

Botany Historical Trust

NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2020



SPECIAL CHRISTMAS EDITION

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Botany Police Station c.1938

In the “Year of COVID”, for the first time there will be no AGM or Christmas Function, a sad reality resulting from the Pandemic! It is thought the COVID-19 Pandemic began in Wuhan, China towards the end of 2019 but its short and long term effects, internationally, nationally and locally have been tragic and a great test of national unity and community spirit.

Who would have or could have thought that after the initial Executive Meeting in February that there would be no talks or excursions, in fact nothing occurred this year? The catastrophic bushfires dominated the news of late 2019 and early 2020 but that soon changed!

The BHT Executive met twice in February, one a scheduled Meeting and the second an Extraordinary Meeting to deal with our invaluable Archives and other historical memorabilia. Our May Meeting was cancelled due to COVID and our August Meeting a ‘trial’, as some Executive Members were physically present though socially distanced at Mascot Library with others participating virtually online, virtually through “Teams”.

As Chair and feeling very unconfident, I had hoped that the November Meeting would be ‘normal’ but again we had to manage through a mixture of those who could attend in person and those using “Teams”.

The Executive expresses its thanks to Council and especially to Bobbi Mayne (Manager Customer Experience) and Leonie Maher (Administrative Officer Customer Service) for their assistance, expertise and patience.

In spite of the many difficulties this year with the ‘virus’ and the challenges of technology, the BHT has seen some real achievements. Because we were unable to fulfil our usual program of events, the Executive has concentrated on saving and preserving our precious primary sources. After much discussion and perseverance, Council has agreed to employ a specialist in Community Heritage to research, locate, assess, evaluate, archive and preserve Botany’s primary source materials, documents and artefacts, so that they are saved and available to the community and future historians. The person appointed has amazing qualifications and will begin in February 2021. We believe this to be a real ‘historic’ achievement and again thank Council and especially Bobbi Mayne for pursuing our case.

Despite COVID and its implications for group gatherings the Annual Nancy Hillier Lecture did take place albeit online. Dr John Carr (UNSW) replaced Associate Professor Paul Brown this year. Paul has been a staunch supporter and promoter of the Lecture from the beginning and Dr Carr is a worthy and enthusiastic successor. Dr Carr organised several expert speakers mainly linked to UNSW and the Lecture is available online. It was disappointing for organisers as Botany Town Hall, a more or less second home to the late and amazing environmentalist Nancy Hillier was to bring the Lecture back to the people and its 'roots' but that is yet another dire outcome of COVID. In 2021, Nancy's Memorial Lecture will be "at home", in Botany where it all began.

I am also delighted to tell Members that the NSW Geographical Names Board has agreed to the renaming of Hillier Park Botany as Nancy Hillier Park. A ceremony to honour our local environmental 'warrior' with a plinth and attached plaque noting Nancy's life and achievements took place on Saturday 5 December 2020.

In the same vein, as suggested by Ron Hoenig MP for Heffron and Life Patron of the Trust and with the support of Council, the Geographical Names Board has also been asked to rename Eastlakes Reserve as Jack Munday Reserve. Jack Munday, President of the BLF, "Father of the Green Bans" was hugely responsible along with his Union and the local community for saving Eastlakes Reserve from becoming yet another high-density development. It is more than fitting that he be honoured and Eastlakes Reserve take his name!

Four Executive Members also represented the BHT at a Meeting in Eastgardens Library, along with Members from the Randwick Historical Society and the Cape Banks Family History Group. The Meeting was organised by Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries NSW to discuss current and future burial practices and other community uses of Botany Cemetery. It is possible and hoped for that down the track the Trust will participate in taking guided tours around Botany Cemetery.

There have also been some notable 'losses' this year. Again, because of COVID the Annual Ron Rathbone History Awards had to be postponed till 2021 though I believe potential entries from this year will still be eligible.

The worst 'losses' and another tragic outcome have been Development approvals given by the Bayside Local Planning Committee, a State appointed instrumentality that can and has gone against Council decisions. The 'mega' developments around the Holden Pagewood site are sadly obvious to all but the proliferation of developments along Botany Road, Botany is also of enormous concern! After more than a year of discussions, submissions, protests and hearings, the Local Bayside Planning Panel gave permission to a unit development at 1445–1447 Botany Road, despite the destruction of a heritage cottage on the site. This permission has paved the way for undoubted massive development along Botany Road, with 1449 almost certain to get approval, quoting 1445–1447 as precedent. Many more are sure to follow despite the opposition of Council and supported by the Trust.

Unveiling of Nancy Hillier Park and Interpretative Sign Saturday 5 December 2020



The preservation of the old Botany Police Station, Sydney's oldest and the nearby heritage boarding house may prove a real battle in the future! The Executive has plans to seek the cooperation of Local Members and one very relevant State body to preserve at least the Police Station. Hopefully, the boarding house will become part of the campaign to begin in early 2021!

As explained previously, due to the restrictions imposed by COVID-19, sadly there will be no AGM or Christmas Function this year but the Executive is considering alternative arrangements for 2021 including perhaps a "Christmas in July" or even earlier?

On a positive note, I believe our Newsletters have been outstanding this year, arguably the best ever and a tribute to Leonie Maher for her dedication, genuine interest and sheer hard work.

To use a cliché, 2020 has been somewhat surreal and the immediate future, despite lifting of some restrictions and openings of borders cannot be considered 'normal' or more descriptively the 'new normal'! It is humbling to realise that a century on from the infamous and rather inaccurately titled "Spanish 'Flu" that nature not science is still the dominant force. Certainly because of better food, medicine and hygiene, the mortality rate is nothing like that of the Great Pandemic although the ignorance of some so-called great powers has been unforgivable in spreading the virus.

In conclusion, I would again like to thank Members, the Executive, Council and Council Staff, in particular Bobbi Mayne and Leonie Maher for their continued interest and support.

