

CANTERBURY HISTORY GROUP



PRESIDENT Neil Curry
CONTACT: 98305896
SECRETARY AND EDITOR
Elizabeth Wilson
canthist@gmail.com

Newsletter June 2023

Greetings to members and friends of the Canterbury History Group

Our next meeting will be on **Monday June 26th at 8.00pm** in St Paul's Parish Centre, Church Street Canterbury.

Our speaker: Local resident, Ian Berg, will tell us about his book *Jas A Monroe & Co: The largest Garage in Melbourne*. See excerpt below:

There is a McDonalds restaurant in an old bluestone building at the top end of Elizabeth Street right next to Victoria Market. Originally constructed by James McEwan of hardware fame, in 1909, another Scotsman purchased the building and the entire block for the purpose of establishing a coachbuilding operation. His name was Jas Munro, and the site then became home to the largest and most successful motor agent in Australia prior to World War One.

The Munro story is about pioneering motoring, and the many ventures of a well-connected risk taker. The site remained in family ownership for over a century and housed the untouched Jas. A. Munro & Co. archives.

Below: *The Elizabeth Street frontage of the Munro works is pictured with the showroom on the left and the bluestone building, now a McDonalds restaurant, on the right.*



Future meetings: We hope to be in our new venue by September but we will let you know.

July and August recess No meetings.

Monday 25th Sept Emeritus Professor Graeme Davison will speak to us about his research for his latest book, 'My Grandfather's Clock' which will be launched in September. He will explain the historical events which affected many Scottish immigrants to Victoria: frontier warfare in the Scottish borders, dispossession of their land, economic turmoil and emigration.

Monday Oct 23rd Dinner: Emeritus Prof Richard Broome will speak on Indigenous peoples of Melbourne and Victoria and the impact of early settlement.

Monday November 27th Christmas lunch

The musical Rohlk Family in North Fitzroy and Canterbury

a sequel to the story of Flight Lieutenant Lyle Edward Bowes told in our March 2023 Newsletter.

I am indebted to the Collingwood Historical Society Inc. for much of the information in this article, for photos, and for giving us permission to use them. Libby Wilson.

Sometimes a hunch pays off when researching people or places in the past. Such was the case when I was trying to discover the address in Canterbury where the Bowes family were living when Lyle Edward Bowes was born in 1923. There were no Bowes listed in the Sands and McDougall directories for Canterbury that year. Could the Bowes family be living with their maternal parents - and who might they be?

I knew that Lyle's parents were William Edward and Gladys Anna Wilhelmina Bowes. The names Anna Wilhelmina could suggest Dutch or Germanic parentage. So, I decided to search for any non-Anglo names in the Sands and McDougall listings for Canterbury and quickly came upon Otto A. Rohlk, a musician, living at 9 Bryson Street.

9 Bryson Street, 2023



Otto Asmus Rohlk was born in 1864, in Tarnagulla, country Victoria, to August Asmus Rohlk and Mathilde Junge. In the 1850s, they had emigrated to the goldfields from Schleswig-Holstein which is the disputed territory on the border of Denmark and Germany. Otto's older siblings, Georg and Mathilde were also born in Tarnagulla and a younger brother Edwin at Newbridge. Sadly, two younger sisters died in infancy. The family moved to Ironbark (Bendigo) where their mother died in 1872.¹ Otto was only 8.

Six years later in 1878, August moved the family to Melbourne where he worked as a musician and music teacher in Carlton until he died, aged 55, in 1883. His house in Carlton became part of the

¹ Collingwood Historical Society Inc., Collingwood Notables Database, Otto Asmus Rohlk.

Lemon Tree Hotel. His musical legacy lived on in the son named Asmus after him.

Otto Asmus Rohlk may, for a while, have been a partner in Rohlk Brothers Shoe Emporium with his older brother Georg but he soon pursued a musical career. It is probable that his father had taught Otto to play an instrument but nothing is known about his training. We do know that as a child of 12 his left thumb had been amputated after an accident but he had managed to find a way of playing instruments without it. He was a pianist and cellist and orchestra conductor.



