

Minutes of Public Meeting Held on Sunday 12 February 2017 Venue: Linnwood, Byron Road, Guildford

Welcome & Apologies

Dorothy Warwick welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming along on this very hot Sunday. She also gave a special welcome to our guest speaker, Greg Clancy.

In Attendance at today's meeting, as per the Attendance Sheet:

John Brodie, Elizabeth Brodie, Pamela Zopf, Roland Zopf, Michael Griggs, Ann Brown, Bev Clohessy, Cassandra Graham, Donna Atkins, Janice Atkins, Steven Cameron, Coral Hamilton, Sue Evans, Margaret 'McKay' Warn, Pat O'Brien, Kaye Weaver, Stan Thomas, Tom Jenkins, Peter Warwick, Dorothy Warwick, Helen Olde, Greg Clancy.

Apologies:

Pam Richardson, Audrey Murphy, Beth & Russ Werner, Leah Armstrong, Angela Caire, Judith Moller, John & Christine McKenna, Margaret Moulds, Julie Walz.

Confirmation of Minutes of Public Meeting held on Sunday 14 August 2016

Moved by John Walz, seconded by Tom Jenkins, that the minutes of the Public Meeting held on Sunday 14 August 2016 were a true and correct record. The motion was carried.

Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the previous minutes.

Correspondence

The Secretary passed around the Correspondence book.

President's Report

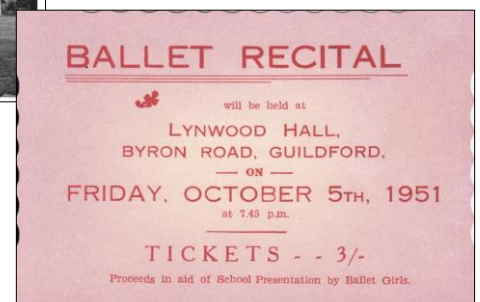
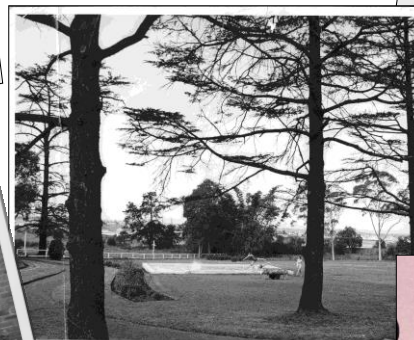
Good afternoon and thank you for attending our meeting this afternoon on such a hot day – I think we would all agree that air conditioning should go to the top of our Linnwood 'Wish List'!

Special welcome and thanks to our guest speaker Greg Clancy for braving the hot weather.

Not a lot to report since our last meeting, but I will go through some things that might be of interest to you.

- We had a very successful November Open Day with a large range of vehicles on display – it really was a sight to see them all on the front lawn. Word has spread about the day, and for November this year we hope to have the same groups of vehicles again, PLUS the Rolls Royce and Bentleys etc have asked to be involved on the same day as well! If this happens, it should be a great day! We are also working on having the Holroyd Brass Band and the Toongabbie Music Club back again to provide some entertainment and atmosphere on the Open Days as well. Thanks must go to all the stall holders and exhibitors inside the house and our kitchen ladies who are also a great drawcard to our visitors – while the menfolk are outside admiring the vehicles, their ladies come inside to enjoy the stalls and Devonshire Teas! You will receive a copy of our flyer for the coming Open Day in March, with a couple of smaller car clubs attending, and an exhibition inside the house by the Australian Lace Guild (NSW) – they actually hold their bi-monthly meetings at Linnwood.
- With the popularity of our Open Days, and increasing visitor numbers, we are aware that the house has limited facilities, so the committee has made the decision to hire portable toilets, including one for the disabled, to have at each open day. The cost will be about \$800 each Open Day and although this will severely cut into any funds we raise, we feel that it is something that must be provided – the facilities in the house just can't cope with the numbers of visitors we have. We looked at applying for a grant from Council to have a more permanent amenities building on site, but were told our proposal was ineligible.
- We have had continuing issues with the security lights at the front of the property not working, and recently the security lights on the front verandah of Linnwood were also not working. We also believe someone is living in McCredie Cottage, but inspections by Council staff have failed to catch the young man. We report these issues to Council and they tell us the lights are fixed - but it still keeps happening, and the neighbours tell us that someone is still in McCredie Cottage.