Anne-Maria Slattery
BHT President



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Anne-Maria Slattery	<i>President</i>
Alice McCann	<i>Senior Vice-President</i>
Christopher Hanna	<i>Vice President</i>
Robert Hanna	<i>Secretary</i>
Richard Smolenski	<i>Treasurer</i>

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Jacqueline Milledge
Peter Orlovich
Barbara Keeley
Councillor Dorothy Rapisardi
Councillor Scott Morrissey

2021 Meeting Schedule : 1 February, 3 May, 2 August and 1 November

THE 2020 BHT CHRISTMAS QUIZ | 30 Questions/30 Answers

1. What was the first song ever broadcast from space?

2. Rolf Harris sang about 6 white 'boomers' pulling Santa's sleigh. What is a 'boomer'?

3. What aspect of Christmas reminds children of the shepherds who visited Baby Jesus?

4. In 1953, who sang the hit song "I'm dreaming of a White Christmas"?

5. True or false? Do reindeer have antlers?

6. In the song "Jingle Bells", how many horses pulled the sleigh?

7. Who helps Santa make the toys at the North Pole?

8. What Christmas beverage is also known as 'milk punch'?

9. Christmas Island off the coast of Western Australia has an annual migration of which animals?

10. What Christmas tradition began in Melbourne in 1938?

11. Who wrote the story "A Christmas Carol"?

12. In what town was Jesus born?

13. How many reindeer pull Santa's sleigh?

14. Name Santa's reindeer.

15. In the song "The 12 Days of Christmas", how many maids were milking?

16. Which Christmas themed ballet premiered in Russia in 1892?

17. Which grumpy American President banned Christmas trees in the White House?

18. What is the highest grossing Christmas movie?

19. "Miracle on 34th Street" is based on which real New York City department store?

20. In Nat King Cole's "The Christmas Song", who was Santa Claus kissing under the Christmas tree?

21. Unlike prawns, what Christmas food can be kept for a long time after Christmas?

22. In what modern day country was Saint Nicholas (Santa Claus) born?

23. What are the names of the Three Wise Men?

24. In what Christmas holiday movie does Donald Trump have a cameo part?

25. Whose eyes were made of coal?

26. What star sign are you if you were born on Christmas Day?

27. In what country did the tradition of the Christmas tree originate?

28. In what year did Google begin tracking Santa Claus?

29. What colour Christmas did Elvis Presley sing about?

30. In the Australian version of "Jingle Bells", what kind of transport replaces Santa's "open sleigh"?

WHAT IS YOUR SCORE / 30

Answers will be found elsewhere in this Newsletter. Try not to take a peek before completing the Quiz!

Good luck and have a very Merry Christmas.



CHRISTMAS AT WAR



Artist's Impression Illustrated London News 1915

The Christmas Truce was a series of widespread unofficial ceasefires along the Western Front around Christmas 1914 even though one of the most popular sayings of 1914 was that “the war would be over by Christmas”.

It was a short peace in a terrible war. As the Great War resumed, it wreaked such destruction and devastation that soldiers became hardened to the brutality of the war. While there were occasional moments of peace throughout the rest of World War I, they never again came on the scale of the Christmas Truce in 1914.

The phenomenon took different forms across the Western Front. One account mentions a British soldier having his hair cut by his pre-war German barber; another talks of a pig-roast. Several mention impromptu “kick-about” with makeshift soccer balls, although, contrary to popular legend, it seems unlikely that there were any organised matches.



Roughly 100,000 British and German troops were involved in the informal cessations of hostility along the Western Front. The Germans placed candles on their trenches and on Christmas trees, then continued the celebration by singing Christmas carols. The British responded by singing carols of their own. The two sides continued by shouting Christmas greetings to each other. Soon thereafter, there were excursions across “No Man’s Land”, where small gifts were exchanged, such as food, tobacco, alcohol and souvenirs, such as buttons and hats. The artillery in the region fell silent and the truce also allowed a breathing spell where recently killed soldiers could be brought back behind their lines by burial parties. Joint services were held and in many sectors, the truce lasted through Christmas night, continuing until New Year’s Day in others.

The following excerpts written by soldiers give us an insight into their experiences during the Christmas Truce.

“I remember the silence, the eerie sound of silence,” one veteran from the Fifth Battalion the Black Watch, Alfred Anderson, later recalled. “It was a short peace in a terrible war.”

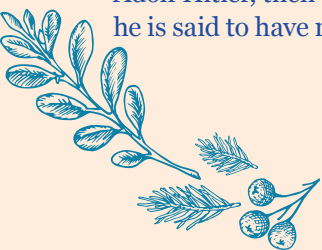


WWI Christmas Truce Front Line - Imperial War Museum

“First the Germans would sing one of their carols and then we would sing one of ours, until when we started up ‘O Come, All Ye Faithful’ the Germans immediately joined in singing the same hymn to the Latin words ‘Adeste Fideles’. And I thought, well, this is really a most extraordinary thing, two nations both singing the same carol in the middle of a war.”

British soldier, Murdoch M. Wood thought “I then came to the conclusion that I have held very firmly ever since, that if we had been left to ourselves there would never have been another shot fired.”

Adolf Hitler, then a Corporal of the 16th Bavarians, saw it differently: “Such a thing should not happen in wartime,” he is said to have remarked. “Have you no German sense of honour?”





Botany Voluntary Aid Detachment. Image courtesy of Bayside Libraries (Community History Collection)

As we all know, the temporary ceasefire of the “Christmas Truce” did not last, three more Christmas Days would come and go before the Armistice of 1918, and by then a new crisis would already be unfolding. This new crisis, the 1919 Influenza Pandemic, has been referred to again and again this year as we all attempt to grapple with COVID-19.

Regular readers of this Newsletter will remember the research of Jenny MacRitchie on the impact of “the wretched flu” in Botany and Mascot: the difficulties imposed by the quarantine, the local inoculation clinics, the public education campaigns, and the grief caused by the many deaths. But regular readers will also know that History demonstrates that both wars and pandemics have been common in the past, and that countries can not only survive them, but can thrive in their aftermath.

Locally and nationally, the soldiers returned home, the influenza pandemic was gradually brought under control, and the 1920s turned into a remarkable period of growth and change. For women, especially, the social changes brought about by the War were a step towards a more equal role in the political and economic life of the nation.

In more concrete terms, the Botany area grew after the war in a myriad of ways. The development of Daceyville, for example, had started in 1912 but had been delayed by the war. In the years that followed, the development of ‘Daceyville No. 2’ began, eventually becoming the suburb of Pagewood.

