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- Historical Heartbeat Series
- Researching your house history
- The Hidden History of Bayswater: Conclusion
- Bayswater in the 1940s

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Historical Heartbeat Series



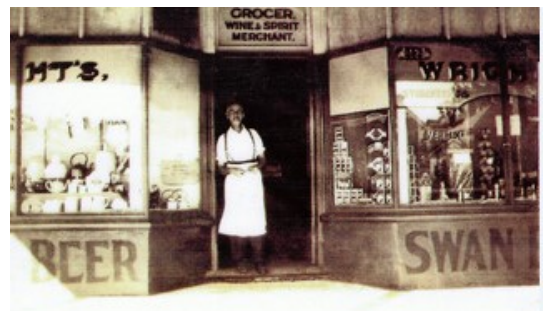
The first commercial building to be built in what is today regarded as the historic town centre was the Webster's building – on the corner of King William Street and Whatley Crescent. Built in 1905 by well-respected and highly productive early citizen, Henry Halliday, the building was architecturally designed and used as a grocery store.

In 1906, Robert McLeish built the two-storey building on the corner of King William Street and Murray Streets. Over 100 years old, wood and corrugated iron building was used as grocery store – it is the only building of its kind “still in use” in the Perth metro. McLeish ran a very successful grocery store and butcher shop in Coode Street for the three years prior.

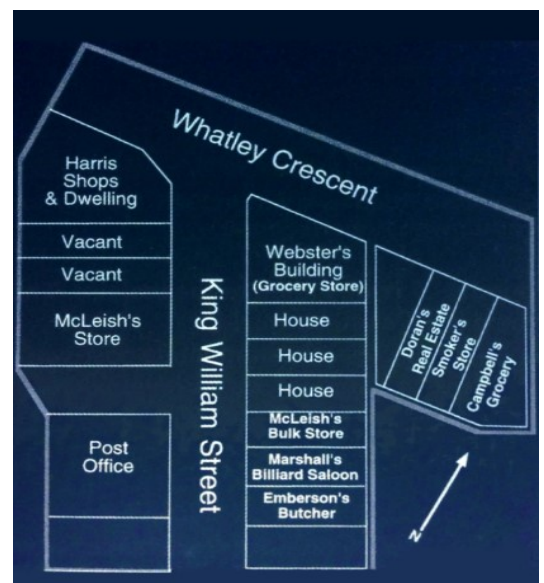


The early 1904-1908 was a boom time for Bayswater. Who would have imagined what lay ahead?

*From Changes They've Seen by Catherine May.
Photos from the Bayswater Historical Society Collection*



Bert Wright Senior can be seen standing in the doorway of the building watching passing traffic of horses and carts, the odd car. Often a bicycle would be rested against the post, it was that of the delivery boy, or on some days the owner was inside ordering goods.



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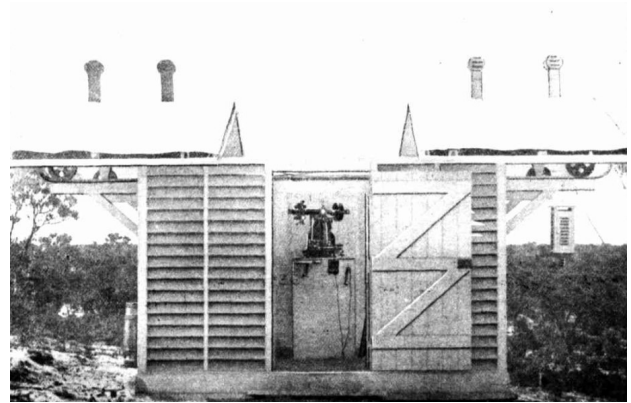
Historical Bayswater

The Hidden History of Bayswater: Conclusion

Dr Hessen concluded his scientific observations in mid-1908 and was due to return overseas in February 1909. However, the day before his departure, he shot himself in the head with a revolver at Lake Monger.

Amazingly, Dr Hessen survived. As the West Australian reported in sensational fashion on 10 February 1909, a local groundsman: "saw the man ... with one hand clasped to his mouth, and the other gripping a smoking revolver". Police and medical assistance were sought at once. Obviously in intense pain, Dr Hessen could still relate to the groundsman what he had just done. The newspaper goes on to report: "(Dr Hessen) is a distinguished scientist and in professional and other circles in the city has, since his arrival from Germany about three years ago, been extremely popular". The article states that on the previous weekend a hearty send-off has been provided to Dr Hessen by his many friends at the Perth Club and "there was nothing ... which would give ... the slightest indication that so tragic an occurrence was impending". Dr Hessen was only 27 at the time of this incident.

Dr Hessen recuperated for several months at Perth before returning to Germany. Information provided to the writer by the Institute for Astrophysics Potsdam states that Dr Hessen continued scientific work (tidal observations) at Wilhelmshaven, that he was a master of the piano and that he died at the relatively young age of 49 after a short illness. It appears Dr Hessen never married.



A photograph of the weather station - The Western Mail April 1906

The circumstances behind Dr Hessen's attempted suicide remain a complete mystery. Was it an overwhelming desire not to return overseas, or perhaps a local romantic interest that had gone wrong?

