



**Altona Laverton
Historical Society Inc.**
PO Box 236 Altona 3018

NEWSLETTER

Remembrance Day



Remembrance Day is one of the most important days on our commemorative calendar. It's a day when we acknowledge those who died while serving in wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations. Remembrance Day is held on 11 November each year. This is the anniversary of the Armistice that ended fighting with Germany in World War I. People in Australia, and many other countries, observe one minute's silence at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month because that's when the

Armistice came into effect. It's a time to honour our service personnel who died in service of Australia.

We believe that we need to also remember our local heroes, who during the Second World War, gave their lives so that we might enjoy the freedom that we have today. In April 1966, a new land sub-division was established at the north-west corner of Freeman and Blackshaws Roads in Altona North. A list of names was submitted for the new streets and courts, and the Altona Council chose the first eight to be named after service personnel who were killed in action during World War 2. They were also listed on the Memorial standing in front of the council buildings in Civic Parade. Two of those who served on HMAS Sydney, which was lost off the Western Australian coast in November 1941, were Able Seaman George Thomas Carthy and Stoker Second Class Douglas John Knapp.

George Thomas Carthy was born 14 June 1920 in Fitzroy, the eldest of two children born to parents George Martin Carthy and Daisy Carthy (nee Sparks). At the time of George's birth, the Carthy's were living in Seves Street, Altona, having moved to the seaside suburb just after their marriage in 1918. In March 1925, George Thomas Carthy was to lose his father who was only 47. It is believed that he died from a snake bite for which he was unable to receive treatment in time. Daisy Carthy was now left to raise her two infant children.

The family remained living in their home in Seves Street, and both children attended the local Altona primary school. When World War 2 was declared in September 1939, George Thomas Carthy immediately enlisted with the Royal Australia Navy in Williamstown. George was nineteen years old. It is believed that his father, George Martin Carthy, served in the Australian navy during World War 1, being assigned to the *HMAS Sydney*¹. So, perhaps George Thomas Carthy saw his enlistment as not only his duty to his country, but also as keeping up a family tradition.

George completed his training at the naval base Cerberus before being assigned to the HMAS Westralia in February 1940. The Westralia spent time patrolling East Indies waters for enemy shipping before travelling to Darwin for exercises and drills. She then returned to Fremantle in late May to undertake escort duties.

On 25 June, the Westralia departed Fremantle for Colombo to begin a period of patrol and escort duties on the East Indies Station, which was to last until January 1941. It was an uneventful routine service over a large area of sea, which covered the whole of the northern and western areas of the Indian Ocean from Sumatra to Bombay, and South to Mauritius.

¹ This was the HMAS Sydney (I). The first HMAS Sydney was a Town Class light cruiser; one of three ordered in 1910, which were part of the initial Australian fleet unit. It was launched in 1912 and decommissioned in 1928. It famously sunk the German naval vessel Emden in November 1914. The HMAS Sydney (II) that George served on was the replacement ship which bore the same name.

On 23 December 1940, the Westralia made her final departure from Colombo, detached from the East Indies station, and proceeded for Fremantle. On 11 January 1941, she returned to Sydney after an absence of ten months. It was here that George found himself reassigned to the HMAS Sydney that had recently been refitted. This would have been when fellow Altonian Douglas Knapp was also assigned to HMAS Sydney. Given the size of the crew and that both men had not enlisted at the same time, they may never have met or possibly known each other.

Douglas John Knapp was born 8 July 1923 in North Kensington London, the third child born to Frederick Marlow Knapp and Rose Louisa Knapp (nee Daley). By the time that Douglas was born, his father had already sailed to Australia (February 1923) to find a new home and life for his growing family and to seek out employment opportunities. Having found both in the Melbourne suburb of Fitzroy, he sent for his family to join him in Australia. In May 1925, Rose and their three children, aged five, four and nearly two, arrived onboard SS Berrima at Port Melbourne to be reunited with Frederick.

Following a short stay in Fitzroy, the family moved to Footscray where Frederick took up employment at the Defense Explosive Factory commencing around 1927. Douglas and his two elder siblings attended the local schools whilst getting used to the Australian way of life and the change in climate. The family remained in Footscray until about 1939/1940 when they moved to the seaside suburb of Altona and moved into their new home in Davies Street. It was around the same time (September 1939) that World War 2 had commenced and Frederick's role at the Defense Explosive Factory was more critical to Australian's war efforts.

