



North Shore Historical Society Inc.

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Affiliate Member of Royal Australian Historical Society



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NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Society will be 6.00pm Thursday 11th August 2022

2nd floor, Stanton Library, Miller Street, North Sydney.

The meeting will commence at 6.00pm, concluding no later than 7.45pm.

Note- The Society's AGM will be held 6pm the 8th September 2022

Nominations for Committee positions must be lodged with the Secretary no later than the 11th August general meeting

Topic: The Arch of Strength and Beauty

The **Sydney Harbour Bridge** recently celebrated its 90th anniversary. One of the largest urban development projects ever seen in Australia, the design and building of the bridge was a technological marvel in its day. Connecting the Sydney CBD to its northern suburbs for the first time, it provided more than a link between the city's two shores. Sydneysiders, caught up in the excitement of the spectacle taking place before their eyes, were moved to capture what they saw in words and pictures. One keen amateur photographer, known only as Mrs Frank Smith, took on the bridge as the subject of her personal 'passion project'.



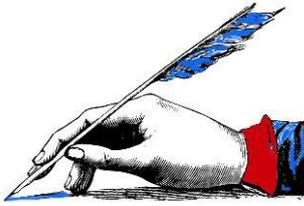
Come along and hear Curator Margot Riley talk about the rich collections of Sydney Harbour Bridge memorabilia gathered by the State Library of NSW since the opening of the bridge on 19 March 1932.

Guest Speaker: Margot Riley

Margot Riley is a cultural historian and curator at the State Library of NSW. With special interests in photography and popular culture, she has curated numerous exhibitions and displays for the library and has written and lectured extensively about its collections. In 2016 she prepared the successful nomination leading to the inscription of the Big Negs on the International register of the Memory of the World, only the second Australian listing to be achieved.



Welcome to new member- **Philip Cohen**



July 2022 Report

Talk by Paul Brunton OAM

Henry Parkes and Saul Samuel – the duo who preserved Australia’s colonial history

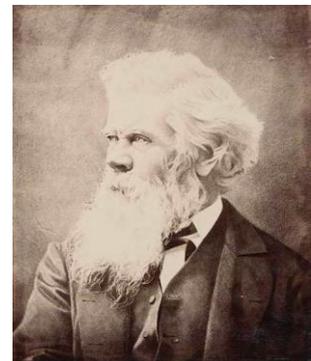
It was indeed a special night for the North Shore Historical Society to have as its speaker the leading archivist in Australia speaking about the history of the early archiving of historical information in Australia. That history did not disappoint and made for an enthralling talk.

Paul said that giving a talk on Sir Henry Parkes and his contemporary, Sir Saul Samuel, was unusual, if not eccentric, because Parkes is quite well known for his achievements while Samuel is scarcely known at all. Yet both men in their different ways played pivotal roles in spearheading the establishment of a unique archival base for Australian history. Both men were born in England and both had a passion for preserving history.

Parkes was Premier of NSW for five terms that totalled 10 years, the longest non-consecutive period of any Premier. He also served as Colonial Secretary five times for a total period of 11 years. Parkes’ own limited education in England had lasted only a few years but despite this, he is now well known for his landmark educational reforms in NSW. Of course, his leading role in Federation following his 1889 Tenterfield Oration with its call for a convention, has led to him being acclaimed as the ‘Father of Federation’. He had in fact been advocating for Federation since the late 1860s.

Parkes’ reformation of education took the form of two Bills. The first, his 1866 Public Schools Act passed when he was the Colonial Secretary, aimed at rationalizing expenditure on education by placing both the national and denominational school systems under a Council of Education. This body was to oversee both teacher training and the content of secular lessons. The second, when Parkes was Premier, was his 1880 Public Instruction Act which was even more seismic in its effect because it removed government funding from religious schools and made education free, secular and compulsory for all children aged between seven and fourteen to attend school.

Paul said that Parkes (*photo right*) was a consummate politician for which he was rightly awarded first a KCMG (“Kindly Call Me God”) and then a decade later a GCMG (“God Calls Me God”). He was, however, a far better politician than businessman because he was declared bankrupt on three separate occasions.



Parkes had 17 children, five of whom died in childhood, with the first two of his three wives. His second wife, Eleanor, had been both his housekeeper and mistress. They had 3 children prior to their marriage. The last of their 5 children, Cobden, was born when Parkes was 76 and he was to become the NSW Government Architect in 1935.



The early archival history of Australia that Paul spoke about related to the consequences of two critical appointments made by Parkes: the first was his appointment of Sir Saul Samuel as the Agent-General for NSW in London in 1880; the second was when, as Colonial Secretary, he authorised James Bonwick (*photo left*) in 1887 to transcribe the NSW Governors’ dispatches in the Public Record Office (now the National Archives) in London. This was part of a drive to collect historical records for the official centenary of NSW.

