

Botany Historical Trust

NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2024



Fun at The BHT Christmas Function





Robert Hanna

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This year marks the 30th Anniversary of the establishment of the Botany Historical Trust. One can only hope that the BHT has an equally long future.

I have been an absentee President for most of this year. Health issues and family matters led to my absence from BHT activities, including Executive meetings.

Fortunately, despite my absence, the Trust has carried on without me. Thanks, no doubt to the Executive members who carried out their duties ably assisted by support staff from Bayside Council. My thanks to Chris Hanna, the Senior Vice President, for chairing the last three Executive Committee meetings during my absence.

I hope, with the support of the Executive, to pursue the matters that I was unable to undertake this year. These include a program of activities and excursions for the general membership, involvement with Bayside's plans to honour veterans on the 80th anniversary of the end of WWII, pursuing items and exhibits of historical and heritage interests, and to push on with the alterations to the Botany War Memorial and seeking a grant from the NSW Government to assist with the costs of any restoration work.

Projects such as these illustrate the need for the BHT to continue its activities in promoting the history of the Botany area.

I also consider a priority in finding a suitable Community Executive member to fill the vacancy left by the late Dr Peter Orlovich, the long serving archivist on the BHT Executive. I hope we can find someone with qualifications and an interest in archival matters, as was Peter's passion. I would hope, as President, to continue to advocate for preservation of and access to the archives of the former City of Botany Bay and its predecessors.

As reported in the June Newsletter, sadly, Peter died in April this year after retiring from the Executive in December 2023 due to ill health. We also lost Alice McCann, a former Senior Vice President who also died in April this year. Both Alice and Peter contributed significantly to the functions and activities of the BHT.

The BHT, in my absence this year, has pursued and participated in some interesting events and contributed to some significant achievements over this period.

As well as the Botany War Memorial and the preservation of our archives, the BHT has been, and is involved, with Bayside's Women in War Project in 2025. Other projects include the old Sir Joseph Banks Hotel archaeological artefacts, the placing of historical plaques on places of significance and the replacement of history panels in the Daceyville area.

As well, the BHT was involved with ANZAC Day commemorations led by the Botany and Mascot Subbranches of the RSL. On both occasions wreaths were laid on both the Mascot and Botany War Memorials on behalf of the BHT.

The Home Sweet Home exhibition at the Mascot Library and Museum continued until June this year. A photographic exhibition is currently on display in the Museum.

On 11 May Peter Hopkins, a winner of the 2023 Ron Rathbone History prize, gave a talk on his work, "The Mascot Miracle: The 1971 airliner collision at Mascot Airport that nearly took 240 lives."

The BHT could not have functioned without the support of dedicated Bayside Council staff. I would like to thank personally Bobbi Mayne, Alison Wishart and Cate Kloos. There are others too numerous to mention, and I thank them also.

Alison is no longer with us, having moved on to other employment. I am pleased to see she has since applied to join the BHT.

I take this opportunity to wish all BHT members and their families all the best for the New Year 2025.

Robert Hanna
President, Botany Historical Trust

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE BHT

On Monday, 4 November 2024, the Botany Historical Trust held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) at the Mascot Library and George Hanna Museum. The meeting was attended by 21 BHT members, 2 Councillors, and 4 Bayside Council staff.

In line with the BHT Constitution, members elected the nominated Executive Office Bearers. The newly appointed BHT Executive team is as follows:



The newly re-elected BHT President, Rob Hanna, addressed the meeting

THE COMMITTEE



Robert Hanna
President

Jacqueline Milledge
Senior Vice President

Christopher Hanna
Vice President

Richard Smolenski
Treasurer

Warren Hensley
Secretary

Amanda Wilson
Committee Member

Lenore Daley
Committee Member

Christina Curry
Councillor

Scott Morrissey
Councillor

2025 Meeting Schedule

3 February
5 May
4 August and
3 November

Historical Markers Program 2024

A Reveal and A Recap!

Bayside Council's Historical Marker Program is designed to improve the visibility and awareness of Bayside's cultural heritage and build a sense of belonging and connectivity in the community.

Under the program, each financial year, Council will fund the production and installation of up to five historical markers at locations nominated by the community.

