

Westlake Newsletter 2013

by Ann Gugler

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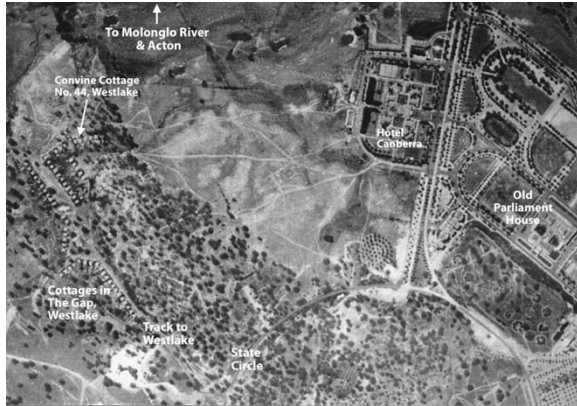
WESTLAKE – THE AREA WE KNEW & THE CHANGES



1943 - Above: Westlake cottages top centre left. Commonwealth Bridge mid left. Below: Capital Hill: Capitol Hill Camp built by Contractor John Howie's men 1925 centre right; PM's Lodge off Cotter Road (Adelaide Ave now close by); Westlake Bus Shelter and entrance road into Westlake top right. US Embassy under construction centre top right. Westridge off in distance centre top. The circle (top centre left) marks the site where the content of collected pans was dumped. Site today is under the overpass over Adelaide Avenue where Kent St Deakin meets Novar Street Yarralumla. (ACT Archives courtesy Chris Newman).



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Above: 1952. The small range of hills increase in height from the western end - to the tallest - Camp and Kurrajong (now part of Capital Hill).



Above: Stirling Park 2012 - Haines' Creek (green line that begins near the extension of Empire Circuit road that extends into the park) cuts the park into two. The eastern side has been set-aside for National Use. This was the area of Contractor Howie's Settlement (Married quarters and Hostel Camp, hall, ablution blocks) and Old Tradesmen's Camp. No. 1 Labourers Camp was on the western side of Capital Hill then part of Westlake. On the western side were No. 3 Sewer Camp and our Westlake settlement consisting of 61 temporary portable timber cottages and the hall. The buildings top right are those of the Southern Cross Yacht Club built on the site of Briar Farm. Below Briar Farm 1940s Day Family. (Courtesy Dorothy Maxwell)



Above: 1913 photograph taken from the area that is now under the water of Lake Burley Griffin. Top right is Briar Farm then occupied by the Kinlyside family and later Commonwealth employees including Percy Douglas and his wife Una. Percy Douglas was our first head of the Canberra Fire Brigade. The trees on the left show the area of Howie's Settlement and Old Tradesmen's Camp. The entrance into the Gap where Westlake cottages & No. 3 Sewer Camp were erected is above the farm cottages.

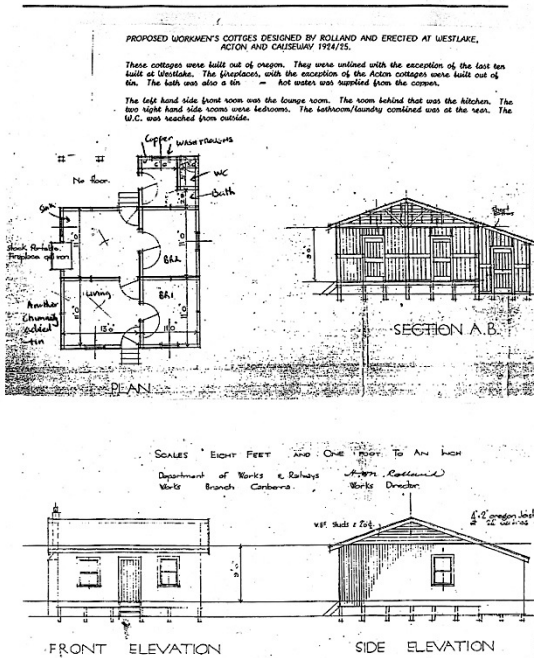


The above photograph shows a view from the eastern side of Stirling Ridge looking down into the Gap with Westlake cottages and tents of No. 3 Sewer Camp in the background. Andy Hawke of no. 36 Westlake in light coloured shirt. The mullock brought up from the sewer tunnel below was spread along the ridge and left in two big dumps of earth. The one near the sewer vent was grey (limestone) and the one between Westlake cottages no. 28 and no. 53 was an apricot coloured shale. (Photo courtesy of Marjie Rundell nee Hawke). Following: Heritage Sewer Vent on Stirling Ridge. The Friends of Grassland have now cleared the weeds and blackberries etc from the area. The big earth dump from sewer tunnel below was spread or removed from the area years ago.

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Chapter two

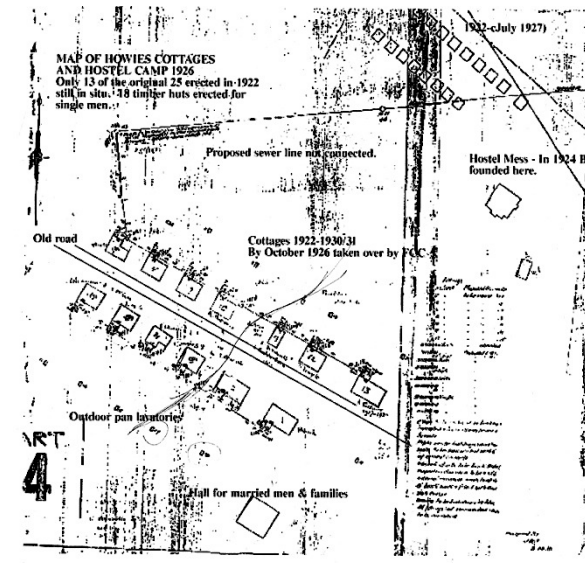


Above: Plan of Westlake cottages designed by HM Rolland. They were unlined timber cottages.