- Recently, Pat and I were invited to attend a meeting with one of the two new Assistant General Managers from Cumberland Council, together with two Council officers. Ms Kenyon advised us that her role is to rationalise the number of Council owned properties. With regard to Linnwood, Council would be seeking a meeting with the Department of Crown Lands to determine the future of the estate. Do Crown Lands want it back? Do they want Council to stay on as Trustee? If this is the case, Council is of the opinion that money should be made available from the Department for restoration and maintenance, which would probably mean selling the Tamplin Road Estate. This isn't anything we haven't heard before, but it means that the whole process is going to start all over again, with new players in the game. We were also told that the meeting probably won't be anytime soon. The ongoing saga of the roof repairs is still ongoing. Tenders will be called for but it's not likely that anything will happen this side of June. If anyone has seen the movie 'Groundhog Day' you will know how we feel.
- Some good news - we were approached by a gentleman at one of our Open Days last year, who was in the process of writing a history of the Blackwood family and the company they founded. As you may be aware, Susan McCredie was a 'Blackwood' before her marriage to George and we were able to assist Mr Rothnie with some information about Susan and George. The book has now been published and we will have some copies available for sale at our Open Days. The cost of the book is \$30.00.
- More good news – we received an envelope of photos, slides, documents and newspaper clippings from a lady who was a former resident of the then Lynwood Hall, and she had been given these items from Miss Davies who was superintendent here for many years. The lady who sent them to us is now in aged care and contacted me because she felt that these items should return to Lynwood. Unfortunately we can't show you everything for privacy reasons, but I have enlarged a few of the photos which give us a very good idea of how our Linnwood looked as Lynwood Hall in the 1940's and 1950's. A couple of them are a bit blurry as the originals were only tiny and they have lost quite a bit of definition in the enlarging. If anyone knows somewhere where we can get slides converted into photos, could you please let me know as there are quite a number of slides we would like to have processed. I'm sure you will agree that they are a great addition to our photographic history of Linnwood.



- As you are aware, the Holroyd Local Government Area was amalgamated with part of Parramatta and most of Auburn Councils, last year. Many residents of Holroyd were not in favour of the amalgamation and with the recent change of Premier, a campaign to “Bring Back Holroyd” has started, seeking to reverse the forced amalgamation of Holroyd Council with the other two. I have a petition form here if anyone would like to sign it – or take some forms for friends or families to sign. If you do take a form, please return it to me and I will pass it on to the organisers.

That’s about all the news for now. Please stay and enjoy Greg’s presentation and then enjoy some afternoon tea and a chat afterwards. Thank you.

Treasurer’s Report

In John McKenna’s absence, Dorothy Warwick briefly presented the Treasurer’s Report covering the months of August 2016 through to January 2017.

	August	September (Open Day)	October	November (Open Day)	December	January	Total
Income	51.42	2,602.99	1.91	3,935.93	1,122.05	2.05	7,716.35
Expenditure	363.57	1,201.41	-	1,066.93	899.75	139.95	3,671.61

Profit - \$4,044.74

Select Account:

Opening Balance August 2016	\$44,742.63
Closing Balance end January 2017	\$48,230.92

Interest Bearing Deposit:

Opening Balance August 2016	\$21,910.85
Balance end January 2017	\$22,116.68
Interest Bearing Deposit Interest YTD	\$ 205.83

Total funds, including floats and petty cash at 31/1/17 - \$71,663.90

Moved by Elizabeth Brodie, seconded by Michael Griggs, that the Treasurer’s report be accepted. The motion was carried.

General Business

Cassandra Graham advised the meeting that her father belongs to the Carnival Glass Association which exhibits at our November open days. In their latest newsletter he wrote about the day last November, excerpts below:

Sunday 13th November 2016 was Open House at Historic Linnwood. The Friends of Linnwood invited the Carnival Glass Collectors Association to be part of the day’s activities which they have done in previous years. What a great day – the weather was just picture perfect, with over 300 visitors who came to enjoy not only the Carnival Glass displays, but also vintage motorbikes, a variety of vintage cars, Austin A40, Buick, Wolseley, and Chevrolet, pre-1918 cars from the Veteran Car Club. The arts and crafts stalls, Western Sydney Woodturners, and not to forget the Toongabbie Music Club with their rendition of songs we love. There was a lot of interest in our displays.

Members and their friends who haven’t been to Linnwood, I would suggest you come next November to enjoy this beautiful Historic House set on five acres at Guildford..... What better way to spend a spring day, enjoy a Devonshire Tea, or a sausage sizzle, wander around the displays, marvel and reminiscence at what life would have been like at Linnwood back in 1891.

Guest Speaker

Greg Clancy introduced us to Annette Wagner (pronounced Vagner). She has been “filed” in the National Archives for over 70 years and no-one has actually picked up her true life story. Within the Archives, there are files in the Security area of people with a German name or who had come from Germany, so a file was established on these people around the time of the impending WWII.

Just before he died, Greg’s Uncle Jack told Greg’s father that he knew this lady and that she was a spy. Ten years later Greg decided to research her story and publish a book about her.

