



EPPING CIVIC TRUST

PO Box 271 Epping 1710
www.eppingcivictrust.org
eppingcivictrust@gmail.com

Newsletter

August 2022

August General Meeting

Tuesday 16 August 2022, 7.30pm in the hall at the rear of Church of Christ, Bridge Street, Epping.

The regular quarterly meeting of the Trust will take place on 16 August, with the theme of **Heritage in our Suburbs.**

Guest Speaker

We are delighted to have an expert speaker presenting - Adjunct Associate Professor Carol Liston AO is a former president of the Royal Australian Historical Society (RAHS). She taught Australian history, local history and heritage at Western Sydney University for many years.

Her investigations into colonial people and places includes a particular interest in female convicts. Carol has also been a member of Parramatta Council's Heritage Advisory Committee since its inception in the late 1990s. She has a deep knowledge of the area and we've invited her to speak on local heritage and its importance to our suburbs.

The meeting is open to all so please feel free to bring friends or neighbours.

FROM THE PRESIDENT, JANET MCGARRY ▶▶▶

I will confess that before I joined the Trust I had no idea what Heritage Conservation Areas (HCA) were, where they were or why they were important. I did enjoy driving or walking through the inner Epping streets just beyond the town centre – particularly the tree-lined ones with gracious houses generously set amongst landscaped gardens. I could see they must have been designed and built as a continuum and, except for the odd jarring new build dotted in, they were largely well-preserved.

A few years later, and the HCA streets and beyond are under continuous assault. As house prices have soared, land become prized for its subdivision potential, and as a new Epping has emerged, the drive to keep and maintain these homes is under threat. The HCAs were mainly established as the area was rezoned after 2010, as a deliberate move to maintain some of the old whilst the new high density was coming.

Over the last year the Trust has put in submissions on numerous DAs for HCA homes – where the plans range

from the decidedly ridiculous, to brazenly ignoring the HCA conditions. Buy one of these houses and there are conditions on any refurbishments or development. But that doesn't stop people trying. I've spoken at five Planning Panel meetings this year alone – we've won some and lost some.

The council have now employed a dedicated Heritage Officer (rather than using external services). We hope, and encourage, council to now take a stand on HCA applications – near enough is never good enough. And why bother at all? Well these streets are part of our fabric. They enrich our community and our culture. And they are what we are charged with handing on to future generations.

If you would like to hear more on this topic, come to our August meeting when we are delighted to welcome Carol Liston to speak on the topic – she is much more expert than me, but I suspect we agree on why heritage matters.

2022 Membership

Thank you to the many members who have already renewed for 2022. Reminders are being sent to those yet to renew.

Donations: Thank you to all the members who give additional donations to the Trust – we would not be able to survive without

them. Almost half of the income of the Trust comes from member donations. You can donate via PayPal through the Donate section on the website, by EFT or cheque.

Development Application Information: Parramatta Council

Feel that you miss out learning about local DAs?

There are a couple of ways you can keep up to date. First, sign up to a service called Planning Alerts online at <https://www.planningalerts.org.au>. This is a useful free system that pulls information when development applications are first lodged with councils, and sends you email alerts. It is a good 'early

warning' system, but Council takes no notice of comments on Planning Alerts.

To have council consider a submission you need to follow <https://www.cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/development/submissions>, review the DA papers and follow the submission guidelines. You can search for DAs on the DA Tracker website. The Trust circulates DAs we consider to be of interest to residents.

Development Applications

DA/65/2022 48 Norfolk Road, Epping

This was a modification to an earlier DA within the East Epping Heritage Conservation Area. It seeks to try and sub divide the block by moving the original house forward. The Trust opposed the DA and spoke at the Planning Panel meeting, but it was very disappointing to see Council's Heritage Officer support it. Without their opposition, the Panel passed the DA.

DA/416/2022 52 Essex Street, Epping

This is a slightly notorious site within the East Epping Heritage Conservation Area. Previous owners illegally cleared a large stand of mature indigenous trees. After lobbying, council took them to court and won damages.

It will come as no surprise that the owner then sold the site (for nearly \$5m), and now there is a DA under way for a large child care centre. This DA adds insult to injury by wanting to remove the last large mature tree.

City of Parramatta Council News

History of Loftus Square Park

This is a much-loved and greatly used park on the west side of the railway line. With its towering trees, playground, basketball half courts, and distinctive bus shelters, locals value this area. Council have now uploaded a very interesting history of the 140 years of Loftus Park – well worth a read:

<https://historyandheritage.cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/140-years-of-loftus-square-park>



Parramatta Council 2023 Operating Plan and Budget

The budget includes \$16M for Dence Park Pool, and \$1M for construction of the sports pavilion in Boronia Park (awarded to a new contractor). Since Parramatta Pool is still under construction, will the Dence Park Pool works start in 2023?