Above: Sister Britton, ?, ?, Rev Murchison ?, Ray Wilder, ?, Carmel Maxwell outside No. 56 Westlake. Cottages in background. L-R no. 39 - no. 36. Circa 1943. (photo courtesy Carmel Koenig.)

Below: Map 1927 showing the remaining 13 Howie's Cottage sites, and Hostel Camp. The Halls and 'dunny' sites marked.

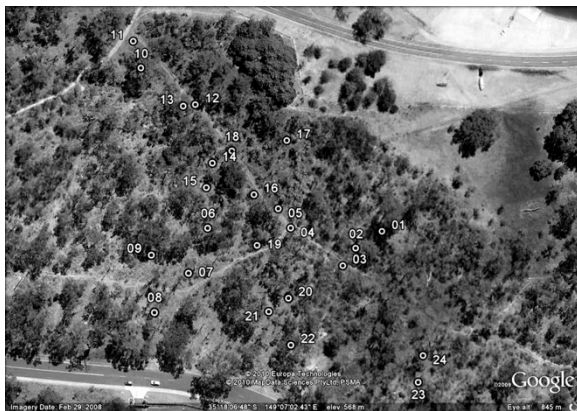


Above: Max near one of the concrete dunny slabs.

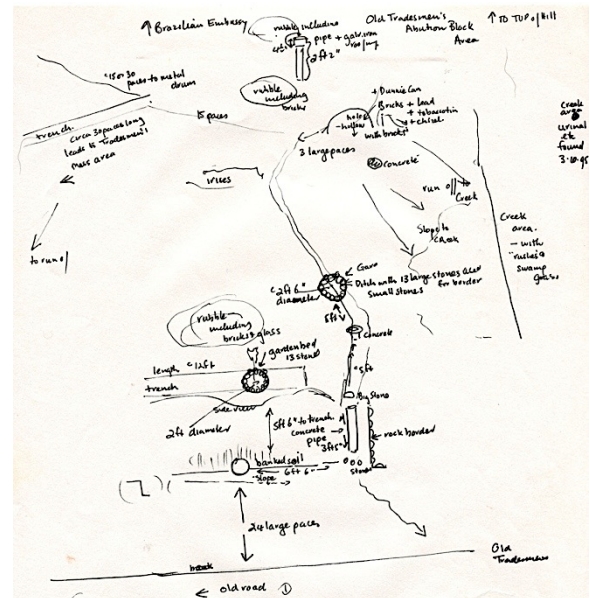


Above: Mrs Harriet Sheen and her son Gordon outside their cottage in Contractor John Howie's Settlement 1924 (courtesy Sheen family). This cottage was on the upper side of the old road toward the end of the cottages shown in following photograph. (c1927 Howie's Cottages CDHS photo)

A black and white photograph showing a row of long, single-story wooden buildings with gabled roofs, possibly a school or government installation. The buildings are situated on a dirt lot. In the foreground, there is a large, open dirt area. To the left, a small, light-colored structure is partially visible. The background is filled with tall, leafy trees. The overall scene suggests a rural or semi-rural setting.



Below: A detail of drainage system in the ablation area Old Tradesmen's Camp - water supply from the Cotter



Area Reserved for Consideration as a Prime Ministers Lodge Site

Area Converted from National Capital Use to Open Space

REMOVED Possible Extension of Empire Circuit Conversion to Open Space

2012 NCA aerial photograph with notations showing a road to join Empire Circuit to Marina Place and an extended area of Attunga Point (old quarry). It is part of Development plan known as DA78.

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Late last year (2012) the proposed road (marked in blue) was withdrawn and the area of Attunga Point added as a site for a PM's Lodge. This area was extended over the existing Alexandrina Drive to include the area of the Westlake Hall, tennis court and around ten or more houses.

Not included on this aerial photograph is a new road to join Alexandrina Drive on the western side to Marina Place. This road if constructed would, like the one initially proposed, also take out the temporary septic tank near Haines Creek and quite a few more houses, site of the hall, tennis court etc.

Following community anger for the proposed development of the park that included construction of embassies in our horse paddock (on the western side of Stirling Ridge) that led to a parliamentary inquiry, DA 78 has been scrapped.

No change has been made to use the area of the park opposite Lotus Bay (site of Contractor John Howie's Settlement and Old Tradesmen's Camp) for National purposes.

Thus the future of the surviving area of the former Westlake (Guru Bung Dhaura Hills) - Stirling Park Yarralumla is still in doubt.

SHRINKING SIZE OF THE PARK - EASTERN END

Gone is the former Block 1, Section 128 Stirling Park that butts on to Flynn Drive: This block was 'given' to the Chinese embassy and has been developed.

This block contained many stone arrangements. The firm that made the report for the NCA stated that these stone arrangements that stretched back some 150m from the Alexandrina Drive end were the remains of garden beds from cottages erected around or after 1952.

There was no evidence of buildings on these blocks such as sewerage and water pipes along with remains of buildings and access roads etc. A simple search of documents from the period would have knocked that theory on the head along with examination of aerial photographs. Ignored also was personal knowledge of people who lived at Westlake.

These stones sit on hard ground not disturbed by gardening. Fortunately photographs were taken of most of the arrangements prior to development work commencing on the block.

Following are photographs showing details of two of the arrangements.



The block next to the former Block 1, Section 128 Stirling Park - i.e. Block 2 Section 128 has been set-aside as an open space for access to the lake.

This is the area where a deep creek made its way down from Red Hill to the Molonglo River. I well remember crossing this creek on the way to the Hotel Canberra. In the area just below the Hotel the track from Westlake descended down a steep incline to a small three-plank bridge and then up again to the hotel grounds. We used this section of the walking track on our way to the bus stop on Commonwealth Avenue. The bar at the rear of the hotel was also a favourite watering hole for many Westlake men.