Soon after WWI, in deliberating what to do with the Bayswater observatory, a government official wondered: "... one is apt to wonder whether these German observers were sent out all over the world solely in the interests of science, or if espionage was not one of their chief duties". The inference that Dr Hessen may have been a spy of some sort appears completely incorrect. The Bayswater observatory fell into disrepair and was dismantled in 1923, its part in a major international scientific project 100 years ago almost forgotten.

Reprinted with permission from Damien Hassan, Senior Archivist, State Records Office of WA

BHS Annual General Meeting



The Society's Annual General Meeting will be held on **Monday 31st August at 6pm**. Due to COVID-19 physical distancing requirements the venue is still to be advised. The meeting Agenda will be available to members shortly. Nominations for any Management Committee positions (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Communications Coordinator and 3 General Members) must be in writing and delivered to the Secretary by COB Friday, 31st July to GPO Box 76

Bayswater WA 6933 or via email bayswaterhs@gmail.com.

Note: 1. The written notice must include a statement by another member in support of the nomination. 2. The member must nominate for a specific Committee position as listed above.

Halliday House Opening and COVID-19 Protocols

Due to COVID-19 restrictions Halliday House remains closed until Council approval. Members will be notified in due course. It is anticipated this will be in August with visitors required to keep to recommended protocols including physical distancing of 1.5m, signing the Visitor's Registration book with maximum visitor numbers of 10 people at any one time and 2 people per display room.

Researching Your House History

by Prue Griffin

There has always been interest in researching the past owners and occupiers of houses in our community. Sometimes a particular place sparks interest because of a unique feature or its location, but mostly it is when we become attached to the places we live in.

Since 2017, I have participated in the preparation of the City of Bayswater Local Heritage Survey (LHS). The LHS is an ongoing process that identifies the places which demonstrate the history of development of Bayswater.

Note: Please refer to the attachment for the various resources used for researching your own house history.

An example of the research process:

Lombardi Engineering Works (fmr), 104 Beechboro Road South, Bayswater

This place had been identified of heritage value in the previous City of Bayswater LHS because of its striking design however, there was minimal information about its history.

Researching this period is more challenging because sources are more limited. A key research tool, the Post Office Directories finish in 1949, and on checking that year there was no listing of this building. Our next step was making a search of Western Australian newspapers in TROVE. That source is also limited as it ceases in 1954 for copyright reasons.

Fortunately, articles were found in *The West Australian* that proved useful. In November 1949, builders Kelly and Sons approached the City of Bayswater to request the allocation of land for factory use in the City of Bayswater. Following that request, four acres of land in the vicinity of Drake Street and Beechboro Road, previously used for market gardens, was designated for factory use. The same article referred to the building of a 'model factory' on the site 'subject to the approval of the Town Planning Board'.

With this information we decided to try and find out something about Kelly and Sons. An initial search of the State Library of WA catalogue using the search terms 'Kelly' and 'Bayswater' revealed Raymond Herbert Kelly was a member of the Bayswater Road Board in 1952.

With Raymond Herbert Kelly as the search term in TROVE revealed that he was a carpenter, plumber, and ex-service man with a somewhat chequered career. An article from 1952, stated that Kelly was a master builder.

With a more focused search of TROVE from 1950, revealed that Kelly and Sons were advertising throughout 1950 and early 1951 from their premises at 26 Coombe Street Bayswater.



Raymond Herbert Kelly, 20 February 1952. Courtesy State Library of WA

In July 1951, an advertisement appeared for a bricklayer's labourer at Beechboro Road Bayswater which indicated the new factory was under construction. Unfortunately no detail was found of the designer of this striking building.

An interesting article from *The West Australian* in September 1953 described how the Minister for Housing Herb Graham, was shown over the factory by Mr R. H. Kelly. The article describes how the factory was responsible for the design, construction and erection of an average of six timber framed asbestos homes per week and manufactured 'joinery, tiles, plasterboard, troughs, cisterns and everything required for the construction of a house'. Each house was erected in an average of 11 to 16 days and many home owners were ex-servicemen supported by the War Service Homes scheme. The 270 workforce at the factory included many 'New Australians' the term for migrants settling in Australia after World War II, often from Italy, Greece or the former Yugoslavia.



James N Kirby Sales Pty Ltd, 1958. Courtesy State Library of WA



Inside James N. Kirby Sales Pty Ltd 1958. Courtesy State Library of WA

After this enthusiastic article in September, the following month Kelly and Sons was fined for not paying their employees the appropriate rates and were ordered to pay back nearly **£1000**.

Kelly and Sons were again in the local press in December 1953 when they donated the materials for a new home for one of the carpenters Claude Rettallack. The Rettallack home in Maida Vale had been destroyed by fire and members of the Kelly and Sons social club built the four roomed home in less than two weeks.