Industry and technology also developed rapidly in the 1920s, the construction of the Bunnerong Power Station started in 1927, while the increasing importance of aviation meant the expansion of the Mascot Aerodrome. This in turn assisted the development of the surrounding Mascot area, leading to new businesses, new opportunities and a growing population.

At the same time, new local churches and schools were being built, expanded or significantly refurbished. Mascot Public School, Daceyville Public School, St Michael’s Catholic School and Banksmeadow Public School are all prime examples. Mascot School of Arts thrived in the early 1920s. New entertainment venues opened, including the Marina Theatre in Gardeners Road, Rosebery. In 1920 a new Sir Joseph Banks Hotel was built to replace the original 1844 building.



1920 Marina Theatre In Gardeners Road, Rosebery



Hector Hicks, courtesy of Kathryn White

Land for Sir Joseph Banks Park was purchased in the 1920s, and planning and development began on Jellicoe Park. Mascot Memorial Park was also built in the early 1920s; in fact, the foundation stone for its Memorial was laid on the 4 December 1920.

The centenary of the laying of the foundation stone brings us full circle. The stone was laid by the Mayor of Mascot, Alderman Thomas Hicks. As BHT President Anne Slattery noted in the May newsletter, the Mayor's son, Hector Hicks, had survived the war only to die from the "Spanish Flu" in November 1919. The solace of history lies in its ability to show us that no matter what disaster, tragedy or conflict befalls us, it will pass, and when it does, we can do more than recover: we can thrive, we can grow, and we can prosper.





JJ Cahill Memorial High School

HONOUR ♦ EXCELLENCE ♦ RESPONSIBILITY ♦ OPPORTUNITY

60th ANNIVERSARY – 24 MARCH 2021

On 24 March 2021, JJ Cahill Memorial High will celebrate its 60th Anniversary, its Diamond Jubilee. Following is a précis of the School's History.

Background

There was no high school, Government, Catholic or Independent in the former Municipality of Botany until 24 March 1961. Students leaving Primary School, who lived in Botany, Daceyville, Eastlakes, Pagewood, Mascot or Rosebery had to travel to Cleveland St Boys, Dover Heights Girls', Randwick Boys' or Girls' or Sydney Boys' or Girls' depending on their academic ability as assessed at the end of Year 6 (6th Class then).

Children who did not fit perfectly into that category attended junior high school at either Daceyville or Gardeners Road Public Schools, where they learned useful trades as well as a basic academic education. The final exam till 1967 was the Leaving Certificate and it was a five-year course strictly geared to university entrance and entrance to the Public Service. In 1967, the Higher School Certificate was introduced under the Wyndham Scheme and children were no longer locked in or out of tertiary education at the age of twelve.

As plans for the new education reforms evolved, the President of Gardeners Rd Public School P&C, the wonderful Miss Norrie Braithwaite and the local community began agitating for a local high school, basically for equal opportunity for children from Botany Municipality. When it opened on 24 March 1961, JJ Cahill Memorial High was one of the first six co-ed, comprehensive high schools built in NSW, ready for the new education system when it was introduced in 1967. The first students walked from Gardeners Rd to JJ Cahill carrying their chairs!

The Opening Ceremony

The Opening Ceremony was a star-studded event with official guests including the NSW Premier Bob Heffron, Local Federal and State MPs, the Minister for Education Ernie Wetherell, the Mayor of Botany, Army representatives, the Director of NSW Education, Public Service Chiefs and of course, members of the Cahill Family led by Joe Cahill's widow, Mrs Esme Cahill. There were Cadets and a choir for this splendid occasion.

JJ Cahill Memorial High was named for the late Premier of NSW, John Joseph (Joe) Cahill, who died 18 months before the School opened.

There are only two high schools

John Joseph Cahill



in NSW with Memorial as part of their name, Parkes Memorial High and JJ Cahill Memorial High, named for both men's extraordinary contributions to their State. Joe Cahill was born in Redfern in 1891, the son of Irish immigrants and left school at age fifteen. He started as an apprentice fitter for NSW Railways and lived through the Conscription Campaign and General Strike of World War I. Joe Cahill never forgot his background and his ideals of God and family nor his passion for engineering. JJ Cahill became Labor Premier of NSW in April 1952 and died in office in October 1959. He is remembered for so many things, especially the building of the Sydney Opera House and is a great role model for students of the School named for him.



Australian Womens Weekly 14 June 1961

Demography

The original school population was mainly "old" Botany but within a short time, the growing numbers of migrants settling in the area, especially in Mascot saw a huge change to the intake of students.

Local work opportunities drew migrant families to the many local industries. Mascot and its surrounds were close to the City, the Airport, beaches, good hospitals and the relatively new UNSW. Cheap shopping, sporting facilities and parks were other attractions, plus the high-density development of Eastlakes both Government and private provided growing numbers of students. By the 1970s, there was a huge Greek component and the migrant trend continues today, though the Pacific Islands, SE Asia and the Middle East are probably the dominant groups now.

Standards

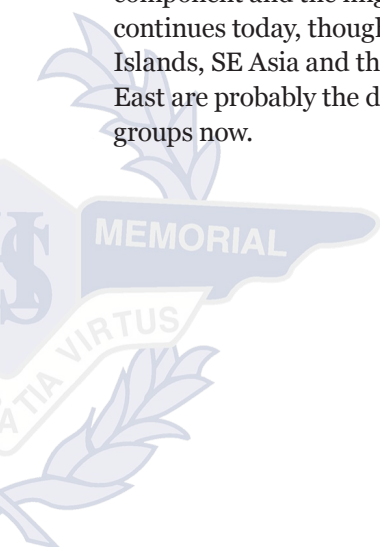
There has always been a strong expectation that "JJ" students develop a sense of individual responsibility and community spirit as well as achieving their absolute personal "best". The School Motto is in Latin as was the fashion of the day: Virtutis Gratia Virtus or Do What is Right Because it is Right! Excellence, Respect and Opportunity are the key principles. Uniform has always been important and the original students, really the girls were given the opportunity to design their own uniform. Blazers, hats and gloves were de rigueur. The original uniform was quite spectacular and remained unchanged till the mid-70s but there have been several modifications since to adapt to our changing world and the needs of students.

Achievements

There have been extraordinary achievements over the past 60 years, academically, in the sporting field and culturally. So many doctors, nurses and lawyers, a judge, a magistrate and several politicians, State and Local plus a nationally known comedian and an up and coming filmmaker are among the wonderful alumnae of "JJ".