I believe that block 2 - which is ACT land, has been filled with earth that may have come from the cuttings made during the construction of State Circle. It is somewhat ironical that this block that was the original site for Darwin Avenue was not built because the terrain was not suitable. Darwin Avenue was later constructed over the old entrance track into Westlake Settlement. It now links Perth Avenue with Forster Crescent.

What comes to mind is death by a thousand cuts. This small area of parkland that adjoins the new Commonwealth Parliament House is native bush land that has survived from a period before the arrival of Europeans.

Stirling Park is a small pocket of surviving native bush land where the heritage listed endangered wild flower, the button wrinklewort grows. It contains many scarred trees and other reminders of Ngunawal use along with the remains of the temporary workmen's camps and settlements. It is home to many native animals, reptiles and birds. This land is in the centre of the city, which calls itself *the Bush Capital*. Nearby are the focal points of the city - the reason for its being - the two Commonwealth Parliament Houses.

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Let us protect this land and not let it, like the centre of most cities, become lost under layers of tar, brick, and cement. Once gone, it is gone forever.

WESTLAKE –THE NAME & SITE (c1913-c1965)

Walter Burley Griffin named an area on the south side the proposed of lake: **WESTLAKE**. The northern boundary of Westlake was the Molonglo River and its southern boundary was the south side of the small range of hills known to the Ngunawal as Guru Bung Dhaura (stony ground. This was an important pathway used by the Ngunawal and the tallest hill - Kurrajong (now part of Capital Hill) an important meeting place).

Westlake stretched on its western end from the Brickyards, Yarralumla to the eastern side of Capital Hill. The area now known as Stirling Ridge was divided into two with one section set aside for a Governor General's residence and the other - Stirling Park. Up until 1963 it was part of Acton.

In 1917 the area west of Stirling Ridge was renamed **WESTRIDGE**. In 1942 the first of the embassies (US) to be constructed in the area of Westlake was commenced. Following the removal of Westlake settlement between late 1950s and 1965 the area of Westlake was further reduced with sites of cottages 1-20 set aside for embassies the largest being the Mexican Embassy. The surviving area of Westlake was renamed - Stirling Park and trees planted on house sites. However, many of the old hedges and trees remained - now grown!

In the early 1920s when work resumed on the construction of the city the Westlake Hills because of their proximity to the major worksites (Hotel Canberra, Provisional Parliament House and main intercepting sewer) was chosen to house construction workers.

The area fulfilled several important criteria: proximity to work sites, out of sight of permanent Canberra and the well timbered hills provided protection from the strong winds that swept the almost treeless Canberra plain and good drainage.

Between 1923 and 1924 three single men's tent camps were erected along with two settlements - Contractor John Howie's (md & single quarters) and Westlake Cottages in *The Gap*. The latter was the first temporary settlement built by the authorities to house construction workers and their families.

The population of Westlake in 1925 was around 700. Molonglo had 50 more. At that time the total population in the city area was around 3000.



Above: Howie's Hostel Camp 1924 (courtesy CDHS). The trees to the right of the Mess building are the same ones shown in the following recent photograph (bottom left). Site opposite Lotus Bay.



Our Westlake is an important site in the history of Canberra. Some of our cottages survive. As people left in the late 1950s and early 1960s cottages were sold and moved by truck to new sites. One sits in River Street Oaks Estate and others in Queanbeyan, and the South Coast. Richard Jenkins was one of the men who bought a number of these cottages and it was his friend, Jack Lette of the Causeway who moved them to their new sites. When I said to Jack the cottages were 24ft square he corrected me - they were a little larger.

One cottage Dick kept - No. 7 (Spencer McDonald's). He converted it into a flat in the backyard of his home at Narrabundah.



Above: Richard (Dick) Jenkins outside one of the Westlake cottages he bought and relocated in Queanbeyan. It has had a paint job and extension but the vertical timbers used in the construction date it as one of the first 52 cottages occupied in

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early 1924. The last ten built in 1926 on the site of the tents of No. 3 Sewer Camp after the removal of the camp used timbers place horizontally.

Jack Lette died a few years ago and Dick this year on 3 October. Dick was born 28 January 1917 and came to Canberra during the war where as a member of the RAAF he was stationed at Fairbairn.

Dick was a keen photographer and one photograph I recall is that of a plane being piggy backed by another to land safely at the Canberra airport. Another photograph was of the Indonesian members of the airforce who came with the Dutch pilots. They joined our local men and the Americans stationed here.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TREES IN THE PARK



The majority of old trees in the park were fully-grown before the arrival of Europeans. All show the signs of Ngunawal and European use.

Many are in photographs taken in 1920s and later and have helped to identify the sites of our homes and other temporary structures. The photograph above for example, of Colleen West (left) and Ann Austin in the front yard of 27 Westlake was taken around 1945. In the background is the big gum tree that is now part of the garden in the grounds of the Mexican Embassy.

Many of us who lived at Westlake had a special tree. Stan Brill and Vlad Bondarenko both lived at no. 22 Westlake. Stan's parents were the first to occupy the cottage and Vlad's parents moved into the cottage in 1954. I believe they were the last to occupy the cottage. The tree at the rear of their cottage was special to both boys.



Above: Stan and Vlad's tree looking down to the site of no. 22. Following is a photograph taken in 1960 showing Vlad on his favourite tree. His remains - his ashes - now lie near his tree. In the background is Mount Ainslie.



Reminders of the beginnings of Canberra history is to be found on the ridge above the cottages and throughout the park. They are (1909) survey marks made by Charles Scrivener. The information from this survey work I believe was used to produce the contour maps of the proposed city area.

The following photograph shows John Bruggeman standing near one of the survey points. Most are marked with old concrete posts.

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OUR SIGN & PHOTOGRAPH BOARD

During the year, someone vandalized our photograph board. It has now been removed and it looks as though our sign painted by Norm Bodkin (deceased) will soon follow. It has seen better days. The two bronze plaques, however, along with the tree planted by our oldest men in 1998 are still going strong. (One plaque is in George Sykes' yard near the corner of Empire Circuit and Forster Crescent - the other is opposite Lotus Bay near an apple tree - site of Howies' Hostel Camp.).

