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## MOSMAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER - February 2019

The last speaker meeting was held on 14th November 2018 when Bob Lawrence presented *From Eden to Windsor Castle: the Amazing Life of Sir Oswald Brierley*. We learned that Brierley was much more than the accomplished naval artist famous for his long lost 1848 mural at *The Rangers*. His life moved from pioneering achievement in Australia to the company of royalty in England. Members all relaxed afterwards with the traditional annual Christmas cheer.

The following Wednesday was the final function for 2018 – a daylight saving history walk at Rawson Park followed by another much-anticipated BBQ from the famous sausage chefs John Dansie and Peter Alderson.

**NEXT SPEAKER MEETING**  
**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March at 7pm**  
**Downstairs at Mosman Library**

If the names Jack Davey, Bob Dyer or Eric Baume ring a bell with you, or programs titled *Yes What?* or *The Quiz Kids* or *Mrs 'Obbs*, you will enjoy the talk by **Graham Sims** entitled *The Golden Years of the Wireless*. Graham is a published author and speaker and has spent 40 years as an education professional. *See attached flyer*

**Local Studies at BARRY O'KEEFE LIBRARY**

**Revisiting Allan Gamble** exhibition 1-30 March. In 1947 Allan Allman Gamble proposed the establishment of the Mosman Art Prize. However his own art, recording Sydney of the 1950s and 1960s is just as memorable and is revisited in this exhibition.

**Migrants to Mosman** will go 'live to air' on the *Mosman Faces* website on 26 February. The 50 mins film, celebrates migrants who settled in Mosman and became part of the community. Filmed interviews reveal stories of French wool buyers and a refugee from Hitler's Europe. Post WW2 immigrants include Italians, Greeks, stateless Palestinians and Chinese.  
*Watch on <http://mosmanfaces.net/>*

**What Does it Say?** Wednesday 20 March 10.30am to 12.30pm  
Do you possess family handwritten documents from the late 18<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century? Gail Davis, Senior Archivist from NSW State Archives, will be sharing tips and hints with attendees to assist them in deciphering old handwriting.  
*Free but bookings are essential - see attached flyer for details.*

**Private viewing of Mosman Treasures**

Wednesday 10 April, 10.30am to 12.30pm.  
Some rarely seen historical items will be on view and members of the MHS Committee will help reveal treasures found in the recently digitised *Mosman Neutral and Middle Harbour Resident* 1904-7 and *Mosman Mail* 1898-1906.  
*Free, tea provided but bookings essential - see attached flyer.*

**Vanessa Finney author evening** 11 March. *Transformations* - 19<sup>th</sup> century Scott sisters' natural history paintings. *See flyer.*

**R.P.C. MILLS 31.10.1928 to 8.2.2019**

Pat Mills was President of Mosman Historical Society for many years. He and Margie, his wife of 60 years, were very popular long-term members. Most recently he contributed as one of the guides for our history walk at Rawson Park on 21<sup>st</sup> November.

Pat was a man liked, admired and respected by all who met him. He was a gentleman and a man of integrity who will be greatly missed.

**NORTH SHORE HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
**Born in protest 60 years ago**

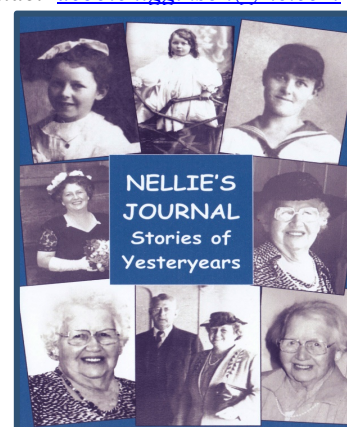
In 1958, local citizens were angered by the demolition of the historic sandstone house, Belle Vue, on Blue's Point, designed by Edmund Blackett. When Harry Seidler's design for **Blue's Point Towers** was published it caused widespread local protest. On 8 December 1958, a public meeting of 71 citizens took place in St. Peter's Hall, Blue's Point Road, North Sydney and the NSHS was born. Its title reflects its founding charter to cover the whole of the North Shore. Population growth and the establishment of other local societies, has resulted in a gradual retraction to the North Sydney area.

**GEORGE MOSMAN (twin brother of Archibald)**  
**Journal of NELLIE SCOTT HARRISON (nee Mosman)**

After organising the September commemoration of her great-great grandfather, George Mosman's death 150 years ago, Debbie Higginson went on to publish her grandmother's journal with the help of MHS member Margaret Szalay.

In 1970-1980s, Nellie Scott Harrison (nee Mosman), (1897-1989), recorded the stories of her life and ancestors for her descendants. Her journal included details of the Mosman family's ancestral home, "Auchtyfardle" in Scotland, stories from her childhood, the family recipes and many family photos, including photos of twins George and Archibald.