Annette came to Australia in 1938 from Madagascar. She was born in Switzerland in 1912. Her mother died when Annette was seven years old so she was sent to England to live with a relative. She went to school there and eventually joined a bank in London. She also worked with the Home Office. There was a rumour that she worked with the Japanese Embassy in London, however there was no direct evidence that she worked with the Japanese during the war.

She worked with a cotton broker in Egypt, and also for the League of Nations as a Japanese interpreter. When she was 22 she joined a medical mission in South Africa, possibly in administration as she wasn't medically trained, and she also worked and travelled through Europe. It was believed she was very intelligent and very clever.

Annette married a Frenchman in 1936, possibly meeting him in Durban. Her husband had been a French civil servant and a District Officer in Madagascar. She ingratiated herself into the very narrow British society there. She contracted typhoid fever in late 1937 and spent six months in hospital – she didn't want to go to France to recuperate, she wanted to live in Australia with another relative in Newcastle. She arrived in Australia in 1938 her husband and lived at Cockle Creek.

She got a job with radio station 2NC in Newcastle, one or two days a week for over 12 months. She gave talks on Egypt, climbing Mt Blanc in Europe, and other places she had visited.

She started to visit Sydney and eventually joined Alliance Francaise – perhaps she wanted to improve her French as people queried her language skills. She found accommodation at Clifton Gardens in a large house, The Manor (which is still standing today). The house has excellent views over Sydney Harbour – a good place to watch shipping activities. Radio 2GB had an aerial right next to The Manor.

She then worked with Trans Radio which trained her in radio work – how to speak, handle the microphone etc. Then she moved to Radio 2UW and started to get a foothold in the radio scene in Sydney.

Moving on to the ABC she did travel talks there, and continued until October 1938. Her name first appeared in a security file due to the general view that war was coming in Europe.

There was an army training camp at Port Stephens – Annette went there but no-one knew why so she was put under surveillance. There were quite a few “spies” in Sydney at that time, and even though resources were fairly limited she was put under 24-hour surveillance.

A lady working for military intelligence was employed to “work on” Annette. This lady submitted quite a few reports on her, and sent a coded message to military intelligence asking to do further surveillance work.

One of the major suspicions was that a ship came into Sydney and small boats berthed at Taylors Bay, near where Annette was living. Someone saw her signalling to a boat via torchlight. She was also heard talking in German even though she claimed she did not speak the language. She was heard giving orders so she could have been more senior in the spy hierarchy than initially thought.

She continued her radio career and in January 1939 a lady doing a fashion segment on Radio 2GB left, and Annette suddenly became a fashion expert and took her place – she was known to have dressed very well. Under the name of Renee Laval, her segment was “Cables from Paris” - she was paid directly from the Paris fashion house and she would read out cables in French over the radio. Apparently military intelligence thought she had been slipping information into the “cables”. She would then talk to her audience in English. Her fashion programme also aired on radio 2CH. Unfortunately radio stations didn't keep recordings of the talks in those days.

In April 1939 war was getting closer. Greg's Uncle Jack, who was a pilot, was asked by Annette if he could fly her to Newcastle. On arrival, she got out of the plane, met and had conversations with some men, and then flew out of Newcastle taking aerial photos around the harbour and over the BHP plant. There were suspicions that these photos were taken for the Japanese who were interested in that part of NSW.

Uncle Jack was met by members of the military organisation (now known as ASIO) and was taken into the city and questioned. His plane was an Aeronca 100 and it is still flying today.

In June 1939 Annette made arrangements to go to the BHP steelworks, representing the radio station she worked with at the time, and arrived with two German photographers. Late that year, all non-citizens were taken off radio stations – Annette was not happy. She approached “ASIO” then for a security clearance – she had not done anything illegal as at that time Australia was not at war – but ASIO knew everything about her.

Once she had that interview she probably realised “the game was up” and in February 1940 she left Australia. She wanted to go back to Madagascar via Japan but this was denied, so she stayed in Jakarta which was a hotbed of spies at that time.

She was interrogated in Madagascar and stayed there until Germany invaded France. She then went to Vischy in France, and Paris, and worked for German intelligence.

In July 1946 she was interrogated again – somehow she managed to get to an open window unchallenged and jumped out onto a stone pavement three storeys below, committing suicide.

Greg brought along copies of his book, “Hitler’s Lost Spy” which was published in 2014.

Next Public Meeting

The next meeting of the Friends of Linnwood is on Sunday 21 May 2017, at 2.00pm, and our guest speaker, Goran Terzic, will give us the history of Greystanes House.

Raffle Draw

The raffle was drawn by Greg Clancy and won by Cassandra Graham.

The meeting closed at 3.35pm.

Confirmed:

_____ Date: _____

