to make connections.

He began his talk by reminding us of the importance of history and of knowing our past then continued with a brief mention of Melbourne before the war. In the years between 1911 and 1914, there were 20,000 voluntary militia and (the later General Sir) John Monash was involved with conducting war games for them. At the time Melbourne was the seat of the Federal Government so it was in Melbourne that war was declared.

Ted Baillieu also outlined the objectives of the ANZAC Centenary Committee and spoke about some of the projects that have been

endorsed. The 5000 Poppies Project already far exceeds all expectations.

He also emphasised the importance of including children in research projects, both in seeking out family connections with WW1 and in researching local community connections. In that way the next generation can not only be educated and engaged but can act as torch bearers of remembrance for their and subsequent generations.

Finally he demonstrated several comprehensive and easy-to-use web sites which are freely available for use by those researching WW1 service personal. (See below)

Some World War 1 Web sites

Victoria's First Convoy Embarkation Records

<http://anzaccentenary.vic.gov.au/discover/>

Personal Service Records – National Archives of Australia

<http://discoveringanzacs.naa.gov.au>

The A.I.F. Project

<http://www.aif.adfa.edu.au/search>

Embarkation Rolls, WW1 Photographs/Diaries – Australian War Memorial

<http://www.awm.gov.au/research/people/all>

Balwyn Historical Society - Contact details

Balwyn Historical Society is a program of the Balwyn Evergreen Centre.

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Kenneth Maxwell (Ken) Lyall – 1928-2015



**Kenneth Maxwell
'Ken' Lyall**

15th December 1928

~

29th January 2015

Ken Lyall was born on 15 December 1928 to William and Hilda Lyall. He was the youngest brother to (William) Brian, Margaret, David and Ian. At the time of Ken's birth his father worked for Mercantile Assurance and he and Hilda were buying a house in Camberwell. However, with the great depression looming it became increasingly difficult for William to sell policies. Soon unfortunately William lost his job and

the house payments fell behind. Thus began several years of William spending days looking for work and the family moving from a rental house in Kew to rental houses in South Camberwell. Fortunately for the family when the last lease ran out "Aunty Nan" stepped in and found a house in Rochester Road, Canterbury for which she paid the rent in advance.

Once settled in Rochester Road, Ken attended Balwyn State School of which he had many fond memories, maintaining friendships with many of his school mates throughout his life. Those early years in the 1930s were difficult days for the family. William was often away in the country looking for work and Ken remembered times when there was not enough to eat. Children of the unemployed were given school books marked with a U and while some government clothing was supplied from the Camberwell Town Hall, the shoes made by Pentridge prisoners were often ill-made and had to have cardboard or newspaper inserted when holes appeared in the soles.

Despite hard times Ken enjoyed a wonderful childhood. Ken's articles *We called it the Quog* (BHS Newsletter Jan/Feb 2009) and *North Balwyn – the Sleeping Giant* (BHS Newsletter May 2010) recorded some of his memories of growing up in Balwyn and North Balwyn.

Life changed dramatically with the outbreak of World War 2. Ken's three older brothers joined up. While David and Ian survived, (William) Brian was

killed in action in 1944. Ken was very disappointed that he was too young to enlist and had to remain at home with his mother, Hilda.

Ken continued on at Balwyn State School until he had completed Year 8, after which he found his first job. He held a variety of positions before becoming a junior clerk with Commonwealth Fertilisers & Chemicals. It was there that he met his future wife, Lorraine. They married in the Canterbury Congregational Church in 1955 and subsequently had two daughters - Kaye and Judy.

Ken's interest in textiles began when he gained employment with Yarra Falls in Abbotsford. From there he moved on to several other positions in the textile trade, eventually achieving his lifelong ambition to start his own business. This became possible when one of his clients received the wrong yarn from England. Ken's knowledge of textiles enabled him to sell this yarn to craft and wool customers for knitting ladies' shawls. Buoyed by this success Ken travelled to the Britain and Ireland buying wool to ship back to Australia.

Horse racing and football were two of Ken's lifelong interests. He and his family enjoyed attending race meetings and watching the horses he had shares in have wins at Cranbourne and Caulfield. Ken played for Balwyn and then for the Deepdene Football Club and followed both for many years. He maintained friendship with many of his team mates for the rest of his life.

On retirement Ken became involved in many projects. He was passionately interested in both family and local

history. Ken's great-grandfather, a pastoralist, arrived in Victoria in 1839. *Harewood* the homestead he built at Tooradin is today heritage listed. Ken also compiled a book from his father's and uncle Brian's World War 1 diaries and letters - *Letters from an ANZAC Gunner*. Ken's uncle Brian died as result of wounds sustained at Gallipoli in December 1915. Ken's book also relates the effect of the war on his family in Canterbury, and it received praise both in Australia and from the Mayor of Villers Bretonneux in France.

Ken also spent much of his time collecting local history books, photographs and documents. He was a founding member of Balwyn Historical Society when it started in 2008. The society is a grateful recipient of many items from his library which formed the basis of our collection. Ken's generosity in sharing his collection and knowledge of the area brought him many friends who will remember him for his warm personality, his generosity and his wealth of knowledge.

(This article has been compiled from information received from Lorraine Lyall and other members of Ken's family.)

Draft Balwyn and Balwyn North Heritage Study (incorporating Deepdene)

The Boroondara Council is seeking feedback on this draft study before it considers whether to progress to a planning scheme amendment to introduce the sites identified into a Heritage Overlay.

A copy of the Draft Study is available for inspection at the Planning Counter, Level 1, Boroondara City Council, 8 Inglesby Rd., Camberwell.

For further information visit www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/your-say

Feedback responses are due by **Friday 27 March 2015** and should be sent to:

Email: strategic.planning@boroondara.vic.gov.au
Att. Draft Balwyn Heritage Study

Mail: Strategic Planning Department
Att.: Draft Balwyn Heritage Study
City of Boroondara
Private Bag 1
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