

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY



COVERING DULWICH HILL, ENMORE, LEWISHAM,
SYDENHAM, TEMPE & PARTS OF NEWTOWN,

MARRICKVILLE, PETERSHAM, ST PETERS, STANMORE
CAMPERDOWN & HURLSTONE PARK

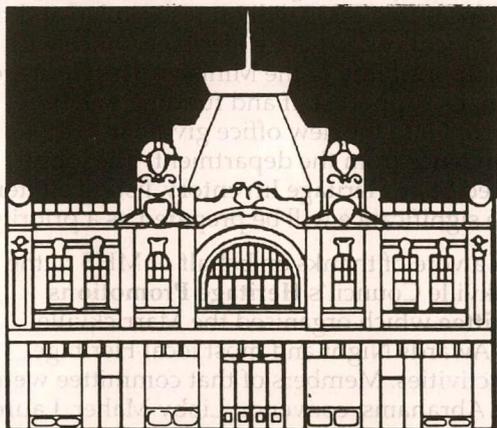
OUR NEXT MEETING

**A WALK ON THE NORTH SIDE – LED
BY SHIRLEY DOOLAN**

Saturday 25 May 9.15 am

Meet at Petersham Town Hall 9.15 am for 9.30 am (sharp) bus departure. Anticipated return 4 pm in Petersham. BYO lunch. Cost \$15, \$12 concession (includes coach & entrances). Bookings essential: Shirley Doolan 516 2123 (please advise if wishing to cancel).

Behind the forest of high rise offices and home units of North Sydney, many heritage buildings have survived the bulldozer, some of which we will view. Don't be put off by the word *walk*, as our coach will whisk us from one site to the next with very little effort on our part.



THE INDEPENDENT THEATRE - NORTH SYDNEY

We will have a guided tour of St. Thomas' Rest Park, the Sexton's Cottage, St Thomas Church, Independent Theatre (pictured) and Don Bank cottage, the only conserved nineteenth century vernacular timber cottage in the inner city open to the public, where we will have BYO lunch (hot water and seating available). Then for the more energetic a short walk up to Graythwaite and Shore. Finally a drive around Ball's Head Point with its indigenous trees before heading home.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Don't forget our AGM on Saturday 22 June at Petersham Town Hall. As well as a review of the year's achievements all executive positions will be thrown open for election. If you want more information about this, ring Infoline. The meeting will also feature Council archivist Cheri Lutz who will advise us how to use the Archival Research Centre and will present some fascinating documents.

SYDENHAM DEMOLITION & RELOCATION OF FITTINGS

With the elections over, the federal Department of Administrative Service's demolition of Sydenham houses has resumed despite the fact that noise levels have somewhat decreased as a result of the re-opening of the east-west runway. The change in federal government has brought no apparent shift in policy regarding Sydenham's disembowelment and the community's future still remains a mystery as does the fate of key heritage-worthy buildings such as *Clarevill* and the Railway Road Church.

A further 38 houses in Park and Railway Roads and Rowe Street are being acquired. The suspicion remains that a link road will eventually run along the demolition path to join Princes Highway with Sydenham Road, although no official word has been uttered.

Meanwhile a concern foreshadowed in last September's newsletter has come to pass. Fittings from demolished houses are being sold by DAS to contractors as far away as Bateman's Bay. One had hoped DAS might have had the sensitivity to allow the local community to have first option on the sale of significant fittings such as leadlight windows, fireplaces, doors and other adornments.

Richard Blair

MARRICKVILLE MEDAL

The 1996 Marrickville Medal for Conservation announced in Heritage Week (29 April) was won by the transparent packaging factory *Signum Transheet* at 47 Carrington Road, Marrickville. A 1930s Art Deco building was carefully conserved and parts that could not be saved were replaced with great skill to maintain its significant fabric (architect Paul Frischknecht).

Three other entries were highly commended – 100 Australia Street, Camperdown for highly sympathetic alterations and a sensitive addition to the house (architects Andrew Nimmo & Annabel Lahz); All Saints Anglican Church, Petersham for repairs and interior painting of the highest order (architects Paul Davies & David Denne); and *Marmion* Fisher Street, Petersham where all original features have been faithfully preserved (architect Robert Moore). There were eight entries.

Shirley Hilyard

(The judging panel consisted of Alan Croker, chair, David Latta and Shirley Hilyard – Editor)

HERITAGE WEEK – APRIL 28 - MAY 5

In 1985 Ian Rae, past President of the National Trust, described Heritage Week as *an opportunity for us all to consider, and to contemplate the distinctive landscapes, buildings and other things which we as a community cherish because they enhance our surroundings*. Exploring this year's theme *Interiors* opportunities for such contemplation abounded in the **Marrickville** area where we were invited into a wide diversity of buildings. **Petersham** has its share of treasures – Mastertouch Piano Roll Company (now in its 77th year), the Majestic Roller Skating Rink (once the Majestic then Odeon picture theatre) and the extraordinarily dazzling Egyptian Room in the Masonic Temple, which must be one of the sights of Sydney.

