

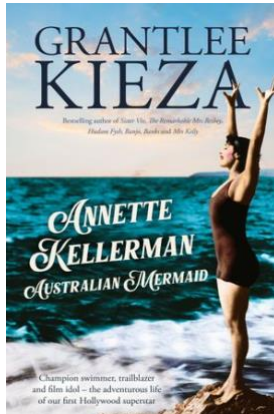


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MISS KELLERMAN'S EXHIBITION



The recent publication of Grantlee Kieza's biography of Annette Kellerman has revived local interest in the legendary Australian swimmer, aquatic performer and film actress, who, with her younger brother Freddie, visited Maryborough in 1905 ("at considerable cost") to give an exhibition of diving and swimming at the local swimming carnival, held at the corporation baths.

Born Annette Marie Sarah Kellermann in Sydney in 1886, she developed swimming prowess as the result of the lessons she was given as a child in order to cure a congenital leg weakness, possibly the result of rickets or polio. She was soon giving public exhibitions of swimming and diving and long-distance swimming, for example a swim along the Yarra River in Melbourne. She later tackled 21 km of the Thames as well as the English Channel and other European rivers. A career in vaudeville and films followed. In later years she lectured on the benefits of health and fitness, and for a time assisted with Australia's Sister Elizabeth Kenny's therapy with polio patients. She died in 1975.

A GREAT SUCCESS

The swimming carnival held by the Maryborough swimming club at the corporation baths was an unqualified success. The day was very warm, the climatic conditions making ideal weather for aquatic sports. The fact that Miss Annette Kellermann, the celebrated swimmer, who has made an enviable reputation for herself during the past years, by her wonderful feats in natation [swimming], and her young brother Freddie, were present, proved a great draw, and there was a very large attendance, about 500 people being present.

The arrangements for the day were well appointed, seating accommodation having been provided for a large gathering. Two points, however, that could be attended to would materially to the convenience of competitors and patrons alike, viz the erection of an awning around the enclosure, and above all else, asphaltting round the baths ... Another point that the management require to look to is regulating the actions of the children at the shallow end of the baths. These youngsters, no doubt thoroughly enjoying themselves, but if they were prevented from swimming too close to the edge of the pond, thus avoiding splashing the lady patrons. And requested to make just a little less noise, their enjoyment would be none the less, while that of spectators would be materially added to... **Maryborough and Dunolly Advertiser, January 20, 1905**

Events included "Swim on Back", "Diving for Objects", "Long Dive". And "Dive off Springboard", age races and the Maryborough 100 yard handicap.

"The exhibition given by Miss and Master Kellermann was interspersed through the programme, and was, of course, the feature of the afternoon. There is no doubt Miss Kellermann well deserves the high reputation she has gained. Possessed as she is of marvellous muscular development, her whole frame is significant of activity and strength, and her performance throughout the afternoon won her the hearty plaudits of all present. Miss Kellermann opened her performance by swimming four lengths of the baths, using the overarm stroke with which she accomplished her notable swim in the Yarra ... " **MADA**

Miss Kellerman next dazzled the spectators with a swim – two lengths of the baths – with her hands tied behind her back. She and her brother followed with a diving display that included a "plain header, wooden soldier, standing sitting dive, honey pot, back somersault, and splash".

As the carnival was drawing to a close, Miss Kellermann was interviewed by a representative of the **Maryborough and Dunolly Advertiser**. She had a very high opinion of the baths but suggested that an awning, plus asphaltting of the edges would enhance the facility. "You have a swimming pond equal to anything in the country", she is quoted as saying. She was however somewhat critical of the local swimming techniques, claiming that the swimmers seemed almost to be moving backwards. She was also uncertain about the item on the program called "Diving for Objects", saying "I do not altogether like the idea. It is most injurious to stay under the water for too long a period, as it has a very bad effect on both the heart and ears"

THE MUNICIPAL BATHS

In the early days of the town swimming was confined to local dams and creeks, and drownings were frequent, but in 1899 a majority of ratepayers polled declared that they were in favour of building swimming baths for the town. Following a public meeting in 1900 a deputation approached council, which agreed to fund the pool via a debenture scheme. A tender, for £598, was awarded for the construction of the pool in Station Street (now closed and redesignated a walkway adjacent to The Hub) opposite the Technical School. The lessee's role was to act as caretaker and to operate the shop.

As Annette Kellerman noted during her visit, the surrounds needed asphaltting as the sand was carried back into the pool on swimmers' feet.

The water quality was questionable, and one young user (Jean Robinson of the Robinson Foundry family) was quoted by Betty Osborn in *Against The Odds* as dreading her pre- WW1 Saturday morning swim because of the green slime and dirty water.