5 nominations have been selected for this round:

- ◆ **Tempe House c.1836**
- ◆ **Former Sir Joseph Banks Hotel c.1844**
- ◆ **Botany Public School c.1848**
- ◆ **Bexley Public School c.1887**
- ◆ **Wilson's Farmhouse c.1850s**

Botany Public School

Many locals already know of the Botany Public School and may have attended it themselves. The school itself was the first public school in the city and is one of the oldest existing public schools in NSW. It was established in late 1848, opening January 1849 in temporary premises. It was then shut until 1862 when it reopened in another temporary location but was soon overcrowded. The community raised money for the construction of a building and classes commenced in January 1869 in the new school.

The school has faced challenges throughout its history, notably a destructive fire in 1962, and has undergone numerous alterations in its pursuit of an appropriate educational environment while preserving its rich heritage.

The Botany Public School is an example of the close-knit community of the Botany area which has lasted through the ages, with its strong connection and perseverance towards education, development and the preservation of history.

*Then and Now:
Botany Public School*



Old Sir Joseph Banks Hotel

The other location of note is the old Sir Joseph Banks Hotel, now consisting of self-contained apartments. This building is an iconic symbol of the days when Botany and Sydney were on the rise, and its pursuit to create a finer life and recreation, bringing some of the Old World to the New. With its origins as a humble inn serving local industries to its pinnacle as a premier tourist destination, the Sir Joseph Banks Hotel has evolved through multiple transformations.

Opening in 1844 and passing through several hands during its life, it was used as a fine dining hotel, amphitheater, ballroom and even as the site of Australia's first zoo. It hosted large crowds for events and performances and was the social scene to be seen at in Sydney.

Its heyday only lasted so long and financial difficulties soon led to its rebranding at the turn of the century and subdivision of the grounds in the 1920s. The old hotel stood vacant for a time until 1930, when it was purchased at auction by James Ruttley who feared its demolition.

His daughter, **Doris Ruttley** nee Ruttley (1892-1983), bought the old hotel in 1944 when it went to auction again following his death. Doris is credited with the preservation of the building in its original style. While initially subdividing the hotel into a few self-contained flats and recreation rooms, she insisted that the work be of the same quality and design as the original building. Any repairs made, were to be done to the same level of workmanship.

As a result of her dedication, the building lasted through to the 21st century in its original style, and today stands tall and proud, a reminder of the seaside resort at the high point of the Sydney social scene and an important Botany landmark.

*Then and Now:
Sir Joseph Banks Hotel*



The markers will be placed at the sites and will be accessible to the public.

A QR code will be displayed with the markers and will direct the community to more information about the sites' history on Council's website.

Keep an eye out for the next round of nominations!

Celia Piper
Local History Librarian



Women's Contribution During Wartime



Phyllis Mary Boissier, whose courage and determination during the First World War saved many lives.

Bayside's local history team will be working on a series of projects during 2025 that focus on women's contribution during war time.

The first project is the ANZAC day banner project. This project was initiated by Member for Kingsford Smith, Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP to recognize many deserving members in our community who have served our country.

This is a multi-year project. The focus for the 2025 ANZAC day banner design will be to recognize women who proudly served during WWII.



Other projects that focus on women's contribution during war time will be delivered during the next 12 months to support the former Councillors Jenny Muscat and Jo Jansyn's Notice of Motion, which Council adopted in May 2024. These include:

- ▶ Engaging with the Botany Historical Trust, the St George Historical Society, local RSLs and our community to research and gather information regarding the contribution of local women in wartime.
- ▶ Enabling the research and information to be accessible to the community and using it to inform future exhibitions and projects.
- ▶ Creating a theme for one category of the Ron Rathbone Award that focuses on the role played by Bayside women in wartime.

Bobbi Mayne

Manager Libraries and Lifestyle



Certificate of Appreciation - Miss J Bentley 1 June 1946 - Anzac Buffet Voluntary Helper

WWI Centenary Street Name Trail Update

When construction of Daceyville began in 1912, early street names were inspired by the European exploration of Australia. For instance, Banks Avenue commemorates Sir Joseph Banks, the renowned naturalist who sailed into Botany Bay with Captain Cook in 1770.

The onset of WWI had a profound effect on society, and when the outbreak of war captured the hearts and minds of society, trends in street naming shifted, as evident in the naming of local streets in Daceyville and Pagewood. Later streets were named in honour of heroic servicemen and important military leaders.