There are also business success stories and excellent tradespersons but perhaps the School's greatest achievement is the quality of its ex-students, rich and famous, known or unknown, struggling, perhaps even poor in material terms but whose loyalty to School, family and community is strong and lasting and invaluable! To quote part of the School Song, "And down through the years the lessons we've learned here, will leave us with memories that never will die."

For a more definitive account of the School's achievement just search the Internet. You will be both amazed and admiring!



Unique to “JJ”

1. Cultural Highlights

- ◆ The great tradition of drama with the “Opera” or fabulous Gilbert and Sullivan performances of the 60s and early ‘70s
- ◆ The Musicals including “Bye-Bye Birdie”, which won a State award
- ◆ The Dramas such as “Arsenic and Old Lace”
- ◆ International Nights
- ◆ The incomparable “Rock Eisteddfods”, 1989 – 1996
- ◆ Music, music, music
- ◆ The Dances in the 70s and 80s and yes, ACDC did perform at “JJ”
- ◆ The Clock i.e. the automated electric bell that rang out even during the holidays!

2. Sporting Achievements

- ◆ Outstanding Rugby League Champions in the 60s and 70s
- ◆ Outstanding Soccer Champions, Boys and Girls from the 80s onwards

- ◆ Netball, Basketball, Softball and Volleyball Champions over many years
- ◆ A School Captain, who was also the 18 and Under World Karate Champion
- ◆ The legendary Sister School visits to Mt Austin High in Wagga

3. “JJ” Vocabulary

- ◆ “The Banquet” - the Year 12 Formal till c. 1975
- ◆ “The Opera” - any School musical performance till c. 1976
- ◆ “The Exeat Book” - the triplicated form allowing a student to leave Class. Students were always confused by EXIT signs and thought the word was misspelled!
- ◆ “The Periodical” - the 6 Weekly Report Book on EVERY Subject, EVERY student had to carry and EVERY teacher had to fill-in so that Classes changed EVERY 6 weeks!
- ◆ “Versing” - playing another team in sport or even debating
- ◆ “Sequencing” - sewing sequins onto costumes. “Sequinning” was unknown at “JJ”

- ◆ “The Botany Compact”, a unique and pioneering Education-Business Link that began at “JJ” in 1989 partnering the School originally with 20 local companies ranging from solicitors to Qantas. The Compact eventually encompassed seven other Schools, Government and Catholic and 45 companies, all organised through JJ Cahill MHS. The School won two Director General’s Awards and the scheme was extended statewide.

Buildings and Refurbishments

Originally there were three major blocks plus a Hall, a “Manual Arts” building, an armoury for the cadets, toilets and of course the Administration Office, which was famously built back to front so that the Deputy had quite a large space and the Principal a somewhat smaller one adjacent to the Staff Toilets!

Later, extensions were added to the Science and Maths areas including the famous circular garden in the latter.

2019 Big Night Out



A new Library came later but at the expense of the swimming pool built and paid for by “JJ” parents and students. The School was the only Comprehensive Government School to have its own pool but sadly, vandalism by outsiders proved too expensive for upkeep and the pool was demolished on the site where the Library is now.

“JJ” has been refurbished about three times in the past 60 years and the modern IT, media and Hospitality facilities are amazing!

Teaching and Ancillary Staff

JJ Cahill Memorial High has always been blessed with excellent dedicated and professional teachers. Traditionally, teachers tend to stay a long time at “JJ” and the same virtues and values apply to the Ancillary Staff. The first Principal, Mr Len Schmidt set a high tone for the School. He was quite a revolutionary educationalist and extraordinarily demanding of staff, students and most of all, himself. Len Schmidt was highly respected and even loved by many of those early students and Len loved “JJ”.

There has been a succession of Principals and Deputies since, all of who have made their mark on the School but arguably Mr Schmidt’s contribution has been the most lasting and positive.

There are too many teachers to be praised but again, a search of the Internet is worth the effort. The Ancillary Staff have complemented the teaching staff for their loyalty, professionalism and commitment. As every teacher knows, the Office is the ‘engine room’ of any school and vital to its smooth running and success.

The champion Rugby League school of the State, and holder of the Lennox Cup for the past four years, is J. J. Cahill Memorial High, Mascot.



JJ Cahill Memorial High School

A Multicultural Model, a Microcosm of Australia

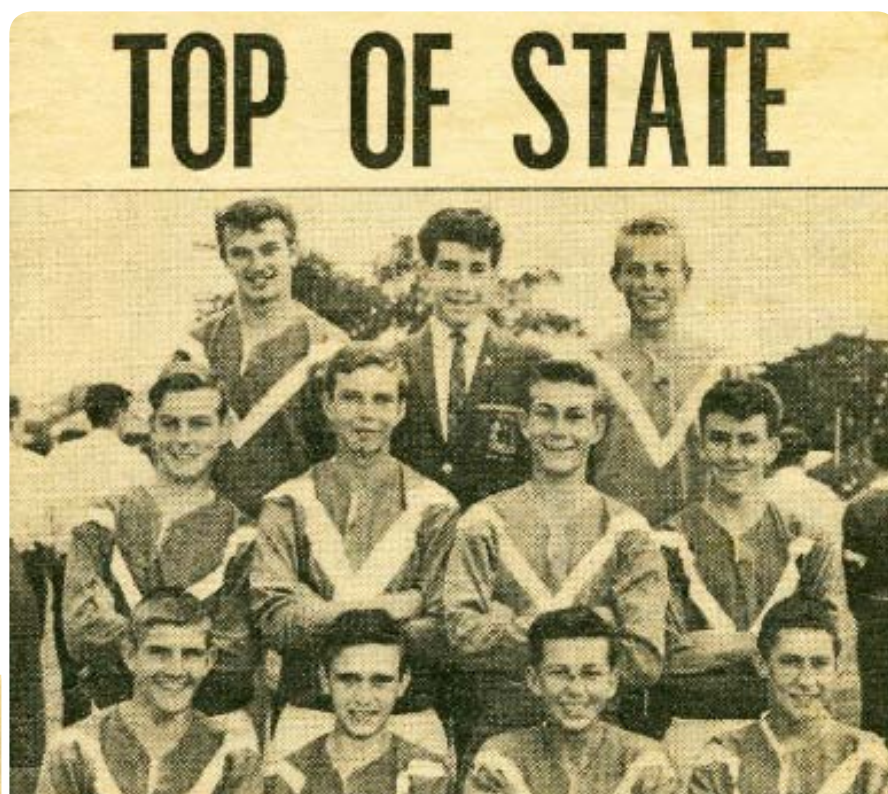
Academic, sporting and cultural achievements are the desired aims and outcomes of every school but it is the development of independent learners with a commitment to responsibility, family, country, community, loyalty, personal achievement, ethical behaviour, compassion, tolerance and respect for others that is equally if not more important. These have always been the values expected and nourished at JJ Cahill Memorial High.