On 6 January 1941, at the age of 17, Douglas enlisted into the Royal Australia Navy at Williamstown. At about the same time as Douglas' enlistment, HMAS Sydney was on its way back to the port of Sydney after a successful and eventful campaign within the Mediterranean Sea. Both Douglas and HMAS Sydney were now on course for a fateful destiny in history.

Douglas completed his training at the naval base Cerberus before being assigned to a refitted-out HMAS Sydney on 23 May 1941. For the next five months HMAS Sydney with Douglas onboard undertook escort duties around the coast of Australia and through the islands of Indonesia and Fiji. Their key job was to ensure the safety of merchant and troop transport ships. In July 1941, Douglas celebrated his eighteenth birthday on board.

HMAS Sydney November 1941

HMAS Sydney November 1941



HMAS Sydney (image courtesy of Virtual War Memorial Australia)

HMAS *Sydney* sailed from Fremantle on Armistice Day, 11 November 1941, to escort the troopship *Zealandia* to Sunda Strait, where she was relieved by the British cruiser HMAS *Durban* for the last leg of the voyage to Singapore. The voyage was without incident. At noon on 17 November, the *Zealandia* was turned over to *HMS Durban* and the *HMAS Sydney* then proceeded back to Fremantle.

She was expected to arrive on the afternoon of 20 November 1941.

However, she did not arrive on time, prompting the District Naval Officer in Western Australia to report this to the Naval Board at 11 a.m. the

following day. This did not immediately concern the Naval Board as they had been advised that the *Zealandia* had arrived later than anticipated and it was assumed that the *Sydney* had been delayed too. There was also the possibility that she might have been diverted for another purpose and had not broken radio silence. When she had not returned by 23 November, she was instructed by the Naval Board to report by signal. There was no reply.

The *HMAS Sydney* had been proceeding south along the northwest coast of Western Australia when she sighted what appeared to be a merchant vessel at about 16:00 on 19 November 1941, some 130 miles west of Shark Bay. The ship was in fact the German naval ship *HSK² Kormoran*. The German navy's largest auxiliary cruiser, the *Kormoran*, now disguised as the Dutch merchant ship *MV Straat Malakka*, had entered the Indian Ocean some months ago and was making her presence felt throughout the region.

HMAS Sydney challenged the vessel continuously, using her searchlight while at the same time closing the range between the two ships. Merchant vessels were known to be less efficient at visual signalling and so, the Germans exploited this knowledge through their actions on their flag deck and by their slow response to the *Sydney's* visual challenges. At 17:00, to further the deception, *Kormoran* broadcast a 'suspicious ship' message, feigning a cry for help in the name of *Straat Malakka*.

The *Sydney's* efforts to establish the true identity of the vessel resulted in her closing the range to a point where she no longer had the advantage of her superior armament. At approximately 17:15, the *Sydney* had drawn almost abeam of *Kormoran* to starboard, less than a kilometre distant. Finally, when concealment of this vessel's true identity was no longer possible, and with the advantage of surprise, the German captain ordered the Dutch colours to be struck. They hoisted the German naval ensign and opened fire at approximately 17:30 with all armament at a range 'somewhat more than a kilometre.

It is likely that the raider's first salvo destroyed the *HMAS Sydney's* bridge, with the result that her primary control was immediately put out of action. The *Sydney's* own guns opened fire almost simultaneously with a full salvo that passed over *Kormoran* without inflicting damage. *Kormoran* again scored hits on the *Sydney*, with two salvos hitting her bridge and midship sections. According to the Germans, all of the *Kormoran's* armament was brought to bear on the *Sydney*, concentrating on her bridge, torpedo tubes, and anti-aircraft batteries. It was reported by the Germans that the *HMAS Sydney* opened fire fast and with great accuracy, hitting the *Kormoran* in the funnel and engine room, the latter of which quickly became on fire. Smoke from the fire hid the *Sydney* from *Kormoran's* bridge, but the raider continued to engage with her guns as the range opened to approximately 4400 yards. At around this time, one of the raider's two torpedoes struck the *Sydney*.

The HMAS Sydney, crippled and now on fire from the bridge to the funnel, steamed slowly to the south, returning only sporadic fire from her secondary armament. Although this fierce action had lasted only half an hour, both ships had been dealt mortal blows. The Sydney then changed course and left the area, being last seen by the Germans about ten miles away, heading approximately southeast.

² HSK – was used by the German navy being, ‘Handels-Stör-Kreuzer’ meaning Military Cruiser Ship

Thereafter, until about 22:00, all that was seen was a distant glare, then occasional flickering’s until midnight, at which time the *Sydney* disappeared.