To mark the centenary of ANZAC, in June 2016 a WWI Centenary Street Name Trail in Daceyville and Pagewood was created. This project was made possible with the assistance of the Botany Historical Trust, Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP, Member for Kingsford Smith & 'Department of Veterans' Affairs, ANZAC Centenary Local Grants Program.



WWI Centenary Street Name Trail

The advent of WWI had a dramatic impact on society. Here in Daceyville and Pagewood we can see this in the naming of local streets.

When the construction of Daceyville began in 1912, early road names were inspired by the European exploration of Australia. Banks Avenue, for example, remembers Sir Joseph Banks, the well-known naturalist who, in 1770, sailed with Captain Cook into Botany Bay.

This pattern of street naming changed when WWI started to dominate the hearts and minds of society. Later streets instead bore the names of heroic servicemen and important commanders. Captain Jacka Crescent, for instance, honours the first Australian to be awarded the Victoria Cross, the highest award given for wartime bravery.

In 1961, this association with war continued when Burke Crescent was renamed Colenso Crescent, in memory of a local family who had lost two sons during WWI. This street, which runs parallel to Wills Crescent, originally honoured the explorer Robert O'Hara Burke who, with William John Wills, attempted to cross Australia from south to north in 1860. Wills Crescent remains but Burke was replaced to avoid confusion with Bourke Road in Mascot.

For more on the history of Daceyville see AudioDaceyville: The story of Dacey Gordon Suburb Australia's first public housing estate.

Daceyville

- General Bridges Crescent
- Captain Jacka Crescent
- Sergeant Larkin Crescent
- Colenso Crescent
- Colonel Braund Crescent
- Juffie Crescent
- Wills Crescent
- Hag Avenue

2024 WWI Centenary Street Name Trail Map

The trail pays tribute to 17 men, most of whom distinguished themselves during WWI and WWII. The interpretative signs, originally unveiled in streets in 2016, each tell a story behind the 17 local street names.

After years of exposure, the plaques had deteriorated significantly. Plans are underway to update the interpretative signs. They will be remanufactured and reinstalled to preserve the legacy of these servicemen and the history behind the street naming.

The new signs will include a QR code that leads to a website with more information on the history of the street naming, and a downloadable PDF map of the trail that shows where each sign is located.

Laura Daaboul
Local History Librarian



Scan the QR code to download a copy.

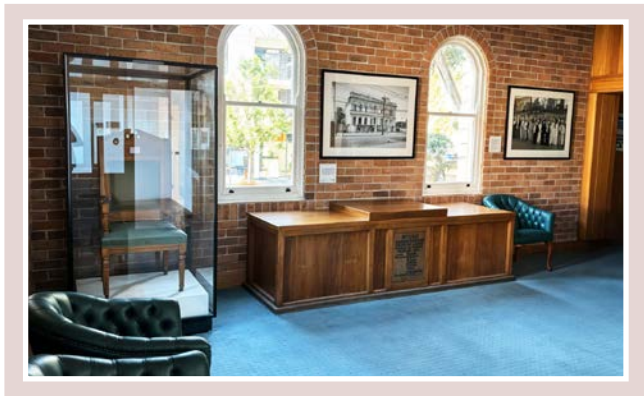


Condition of original plaque, Colenso Crescent

New Look of Botany Town Hall

Botany Town Hall has received some upgrades to create a more inviting atmosphere for visitors and users alike.

The foyer is now very welcoming with the historic Mayoral Chair on display, comfortable seating and historical photos that highlight the rich history of the town hall.



Mayoral Chair

The inscription on the chair reads: 'First mayoral chair, made by the late ex Alderman A.W. Sparks in 1888.' Alf W. Sparks was an alderman from 1888 and Mayor of North Botany in 1891, 1892 and 1905.

The 'Borough of North Botany' was proclaimed on 29 March 1888 and changed its name to the Municipality of Mascot in 1911. On 1 January 1949, Mascot and Botany amalgamated into the Municipality of Botany.



The historic former City of Botany Bay mayoral chains have been restored and encased in a display cabinet in the former City of Botany Bay Council Chambers at Botany Town Hall.

Municipality of Botany Mayoral Chain

Although Botany was declared a municipality in 1888, the mayoral chain pictured on the left was not made until 1981. The Hon. Ron Hoenig, MP, who was mayor of the Municipality of Botany from September 1981, proposed that the chains be made to help the public identify the mayor at official functions.