Victoria Parade Collingwood looking East. On the left is Georg Rohlk's boot-making business and the terrace of 5 shops which he bought.²

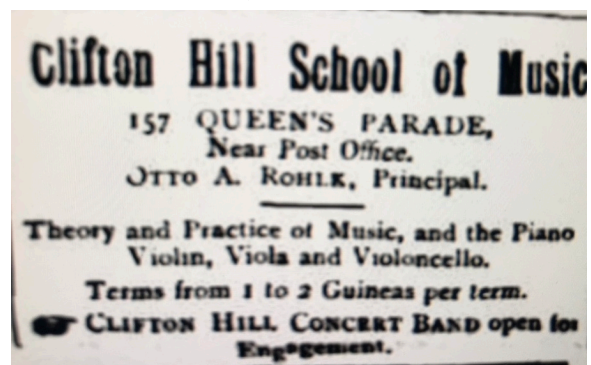
On 22nd December 1890,

Otto married Anna Carolina (Carrie) Hogrefe at the German Lutheran Church in East Melbourne; Born in 1867, she was the daughter of German immigrants who lived in Richmond. Carrie's younger brother Julius Hogrefe was a violinist and they were a musical family. The young couple moved to 230 McKean Street, North Fitzroy (see below left) where Otto Rohlk established the Clifton Hill School of Music, advertising weekly in the local paper, *The Mercury*.



Newspapers frequently carried reports of his pupils' concerts such as one reported in August 1892 at the Albert Hall, Queens Parade, Clifton Hill, '*... Mr Rohlk in his two bracketed solos shows that Clifton Hill possesses in him a sterling musician*'. As well as these concerts, his orchestras often played at local events and fundraisers: St Joseph's Church Fair, The Magpies Fair and Art Union (fundraiser for the Collingwood Football Club), Collingwood State School's Entertainment and Prize-giving, St Andrew's Cricket Club Concert and Dance, the Fitzroy Horticultural Society, and civic moonlight concerts at Fitzroy cricket ground. At the series of ANA (Australian Natives Association) ladies subscription dances ... in North Fitzroy, '*splendid music was supplied by Herr Otto Rohk's band*' and ... in 1897 Otto '*played the violoncello, while his orchestra played many other events*' at St John's Church in Queens Parade³

The year after they were married the first of two daughters: Frieda Dolce Carol was born in 1891. Sadly, their first son, Julius Mozart, died at 4 months in October, 1893. Anna Gladys Wilhelmina was born in 1894 (later Mrs Bowes) and Karl Oswald, the youngest child followed in 1895. Shortly after his birth, around 1896, the Rohlks moved across the road to a two-storey house at 211 McKean Street. Later in 1898, they rented '157 Queens Parade where the ground floor shop would have provided a better space for



² Collingwood Historical Society Inc., Collingwood Notables Database, Otto Asmus Rohlk.

³ Ibid.

lessons and practice, separated from the upstairs dwelling.' Otto added 'piano tuning and violin importing to his repertoire'.⁴ When the Clifton Hill branch of the ANA decided to form an orchestra in 1899, Otto Rohlk was chosen as hon. conductor and the orchestra practised in his studio. He assembled a number of orchestras from his extensive list of students.

They were performing in other areas of Melbourne too. Rohlk's orchestra in 1906 became a regular at open air concerts held fortnightly at the South Melbourne Cricket Club. 'Two of his pupils became well-known performers, especially Elsie Berry. As well as piano, she specialised in elocution, while her sister was later well known as Madame Ethel Ashton, a pianist and soprano.'⁵

In 1909 Otto had relocated his Clifton Hill School of Music to a small cottage at 193 Queens Parade. Then in 1912, the Rohlk family moved to live in Canterbury. At first, they lived on the east side of Balwyn Road near the corner of Canterbury Road but in 1915 they moved to 9 Bryson Street.⁶ In spite of the distance, Otto Rohlk continued his Clifton Hill School of Music until 1916 or 17 but there were fewer reports in the press of his musical performances.⁷ Why did the Rohlk family move from North Fitzroy to sparsely populated Canterbury? We can only speculate.

There was strong support in Canterbury for 'civic improvement' in the form of a Literary Society established in the 1890's, The Canterbury Public Library opened in 1907 in the Canterbury Gardens which had been reserved in 1903 and laid out in 1905.⁸ In 1909, the Canterbury Citizens Concerts Committee had held outdoor picture shows in the Canterbury Gardens with the screen near [what had originally been] creek level and the audience sitting on its banks. From December to April, concerts were held fortnightly, mixed with films 'with the music of the Kew Brass Band, as well as recitals and song.' This first season became so popular that the next year they were held weekly and if rain threatened, they moved to Golding's Hall at the western end of the gardens. The committee estimated that 'the weekly attendances averaged 300 people'⁹

Golding's Hall which had opened in 1897 at 190 Canterbury Road above his boot factory, had been the centre of communal life of Canterbury. It was used for dances, concerts, school speech days, meetings of the Literary Society, election meetings and a very successful gymnasium.