The town halls of Petersham, Marrickville and St Peters (actually in Sydenham) were on show. Council's Heritage architect Libby Maher explained how heritage practitioners function and outlined the story of **Petersham's** three town halls before showing us over the town hall (1938) with its Art Deco features. Archivist Cheri Lutz, whose sumptuous office was once the Council Chambers, showed us rate books, minute books, maps and other source material. Cheri loves to tell about the sad fate of the 1880 time capsule ...!

The effervescent Chrys Meader presented the story of **St Peters'** two town halls whilst Bill Kerameas told us everything we always wanted to know about the 1870ish bottles found during last year's excavations at the original St Peters town hall site. Then heritage architect Matthew Devine showed us over the 1920s town hall with its Ionic columns and portico, marvellous timber staircase, and beautifully preserved decorative plaster ceilings.

The interior of **Marrickville** Town Hall was also on display for the Marrickville Medal presentation (see front page report) and Mayor Barry Cotter announced that \$300,000 will be spent on improving all local town halls. Margaret Hall demonstrated the extraordinary versatility of the restored historic Wurlitzer organ in stereo. Tony Fenelon played to a large audience there on the final day of Heritage Week.

Following Saturday's MHS *brick* talk (see page 3 report) Marrickville Library hosted a pottery display and talks by Bill Kerameas on *Fowlerware* and Geoff Ostling on *Diana*. Bill outlined the history of Fowlers and told how he rescued relics just hours before the Marrickville site was covered with concrete. Geoff (whose article *Desperately Seeking Diana* appeared in *Heritage 8*) gave an appreciation of this once mass-produced pottery which has attained *collectable* status. Also present was Pearl Lowe, head paintress at Diana Pottery for many years.

Two Anglican churches also welcomed us inside: Holy Trinity **Dulwich Hill** and its rectory with landmark widow's walk and St Clements **Marrickville** with its historic spire. Heritage architect Hector Abrahams led a group along **Enmore Road**, a well-preserved Victorian shopping precinct, with particular attention to the

interiors of the Enmore Theatre, Stanmore House, Dispensary Hall, Marie-Louise Salon and in Metropolitan Road the Fijian Seventh Day Adventist Church (formerly the Church of Christ) mid sermon. An entire newsletter could be devoted to the features of these interiors.

The outgoing Heritage Council of NSW visited local heritage sites and met with key Marrickville Council personnel and some MHS committee members. Beyond Marrickville, heritage interiors were on show everywhere such as Central Railway Station where I climbed the 251+ steps to the top of the 1921 Central Railway clock tower, walked along the labyrinth of service tunnels under the station, and through the 1855 Railway Square tunnel.

At the **National Trust Heritage Awards** lunch the major award went to the late Milo Dunphy, conservationist and lifelong champion of the natural environment and was accepted by his son Guy and grandson Myles. Awards were presented in seven other categories. Shirley Hilyard and I were delighted when it was announced that **MHS had won a commendation in the Community Groups Award for its entry the 1995 MHS newsletters, (the journal) *Heritage 9*, and the journal *Index*.**

In a good news week for heritage the Minister for Urban Affairs & Planning Mr Craig Knowles announced major changes to the NSW heritage system including a \$30 million rescue plan and the establishment of a separate Heritage Office with direct responsibility to the Minister. The Heritage Council, its support staff and funding will be transferred into the new office giving it independence from the department. The long-promised State Heritage Inventory, listing all items of State significance will be prepared as a priority.

Finally a vote of thanks on behalf of MHS to the Marrickville Council's **Heritage Promotions Committee** which organised the Marrickville Medal Awards Night and most local Heritage Week activities. Members of that committee were Hector Abrahams, convenor, Libby Maher, Laurel Adriaanz, Richard Blair, Avril Chiswell, Sylvia Hale, Trevor Howells, Richard Knopf, Brenda Pittard and John Zinsmeester. The efforts of Libby Maher have been nothing short of stupendous – MHS salutes you!