The chains were designed with 75 links so that the names of the 65 mayors who had served the municipalities of Botany, Mascot and North Botany could be inscribed on the links along with the years that they were mayor. Extra links were for the future mayors' names.

The chains were worn for the first time at a citizenship ceremony on 24 February 1982. The pendant pictured is a faithful replica of the Seal of Botany, which was designed by its first mayor, Alderman J.J. MacFadyen.



City of Botany Bay Mayoral Chain

When the Municipality of Botany was declared the City of Botany Bay in May 1996, a new mayoral chain was commissioned by Mayor Hoenig, which is pictured on the right. The pendant is a replica of the City of Botany Bay Coat of Arms

Cate Kloos, Administration Officer
Research by Alison Wishart, Local History Librarian

2024 Ron Rathbone Local History Competition



Lydham Hall

Olga Sedneva was announced as the winner of the 2024 Ron Rathbone Local History Competition in a ceremony held at Lydham Hall on the 26th of October.

The competition had two categories this year, an open category and a high school category. This year's entries were judged by Dr Paula Hamilton, Anne Slattery OAM, Julie Fitzsimmons and Mellissa Zimmerman.

Olga Sedneva was awarded the \$5,000 prize for her essay in the open category with her entry: *Tempe House. Change of purpose, change of landscape.*

Tempe House is of exceptional historical and social significance, designed by renowned architect John Verge for Alexander Brodie Spark, and utilised by high-profile organisations including the Sisters of the Good Samaritans. Tempe House and its surrounding gardens have undergone several changes over the years. Olga's work looks at the physical and social changes of Tempe House from colonial times to the end of the 20th century through investigations into a number of artworks, drawings and maps.

Riya Suvarna was awarded \$500 for her entry in the high school category: *History - made to be remembered. Why is Bayside's local history so important?*

Two recognitions of efforts were given, one in each category, being awarded to Kodie Mason for her entry *What does the life of Biyarung reveal about the participation of Indigenous people in Indigenous and colonial society and economy in the 19th century?* and to Joshua Osei-Agyei for his entry *A Crook Cooks River.*

Laura Daaboul

Local History Librarian



Scan the QR code to read the winning entries or you can read them at the Rockdale Library local studies area.



L to R: Joshua Osei-Agyei, Riya Suvarna, Councillor Liz Barlow, Mayor Edward Mc Dougall, Olga Sedneva, Director City Performance Richard Sheridan and Deputy Mayor Heidi Lee Douglas



Nancy Hillier OAM Memorial Lecture

On Thursday, 7 November, the annual Nancy Hillier OAM Memorial Lecture took place at Botany Town Hall, celebrating the legacy of Nancy Hillier, a passionate advocate for environmental and social justice in Botany Bay. The event was a collaboration between Bayside Council, The Botany Historic Trust, the University of NSW, and Women's Environmental Leadership Australia (WELA).

This year's lecture focused on women in environmental leadership and advocacy and featured an intergenerational panel discussion, where women from different generations shared their creative and bold approaches to tackling environmental challenges. Through personal stories and insights, the panel,



A display of calls to action from Nancy Hillier's Archives

consisting of Maria Poulos, Julie Lyford OAM, Valentina Campos, Nina Gbor, chaired by Professor Tema Milstein explored both the obstacles and successes in their activism and provided a powerful platform for fearless women who are challenging the status quo in the pursuit of environmental progress. The 130 attendees also engaged in an interactive mapping activity, connected with each other and celebrated the legacy and future of community-driven leadership.

The evening highlighted the power of women changemakers who push boundaries, advocate for progress, and inspire others to take action.

This annual event not only honours Nancy Hillier's tireless work but also underscores the ongoing importance of grassroots environmental advocacy.

By bringing together community members, environmental leaders, and activists, the event encouraged reflection on past achievements while also envisioning new paths for future advocacy. It was a night of inspiration and empowerment, shining a spotlight on the vital role of women in leading change, breaking barriers, and shaping a more sustainable and just future for all.

Natalie Funston
Senior Specialist Librarian and

Laura Daaboul
Local History Librarian



The crowd tuned in to the panel discussion

Farewell and Welcomes

On 11 May the Botany Historical Trust farewelled Bayside's Local History Librarian Alison Wishart at her final event for Bayside Council. The Botany Historical Trust represented by Jacqueline Milledge presented Alison with flowers to thank her for her work and support over the last three years.