*Opening of Maryborough Municipal Swimming Baths, November 1901
One small section of the station building can be seen at left*

The baths were usually open for six months of the year between 6 am and 8 pm, except on Sundays, and Ladies' Day was on Tuesday afternoons. The first swimming club began in 1902, but girls were initially not included. Another early photo of the baths shows a sign posted on the corrugated iron fence announcing that:

"BETTING IS PROHIBITED" (presumably on swimming carnival races).

By the 1930s it became obvious that the old pool's facilities could not cater for the town's requirements such as mixed bathing and learn to swim campaigns. In 1939 the council decided to construct a new pool on a site in Princes Park. The new Olympic Pool, with its distinctive Art Deco buildings designed by local architect E.J. (Eddie) Peck, was officially opened in December 1941 by legendary swimmer Sir Frank Beaurepaire (1891-1956), who had competed in three Olympic Games and helped to found the Herald Learn to Swim campaign. The pool precinct is listed on the Victorian Heritage database. Unfortunately the pool is currently closed pending renovation.

WORSLEY VISITORS

Earlier this year one of Arthur Worsley's descendants visited the Cottage built by his great grandfather to view the recently completed renovations. Kerry Worsley and his wife Patricia hadn't seen the Cottage for many years. Kerry's grandfather Frederick is pictured below in front of the Cottage with his older sister Elsie.

For years the younger child was thought to be a girl, until it was pointed out that in that era boys often wore skirts to facilitate toilet training. When it was achieved and they were capable of handling all the complications of fastening trousers they wore breeches/trousers and were considered "breeched". Sadly, only four of Arthur and his wife Agnes's eight children reached adulthood.

Kerry's wife Patricia also has a Maryborough connection. She taught at PS 404 just down the road in the 1980s.

The Cottage was built in stages, the two front rooms in 1894, the next section *circa* 1908.



Elsie and Frederick Worsley in front of Worsley Cottage circa 1903



Kerry and Patricia Worsley with a portrait of Cottage builder Arthur Worsley.

The portrait hangs in the Cottage with other Worsley family images.

Arthur Worsley's other notable achievement in Maryborough was as one of the twenty different contractors who worked on the town's Main Drain project, which converted the heavily polluted Four Mile Creek into a properly engineered drain. Work began in 1871.

Prisoners from the Maryborough Gaol worked on one of the sections.

THOMAS CASEY'S LEGACY



Two Casey descendants, Helen Legg and Janine McCoy, have generously donated copies of an illuminated address presented to Maryborough Fire Brigade legend Thomas Casey's family following his death in 1919. Irish born Casey migrated to Canada with his family as a child, trained as a carpenter and joiner, then in 1853 sailed to Melbourne, subsequently establishing a building and contracting business in Maryborough. He became actively involved in community affairs, including education and local government (including eight terms as mayor), but his most memorable achievement was his record long service as foundation member and Captain of the Fire Brigade, which was founded in 1861. In 1888 he laid the foundation stone for the new Fire Brigade bell tower. The stone (incorporating Casey's name) can still be viewed outside the former fire station which is now the town's art gallery.

*Country Fire Brigades Board of Victoria
In kindly remembrance of our late colleague
Captain Thomas Casey J.P.*

Who died at Maryborough on 23rd January 1919

He was a valued member of the Country Fire Brigades Board from its inception in 1891 until he retired in May 1917. He was for fifty-six years Captain of the Maryborough Fire Brigade and during that long period he rendered splendid service to that Brigade and to the Country Fire Service of Victoria.

The Board desires to place on permanent record their warmest appreciation of the valuable work he performed during his lifetime and their sense of the great loss which the service has sustained through his lamented death.

*[signed by the President and Board members]
Melbourne, February 25, 1919*



Helen Legg and Janine McCoy with the original certificate in blue leather folder

MEMBERSHIP

A reminder that memberships are now due. They remain at \$25 single and \$35 family.

Please help us to continue our work by becoming an official member.

We're still accepting cheques (possibly for the last time?) and cash.

We're open during the usual hours to accept these (Tues/Thurs 10am to 12 noon and Sunday 2pm to 4pm).

For postal details see below.

You can also pay directly into our Commonwealth Bank account: **BSB 06 3519 Account no. 0090 1319.**

Please Note: That during July and August this year we won't be open on Sunday afternoons.



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We're also on Facebook/Meta

The Maryborough Midlands Historical Society acknowledges the ancestors and descendants of the Dja Dja Wurrung, traditional owners of the land on which we live and work.