Bonwick was appointed Archivist for the NSW Government in the

following year and continued for 15 years until 1902. He compiled what have become known as the Bonwick Transcripts, which are now archived in the Mitchell Library and available online. These handwritten transcripts of records held in the Public Record Office, London (now The National Archives) were published by the NSW Government Printer between 1892 to 1901 in the series *Historical Records of New South Wales*. This series comprised 7 volumes from the period of Captain Cook (volume 1) to the Governorship of William Bligh and part way through the Governorship of Lachlan Macquarie (volume 7).



Paul then related Parkes' grand vision for the Centennial Park that he was planning. It was to include a building to be called the *State House*, (left) which Paul described as a "national palace". This was to include a monumental repository for historical documents, a gallery, a museum, a hall and even a public mausoleum. An architectural competition was held for its design but the concept of such a building attracted considerable criticism in Parliament for its

extravagance and no money was ever provided for it to be built.

Sir Saul Samuel had been a successful businessman and a colleague of Parkes in the NSW Parliament. He was the first Jewish legislator in NSW, serving twice as Treasurer and twice as Postmaster-General, in which role he opened James Barnet's GPO in Martin Place in 1874. It was in 1880 that Parkes appointed him the NSW Agent-General in London. This was a role that he fulfilled with considerable acumen and foresight for 17 years.

Paul said that when Sir Joseph Banks died in 1820, he left behind an extraordinarily well organised and extensive archive that documented his influential career over the period 1767 to 1820. It was the most comprehensive archive of its kind in Britain, perhaps in the world. (*State Library photo Sir Saul right*) custodial history of the archive following Banks' death is confused. Paul said that his widow deposited most of the Banks archive in the British Museum. Her nephew, Edward Knatchbull (later Lord Brabourne), in 1880 realised the monetary value of the archive, which was only on loan to the Museum. The papers were then returned to Brabourne who subsequently offered them for purchase to the Museum for £300. When the Museum offered only £250, the dispersal of the archive by sale began.



Saul Samuel in 1884 swooped and after consulting James Bonwick, offered £375 for the Banks papers. This offer was accepted. These papers, including the incomparable 'Endeavour Journal', are now available in the NSW State Library and form the bedrock of the early Australian story. Thanks to Paul and the Library, most have been digitised and are available on the web, the first such digitisation in the world. Components of the Banks papers can also be found in some 50 libraries around the world.

While archiving might be thought by some to be a less than exciting subject, Paul's talk showed that the story of archiving the early Australian history is indeed most compelling. Don Napper

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cNoI_ilxORU

Wading through the Archives



Susan Wade

Edition No.70

What Is Truth?

I would like to challenge you with the above question which appeared in an article by Richard Oxenberg in a recent edition of *Philosophy Now* and which we shared with our Stanton Philosophy Group. In his exploration of the topic Oxenberg claims “Aristotle, just like Socrates and Plato before him, recognised the attainment of truth is the ultimate goal of our intellect; and truth is ethical”¹.

Truth is the set of things that are real and factual, or those things that are accepted as true. Ethics are the set of moral principles that guide a person's behaviour or the behaviour of a group.²

With this in mind, I want to invite you to consider the question “**What is truth**” as applied to this correspondence below, between a local resident and the Council Health Inspector in 1934, and who both strongly claim the incident in their opposing versions, are the truth!

Firstly, from Mr Hinds, whose Cremorne property was at the corner of Shellcove Rd, Harriet and Bannerman Streets, a letter in August 1934 complaining “about the daily procession of Council horse drawn Garbage Carts, and which to get some foot hold on the steep grades, the men driving them scatter a whole lot of ashes and dirt along the roadway, and in no time clouds of this are driven into the flats and surrounding properties. We believe this recently contributed to the death of the resident on the opposite corner, and we consider this such a nuisance that the Council should immediately allay, either by finding another route or providing motor drawn transport for this garbage. Your Engineer must also notice the continual cutting up of the roadway on the wrong side just at the gutter edge. This is where these heavily laden carts continually make a track, and it is frequently a wonder to us that serious accidents have not occurred at this rather busy corner, for the garbage carts invariably go up the wrong side of the road”.



In his response the Health Inspector, Mr Tedder, wrote “I have to report with reference to the subject matter of the above letter that I inspected the site and found no trace of the dirt or sand complained of in the writer’s letter.”

Mr Tedder went on to state that he also interviewed the Garbage Carters who use the road, and they say that occasionally they have used a little sand on the road, but not ashes or other dirt. He also mentioned that it is quite a customary thing, not only for the Council carts but also other horse drawn vehicles when negotiating

a steep grade to carefully zigzag up the hill to relieve the horses and ease them with their load.

“The writer might be informed that the road travelled by our Garbage Carts is the one most suitable and has been used ever since the garbage service was inaugurated and there is no intention of diverting it.”

¹ <https://philpapers.org/rec/OXEWIT-2>

² <https://nickfalkner.com>

Now if we pause here for a moment and consider my initial heading **What is Truth** – when we have two clearly opposed versions outlined in the situation above – how would you decide the ethical truth? If you were the Town Clerk, how would you resolve this situation?