Following: The sign when new (1998) with L-R Les & Neville Menzies, Sylvia Cleveland (nee Menzies deceased) and daughter Shiralee.



Above: Our photograph board in earlier years and family and Westlake plaques.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS THAT OCCURRED IN 2003 AND ONE PLANNED FOR 2014

2013 Competition to Design a New PM's Lodge - the site chosen for this building was Attunga Point.

Brit Andreson Emeritus Professor of Architecture Queensland University contacted me earlier this year. She wanted to know where she could obtain a copy of my last book, *A Story of Capital Hill*. I informed her that I have no copies left, but the book is available on my Web Canberra Camps - <http://canberracamps.webs.com/astoryofcapitalhill.htm> - Incidentally I have also added in the book section of this web draft chapters for a revised edition of *Builders of Canberra 1909-1929*.

Brit's interest did not stop at reading the book. Later in the year, she along with another member of her group travelled to Canberra where they met me at Stirling Park. I showed the visitors around the site. All of this was in preparation for the competition to design a new Prime Minister's Lodge on the Attunga Point site.

Later she contacted me to say that she had decided to withdraw her students from the competition because (my words) the site is too important to be built upon.

FRIENDS OF THE GRASSLANDS - 'FOG'

During the year the Friends of the Grasslands - led by Dr Jamie Pittock spent many hours removing the intrusive weeds and non-native shrubs/trees that have taken over parts of the parkland. Excluded from removal are the trees, shrubs and flowers that belong to the settlements. This group has also replanted trees native to the area. As a result of their dedicated the park is being returned to health.

WALKS

During the year I led a number of walks through our Westlake Settlement and up on to Stirling Ridge to show the survey pegs put there by Scrivener in 1909ⁱ and a number of Ngunawal scarred trees. Also included were the remains of the sewer works carried out in the early 1920s. No. 3 Sewer Camp was in the area below where cottages 53-62 were built after the camp was removed in 1925. Their Mess became our first hall. The remains include the capped shaft down to the sewer tunnel, sewer vent ('the chimney') etc. Gone is the big dump of grey coloured earth (limestone) from the tunnel below. The big dump between no. 28 and no. 53 was apricot coloured shale. It is also gone and trees were planted on the site by the NCAC?

The ACT National Trust organized the June walk. It took place (thankfully) on the one day between two of heavy rainfall. This walk was followed by a shorter one organized by Master Builders of Canberra. This group started at the Brickyards, followed by Westlake and then over the Oaks Estate where (Dr) Karen Williams led the group through heritage listed Les Robertson's cottage.

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Karen provided the interested listeners with memories of Oaks Estate and the significance of this former area of Queanbeyan that has become an almost forgotten worker's settlement of Canberra.

Later this year I attended an important ceremony held at Oaks Estate - the unveiling of a plaque to mark the contribution of Bede Tong to the village of Oaks Estate. He was not only a tireless worker to improve the conditions of the community, but also donated the land on which the Oaks Estate Community Hall is built.

Oaks Estate was part of Queanbeyan until the railway line became the boundary between NSW and the ACT. This village developed into a workers settlement and unlike the remainder of the ACT remained freehold land until 1974.

This village lacked basic infrastructures that even we at Westlake had from the beginning of our settlement - ie connected to sewerage, electricity and water. Even Howie's and the camps had town water and electricity. Oaks Estate had to wait until 1938 for connection to water, 1941 for electricity and 1970 for connection to the sewerage system.

In the early years of Canberra's history many in high positions (including Charles Daley) tried to give Oaks Estate back to NSW - but NSW said 'No'.

Oaks Estate until recent times remained a forgotten and almost ignored part of Canberra and thus has survived relatively intact.



Above: Unveiling of plaque by Senator Kate Lundy - L-R: Garry Tong, Bede Tong, Kate Lundy, Karen Williams.

WALK - MARGULES PADDOCK & MOLONGLO GORGE

On Saturday 30 November I attended a walk organized by Karen Williams, Fiona Dyer (Freshwater scientist), Tyronne and Wally Bell (Ngunawal) and the Molonglo Catchment Group. We met at the Oaks Estate Hall and after an introductory chat moved off in vehicles to the first of the sites to be walked.

A handout provided those attending with a brief overview to the land and history of the area (much of which also applies to Stirling Park). It in part states: *Ngunawal territory is an open space of pathways, a local network of mountain ranges and river corridors linking, at one level, the frontiers of adjoining headwaters, food bowls, ancient lake*

catchments and swamplands, sources of material for tool making and places of significant in the life and death relationships. On another level a greater national network of inter-group trade and other social and cultural relations underscores that interaction. The meeting places of southern Aboriginal socio-cultural groups are linked by the ancient Murrumbidgee and Shoalhaven (and Lachlan) River systems.

During the walk and afternoon tea break Tyronne and Wally Bell spoke about Ngunawal points of interest and Karen and Fiona about the ancient development and changes to the landscape that included the information that: *The ancient Murrumbidgee lake system drained the region from about 2 million to 10,000 years ago. The Molonglo, Queanbeyan and Yass Rivers forming the original headwaters of that system... (i.e. the rivers flowed in the opposite direction to today).*

Ngunawal web pages:

<http://www.ngunawal.com.au> and
<http://www.thunderstone.net.au>

Following are photographs taken on the walk. The top one shows Wally Bell (Ngunawal) and listeners. The African box thorn shrubs that surround the trees in the paddock were planted by the then owner, Louis Margules to protect them from the cattle in the paddocks. The second shows Tyronne Bell.



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PLANNED FOR 2014

ANTHOLOGY – A MICROCOSM OF A CITY.

Site Stirling Park - former Westlake.

The planning for this 'event' began earlier in the year when I met with Pip Buining (Creator & Director) and Louise Morris (Creator and Anthology Artist) to show them around the area of the park.