“JJ” students, with varying abilities, come from a multitude of backgrounds, national, religious,

social and economic. The School is especially proud of its Special Education Unit. Students from everywhere and anywhere are valued and accepted. Students value each other.

The School is an outstanding example of the success of Australia’s Multiculturalism and a microcosm of the wider Australian community. “JJ” embodies and embraces its Motto,

*Do what is right,
because it is right!*



THE BEXLEY PATRIOTIC FLAG AND THE MASCOT FARLEIGH TANNERY

The Lydham Hall Museum, run by the St George Historical Society, is home to a wonderful collection of local items and material including an Australian Flag created in 1915 for Bexley Public School.

In 1915 the school had started to plan a memorial tablet to be engraved with the names of ex-students who were enlisting to fight in the war, and the school purchased a flag to display with the tablet. However, while the school was planning its memorial, a new national initiative was taking shape.

Mrs Ellen Wharton-Kirke, a mother whose four sons had enlisted, suggested to the NSW Premier, Sir Charles Wade, that a national fund-raising day be held to raise money to support our overseas troops and wounded soldiers. Regardless of what date was chosen, said Mrs Wharton-Kirke, the day should be called 'Australia Day'. Her idea was adopted, the designated date of the first Australia Day was named as 30 July 1915, and planning for fund-raising events began across the country. The four St George Councils combined to form a St George Australia Day Fund with the aim of raising £5,000.

Bexley Public School had already arranged for a School Fair to raise funds for wounded soldiers. The School Principal, Mr Middenway, now announced that the proceeds from the School Fair would be donated to the St George Australia Day Fund. Moreover, a new event was planned at which locals willing to donate money to the cause would earn the right to have their name embroidered on the school's new Australian Flag. As a result, 59 individuals donated money and had their name embroidered on the flag, which became known as the 'Bexley Patriotic Flag'.





Councillor Andrew Tsounis, Mayor Joe Awada and Councillor Liz Barlow, holding the Bexley Patriotic Flag

The war lasted longer than anyone had anticipated at the beginning of 1915, and the school's planned memorial tablet eventually became an Honour Board listing the names of no less than 115 former pupils who had enlisted.

One of those names was Gibson Farleigh, an employee of a Mascot tannery and a grandson of that tannery's founder: E. M. Farleigh.

Edward Manicom Farleigh migrated to Australia in the 1860s. He entered the leather trade and, after moving to Sydney in the 1870s, founded his own firm - E. M. Farleigh Pty Ltd – and built its tannery at Mascot.

The Farleigh tannery occupied three acres of land on the south side of Coward Street between what was then Kent Road and Old Botany Road. Bourke Road would eventually cut through this section of Coward Street, and Old Botany Road would be renamed O'Riordan Street, but in the late 1800s it was largely vacant land. Even by 1915, according to Sands Directory records, there was a total of only five houses on this section of Coward Street.

By 1915, both the Farleigh firm and the Farleigh family had become large and successful. Edward Farleigh's eldest son, John Farleigh, had become particularly prominent: he was a senior partner of the firm Farleigh, Nettheim & Co., had served as an alderman on Rockdale Council, and was a Member of the NSW Legislative Council. The Gibson Farleigh listed on the Bexley Public School Honour Board was John Farleigh's son.

When Gibson Farleigh enlisted in 1916, he had become a leather merchant himself and was working at the Mascot tannery. Enlisting along with him was Fred Farleigh, Edward Farleigh's youngest son, another leather merchant also working at the Coward Street tannery.

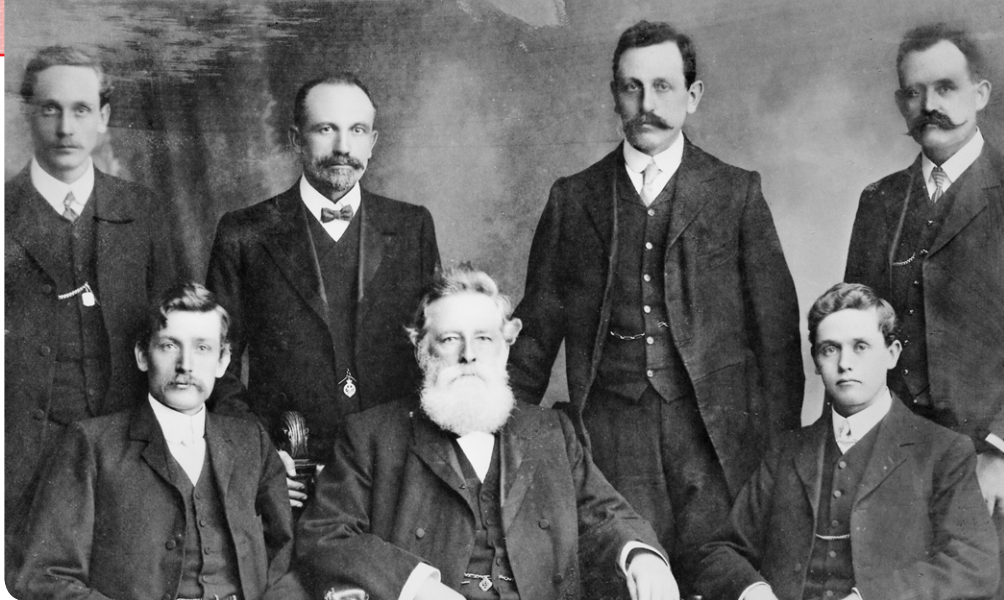
Fred was Gibson's uncle, but the two men had been born only four years apart. Gibson was 25 years old when he enlisted; his uncle Fred was 29. Both men were commissioned as Lieutenants, were wounded in action and served with distinction. In fact, Fred was awarded the Military Cross for 'conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty', an honour he earned after leading his men in a raid on enemy trenches. But whereas Gibson returned home when the war ended, Fred was killed in action by artillery fire while serving with his Battalion at Bray-sur-Somme on 22 August 1918.