Richard Blair, Editor

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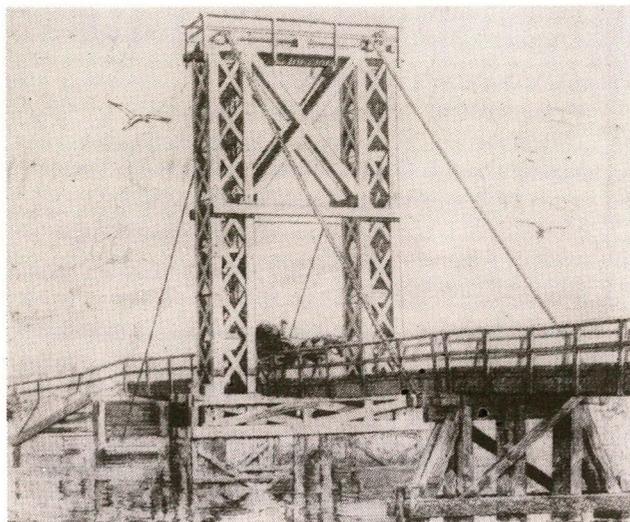
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AN AUTUMN TRIVIA ANSWER – RICKETTY STREET

Ricketty Street is confined to the suburb of Mascot but in bygone days it came right up to Princes Highway in St Peters, this stretch now called Canal Road. It is not clear when it was so named. MHS member Ron Smith (whose grandfather Harold Boyd lived at *Petersleigh* and was buried in St Peters Church cemetery) posed the question and provided an answer, courtesy of his uncle, 77 year old Alf Warner who had a long association with the St Peters area. Alf claims the road took its name from the old one-way wooden bridge which crossed Shea's Creek, now Alexandra Canal. It vibrated so badly that it became known as the *Ricketty* bridge. It was replaced during his youth by a wider, stronger concrete bridge.



Old Ricketty Street Bridge (from Larcombe *The History of Botany 1788-1963*)

Though first listed in *Sands* in 1877, Botany's library archivist Georgina Keep cited a *Sydney Morning Herald* article of 5 August 1864 which states – *the line of demarcation between the Municipality of Waterloo and the district of Botany is a roadway known by the queer appellation of Ricketty-street. This runs to the westward from the "Halfway House" inn, about four miles from Sydney to Newtown. ... The name of Ricketty-street is said to have been bestowed upon the roadway in consequence of the jolting to which all were subjected who traversed in any sort of vehicle, the layers of bush and grass-tree by which the heavy drag through the sand was sought to be relieved... When it shall have been put in better order, it is hoped it will have a better name given to it.*

The minutes for the St Peters Council meeting of 16 September 1889 indicate that *steps would be taken at once to put it in repair. Whilst now in good order, its length has diminished but the name has fortunately stuck. Thanks to Ron, Alf, Cheri, Shirley and Georgina.*

Richard Blair

JUDITH'S GRADUATION

Congratulations to MHS member Judith Matheson who was awarded the Graduate Diploma in Museum Studies with Merit at a University of Sydney graduation ceremony on 12 April. Judith is a former MHS president and editor, and received a RAHS Achievement Award in 1994.

OUR LAST MEETING BRICKS & BRICKMAKERS OF THE MARRICKVILLE AREA

On Saturday 27 April, 90 MHS members and visitors packed our meeting room at Petersham Town Hall for this curtain-raiser to Heritage Week in Marrickville. Geologist Dr George Gibbons explained the labour intensive and physically exhausting method of making sandstock bricks. After Brickfield Hill ran out of suitable clay, the Marrickville/St Peters/Camperdown district produced some of the best quality bricks around Sydney. Early brickmakers left their *frog* – a mark pressed in the wet clay – such as *government arrow*, *spade* and *diamond*. Later machine-pressing and more even firing in kilns left us with a legacy of bricks of some provenance, now highly collectable.

Historian Chrys Meader, who almost literally has bricks in her blood and whose convict ancestor was a brickmaker, then regaled us with tales tall and true about the local brickmakers – including Goodsell (who introduced several innovations including the first machine-made bricks in 1871), Speare (who bought Goodsell's), Porter, Playford, Toyer, Harber, Josiah Gentle (later) Austral, and Thomas Daley's Standsure Brick Company on what in 1923 became Henson Park. Indeed brickmaking was one of the earliest industries which nurtured conservation as many of our public parks and Dibble's Waterhole were originally brickpits. A number of vintage bricks were on display. Many thanks to George and Chrys and to Shirley Hilyard who organised the talk.

John Waterstreet

SISTER CITIES

Last August the Society wrote to Marrickville Council recommending that Blackburn/Bury in Lancashire be approached about becoming a sister city to Marrickville LGA. The rationale was that Marrickville has no sister city in Britain and the district where Mary Reibey was born and bred might be appropriate given that the final 13 years of her illustrious life were spent in the Marrickville area. The Sister City Committee decided in February the criterion had not been met as there needs to be a mutual interest by prospective sisters.