The published Journal is just as Nellie wrote it with the addition of family trees, photos, recipes, obituary and newspaper clippings. Debbie has copies for sale for \$30 (\$25 for MHS members). Contact [debbiehigginson@me.com](mailto:debbiehigginson@me.com) or 0412 528 451



## MOSMAN'S WAR TROPHIES - What became of them?

100 years ago World War I was finally over but still very fresh in people's memories. Ideas for memorials abounded, one being for community war trophies. Enemy weapons captured by Australian units were collected and brought back to Australia for distribution. Some were kept by what became the Australian War Memorial, after which state trophy committees managed the allocation to towns and suburbs. Items captured by a particular army unit were usually ceded to that unit. Otherwise, criteria for the size of trophy allotted, e.g. artillery piece, mortar or machine gun, was based on the population of the area.

Each town nominated 3 trustees who, with the local community, accepted responsibility for its trophy, arranging for its transportation, display, unveiling ceremony, and maintenance.

While some towns and suburbs declined a trophy, feeling they had had quite enough of war, and not wanting a weapon which might have taken Australian lives, Council Minutes record that Mosman was very keen to participate. When the scheme was announced in 1919, Mayor A.D. Walker wrote to the Department of Defence requesting a pair of field guns for Mosman Park. He noted that over 2000 men from Mosman had enlisted, and that this suburb had raised £180,000 for the War Loan.

Not until February 1921 did the distribution begin. 70 trophies were allocated to Sydney: 20 guns, 10 trench mortars and 40 machine guns. Mosman was to receive a trench mortar. This was duly accepted and the agreement signed off by the trustees, including Mayor Walker, and by June 8<sup>th</sup>, trench mortar no. 15098 was ready for delivery.

When it arrived the Mayor was greatly dissatisfied, appealing to local MP Major General Sir Granville Ryrrie to secure a bigger gun, similar to other suburbs, and more "in keeping with the dignity of this Municipality". It was so small that "children of the district could pull it around like a billy-cart".

Despite Ryrrie's intervention, nothing could be done – all the trophies had been allotted. Nevertheless lobbying continued. In August 1922 additional trophies were distributed and Mosman received an aeroplane gun. Still not satisfied, the bid continued and finally, in November that year, Council Minutes report that, due to the efforts of the Mayor, "a satisfactory War Trophy has now been made available in the shape of a large field gun" (Howitzer no. 5324). Trophy agreements stated it was to be "permanently housed in a public park, garden or building ... within the town ... for its subsequent preservation and safe keeping".

What did Council do with their three trophies, especially the large gun so keenly sought after?

Having finally secured their big Howitzer gun, in May 1923 Council handed over the smaller trophies, the trench mortar and aeroplane gun, to the Mosman Returned Services League. In August 1925 Council attention moved to choosing a suitable permanent site for their trophy gun which, since its arrival, had been sitting in Town Hall Park beside the Council Chambers.

In 1922 the foundation stone for the Mosman War Memorial had been laid, and unveiling was due in November 1925. At a Council meeting on 8/9/1925 it was suggested that "a suitable position for this gun, together with the other gun, be on either side of the Memorial in Mosman Park, on a concrete base". (The *other gun* was most likely the field gun captured by, and ceded to, the 17<sup>th</sup> Battalion, based in Mosman, and loaned by them to the RSL, who handed it over to Council in 1922).

This placement of the guns near the War Memorial was apparently done (though I can find no photo of them in situ), as Council in 1941 and 1942 discussed and approved the removal of the "souvenir guns" from Mosman Park. No explanation of why this was to be, or where they were to go, was given, and no mention since.

What became of these war trophies? It seems these mementos soon lost their allure. The necessary maintenance became a burden and they were passed from owner to owner. Records tell that the 17<sup>th</sup> Battalion field gun is now at Kapooka Army Base Heritage Museum, confirmed by them that it is indeed on display there. Mosman Council however can find no record of what became of its partner at the War Memorial, their prized Howitzer field gun, once it was removed from that site. (How can you lose a Howitzer)? The trench mortar and aeroplane gun given by Council to the RSL were in turn, the Sub-Branch believes, donated to the Zoo many years ago (yet to be followed up).

As we commemorate the centenary of the end of the Great War, wouldn't it be nice to solve the mystery of Mosman's lost war trophies, perhaps to find just one and place it on permanent display here, as originally intended, as a reminder of the bravery and sacrifice of our soldiers.

*P. Morris. Mosman Historical Society*

*Mosman Council Minutes on Trace  
War Trophy Correspondence on Trace and in Mosman Local Studies Collection  
Newspaper articles on Trove  
Email correspondence with Kapooka, and Mosman Sub-Branch of RSL  
RAAHC Gun Register – Directory of allocated guns*