Alison worked for Bayside Council from 2021 first as the Community History Project Officer and then as the Local History Librarian based at Mascot Library. Alison worked on an audit of the local history collections as well as curating exhibitions, organizing talks and responding to local history enquiries. One of her notable achievements was researching and curating the exhibition *A Park for the people: Jack Munday and the Eastlakes Green Ban* for which Bayside Council won the Macquarie-PHA Applied History Award in 2021.



Jacqueline Milledge presenting flowers to Alison Wishart at the Mascot's Miracle local history talk



Our new Local History Librarians Celia Piper and Laura Daaboul

Welcome to Laura Daaboul and Celia Piper who have recently started with Bayside Council as Local History Librarians. Laura is based at Mascot Library and Celia is based at Rockdale and is covering Kirsten Broderick's position while she is on extended leave.

Celia has previous experience in libraries as a 1-person team, running all parts of a library service and processes. She has catalogued a rural museum from scratch, assisting with the setting up of an acquisition and donation process, ensuring that all objects are now recorded.

Celia has worked with many local groups such as Historical Societies and community development groups in assisting and leading local history projects, from exhibitions and history walks to the collating of servicemen and women records, and digitisation and recording of a local historian's collection.

Laura has a background in libraries and archival institutions, with expertise in managing both physical and digital records. Her experience includes providing research and reference services, as well as accessioning, arranging, and describing materials to ensure proper cataloguing and preservation. Prior to joining Bayside Council, Laura contributed to a large-scale project focused on appraising, accessioning, and digitising over 18,000 historic audiovisual items, ensuring their ongoing accessibility and discoverability into the future.

While based in separate locations Laura and Celia are working closely together to continue to conserve and highlight the many facets of Bayside's history through exhibitions, and a program of events.

Natalie Funston
Senior Specialist Librarian



MASCOT LIBRARY

PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION 2024

The exhibition at Mascot Library and George Hanna Memorial Museum was updated to showcase the winners and finalists of the Bayside 2024 Photographic Competition in December.

Through their artistic vision, Bayside residents have captured the beauty and diversity of our community and landscapes. The impressive array of photographs on display offers a glimpse into what makes Bayside such a vibrant cultural and creative exchange in Southern Sydney.



Transport by Maria Franklin



"Wharf" by Michelle Sparkes. Open Category Winner



Your Neighbourhood by Edward Adhikari



Exhibition area at Mascot Library and George Hanna Memorial Museum

Library visitors are taking full advantage of the space, enjoying studying and reading in the visually engaging environment. The 2024 Bayside Photography Competition Exhibition will be open until April and will be accompanied by a series of public programs.

Flashback Friday

The local history team have been writing “Flashback Friday” posts on social media to engage the community by sharing intriguing stories and images from our local history collection. Since 2015, these posts have aimed at fostering a sense of connection and pride in our shared heritage, making history accessible and relevant to residents. By highlighting significant events, places, and people, we encourage conversations and reflections that deepen our community’s understanding of its own history.

Additionally, these posts serve to preserve and celebrate our local culture, ensuring that the rich tapestry of our past remains alive in the minds of current and future generations.

It’s been our pleasure to research and explore the local history of Bayside to create these Flashback Friday posts over the past years. On average, we write two posts a month, attempting to cover topics that represent all parts of our local government area.

Crafting these social media posts often feels like a balancing act as we must carefully consider what to include and what to leave out. For if this balance isn’t struck just right, the public is usually quick to share their feedback in the comments!

The following posts showcase some of the unique and engaging examples of people, places and significant events of our shared local history.

Places



Princes Highway, Rockdale 1937

The Princes Highway was named in 1920 for the Prince of Wales's, Edward VII's visit to Australia. He was originally set to travel from Melbourne to Sydney on the highway, however he never actually made the journey.

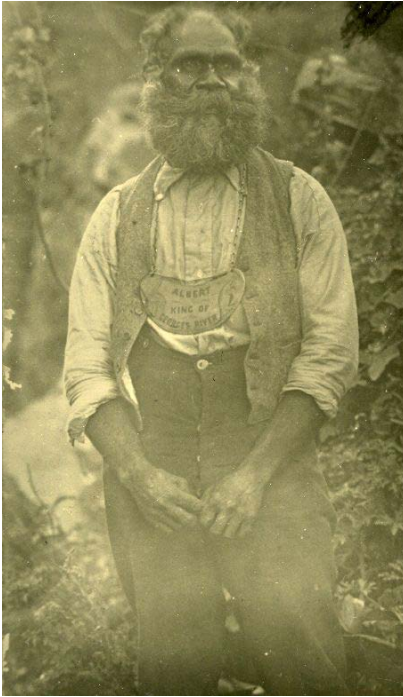
The highway today is 1,941 kms in length and joins Sydney with Adelaide via Melbourne. It serves as a crucial artery for the many Bayside residents and visitors travelling around the LGA.