Further developments for the planned 'Anthology' occurred last month when I met with Pip and Louise along with members of the team. Part of the introductory handout to the group begins:

Over the hill and down into the hollow, There is a path we all follow, To this place we still call home.

Plaque erected by Westlake children at 'Westlake' Yarralumla ACT. Anthology eulogises the lives of the unsung transient workers past and present to reveal rich potential in our imagined future.

Ronnie O'Rourke of 45 Westlake wrote the poem on our plaque. It was unveiled on 15 March 1998.



Above: 'Cocky' (Ronnie) O'Rourke near his tree (shown right) outside no. 55 Westlake, home of Lofty Harrington one of our SP Bookies. Ronnie sat in a space between two branches of the trunk of his tree to keep an eye out for the police. (Photo of Ronnie's tree -courtesy Fiona Edge)

Details of the proposed work can be found on <http://www.anthology.net.au> -

The team consists of Kimmo Vennonen (sound), Sarah Kaur (Video), Matt Scott (technical artist), Joe Woodward (performer), Canberra Dance Theatre GOLD Dance Ensemble, Canberra Academy of Dramatic Art, HASHEMOTO, Fiona Edge (Design for Promo) and members of the local Ngunawal community, Tyronne, Karen and Ruth Bell.



FAMILY EVENT



The graphic design for the book *Head of Flames* was carried out by my daughter, Robina Gugler who also contributed to the contents of the book. The book and exhibition was launched at CMAG in October 2013 and the exhibition will continue until 9 February 2014. The photograph on the cover was borrowed from me by Robina. She gave had given it to me many years ago.



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MORE WESTLAKE PEOPLE

As has happened each year following the sending out of the newsletter more information comes to light including the names of people who lived at Westlake that I did not know. One such *find* came via a young lady by the name of Rebecca whose grandparents Geach lived at Westlake sometime in the 1940s prior to moving to 42 Novar Street Westridge where Rebecca's father, Harold, was born.



Above: Harold and Minnie & James Geach.

SMALL WORLD

Minnie was a descendent of Charles Cooper who arrived as a convict in 1798 with his wife Alse and daughter, Sarah. Their daughter, Ann, born in January 1801 married in 1818 a convict - William Price. I descend from their daughter, Martha who married Robert Cooper Martin and Minnie from Martha's sister, Lydia Ann who married Thomas Crisford.

Charles Cooper went off to Batavia with horses in 1817. Sometime before his death in 1820 in Batavia he went to work for a man named McQuoid who had a property named Waniassa. McQuoid later came to Tuggranong where he named his property Waniassa. Today this is the name of a Canberra Suburb.

DEPARTED FRIENDS

The Canberra Times death notices provide information re the deaths of early Canberrans who had links with Westlake, Westridge & Acton. The ones that I am aware of are:

1. **Stanley Raymond Marguels** died Nov 2013
2. **Clive Hugh Harvie** died 30 January 2012. Clive was born 2 March 1929 and was a son of a local dentist whose surgery was in the two storey Spanish Mission style house at Manuka. Clive was the author of a book on the Manuka Swimming Pool - *Where I Met My Wife*.
3. **Ankie Dunn**, wife of John, died 20 Nov 2013. When we came to Canberra in 1941 we lived for a short time with the Dunn family in Kennedy Street Kingston. John's mother Molly (nee McKissock) was another Westlake person.



Members of McKissock family Westlake. Jock McKissock and his second wife, Maude, daughters (first marriage) Belle Doherty (left), Mollie Dunn - small children, Kathy and John Dunn and cousin Richard Doherty.

4. **John Harry Notaras** born 5.5.1939 died 27.5.2013. John was the son of Harry and Helen Notaras who owned the Highgate Café at Kingston. He was the brother of Jim, George, Nina and Emmanuel. During my senior years at Canberra High I recall John's brother, George, was in the same history class as me. The History teacher 'Jock' said the George - 'What will you be when you leave school?' George's reply was 'An Old Man, Sir!' John Notaras's grave is not far from that of his parents (shown below) in the Woden Cemetery.



5. **Robert Henry Boyd** - died this year. He was a Westridge lad born 15 January 1928 son of Bill and Doris (nee Townsend) Boyd. He was a cousin of Moya and Audrey Oldfield (children of Jean Oldfield nee Boyd) and Ray and John. Robert's father worked at the Brickyards. (All Westridge people).



Above: Bill Boyd's truck at Brickyards early 1920s. (Courtesy of Jean Oldfield nee Boyd)

The fire brigade moved to the Power House Industrial area after World War 1 - with Percy Douglas still at its head. Brenda Hennessy (nee Stevenson) gave me a copy of a photograph of

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firemen at this venue. Her father is third from the left in the following photograph.



MORE MEMORIES OF YESTERYEAR

Going through the process of sorting and rereading old documents I came across a typewritten letter from Charlie Law who lived at 23 Westlake in the 1920s. It was in response to *True Tales* (1997) in which he commented: *My one and only criticism is Stan Brill's story* (this story was written by Stan who lived at 22 Westlake). *Jimmy Brill* (Stan's brother) *was a champion rugby league footballer and represented the ACT and the Australian Army and played against a team from the British Army in England. He won the ACT Ballroom Dancing Championship and was runner up in the NSW Championship. He was taken prisoner on an exercise in the Sahara Desert by a German patrol.*

Richard, Stan's brother represented the ACT in Hockey and later NSW. Ted became the chauffeur for the Governor General when the family moved to the caretaker's cottages (in the grounds of the Governor General's residence) at Government House. His father, Les was a fanatical Manuka supporter and was the secretary of the Carpenters & Joiners Union.

I forgot to mention that Jimmy was the president of the POW Association and met the Queen when she came to Canberra. Jimmy became a traveller for a whisky firm. As far as I know Jimmy never drank alcohol but had to have a drink of whiskey at every hotel visited. He became obese and never lost this weight and was probably the cause of his death.