As was the case with so many men who failed to return to their unit after the chaos of battle, Fred was at first listed as 'Missing'. According to Red Cross Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau files, it was three days before Gibson even discovered this much. Fred served with the 33rd Battalion; Gibson with the 34th, and there was little Gibson could do when he finally heard his uncle had not returned from battle. Gibson asked the Chaplain of his Battalion – Padre Captain Calder – for help. It was Chaplain Calder who searched for Fred Farleigh, found his body, and buried him with honours where he had fallen.

Gibson survived the war, married in England in 1919, and returned to Australia in 1920. He had lost not just an uncle in the war, but a cousin as well: Leigh Howard, a maternal grandson of Edward Farleigh. Leigh was only 18 years old when he enlisted in March 1916. Less than three months later, while training for overseas service, Leigh contracted Streptococcal Meningitis; he died from the disease on 5 June 1916.

The E. M. Farleigh firm, known for its high-quality leather, prospered in the decades after the war. It was not until 1960 that the company was taken over by Finance and Guarantee Co. Ltd. That same year, the three acre tannery site on Coward Street was sold for £55,000 to George Wimpy & Co.

There is now no trace of the Farleigh tannery left in Mascot. The Patriotic Flag originally displayed at Bexley Public School is now at Lydham Hall. The Farleigh name, while listed on the Bexley Public School Honour Board, is not among the names embroidered on the Flag.



A pre-war [circa 1905] studio portrait of Edward M. Farleigh and sons, the managers of the E. M. Farleigh tannery; Edward Farleigh is seated in the middle of the front row; his youngest son, Fred Farleigh, is seated on the far right of the front row - From the Australian War Memorial Photograph Collection.

However, the names of the three members of the Farleigh family who enlisted can be seen on another Honour Board that was originally erected in the Arncliffe Methodist Church.

The building still stands in Wollongong Road, but it is now St Mark's Coptic Orthodox Church.

The Arncliffe Methodist Church World War I Honour Board, long forgotten, was found in pieces in a garage by members of the Arncliffe Men's Shed in late 2013 and was restored and re-sited in the Rockdale Town Hall building. The Board lists over sixty names, with the names of the ten men from the congregation who lost their lives in the war inscribed in gold on the Board's centrepiece: Fred Farleigh and his young nephew Leigh Howard are among them.

Welcome to Mascot Booklet c.1940

E. M. FARLEIGH PTY LTD

Employing to-day between 75 and 80 hands the tannery firm of E. M. Farleigh Pty. Ltd. was established on the present site over 40 years ago, by the late Mr. E. M. Farleigh who died in 1909.

The tannery covers an area of 3 acres and has always been prominent in the production of high class patent and other leathers.

Due however to the intensification of Australia's war effort leather for Army boots is being produced in quantities.

At the head of affairs as managing director is Mr. E. M. Farleigh, while Mr. Norman Farleigh is in charge of the works.





A circa 1950 aerial photograph by Milton Kent of J. Bayley Tannery, Lord Street, Botany from State Library of New South Wales.

And Speaking of Tanneries...

The foundation of the leather industry had been solidly laid before the advent of local government in Botany Bay. In the year of incorporation, 1888, it is known that there were at least four tanners (and most likely many more) in the Botany Bay district. One of the earliest tanners in the area was William Horace Darvall who operated tanneries in his own name and in partnership with Mr Castilla as 'Darvall and Castilla's Tannery' on part of Lord's 600 acre grant immediately east of Booralee (near the intersection of today's Botany Road and Bay Street) from the early 1850s. (This tannery is frequently mistitled as Darvall and Costello's Tannery, but Castilla is the correct name) Other early tanners were John Bunce, John Geddes, who tanned basils and hides at Springvale; Frank Lupton who operated at Rosebank Tannery in Botany Road and Messrs Page and Gorton who also carried on operations.

The Farleigh tannery in Coward Street was just one of many tanneries throughout the Mascot and Botany area, one of the most well-known of which was Bayley & Sons in Lord Street, Botany.

The J. Bayley tannery is just one of a number of local businesses and locations that were photographed by the aerial photographer Milton Kent from the 1930s through to the 1960s. Milton Kent's photographs, now held by the State Library of NSW, provide both an overview of our area and remarkable details of individual streets and buildings.

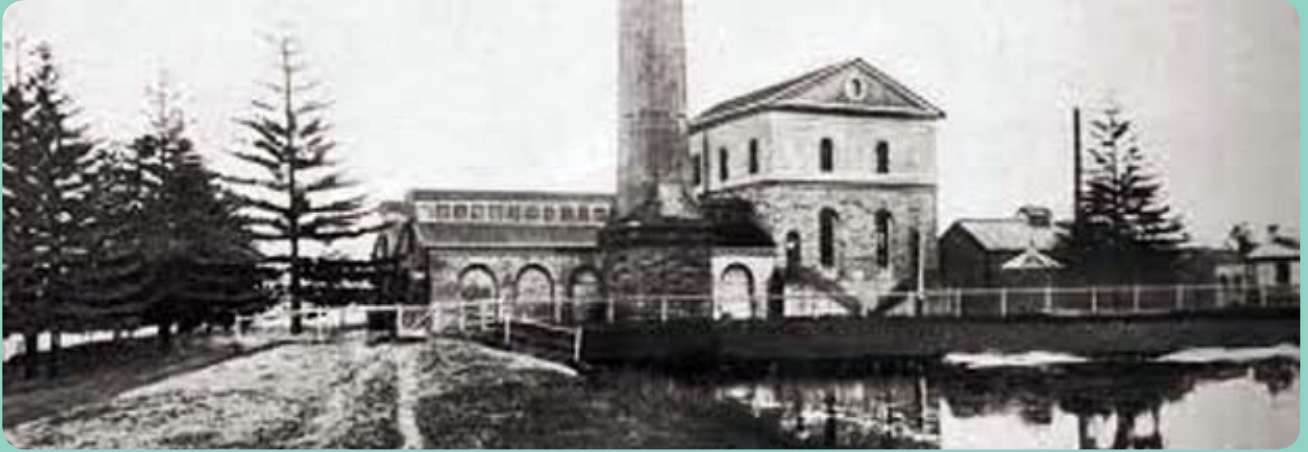
For example, the above photo of the J. Bayley tannery shows a section of Booralee Park and the view across the Lord Street tannery to the Botany wetlands, Mascot Bowling Club and L'Estrange Park.