Message from Lord Mayor Councillor Donna Davis

Boronia Grove Community Centre

Council's Family Fun Day at Boronia Grove, in early June, was a huge success. It was great to see so many familiar faces on the day. Councillors Lorraine Wearne and Cameron Maclean joined me at the Meet the Lord Mayor Stall to speak with residents about a range of issues. It was a pleasure to show the Premier and new Member for Bennelong around our upgraded facilities.

Boronia Park – Lights Update

Many of you will be aware that there have been ongoing issues with inconsistent lighting in Boronia Park. Council has identified that construction and electrical works involved in the rebuilding of the Sports Pavilion is the likely cause of the problem. Council officers are working to resolve the lighting as soon as possible and will continue to monitor the site closely.

Epping Dog Park

The City of Parramatta has recently approved the formal construction of an off-leash dog park in West Epping Park. This was a community-driven request and I thank Epping residents for presenting me with the initial petition (tabled at the 15 June 2021 Council meeting). The area will be securely fenced to separate dogs from other park users - providing a wonderful new area to socialise dogs and their owner friends. Council has submitted a funding application to the NSW Government, however should the application be unsuccessful, Council will fund this project out of the 2022/23 Parks Improvement Program. I'm so glad to have been able to advocate for the project thus far and I look forward to the next steps.

Family Fun Day at Boronia Grove with Lord Mayor Donna Davis, Member for Bennelong Jerome Laxale MP and the Premier, the Hon. Dominic Perrottet MP



All Epping councillors (Hornsby and Parramatta) are invited to submit news for the newsletter. Only one contribution was received by deadline.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Members who have concerns about issues in Epping are always free to contact the Trust through our email or website. However, if you have issues that you would prefer to discuss with our elected representatives, here is a list of their contact details:

City of Parramatta Council,
PO Box 32, Parramatta NSW 2124

Lord Mayor & Councillor Donna Davis
Phone: 0447 745 402
ddavis@cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au

Councillor Lorraine Wearne
Phone: 0416 035 817
lwearne@cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au
Councillor Cameron Maclean
Phone: 0422 141 415
cmaclean@cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au

A Notable Epping Resident – Miss Ruby Melville



Ruby Melville

Source: *Northern District Times*, 1990

**Melville family home
38 Kent Street,
Epping**

Photo from
*Carlingford-Epping
Partners in History* by
Alex McAndrew (1999)

A pioneering female entrepreneur in an overwhelmingly male society, Ruby Melville established her own clothing factory in Rawson St Epping which operated from 1917 to 1966, and contributed extensively to her local community.

Ruby Mabel Alice Melville, the youngest of nine children, was born in 1895 in Ryde, NSW. Her father, David Melville, originally lived in Newcastle, worked on the railways and was secretary of the 'Eight Hour Day Movement'. Ruby's family moved to a house known as 'Fernville' in Kent St Epping. The 12-acre property extended to Rawson St and was eventually acquired by Dundas Council in 1949 to double the size of Boronia Park, and create the present-day Council car park.

Ruby was a foundation pupil of Epping Public School, with the rest of her schooling at Burwood Home Science, and at Miss Stapleton's Private School Epping. At 15 years of age, Ruby undertook training at Sydney Technical School, from where she was seconded by the David Jones retail factory in Surry Hills in the manufacture of army uniforms for the Government during World War 1. She graduated with a Teacher's Certificate and gained dressmaking qualifications.

In 1918, Ruby established her own business making skirts in her parents' home for a company called 'Farmer and Co'. All materials and clothing samples were supplied by Farmers, with Ruby being paid each week for what she had manufactured. Soon the family home was crowded with seven employees, and Ruby's father gave her some of his

land fronting Rawson St on which a separate small factory was built at the end of 1918. This factory was located at 51 Rawson St Epping.

Ruby's clothing business, registered as Rema & Co, started manufacturing civilian clothes, supplying to a number of Sydney retailers. During WW2, Ruby again supported the war effort by producing nurses' uniforms and doctors' theatre gowns.

A 1927 newspaper report headlined 'Will Epping Remain Dry?' stated that the Melville clothing factory employed 80 young women. Ruby Melville rallied against a proposed Epping hotel establishment in court as it would 'militate against her business' as many of her staff would need to walk past the hotel via the adjacent laneway.

