

blackheath history forum

2015 Season
August 1 - October 24

The *Past* in the Present

Venue: Blackheath Public School Hall, cnr Great Western Highway & Leichhardt St, Blackheath
Entry: \$5 Time: Lectures start at 4pm. Refreshments available from 3.30pm

www.blackheathhistoryforum.org.au

August 1: PAUL KELLY (*The Australian*)

CHANGE AND CHALLENGE: Australian Politics, 1975 – 2015

Over the past four decades Paul Kelly has become the chronicler of modern Australian politics. In a series of major works – *The Unmaking of Gough*, *The Hawke Ascendancy*, *The End of Certainty*, *The March of Patriots and Triumph and Demise* – Kelly has charted political history from Whitlam to Rudd-Gillard-Rudd. Today he reflects on the characteristics of that period and questions whether the business of politics has now become too de-coupled from the interests of Australia and its citizens.

August 15: JAMES BROWN (*University of Sydney*)

ANZAC'S LONG SHADOW

In 2014 James Brown published *Anzac's Long Shadow*, his thoughts on the legacy of Australia's past century of involvement in wars. He argues that we spend too much time commemorating the wrong aspects of our past military experience, and not enough on aspects which relate to our present and future needs, both in terms of military capabilities and the provision of care for those who suffer as a result of their past military service. Our much-respected military commitments of the past century are retarding our capacities to meet new challenges, both in terms of Australia's international security and the impact of war service on those who render it in the national interest.

August 29: DON WATSON (*Freelance writer/historian*)

THE BUSH: a history

Most Australians live in cities and cling to the coastal fringe, yet our sense of what Australia is – or should be – is drawn from the vast and varied inland called 'the bush'. But what do we mean by 'the bush', and how has it shaped us? For, as Don Watson says, 'The Australian bush is both real and imaginary. Real, in that it grows in various unmistakable and bush-like ways... Imaginary, in that among the life it harbours is the life of the Australian mind. It is, by many accounts, the nation's idea of itself... The bush is a social construct as well as an ecological one: as much as the things that grow and live there, we define it by the people who inhabit it.' In his talk, Watson will explore some of the fascinating themes of his much acclaimed book *The Bush*.

September 12: MARK MCKENNA (*University of Sydney*)

WRESTLING WITH THE LEVIATHAN: biography, history, Australia and C.M.H. Clark

7th Vere Gordon Childe Lecture

The challenges for Mark McKenna of writing Manning Clark's biography could at times seem overwhelming. Clark's archive is one of the largest in Australia, and he kindly left many signposts behind to assist the biographer in writing the story of his life. In addition to several volumes of autobiography, Clark produced many autobiographical essays and short stories and spoke frequently in public about his personal life. To wrest control of Clark's biography from Clark himself was always going to be a struggle. So much of his life and work was dedicated to understanding Australian identity. But how should we understand Clark's role as a prophet in late twentieth-century Australia? Does his voice still speak to us today? And in 2015, the centenary of Clark's birth, what legacy remains from his countless public interventions and the millions of words that flowed from his pen? Clark's award-winning biographer will address these questions in our seventh Vere Gordon Childe Lecture.

SPECIAL EVENT | JUNE 6 | SPRINGWOOD

Joan Beaumont: **Remembering Ambon**
Venue: Presbyterian Church Hall, Macquarie Road
Entry: \$5 Doors open 3.30 for 4.00 start

Joan's talk on the Ambon POW camp sets the scene for the world premiere at 8.00pm of

AMBON

Lloyd Swanton's stunning jazz tribute to the POWs.
Venue: Blue Mountains Theatre
108 Macquarie Road, Springwood

More info & bookings
www.get.al/ambon
www.liveatthevillage.com.au

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26 September: DAVID HORNER (Australian National University)

TELLING THE SECRETS: writing the official history of ASIO

The whole idea of publishing a history of an intelligence organisation based on its classified files seems counter-intuitive. Intelligence services trade in secrecy. If they reveal their sources, the sources will dry up. If they reveal their techniques their opponents will counter them. If the identities of officers are revealed they will no longer be able to operate with the freedom that is necessary to achieve their tasks. Why then did the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) commission an official history and grant Professor Horner unrestricted access to its records? In this lecture he will explain how this happened and how he went about writing the history. He will also describe some of the key themes and contentious issues covered in his history. David Horner will conclude by recounting several of the interesting activities conducted by ASIO, some of which have never been revealed before.

October 10: DI LANGMORE (former General Editor, Australian Dictionary of Biography)
'BEHIND EVERY GREAT MAN...'

Di Langmore's books -- *Prime Ministers' Wives: the public and private lives of ten Australian women* and *Glittering Surfaces: a life of Maie Casey* -- while essentially biographical studies, also explore the influence of these ten prime ministers' wives and one governor-general's wife on the careers of their eminent husbands. In this talk, Langmore will apply the maxim 'Behind every great man there is a great woman' to four case studies—Dame Enid Lyons, Dame Pattie Menzies, Margaret Whitlam and the Lady Casey—and examine in each case the relationship between the wife and her husband, her perception of her public and private role in the partnership, and the extent and nature of her involvement in her husband's career, before offering some general conclusions.

October 24: CLAIRE HIGGINS (University of New South Wales)
THE FRASER GOVERNMENT'S ASYLUM SEEKER POLICY

The controversial nature of Australia's current refugee policy has drawn attention to Malcolm Fraser's Liberal/National government's response to the nation's first large-scale, irregular arrival of asylum seekers by boat. In order to accept and resettle all these 'boat-people', while also successfully managing domestic disquiet over their arrival, the Fraser government told the public and the bureaucracy that it would only admit 'genuine' refugees. To achieve this objective, it used the newly established Determination of Refugee Status Committee. However, the unofficial policy to approve all boat arrivals caused considerable tensions amongst members of the Committee. Consequently the government and senior Department of Immigration officials were required to perform a 'balancing act', not just between the forces of public opinion but also within the bureaucracy. Yet in doing so, the government was able to give due effect to Australia's international legal obligations, while simultaneously appearing to have control over the entry of asylum seekers.

WORLD WAR I FILM FEST

World War I on Film: the Middle Eastern Legacy
This year's film weekend at Mount Vic Flicks will be held on
November 20-22.
Stay tuned for Coming Attractions!

Thanks to Alan Coggins for designing and managing our website www.simplycomputing.com.au | brochure design Jo See

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