Of the *HMAS Sydney's* total complement of 42 officers and 603 ratings, tragically none survived, including George Thomas Carthy and Douglas John Knapp. It was some days later before the loss of the Sydney was realised as she had not returned to port as scheduled. A search had also picked up survivors from the German ship on lifeboats and from the shore. It was sometime later that the families and the general population were advised of the loss. The wreckage of the *HMAS Sydney* and war grave for 645 sailors was not located until 16 March 2008. So many young men, including George Thomas Carthy and Douglas John Knapp, gave their lives in their duty to protect our coastline and country.

Graeme Reilly (Altona Laverton Historical Society)

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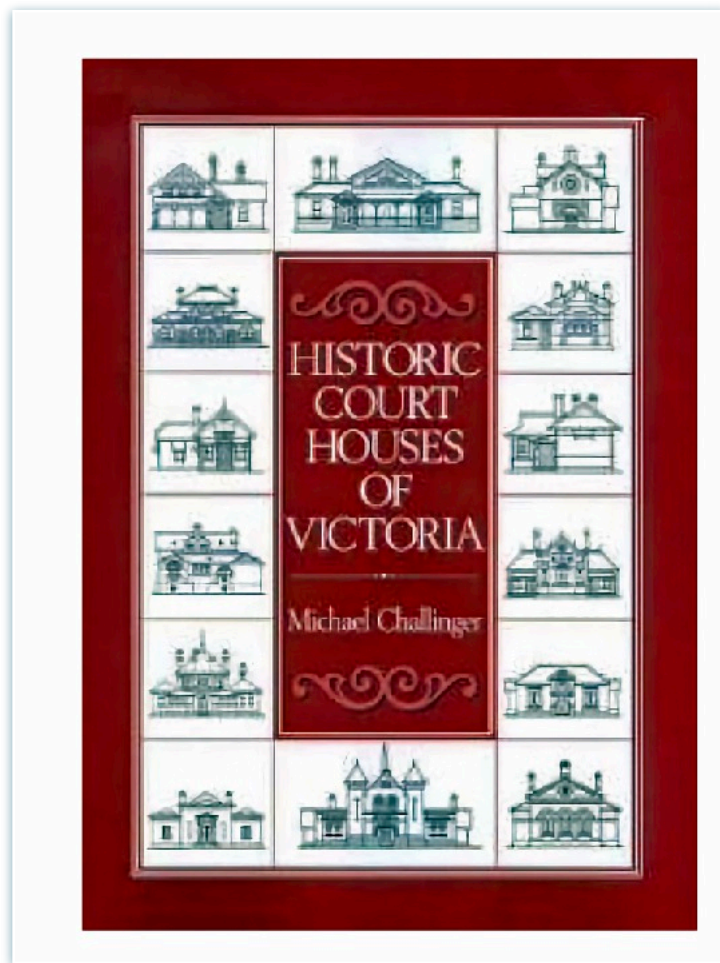
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National Archives of Australia, WW2 Service Records – Douglas John Knapp, Item 4434142, accessed 26 June 2023

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HISTORIC COURTHOUSES OF VICTORIA



As mentioned in our previous Newsletter in April our President, Owen Hyde passed away on March 10, 2023.



Owen (pictured left) left us with a legacy of 48 copies of the Book-“**Historic Court Houses of Victoria**” written by Michael Challenger, a Barrister and one of Owen’s friends.

Originally published in 2001, the contents are on Michael’s web site: summarised as:

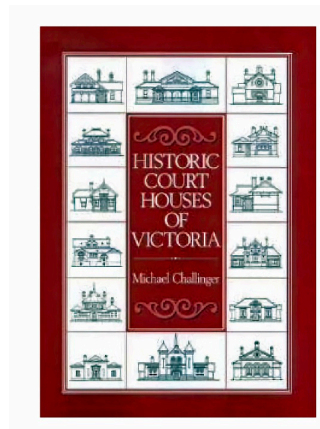
“Many of Victoria’s court houses are historically significant. Some are architectural gems and all have local interest. This book details every one of Victoria’s remaining pre-1945 court houses, providing a photograph and description of each building and accounts of some of the cases heard in them.”

The Altona Laverton Historical Society advised the Royal Historical Society of Victoria of the books held by us, and the RHSV kindly published their availability on their website.

The response was immediate and ALHS have provided copies free of charge on a first come, first served basis to the following groups or individuals in the areas shown.