Miss Melville's local advocacy continued as she entered her later years. Her close association with Epping led her to be a founding member of the Boronia Park Committee in 1974, since half of the park was previously owned by her family and 'part of her backyard'. In 1975, she authored "A History of Boronia Park".

Ruby passed away in 1990, just short of her 95th birthday. Her family home, a Victorian styled house, unfortunately had no heritage protection at the time and was demolished after being sold in 1995.

Sources:

- *Carlingford-Epping Partners in History*, by Alex McAndrew (1999)
- Trove Digitised Newspapers website <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/> 'Epping's Enterprising Pioneer Leaves Legacy', *Northern District Times*, 27 June 1990
- *Boronia Park Committee archives* - Letter to the Town Clerk, Parramatta City Council dated 26 Aug 1974
- ABC News (Posted 26 May 2015)
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-05-26/sydney-tafe-celebrates-contribution-to-world-war-one/6497390?pfm=sm&pfmredir=sm>

Hornsby Shire Council,
PO Box 37, Hornsby NSW 1630

Councillor Emma Heyde
Phone: 0403 589 722
ehayde@hornsby.nsw.gov.au

Councillor Verity Greenwood
Phone: 0402 444 456
vgreenwood@hornsby.nsw.gov.au
Councillor Sreeni Pillamarri
Phone: 0499 116 664
spillamarri@hornsby.nsw.gov.au

PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Member for Epping,
Dominic Perrottet
Suite 303, level 3, 51 Rawson Street, Epping
Phone: 9877 0266
Email: epping@parliament.nsw.gov.au



Vale Ron Dunstan

The Trust was saddened to hear of the recent death of Ron Dunstan, one of our earliest members, and a long-standing committee member. Ron joined the Trust in 1972, and he was President of the Trust in the early days, but then held the role of Secretary for many years, contributing to the Trust in many ways. Ron was a quiet and

gracious gentleman, interested in keeping things in order for the sake of the whole community. He was in the habit of taking regular walks around Epping, picking up litter whenever he saw it. Our Epping community is the poorer for his passing and we send our sincere condolences to Jan and his family and friends.

SUBCOMMITTEES

West Epping

Following completion of mitigation works, the approaches to the lift and stairway on the southern end of the Carlingford Road pedestrian overpass in Ryde Street had become bare and hazardous due to high pedestrian traffic, particularly on rainy days and during before and after school periods.

The Trust approached Councillor Donna Davis and sought her assistance through Parramatta City Council, in providing rectification works to address the affected areas. The Council has now concreted the affected areas to provide a safe and hazard-free access for pedestrians to the overpass.

Before and after, Ryde Street Epping overpass ▶



Tree Subcommittee

City of Parramatta Council plans a review of tree policies. The Tree committee has reviewed the tree policies of other Sydney councils, and has collated some recommendations for the City of Parramatta Council, including the following:

Tree Preservation The vision and motivation for tree preservation and increased tree canopy needs to be clearly and persuasively articulated. This vision should guide the actions of council staff and inform local residents.

We need a **better definition of a tree** to ensure tree preservation across the council area. This requires a more inclusive definition of a tree (height, trunk diameter or canopy), and clear controls on landscape and deep soil areas to support retention of existing vegetation during development.

Development Applications and Tree Applications should be posted at the affected property so that nearby residents are aware. Residents and Developers need **detailed guidance** on tree management, species choice, maintenance, pruning, and deep soil allowance. DA and TA Approval documents should match best practice, with a detailed description of tree preservation actions and specific conditions. Council staff should follow up on the Approval conditions.

Increased Tree Planting The council should be more ambitious in its tree canopy policy, and align with NSW State government targets (40% tree canopy by 2030).

Because of the important contribution of mature trees to the tree canopy, a complete rethinking of current policies on tree removal is needed, in addition to increased new tree planting.

Street trees and new tree planting offer the opportunity to increase the tree canopy and livability of the council area. Policies to educate and consult with residents are also needed.

We invite you to submit a photo of your favourite Epping tree. We would like to publish the best photos in the newsletter or on the Trust website. Please send your photo to judithmdawes@gmail.com with an accompanying statement naming the photographer, and giving permission for it to be used by the Civic Trust.



◀ *Sadly this magnificent eucalypt in Willoughby Street was recently cut down.*



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PRESIDENT: Janet McGarry (0408 071 707)
TREASURER: Leo Hart (0417 424 580)
P.O. BOX 271, Epping 1710

Proposed meeting dates for 2022
Tuesday 15 November

7.30pm Church of Christ Hall,
31 Bridge Street, Epping.