When working in the Public Service the Grant brothers, Jimmy and Sandy were great characters. Jimmy was a gentle giant and hardly ever picked a fight, but he would fight anyone who picked on his mates. He became so good the famous Sydney Boxing trainer Ernie McQuillian trained him. Jim won a couple of fights but got homesick and returned to Canberra. Sandy was in a fight at Hotel Ainslie and getting a thrashing so Jimmy, half drunk, hopped in his car and drove down to the police station...

SMITH-BLEWITT

A phone call from Colin Smith in early December allowed us to catch up. Colin and his wife Jutta are coming up to their 51st wedding anniversary. Colin is the eldest child of Doris (nee Blewitt) and Tom Smith.



Above: L-R: Smith brothers, Colin, Roy and Stanley on the front steps of no. 17 Westlake.

Colin reminded me that his two grandfathers, Joe Blewitt of Carwoola and Jack Smith (horse & dray men) were two of thirty men responsible for setting up the materials such as the flying foxes in readiness for work to commence on the Cotter Dam. This would have been in late 1911 or early 1912. Colin's mother was born during the time the family lived at the Cotter.

Cletus Hamilton's family was another involved in this work along with Leo O'Neill, another Westlake man. Leo was one of the men who worked on the construction of the tunnel where the big water pipe is laid on its way from the dam side of the big hill to the pumping station. He wrote his name in the tunnel. Still there I believe.

The Smith family following their move to Canberra and prior to their move the Westlake lived in a humpy on Rottenbury Hill (St Mark's Cross on the site and Riverside Hostel) before a move to Russell Hill Settlement. Colin reminded me that there was an old gum tree near his grandparent's home. It is still there and today the site is in the park near the Campbell Shops. Their home was not far from the home of the Lasseter (of gold reef fame) family. Lasseter came to Canberra ahead of his family in 1925 and lived at that time at Northbourne Camp.

The single men's camp at the Cotter was to the left of the old bridge above the area of the Cotter Kiosk. This same area was later used to erect cubicles for campers at the Cotter. These cubicles, Colin mentioned, were moved to the Causeway where many of the elderly old workers lived.

The married quarters camp at the Cotter was opposite the bridge across the Murrumbidgee on land between the two rivers. A tent school was conducted there between 1913 and 1917.

It was Cecily Hinchliffe, daughter of Mrs Stanley, a Mess Caterer in a number of Camp Messes in Canberra including Capitol Hill Camp who told me that her mother was caterer at an early 1920s camp set up on the bank on the opposite side of the pumping station. The men of this camp worked on the bridge crossing the Murrumbidgee.

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MEMORIES OF THE ALBERT HALL & FRANK DUNSHEA'S STORY



Photograph of the Albert Hall c1945. Students from Telopea Park leaving the hall following a concert. Len Austin's Vauxhall on right.



The above photograph is of a statue we knew as Boadicea. (Her name is Bellona). She stood opposite the Albert Hall on the nature strip between the two roads of Commonwealth Avenue looking towards Civic. Annually on one day of the year she was attired by students with a bra - often pink of the type worn by large ladies.

FRANK DUNSHEA'S RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ALBERT HALL

As a young boy in the mid 1930's, I recall walking with my older siblings to the dances at the Albert Hall. We went from the Acton Cottages and passed the Police Station, the Acton Offices and over the future site of the Royal Canberra Hospital. From there we would go down a steep hill to the river and cross over it by the Lennox Crossing Bridge. We then headed over the practice area of the Royal Canberra Golf Club and arrived at the rear of the Hall

Saturday night was dance night and the occasion was known as The Silver Greys Dance. Approaching the Hall, you could hear the band playing very clearly. The music was mostly from Wally Higgs' orchestra and this was our free entertainment because we couldn't really see much dancing inside. We sometimes went round to the front of the Hall and watched the patrons arriving dressed up in their long dresses and suits.

The sun dial in the front of the Hall was of interest to us kids. We would study the correction charts to try and calculate the time. As none of our group was rich enough to own a watch, we never knew

how successful we were.

My first experience inside the Hall was about 1937 when it became the venue for a fancy dress party for students of the Ainslie Primary School. I was one of four boys dressed as pirates. I thought that a good time was had by the students and teachers, though I remember one boy dressed in girls clothes getting a lot of chiacking.

I recall as a young teenager attending some vaudeville shows at the Hall that were a lot of fun. One night a small group of us walked from Acton to one of these shows but the attendance was very poor. With only about 25 people there, the management called off the show and returned our admission fees. However, the majority of the cast came out and joined us anyway. They put on acts and led us in sing-alongs so we had had a fun night for free. That was the last of the vaudeville shows.

One memorable night was experienced when I went with a couple of workmates to the opera. The 'Barber of Seville' was to be performed by the Australian Opera Company. I think this was the first time an Opera was performed in Canberra.

Our tickets for the opening night had been acquired by the sister of Stan Goodhew, who worked with me at the Electrical Workshop, and she had three more than required. Stan wanted buyers for two tickets to go to the show with him and Ken Kaye and I jumped at the chance.

We went to the Hall in Ken's old 1926 Buick 'truck', recently purchased for £10, which had been cut down from a sedan and looked rather dilapidated. Arriving at the hall site we saw a line up of elegant vehicles at the front entrance where the occupants were being welcomed on arrival. Ken said to us with a large smile:

I am dropping you fellows off at the front door. We then joined the queue behind a large black Daimler. Another big black car came in behind us and we were stuck in the line. Approaching the entrance we could see the patrons alighting from their chauffeur driven vehicles and being greeted by lady and gentleman officials before they were handed over to an usher.

When we arrived and clambered out of the old truck, the greeting was very short and Ken was hurriedly sent on his way to park. Stan and I were neatly dressed and had tickets so an usher was quickly called to show us to our seats. The Barber of Seville performed by the company was terrific entertainment and en-kindled in me a love of opera and opera singing that has lasted all my life.