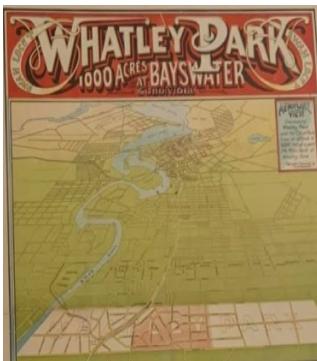
What happened to Kelly and Sons has not been determined but their role in the post World War II building boom is reflective of many small businesses of the time. Enterprising individuals capitalised on the growth in population and made significant profits in a short period of time. Whether Ray Kelly held on to his fortune is not known. There is probably a lot more to that story.

By 1958, the business was occupied by James N Kirby Sales Pty Ltd and later for some years by Lombardi Pty Ltd.

The BHS wishes to thank local historian Prue Griffin from Hocking Heritage for her contribution.

Do you have a piece of Baysie History? We'd love to hear from you!

You might be living in a worker's cottage or a Federation-era house. Perhaps you call a renovated Cal-bung house your home or the more traditional Queen Anne abode. Or maybe you prefer the modern aesthetics of an art deco building or a post-war brick house?



These are all a part of Bayswater history and we would love to hear about your own piece of Baysie History!

Please forward your submissions and photographs for consideration, and all other enquiries addressed to the Secretary via email bayswaterhs@gmail.com

or via post GPO Box 76 Bayswater 6053.



Stock photo

Bayswater in the 1940's: Phil Bolton remembers

An interview with neighbour and friend Greg Smith

Phil was born on 4 April 1936 at the Beechboro Road Maternity Hospital and went to Bayswater Primary School. He did 7 years there in the 1940's, commencing in the infant's class and then through grades 1 to 6. After that he went to Forrest High School which was in Lord St., Mount Lawley near the now Mount Lawley TAFE. After two years he left (as most students did) at the leaving age of 14. In his 20s he left Bayswater to work as a Fitter and Turner on the Snowy Mountain Hydro scheme.

During WWII Phil's father, Les served in the AIF with the 2/28th Infantry. He left on the SS Aquitania in 1941 to serve in the Middle East and was one of the famous "Rats of Tobruk". Fortunately for Phil his dad came back.

Phil recalls, "My dad told me there was great concern in WA of an invasion from the Japanese army. There were two Victorian militia divisions of approximately 30,000 troops that were posted to WA. A Victorian Signals unit of about 800 men were stationed in Bayswater. Bayswater was a preferred place because of its hills. The troops slept in the Town Hall in Slade Street, the Drill Hall (Murray Street) and in tents on Hillcrest Oval. Private houses were also used where there were no single women and the owners were paid

six pence per day. Breakfast was not included; and a truck would come around in the morning to collect the soldiers for their duty. The Victorian signals units built



Phil at the Karrakatta Army Base during his two years of National Service, 1957.

slit trenches in Halliday Park and at Bayswater Primary School. They were built in a zigzag fashion so that if a bomb was dropped, they would be stopped rather than sliding along the trench. The Halliday Park trenches were always full of water."

"There were two air raid shelters constructed opposite the post office and another one opposite the drip café in King William St. Another thing my dad told me that there was a real beer shortage and pubs were closed at 6 o'clock".



Phil points out where the air shelters were located in Bayswater during WWII



A present day converted 1942 bomb shelter at Bullsbrook and inside a WWII Anderson air raid shelter

BHS Meeting With Public Transport Authority WA and Evolve Bayswater

Last month, some of the BHS Management Committee members had a meeting with Whitney Williamson from Public Transport Authority (PTA) of WA and Jamie Robertson from Evolve Bayswater at Halliday House. PTA has requested to view the Society's photographic collection of the Bayswater Railway Station. It would be used as part of a public art exhibit to showcase the evolution of the railway station. The Society's involvement as a point of historical reference for PTA and Evolve Bayswater would be in line with our aim of promoting public interest in and support for the preservation of the history of Bayswater.



From left: Jamie Robertson, BHS Secretary Glen Cookson, Whitney Williamson and BHS Communications Coordinator Christina Middleton



Above: BHS President Keith Clements presents Jamie with a copy of Catherine May's *Changes They've Seen*

BAYSWATER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Halliday House
114 King William Street
BAYSWATER

Phone: 08 9271 3741
Email: bayswaterhs@gmail.com
Postal Address: GPO Box 76 Bayswater 6933

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Photography by Terry Devereux

The Bayswater Historical Society Inc. was formed in 1991. It is a non-profit organisation which aims to preserve the history of Bayswater district; protect the records and objects relating to the area; promote public interest in and support for the preservation of historic records, buildings and sites.

Halliday House is Bayswater's historic home and is used as the Society's base and museum. Currently Halliday House is temporary closed to the public until further notice due to the current State Government recommendations to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Historical Bayswater is the society's newsletter and welcomes contributions such as stories and photographs relating to the history of Bayswater to be included in future issues. Please forward all enquiries addressed to the Secretary. *Historical Bayswater* wishes to acknowledge our contributors for their items included in this issue.

Connect with us on Facebook and Instagram @bayswaterhistoricalsociety



Opinions expressed in *Historical Bayswater* are not necessarily those of the Bayswater Historical Society Inc. This issue is published by the society's Communications Sub-Committee.

Editor: Christina Middleton

Copy Editor: Glen Cookson