GMH Pagewood 1962

General Motors Holden's Pagewood factory was officially opened by former Prime Minister Robert Menzies on 15 February 1940 and was highly regarded due to its excellent working conditions. World War II saw the factory stop assembling Vauxhall, Chevrolet, Pontiac and Bedford vehicles and shift to producing military equipment. After the war, vehicle production resumed and by 1948, GMH launched the very popular Holden FX and continued to produce vehicles until its closure in August 1980.

Significant Events



Albert King of Georges River

It is believed Albert was a Dharawal man who lived along the shores of Kogarah Bay towards the end of the nineteenth century. This photograph was taken during the 1880s and shows Albert wearing a brass breastplate around his neck, which is inscribed: 'Albert King of Georges River'.

Sadly, like many First Australians, Albert was made to wear this breastplate so colonial authorities could identify him as a local Aboriginal leader. The practice of making Aboriginal Elders wear breastplates mainly occurred between the mid nineteenth to early twentieth century.

The breastplates were often inscribed with the title of "King", "Queen", or sometimes even "Prince".

The theme of this year's National NAIDOC week - "For Our Elders" - looks at how past and present generations of Elders have played, and continue to play, an important role in communities and families. NAIDOC week is a time to both celebrate Australia's First Nations people and to remember those like 'Albert', who bravely led his people despite being forced to go against his own cultural practices and beliefs. We pay our respects to the Elders of the past and to those who continue to lead their people/mob today.



*Sydney Olympic 2000
From the Bayside Council Local History Collection*

On the morning before the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games began, thousands of residents lined Botany Road, Page Street, and Wentworth Avenue to see the Olympic Torch's grand journey through the city

Among the torchbearers was former Olympic Men's 20km and 50km Race Walk competitor Ron Crawford, the esteemed President of the Randwick Botany Harriers Club

Congratulations to all Australian athletes who competed at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, who have made this campaign the most successful Games in Australian history!

People



Phyllis Mary Boissier (1884-1976)

Phyllis Mary Bossier (1884-1976) was a remarkable woman from Smith St, Mascot, whose courage and determination during the First World War saved many lives.

Enlisting as a nurse on the 24th November 1914 at age 30, Phyllis was posted to Egypt to treat soldiers returning from Gallipoli, and then in France during the Battles of the Somme. She was awarded a Royal Red Cross 2nd Class medal presented by King George V in 1916, for her exceptional leadership.

After the war, Phyllis continued her nursing career at Prince Alfred Hospital until 1935. In 1921, she made history by becoming the first female Justice of the Peace in New South Wales, where she also continued to help soldiers struggling with shell shock.

Phyllis Boissier lived a life of service. Passing away at age 90, her legacy as a trailblazer, nurse, and champion of the returned soldiers' recovery continues to inspire us.



*The Founder of Sydney Airport, Nigel Love
From National Library of Australia*

World War I veteran and pioneering aviator Nigel Love discovered a closed abattoir in Mascot surrounded by flat paddocks - perfect for landing planes. In 1919 Love leased the land, formed the Australian Aircraft and Engineering Company and established Mascot Aerodrome.

On 19 November that same year, he took off from his new airstrip with photographer Billy Marshall, marking the first passenger flight out of what would later become Sydney Airport. Despite government takeover in 1923, Love's passion laid the foundation for Australia's aviation industry.

Throughout the process of writing these historical posts, I have developed a deeper appreciation for the histories of Botany and Rockdale, which in turn has given me a greater sense of connection to the area itself. I hope that through these writings, others will also experience this connection and come to value the rich histories of these areas as I have. You can find our Flashback Friday posts on the Bayside Council's social media channels.

Explore local history with us by following these links:

Facebook facebook.com/baysidelibrariesnsw or facebook.com/BaysideNSW

Instagram instagram.com/baysidelibrariesnsw

We invite you to engage with us and share your own memories or connections to our local history!

Dean Palmer, Library Graduate