WE HOPE TO FEATURE MORE OF MILTON KENT'S PHOTOGRAPHS OF OUR AREA IN NEXT YEAR'S BULLETINS.



Another photo of the J. Bayley Tannery taken by Milton Kent is so clear that a tennis match in progress can be seen in the garden of the Lord Street property adjacent to Booralee Park.

A BRIEF TOUR OF EASTLAKES



Botany Water Pumping Station Pumped water from the Botany Bay Swamps to Crown St Reservoir

In October 2015, a group of BHT Members toured Eastlakes as part of the annual Program. Since 2013 and until the “Year of COVID”, it has been customary to visit one of the suburbs in the former Botany Bay LGA and learn about its History. Hopefully, such activities will take place again, soon!

In 2015, our group visited or viewed (from the “comfort” of the Council bus) the following places:

The Lakes Golf Club, Horner Memorial Church on King Street, the Dept of Housing Flats on Maloney St and Florence Avenue, various Parks and Reserves, The Four Head Buddha Shrine behind the Eastlakes Shopping Centre, Eastlakes Public School, Windgap, The Light Horse Reserve and the Alf Kay Community Centre.

The contentious rebuilding of the Shopping Centre and associated units was some years away in 2015!

Background

The suburb of Eastlakes was once the site of Sydney’s third water supply, the first being the famous Tank Stream and the second the Lachlan Swamps, now Centennial Park. The original name of the area was the Botany Swamps, an extension really of the Lachlan Swamps.

The area was unique geologically and Botany Bay was once much larger, encompassing the area around the Bay, including parts of Botany and surrounds.

When sand drifts began to shrink Botany Bay they formed excellent filtered, retaining areas for underground water and so the ‘Lakes’ of southeastern Sydney were formed. The area had many natural springs and creeks as well. The famous ex-convict entrepreneur, Simeon Lord built the first dam in the area as part of his wool washes and other early industrialists and market gardeners soon moved into the Botany area. By the 1840s, even earlier, the Lachlan Swamps and Busby’s Bore, its water distributor to the City of Sydney was no longer adequate.

The Botany Swamps became the main water supply of Sydney from the early 1850s for the next 30 years until the Nepean and later Warragamba Dam was constructed. The “East Lakes” part of the Botany Swamps now became available for residential development.

The “lakes” of the two golf courses, Eastlakes and The Lakes and the Botany Wetlands around Lord St and the Airport are the most visible evidence of the former Botany Swamps today.

Eastlakes the Suburb

The present suburb of Eastlakes is bounded by Gardeners Rd to the north, the eastern side of Isaac Smith St and Pagewood to the east, Wentworth Avenue in the south and Sparks and Maloney Streets in the west. The name comes as mentioned previously from the lakes (part of the Botany swamps) and its location in the eastern part of Sydney.

The European settlement of Eastlakes goes back to the early 1800s when farming was the main occupation. Residential occupation did not grow until the early 1900s, when various sub-divisions took place. Vernon Anderson (Vernon Estate), John Want (Want Estate), Charles Whitney (Wellington Estate), Kensington No 2 and the Holt Estate were the most important developers and sub-divisions. Several streets in Eastlakes are named for these men, their origins and their families e.g. Vernon, Florence, Lismore, Grafton, Casino, Kyogle (Vernon Anderson); Harry (John Want). Others are named because of the connection to the former Rosebery Racecourse (Longworth, Racecourse, O'Rourke) or for former local Councillors (Charles, Chipman, Gray, Hillary, Slattery, Sparks) and Staff (Barber, Evans) and Local Government pioneers (Westcott). Gardeners Rd speaks for itself!

The major residential development of Eastlakes began in the 1960s with high density, controversial housing projects built by Stocks and Holdings and Parkes Developments plus of course, the Dept of Housing flats in Maloney St and Florence Avenue.

Interestingly, the Maloney St flats were designed by Australia's then leading architect, Harry Seidler and are arguably among the best public housing developments in Sydney.

Eastlakes also has many green spaces e.g. Bridget Tight, Eastlakes, Edward Thornton, Florence Avenue, Jerome Dowling Leon Lachal and Vernon Avenue Reserves and Griffith Park, though having said that can there ever be enough green spaces?

Florence Avenue Reserve has been renamed Light Horse Reserve in honour of those gallant WWI soldiers. Currently the NSW Geographical Names Board is considering changing the name of Eastlakes Reserve to Jack Munday Reserve, to recognise and perpetuate the invaluable contribution of the late BLF leader, who “saved” the Eastlakes Reserve from becoming even more high-density home units!

The rebuilding and redevelopment of the Eastlakes Shopping Centre has also been a matter of controversy for many years but that project is now well underway, another part of the Eastlakes ‘story’!

Perhaps the best feature of Eastlakes is its wonderful people, a myriad of nationalities and cultures old and new, with an amazing diversity of housing stock ranging from the very wealthy to the humble. People come from all over Sydney just to ‘bargain’ shop at Eastlakes. The suburb's closeness to the Sydney CBD, the Eastern Beaches, the Airport, Botany Bay, UNSW, POW Hospital, Randwick Racecourse, Centennial and Moore Parks, great sporting facilities and other major local shopping centres also makes Eastlakes a great and enviable place to live!

Eastlakes also boasts three significant historical and cultural contributions that should be acknowledged.

The Lakes Shopping Centre c. 1964



Windgap

In 1961, Alderman Edith Gibson requested the sitting Mayor to set up a committee to raise hopefully \$60,000 to establish a residential school and sheltered workshop for children with special needs living in the Eastern and Southeastern suburbs of Sydney. From about 1953, children from the former Botany Municipality had been attending Windgap, a property in Mount St, Coogee that had been purchased by the four local Councils, Botany, Randwick, Waverley and Woollahra but their parents were responsible for almost all their expenses and care.