Canterbury Gardens looking east towards Maling Rd and the railway c 1910. (CHG)

However, in 1910, the upper space was needed for the expanding business and the hall was closed.¹⁰

⁴ Collingwood Historical Society, op. cit.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Sands and McDougall, Canterbury, 1912 to 1915

⁷ Collingwood Historical Society op. cit.

⁸ Don Gibb with Jill Barnard, Canterbury A History, 2022, pp. 93 and 97.

⁹ Ian Smith, 'Canterbury Picture Theatre'

¹⁰ R.L.Renwick, Golding's Hall and Alfred Golding- Pioneer of Secondary Industry in Canterbury, Notes, 14.6.68.

The Rohlk family's move to Canterbury probably slightly preceded the opening, on 27th November 1912, of the combined public hall and picture theatre in Maling Road. The auditorium was comparatively small, seating 614 patrons, 'more on the lines of a country hall' but it did have a stage and was used for concerts and performances as well as movies.¹¹ The shops around Theatre Place would not be added until the 1920s.¹² It is now an antique centre.

The Canterbury School of Music and the Canterbury Orchestra were founded by Otto Rohlk. As they had done in North Fitzroy, his family took part in fundraising activities in their new local area: a concert to raise funds for the Surrey Hills library in 1912 where Otto played the cello, Carrie the cornet and Frieda the clarinet.¹³ Frieda assisted her father with the Canterbury School of Music and developed her own career as performer and teacher. She joined the Southern Cross Women's Orchestra playing the clarinet and also specialised in 'dramatic and comic elocutionary performances'.¹⁴ When 600 people attended a concert in the Canterbury Theatre in September 1914 in aid of the newly formed Red Cross Society, it is likely that members of the Rohlk family participated in the 'tableaux, choirs, bands, an orchestra and individual songs and recitations'.¹⁵



Trove: Punch Melbourne, 8th June 1911 p. 12. Frieda Rohlk is shown 3rd from the left in the back row with her clarinet at a performance of the Southern Cross Women's Orchestra in the Melbourne Townhall on Empire Night.

sons: Glenn William and Lyle Edward at 'Warwillah', Gould Street, Long Island, Frankston.¹⁶

The records suggest that Rohlk family continued to live at 9 Bryson Street until 1936. Sometime in the 1930's Otto and Carrie Rohlk moved to Frankston where their daughter Gladys Bowes was living with her husband William Bowes and two

Son Karl Rohlk continued to live in the family home at 9 Bryson Street, listed under his name from 1937 (until listings ceased in 1974). Neville Daynes, who moved to 19 Bryson Street with his family in 1938 remembered Mr and Mrs Rohlk; 'he was a big broad shouldered man. They were a friendly but reserved couple I vaguely remember he was a musician and that the large front room was used for music.'¹⁷ Karl Rohlk died in 1986; his sister Frieda died in 1946 and Gladys Bowes in 1985.

Carrie and Otto Rohlk celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary in December 1940. Carrie died on 13th February 1941 and Otto only a few weeks later on 7th April.¹⁸ He had been a child of the gold rush era, hardworking and entrepreneurial. He (and Carrie) overcame early setbacks and tragedies to become a well-known musician and teacher and contribute generously to his community.

¹¹ Ibid. The theatre was built by F R Green, designed by architects Ward and Carleton.

¹² Don Gibb and Stuart Warmington, *Visions of a Village*, 2016, Alpha Printing, pp.14, 65 and 66

¹³ Collingwood Historical Society, op. cit.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Don Gibb with Jill Barnard, op. cit., p.104.

¹⁶ Trove: *The Argus*, July 8th 1944, p. 2.

¹⁷ Neville Daynes email 16.6.23.

¹⁸ Collingwood Historical Society op.cit.,

We would be grateful for any information about the Canterbury School of Music and/or The Canterbury Orchestra or performances involving the Rohlk family. Editor

.....