Some have kindly offered payment to cover postage costs incurred.

The ALHS is proud to have this fine publication being made available to those with an interest in the subject matter.



Books were posted to the following Historical Societies or individuals who sought a copy

| | |
|----------------|--------------|
| Port Melbourne | Kyneton |
| Red Cliff, | Araphiles |
| Port Fairy | Heidelberg |
| Terang | Chelsea |
| Doncaster | Narre Warren |
| Camperdown | Berwick |
| Talbot | Brighton |
| Ararat | Maldon |
| Birchip | Kororoit |
| Yackandandah | Buninyong |
| Charlton | Collingwood |
| Wonthaggi | Cheltenham |
| Jamieson | Balmoral |
| Bacchus marsh | Hawthorn |
| Hastings | Ouyen |
| Benalla | Mortlake |
| Mt. Rouse | Cranbourne |
| Lilydale | |

Our supply of Books has now been distributed

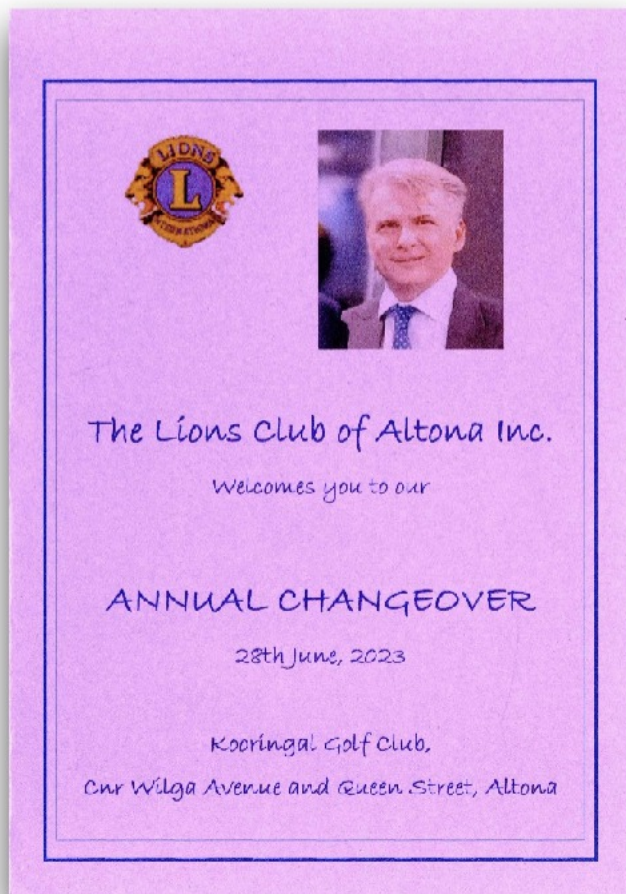
Altona Lions Annual Changeover Dinner

Ann Cassar

On the evening of Wednesday 28 June, I had the pleasure of representing Altona Laverton Historical Society at the Altona Lions annual changeover dinner held at Koorringal Golf Club. For the uninitiated, this is a formal evening when they change over to their new incoming committee for the next 12 months. It was very well attended by Altona Lions members, members from other service organisations, grant recipients, and the Mayor of Hobsons Bay City Council, Tony Briffa, totalling almost 50 people in all.

Lions distributed a number of grants to local organisations to assist them in the community work they are carrying out. Along with Williamstown Historical Society and Truganina Explosives Reserve Preservation Society, we were each awarded \$500 to fund the purchase of our own copies of the Filemaker computer program for use in cataloguing our historic collections.

As the very enjoyable evening progressed, it became obvious there was just not enough time available for all people receiving grants and other awards to make thank you speeches, so I was happy to forego that opportunity to speak publicly. However, I do feel it is important to pass on the whole 20 seconds of what I had in mind to say, which I'm more than happy to reproduce below.



On behalf of the Altona Laverton Historical Society, I would like to thank Altona Lions for this very generous and most welcome gift for us to purchase our own copy of the Filemaker computer program, taking us to the next level of caring for our collection at the Altona Homestead Museum, building on the skill and guidance we have been privileged to receive from Jim Hevey for more than 10 years now on how to use Filemaker. Thank you all.

Comments above are from ALHS Member Ann Cassar

ALTONA CITY WILL BE CELEBRATING 35 YEARS OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE TWIN CITY AGREEMENT WITH ANJO CITY-JAPAN IN OCTOBER

In **October 1988**, the former City of Altona Council (now Hobsons Bay City Council) established a sister city agreement with the City of Anjo in Japan. The two cities aim to develop friendship and goodwill through the relationship, as well as exchanging information, ideas, culture and traditions.