Its original owners named Windgap after a property in Kilkenny Ireland. Curiously, modern *Camp Hill* near the Irish *Windgap* is the most progressive and admired residential and training establishment in Ireland and beyond!

Lionel Bowen, Member for Randwick, Kingsford Smith and future Deputy Prime Minister was a strong advocate for the project. A committee representing business, culture, sport and government was formed to set up Windgap while the NSW Dept of Education set aside land from nearby Eastlakes Public School for the new premises. A funding campaign led by the local Rotary and Lions Clubs and enthusiastic support by parents and community raised more than \$117, 000. *The monetary amounts shown are at 1960s value.*

The story and success of Eastlakes Windgap had begun and its progress has been exponential! The majority of fundraising is through the *Windgap Foundation*, parents, benefactors and community but there are now also *Windgap Enterprises* and a host of business activities and locations around the area, ranging from *Growability* to assisted residential accommodation. Currently, the Florence Avenue site is being upgraded such are the needs for expansion. Windgap also has a football (Soccer) team and a choir and every St Patrick's Day hosts a genuine Irish Breakfast and Shindig/Ceilidh at Souths Juniors!

**Windgap's story is unique and ongoing
and part of the fabric of the suburb of
Eastlakes.**

Eastlakes Public School

Eastlakes Public School is the only school in Eastlakes. The School opened in July 1939 in temporary, rented premises in a church in O'Connor Street and operated there till 1944. Permanent buildings were erected in 1945 but it was not until 1979 that Eastlakes became a K – 6 Primary School. The development of high-density units on the former Rosebery Racecourse and nearby NSW DOH flats led to a great increase in population and the demand for a full primary school. Like the suburb, Eastlakes Public School has a wonderful multicultural and diverse school population.

Some special features of Eastlakes Public School include a Discovery Playground, a Sensory Garden established in partnership with *Windgap* and most importantly and historically significant, a 1930s mural of Mae Gibbs' famous *Gumnut Babies*. The School offers an excellent all-round education including Languages that reflect the cultural backgrounds of the School community. Recreation areas and green spaces are seen as very important. The School also has a great sporting tradition!

Eastlakes Public School is a true community school, loved, respected and supported by its students and former students, by its parents and local community and from the beginning, by dedicated and highly professional teachers and staff, who model and encourage students follow the School motto and always

“To Rise to the Challenge!”



Some readers may recognise the children

Rosebery Racecourse

Rosebery Park or Racecourse began as a pony track in 1906 and was used intermittently as a racetrack, an army base and HQ and a training track until 1948, when it closed. The Rosebery Racecourse was part of the Holt Estate and was at its most popular in the 1920s but for commercial reasons the Sydney Turf Club ceased racing activities there and the site became the property of developers Parkes and Stocks and Holdings. High-density units and the Eastlakes Shopping Centre now cover most of the old Racecourse.

With the outbreak of WWI, Rosebery Racecourse was taken over by the military in mid August 1914 and became the HQ, camp and training ground of the 1st Light Horse Regiment of the 1st Light Horse Brigade, I/AIF prior to its departure for Egypt on the "Star of Victoria", October 19, 1914. The Memorials in the Light Horse Reserve at Eastlakes honour the Light Horse and especially their historic victory at Beersheba on October 31, 1917. The NSW Light Horse transferred to Liverpool during WWI and the Racecourse became pivotal to training the Citizen Military Forces.

Racing returned in the 1920s but again when WW2 began, Rosebery Racecourse became HQ for the tragic 8th Division, 2/AIF that was captured en masse during the Fall of Singapore.

8th Division members spent the War as POWs in notorious POW Camps like Changi or on the infamous "Burma Railway". Many did not return and the condition of those who did was pitiful. One local Daceyville Family, the Colenso "Boys" lost two sons and the remaining two held captive for four years. The 8th Division is also remembered on the Memorials

in the Light Horse Reserve. After WW2, Rosebery Racecourse was basically a training track for the STC until 1948, till it was transformed into the unit area between Eastlakes Shops, George Street, Florence Avenue and St Helena Parade north of George Street.

Postscript



Major General Plant inspecting the 1st Australian Returned Stores Depot at Rosebery Race Course in 1945

There are so many Eastlakes stories but there isn't space for all. The two golf courses deserve a chapter of their own, especially the famous DC-3 East-West Airlines 'plane crash at the Eastlakes course on November 5, 1957! No deaths, minor injuries, lots of shock and some embarrassment as an ambulance flipped when it fell into a bunker!

As they say, "Watch this space!"

Roseberry Race Course c. 1945





Make a video call to your loved ones this holiday season with ZOOM. We will teach you how to install and use the ZOOM platform on your own device. Please bring your own mobile, tablet or laptop. Make sure it is set up and ready to use. You will need your **Apple** or **Play store password**. **Bookings essential!**

Register at Bayside Library Eventbrite at tinyurl.com/y2q4ljgx or enquire with library staff.

**Wednesday, 13 January 2021
10:00am to 11:30am**

Eastgardens Library, Room 6
9366 3888

**Thursday, 14 January 2021
10:00am to 11.30am**

Rockdale Library, Level 3
9562 1821

ANSWERS TO THE 2020 BHT CHRISTMAS QUIZ

Q10 Carols by Candlelight
Q9 Crabs
Q8 Eggnog
Q7 The Elves
Q6 One
Q5 True
Q4 Bing Crosby
Q3 Candy Canes, they represent the shepherd's staff
Q2 A large male kangaroo
Q1 Jingle Bells

Q20 Mummy
Q19 Macy's
Q18 Home Alone
Q17 Theodore Roosevelt
Q16 The Nutcracker
Q15 Eight
Q14 Donner, Blitzen, Dancer, Comet, Cupid and Rudolf (9 Marks)
Q13 Nine
Q12 Bethlehem
Q11 Charles Dickens

Q30 A rusty Holden Ute
Q29 Blue
Q28 2004
Q27 Germany
Q26 Capricorn
Q25 Frosty the Snowman
Q24 Home Alone 2
Q23 Caspar, Balthazar and Melchior (3 Marks)
Q22 Turkey
Q21 Fruitcake

Merry
Christmas