The information below was sent to Canterbury History Group by The Heritage Council of Victoria. They have launched a new Heritage Information Pack to explain to councils and the public how the system works. They suggest that 'protection of our heritage can be enabled by individual and community involvement. It all starts with you!' You can download it or print hard copies. See

https://heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/heritage-protection/heritage_info_pack/

The summary below contains links.

HERITAGE PROTECTION IN VICTORIA EXPLAINED

Respect for our cultural heritage involves protecting places and objects that have importance to us as a community. Identifying and registering places and objects of cultural significance helps us to protect and conserve them.

Heritage places and objects in Victoria are considered to be of either:

- state significance, or
- local significance.
- - [Various legislation governs heritage protection](#) at all levels.

1. State-level Victorian Heritage Register

Heritage places and objects of 'State-level cultural heritage significance' are included in the [Victorian Heritage Register](#). To be included in the Victorian Heritage Register, places and objects must meet the [Heritage Council of Victoria's assessment criteria](#). All heritage places and objects registered by the Heritage Council are considered to be important to understanding the history and development of Victoria.

Anyone can nominate heritage places and objects for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register. Registered heritage places are legally protected and cannot be altered without a permit or permit exemption from Heritage Victoria.

[Discover the steps to nominate a place or object on the Heritage Victoria website.](#)

[Apply for a permit or permit exemption from Heritage Victoria.](#)

Places that are of State-level cultural heritage significance are managed in accordance with the [Heritage Act 2017](#).

2. Local-level (Heritage Overlay)

Local councils record and protect places of value to the local community. Places of local significance may be protected by listing on a schedule to the [Heritage Overlay](#), under your local council's planning scheme. Local government manages the identification and protection of places under the planning scheme.

Councils are responsible for issuing planning permits for the use and development of heritage places under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

3. Classification by the National Trust

[The National Trust of Australia \(Victoria\)](#) is a community organisation that works towards preserving and protecting heritage places. Classification by the National Trust does not entail legal recognition.

Although the National Trust plays an important role in advocating heritage protection, it is not responsible for issuing heritage or planning permits.

4. Archaeology (Victorian Heritage Inventory)

The Victorian Heritage Inventory is a list of known historical archaeological sites in the State. Sites can be included in both the Victorian Heritage Register and the Victorian Heritage Inventory. An archaeological site is a place which:

- Contains buried evidence like an artefact, deposit or feature which is 75 years old or more.
- Provides information about past activity.
- Needs archaeological methods to reveal information about the place.
- Isn't associated only with Aboriginal use.

The *Heritage Act 2017* also allows for the inclusion of a site that is less than 75 years old in the Victorian Heritage Inventory, on the recommendation of the Executive Director, if the site is considered to have archaeological value.

The *Heritage Act 2017* also protects sites that are not listed in the Victorian Heritage Inventory.

Aboriginal archaeological sites are protected under the [Aboriginal Heritage Act](#), which is regulated by [First Peoples – State Relations](#).

If you think you have found evidence of an archaeological site, you must submit it to Heritage Victoria. All archaeological sites in Victoria are legally protected and cannot be disturbed without consent from Heritage Victoria.

[Discover the steps to report an archaeological site on the Heritage Victoria website.](#)

[Apply for an archaeology consent from Heritage Victoria.](#)

Historical archaeological sites are managed in accordance with the *Heritage Act 2017*.

Victorian Heritage Database

You can find information on places and objects of historical and cultural significance in Victoria in the [Victorian Heritage Database](#). The database lists not only all places and objects that are included in the Victorian Heritage Register, but a large number of heritage sites and items that are of local heritage significance or listed by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria). Entries in the database are labelled according to the relevant authority.

.....

The Bowling Club - Donation of Photos

The daughter of the last green keeper at the Canterbury Bowling Club, Ian Bartlett, has given us a collection of photos. She also drew a plan of the layout of the house which was entered from Kendall Street. The Bartlett family lived in the greenkeeper's house adjoining the club rooms from 1981 until the Bowling Club closed in 1988. The house has been preserved as part of the Canterbury Community Precinct. These are the only photos we have of the interior of the club. We have been given permission to use them. Thank you Cassie.



Opening Day 5.9.1987
Cassandra Bartlett gave Dame Pattie Menzies a bouquet. Dame Pattie or Sir Robert Menzies usually opened the Bowling season. It was part of his electorate of Kooyong.

Below: Jack White's 80th birthday early 1984 in the bowling Club pavilion. The door leads into the men's changing room. Note: the

noticeboards. Does anyone know what happened to them ?