As a result of the agreement, the Altona (now Hobsons Bay) International Friendship Association was formed by local residents. The association organises the annual student exchange program which provides an opportunity for students from both countries to experience a different culture and lifestyle. Around 200 young people have participated through the Hobsons Bay International Friendship Association exchange to Japan.

It also participates in a cultural exchange program separate to the student exchange. A visit is planned on a cycle of every three years.

About Anjo, Japan

Anjo is a city in the Aichi Prefecture in Japan, situated near the centre of the Nishi-Mikawa Plain, around 30 km from Nagoya. It covers an area approximately 86 square kms with a population of almost 190,000 people.



Anjo Castle



Anjo was originally an agricultural district; it now has a mixed economy including manufacturing, and also still known for rice, wheat, soybeans, figs, Japanese pears and cucumbers. Due to its proximity to **Toyota City**, it is home to factories supplying components into the automobile industry.

A visit to Anjo should always include a visit to the Toyota Museum. Pictured is the Toyota Anjo Electronic Component Plant.



Mayor Cr.D.N.Duane J.P. welcomed the Japanese Visitors in 1988 to a Council Meeting



Cr. A.B.Shaw accepts a document from Japanese Representative while the Mayor Cr Duane looks on

HOBSONS BAY INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION INC.

The Hobsons Bay International Friendship Association Inc. (HBIFA) assists Council with its sister-city relationship with Anjo and promotes the friendship throughout Hobsons Bay. The HBIFA is made up of local families who donate their time, effort and enthusiasm to ensure the continues success of the alliance.

The group arranges the annual student exchange program where four students and a chaperone visit Anjo, stay with host families for two weeks, and experience Japan's culture.

The local students and chaperone host the Japanese students and show them life in Australia. HBIFA also supports a regular exchange program, hosting a delegation of adults from Japan through home-stays and itinerary planning and reciprocal group visits to Anjo. The HBIFA also holds a Japanese writing competition for secondary students.

THE ANNUAL STUDENT EXCHANGE

Each year a delegation of four students aged between 14 and 17 and an adult group leader (Chaperone) are selected to participate in the annual student exchange.

The students applying must be residents of Hobsons Bay. The Chaperone, however, must work or live in Hobsons Bay. Past students of the exchange are also eligible.

The exchange involves hosting a Japanese student for ten days during the winter school holiday break and then visiting Anjo in the following month, as a representative of the City of Hobsons Bay, and being hosted for two weeks by the reciprocal Japanese host family.

Whilst in Hobsons Bay the students and their Japanese guests visit a number of local attractions. These include Newport Lakes, Williamstown and Altona beaches and many other interesting places in and around Hobsons Bay and Melbourne. They also experience some of regional Victoria including Sovereign Hill Ballarat and visit a nature park to see our native animals. The Japanese students engage in Australian culture while living with their host families. They also experience our Indigenous history through the observation of traditional aboriginal dance and practice.



Pictured above are Japanese Students who visited the Altona Homestead Museum in July 2023, in company with an interpreter and (not in photo) Mrs. Joy Martin-President, of the Hobsons Bay International Friendship Association. ALHS member Jim Hevey conducted the visitors around the site on the day.

It is understood that Adult visitors from Japan are expected to visit Altona in October 2023.

HOBSONS BAY INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION INC.

In Japan the student delegation has many great opportunities to discover and appreciate Japanese culture. The Australian delegates visit a Japanese teahouse, Japanese temples and local schools and are guests at the famous Tanabata Festival.

The home stay accommodation gives students a valuable insight into the lifestyle of Japanese families and the opportunity to immerse themselves in Japanese culture and language.

Both delegations also attend a number of official functions in each country, including a Mayoral reception and community celebrations. It is here that the students and Chaperone give a brief self-introduction in the language of their host country as well as a group performance. The Association prepares the delegates through participation in a short course to develop their self-introduction/speeches and group performance.

The exchange is fun yet educational. More than 200 students have participated in the exchange along with 30 adult group leaders and has resulted in many life-long friendships being formed.



Japanese Culture

A stylish person at Fukoka City Hall Japan

Photographer Gerald Shields 2018

Jim Hevey

Research Sources:

Hobsons Bay City Council web site.

HBIF web site.

Google Searches

Wikipedia

ALHS images

Photo Image-Gerald Shields