In a letter to Mr Hinds in early September the Town Clerk Charles Trickett (whose biography was discussed in our April 2019 Journal) wrote “In reply to your letter drawing attention to the alleged practice of the garbage carters scattering ashes and dirt along the roadway at the corner of Shellcove Rd, Harriette and Bannerman Streets, I have to inform you that the Engineer reports that the surface has been re-treaded to a width of 6 feet to provide foothold for horses. The Health Inspector reports that it would be impracticable to divert the route of the garbage carts.

So, what have you concluded? Was the report true about the situation discussed with the Engineer or the resident? How would you have determined **What is the Truth**? And do you think that Charles Trickett was trying to resolve the situation by applying his own truth about the event? Notice he doesn’t delve into the situation about the scattering of ashes and dirt, as both men present different reports, but he does seem to seek a solution with the re-treading of the surface for a better foothold for the horses.

And if you thought that was the end of the issue, well four months later in December 1934 Mr Hinds wrote again to the Council saying “We are again forced to draw the Council’s attention to the Garbage Cart nuisance daily inflicted upon us residents at the intersection of Harriette Street, Shellcove Road and Bannerman Street. This Harriette Street pinch, with its present smooth surface, is evidently far too steep for horses, and daily the drivers have to scatter ashes and dirt over the section of the road they use, in the endeavour to give their horses a better foot hold, and this dirt is quickly powdered by the continuous traffic passing there, and floats into the residents in this area.

I contend that the recent death of Mr Rufus was largely attributable to this dust nuisance, and now Mr Hogan, on the other side of the street, is very seriously ill and must be in danger from this excessive dust source. Surely in a highly rated area such as this, we can expect something better. Dr Humpries, another of my neighbours, is astounded to think that such practices are allowed to continue. I might also add that the garbage carts continue on the wrong side of this busy intersection and daily we expect some serious accident to occur.”

And in response to the Councill Executive, this time I suggest Mr Trickett is becoming a little annoyed with the letters from Mr Hinds. Trickett said “I refer to the Department’s reply in August, which should have been sufficient for that gentleman. There have been occasions when two men using Harriette Street, under necessitous circumstances, have had to throw sand on the surface of same to assist their horses in ascending the hill, but they definitely deny ever using ashes or dirt as suggested by the writer. The Council will I’m sure place very little credence in the Writer’s contention that the death of Mr, Rufus, whoever he may be, was due to the alleged dust nuisance and likewise the serious illness of Mr. Hogan.

Regarding the writer’s last paragraph, the carters deny ever travelling on the wrong side of the streets. They point out that it is absolutely necessary that they zigzag their carts up steep grades with heavy loads to enable their horses to negotiate the same. This is a recognised practice, even by Traffic Authorities. I recommend that the writer be informed that the Council have noted the matters brought under notice in his letter”.

Once again, if you thought that might be the end of the matter, Mr Hinds sent a third letter to Council on 31 December 1934 informing them that “Since my recent note re the garbage carts putting dirt down in front of us, they have now been lying it on heavier than ever. I have also found a large parcel of prawns or fish stuffed in the mouth of the drain in front of my place in Shellcove Rd. It was giving off such an offensive smell I applied a match to try and burn it up. While the blockage has not greatly inconvenienced us, I thought it only right to advise you of same”.

The Town Clerk sent a brief note on 25 January 1935 informing Mr Hinds that the Overseer reported the matter brought under their notice has been attended to.

Am I being somewhat cynical or does the incident referred to in Mr Hind's third letter seem like payback by the garbage cart drivers?

And remember we are examining ***Truth as a set of things that are real and factual, or those things that are accepted as true; and Ethics as the set of moral principles that guide a person's behaviour or the behaviour of a group.***

So what have you concluded? Whose truth was real and factual? And whose moral principles were guiding their behaviour?

If you wish to read the article by Richard Oeberg, copy this link into your search engine:

<https://philarchive.org/archive/OXEWITv3>

Outing report - Anzac Memorial 20 July 2022



Photos by G Austen



Our visit to the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park was an excellent excursion and most attendees expressed their surprise at the extent of the museum's collection.

It is listed as New South Wales's principal memorial to all Australians who served in the defence Force. We were impressed with the building in both its original and extended form of art and remarkable piece of architecture.

We began by attending the Devoted Service, created by the Anzac Memorial, and featuring the actual words and personal accounts written by three nurses and a matron in their diaries and letters, and was a truly moving experience. At the conclusion of the performance a guide escorted us on a tour of the numerous objects on display in the exhibition.

All of the 20 Society members who attended agreed that it was a most memorable experience.

Outing for your diary- Tuesday 13 September 2022

Cammeray Walk with Dr Ian Hoskins

Cost free. Meet 10am at 65 Bellevue St Cammeray, a house built in 1911-12.

The suburb Cammeray takes its name from the Cammeraygal people whose territory stretched from the harbour, and perhaps as far north as Turramurra. This walk helps to explore the History of Cammeray as it developed from a place of market gardens into a modern suburb which maintains much of the architectural character of the early 1900s. It is rated as medium to difficult and includes a bush track however Dr Hoskins has agreed to ensure the walk is manageable for all members of our Society. Length of walk about 3 kms.