During the 1950's, no permanent collection facilities for the Red Cross Blood Bank existed in Canberra. A bus with nurses, support staff and equipment for blood collection would make periodic visits and set up at the Albert Hall. Beds were placed up along both sides of the Hall and nurses would move around checking on the donors and collecting blood. There were also volunteers supplying tea and biscuits.

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I was one of a group of donors who were allowed time off work to attend these sessions. We were driven to the Hall and dropped off there by a van from our workshop at Kingston. After giving blood we would be told that we should not smoke for four hours or drink alcohol for twelve hours. This advice would be followed for the time it took us to walk to the bar at the adjacent Hotel Canberra, from where the van driver would later pick us up. I have many fond recollections of dances and balls held at the Hall in the 1940's and early 1950's and of the music played by various orchestras. The bands led by Fred Lawler, Les Pogson, Muriel Hartigan and Claude Benzley are ones that easily come to mind.

There was no liquor allowed in the Hall, so it was common practice to hide bottles outside. One popular hiding place was the hedges across the road bordering the grounds of the Hotel Canberra. During the war years it was almost impossible to get bottled liquor legally from the hotels and the black market prices were well above what we could pay on apprentice wages. On the rare occasions that we were able to get a bottle or two it was good to join the festivities between dances on the Canberra Hotel lawns. Having to keep an eye out for the police made it all the more exciting.

During this time many servicemen attended the dances and prominent among these were the American Navy personnel who were quartered at Lennox House in Acton. Several of these sailors were well known to us because we regularly played rugby against them in the local comp. One of the Americans was a very tall man nicknamed Tiny. He was an excellent drummer and later in the night, while the band was resting, he would take over the drums. A large crowd would then gather in front of the stage to see and hear his performance.

One of my favourite dance nights was the Hogmanay held on New Year's Eve. The Highland Society band would pipe in the haggis and a long conga line would form behind them as they marched around the floor. This and the usual midnight festivities made it a fun night.

I recall one year it fell on a Sunday and Canberra had laws at that time preventing charging for entertainment on a Sunday. The organisers of the Hogmanay decided to start at midnight. A group of us gathered in a room in the Hotel Kurrajong, where we had a few drinks and played games until it was time to leave. We then walked to the Hall arriving just before midnight. The doors were opened at midnight and the celebrations began. A great time was experienced by the large crowd who turned up from all parts at this hour.

These are a few of my fond memories of time spent in and around the Albert Hall.

Someone said that the curtains at the old Albert Hall were green - I recall the deep red colour as do my friends and others of my generation and older. Frank also said - Red.

<http://hiddencanberra.webs.com/History%20of%20Canberra/Frank%20Dunshea%20Acton.pdf>

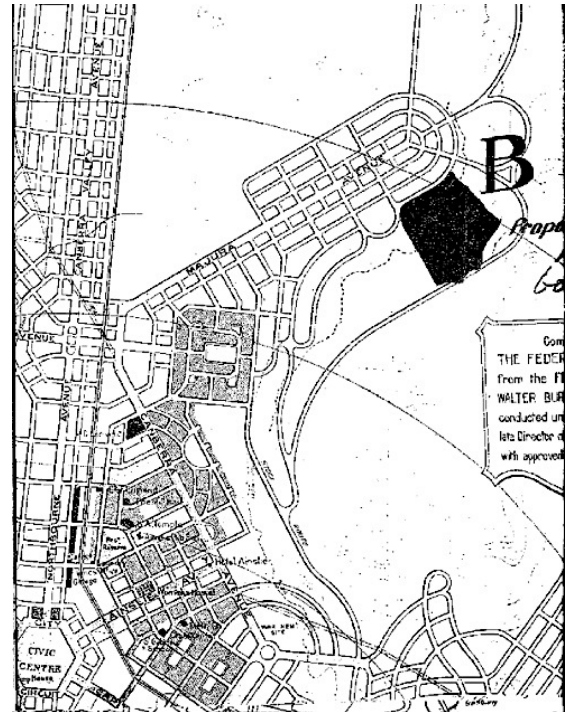
<http://hiddencanberra.webs.com/From%20Barber-Green%20Alley%20Frank%20Dunshea.pdf>

CEMETERY WALK NOVEMBER 2013

Don Mountain who usually leads a cemetery walk through the Woden Cemetery (former Canberra General Cemetery 1935-late 1960s?) was unable to do so this year and I was asked to lead it.

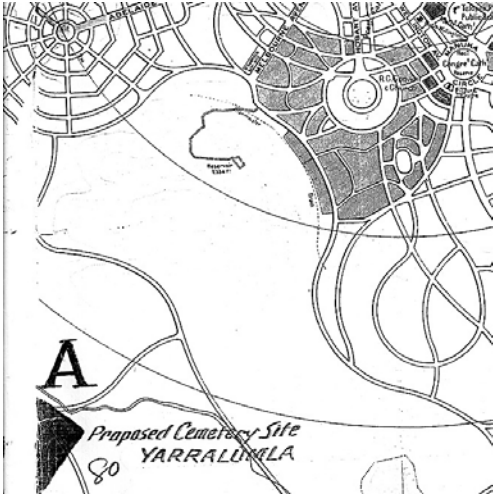
I was at the time in the process of adding information to a transcribed copy of the Burial Register for the Canberra Cemetery (1936 to early 1967). As part of this work I had begun to revisit the cemetery to note the burial sites of people in the register. (And recall that the first burial I attended there was that of Peter Johnston, a Westlake boy killed in a motorbike accident. His sister Fay was so distraught that she tried to throw herself in the grave. A few years later she too died in a similar accident. She too is buried at Woden.)

As early as 1927 or perhaps even earlier - the authorities were in the process of deciding where to put a cemetery. Prior to this time Anglicans could be buried in St John the Baptist Cemetery, Reid. Roman Catholics had a problem. Burials of course took place at Queanbeyan Riverside or village cemeteries such as Hall or Tharwa, or cemeteries on properties such as Lanyon. The arrival of government departments in 1927 gave a sense of urgency to the decision to provide a new cemetery.



A 1927 map shows several proposed sites including the one shown above near Majura Avenue and following a site in Yarralumla which was the final site chosen - now part of Woden.

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Above: 1963 photograph of Woden area. The suburb in the foreground is Curtin. The site of Woden Cemetery is top left - trees surrounded by an open space.

Alexander Bruce who took over from Charles Weston (Head of Parks & Gardens) after his retirement in December 1926 designed the setting. Each man received a MBE for his work. The Canberra Cemetery opened in December 1935. The first burial was that of Mrs Elsie Tilley whose remains were interred in the Roman Catholic portion of the cemetery in the first week in January 1936. Father Patrick Haydon carried out the burial rites. The deceased was a young mother in her early thirties at the time of her death and one wonders how her family felt as they left her lone grave in the new cemetery. Father Hayden (then Monsignor) is buried not far from Mrs Tillie. He died 19 April 1949.



Above: Grave plaque Dr Lewis Wyndamere Nott

Many Westlake people are buried in the cemetery along with many who contributed to the history of Canberra such as John Mildenhall whose photographic skills provide us with an important visual history of the beginnings of our city and Dr Lewis Wyndamere Nott who in 1949 became our first elected member to the Federal Parliament. He held positions that included the Superintendent of the Hospital and member of the Advisory Council. Both graves are in the lawn section of the cemetery.

Not far from Dr Nott in the Presbyterian section is Jim Fraser who took over from Dr Nott as our representative in Federal Parliament - a position he held for over twenty years. He is a man well remembered by Canberrans in the 1950s - 1970s. In the early years our representative in the House of Representatives could only vote on matters to do with the ACT. The Minister of the Interior advised by an Advisory Committee, however, decided policy.

Another grave in the Presbyterian lawn section is that of Miss Isabella Southwell. She was the manageress at Yarralumla House in the teen years of the last century when it was used to provide accommodation for VIPs. She moved to Hotel Canberra when it opened in December 1924 and later to Hotel Kurrajong that became a second home for many of the visiting politicians during the periods when parliament sat.

Buried with her is her sister, Una Douglas (wife of Percy our first head of the fire brigade). Percy Douglas is buried with the ex-servicemen.

Not too far away in this section of the cemetery is a Westlake man, Ernie Corey. He won four medals in World War 1. He was the most highly decorated soldier from WW 1. His daughter, Patsy, married George Blewitt - uncle of Colin Smith and son of Joe Smith who worked at the Cotter.

A story told me by Colin was about a glass eye that Ernie had as a result of an explosion of a tin of jam in the incinerator in Westbourne Woods. At that time Ernie's job was to burn rubbish in the incinerator. He lived in the nearby cottage. The children on a visit to their grandfather were left alone whilst Ernie had to go out to attend to another matter. He took out his glass eye and placed it on the table and told them it would keep an eye on them!

Another man buried in the ex-servicemen's section of the cemetery is Frederick Pollack, who was the last man to leave the beach at Gallipoli. The story goes that Frederick (probably known as Fred) came off duty and as he was very tired asked his mates to call him when it was time to move. Unfortunately he forgot to tell them that he didn't intend sleeping in his usual dugout with the result when the time came his mates went to his usual sleeping spot. He was not there - so they left. Fortunately Frederick awoke in time to find the last boat leaving and managed to get on board.

Another person buried in the cemetery who has a link with the Federal beginnings is Lady Sarah Jane Lyne, second wife of Sir William Lyne, Minister in

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the first Federal government. The suburb of Lyneham is named after Sir William.

The story of the second secret marriage to Sarah Jane Holden in 1906 came to light when Sir William took ill at a meeting in 1912 that resulted in his removal to hospital. His second wife and young daughter, Dorothy arrived at the hospital and requested to see Sir William. As the staff did not know the couple they refused with the result Sarah Jane Lyne requested a note be sent to Sir William with the words 'Lady Lyne' written on it. At the time, Sir William's two married daughters and daughter in law were at his bedside. They withdrew before their younger stepmother and stepsister arrived.

A FEW MORE PHOTOGRAPHS - MEMORIES



Above: Ilma Keir in her backyard no. 31 Westlake. In the background is no. 52 - Haines' house



Above: Freeman children 13 Howie's Cottages 1927.



Ken Dinnerville Howie's Cottages 1927

Above: Ken Dinnerville and friend Howie's Cottages 1927. Ken's face is lost in shadows. He and his

friend, Arthur Freeman - both scouts - took part in the May 1927 opening of Parliament ceremony.



Above: Alan Gane home on leave. (Courtesy of Alan Gane). 1940s



Above right: Mike (National Trust ACT), Adrie Callan (nee O'Neill), Ada Haines & Arthur Carn. Hazel Kennedy (nee Haines), Book launch 'WESTLAKE ONE OF THE VANISHED SUBURBS OF CANBERRA Causeway Hall.



HAROLD LASSETER with his family shortly before his death.



Above left: Newspaper photograph of HL Lasseter and family at Russell Hill Settlement and right: Des West no. 54 Westlake at Hotel Canberra where he worked.

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Above left: Haines children ready for school 1940s. They were not the only ones to go to school without shoes. Above right: 1935 Westlake Women's Cricket Club and others not far from the site of our main plaque. Below left: No 1 Labourers Camp 1924 (CDHS photo) and right: Photo bottom right: Harold Gane in the backyard no. 29 Westlake. The billy cart was famous. It had brakes. (Phot courtesy Harold Gane). Bottom: The day of dedication of our plaques, tree and sign 15 March 1998. The pine trees are the hedge in front of no. 29. George's son, Harold, was responsible for trimming the hedge.



Happy Christmas 2013 & New Year 2014

Ann (nee Austin) Gugler