Marrickville has sister cities with the Greek island of Kos (home of Hippocrates), Keelung in Taiwan and Funchal in Portugal whilst Alexandria or Ismailea in Egypt is under consideration. Mayor Barry Cotter says *this one will be it for some time*. Fair enough. An abundance of sister cities would be ludicrous and MHS fully supports the recognition by Council that Marrickville is one of Australia's most multi-national communities. However British enterprise and toil laid our foundations and that should not be overlooked. Mary Reibey overcame the dual disadvantage of being a female convict to become the most successful businesswoman of her time – the first seventy years of the colony.

Richard Blair

SAVE OUR SPARE



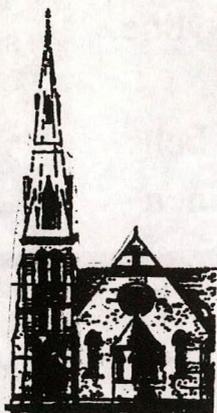
*St. Clements Anglican
Church, Marrickville*

FUND RAISING NIGHT

A7

MARRICKVILLE RSL

8pm FRIDAY, 24th MAY 1996



**A STAR STUDDED CONCERT AND
MANY PRIZES TO BE WON!**

SPONSORED BY MARRICKVILLE MUNICIPAL
COUNCIL AND MARRICKVILLE RSL CLUB.

TICKETS \$10

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY

SAINT CLEMENTS ANGLICAN CHURCH SPIRE CONSERVATION APPEAL

Marrickville RSL, in conjunction with our Municipal Council, St Clements Church and the National Trust has pledged its support to "SAVE THE SPIRE" of this historic church.

The conservation appeal aims to raise \$70,000 to \$90,000, towards the \$150,000 needed to retain and rebuild this magnificent spire which towers over our Marrickville skyline.

It's significance to the RSL is that in 1922 a peal of 8 bells were incorporated to commemorate the men and women who served in World War 1.

Today the spire must be restored or removed. A fund raising night has been arranged at the Marrickville RSL Club on Friday 24/05/96, starting at 8.00pm, and we invite all those interested in preserving this historic relic of our past to support this appeal. Admittance is \$10.00 for adults and tickets are available from the RSL Club, Marrickville Municipal Council, Petersham, and St Clements Anglican Church. Donations made out to the National Trust of Australia (NSW). St Clements Anglican Church Spire Appeal are tax deductible and may be sent to any of the above locations

PLEASE HELP US SAVE OUR SPIRE

MOST CURIOUS AND PECULIAR: WOMEN TAXIDERMISTS IN COLONIAL SYDNEY

You heard the lecture, now see the exhibition! Anybody who attended Martha Sear's talk last August on women taxidermists in colonial Sydney, could not fail to be interested in her chosen subject. Climb the 58 steps to the wonderfully atmospheric Macleay Museum and behold the beautiful display based on Martha's research. This intimate exhibition covers not only taxidermy, but needlework crafts, fashion items and the many medals won, both here and abroad, by the very talented women who entered this male domain of business.

Magnificent 19th century cedar cabinets display the rich array of items that women, like Jane Tost, her daughter Ada Rohu, and Sophie Steffanoni presented and sold to museums and the people of Sydney. Not only did they mount exotic and native birds and animals, they also sold rugs, items to highlight the clothes and hats of fashionable ladies of society, and artefacts of Aboriginal and Pacific island cultures.

Congratulations to all the people who helped put together this fascinating exhibition which runs until 31 January 1997. The museum entrance is in Gosper Lane off Science Road near the Great Hall, University of Sydney. Admission is free and opening hours are Monday 11-4 or Tuesday-Friday 9-4. Well worth the climb!

Robert Hutchinson

(It's a pity this marvellous exhibition has such restrictive opening hours. Even a monthly Saturday and/or weeknight opening would afford access to a much broader audience. - Editor)

OTHER EXHIBITIONS

An exciting new exhibition of popular American folk art *In The American Spirit* from the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts is on at the **Museum of Sydney on the site of first Government House**, corner Phillip and Bridge Streets Sydney and runs till 15 September. Open daily 10-5. \$6, \$4 concession, \$15 family.

Our March 1995 newsletter publicised the **Australia Street Archive**, a project aimed at presenting a picture of how Australians live. We can now visit a selection of Australia Streets and their inhabitants via the Internet at the **Australian Museum** in College Street, Sydney till 23 June. Admission free after museum admission.

To mark the centenary of the **National Council of Women of NSW** (Australia's oldest women's umbrella organisation) a **Centenary Exhibition** is being held weekdays 10-4 in the Fountain Forecourt of NSW Parliament House until 30 June. Admission free.

CLASSICAL CONCERTS

SUNDAY 19 MAY 4.30 PM

St Peters Anglican Church Cooks River
St Marks Players led by Brian Strong play works by Handel, Mozart, Bach & Grieg. Entry by donation to National Trust Organ Restoration Appeal. Enquiries 557 3795.

SATURDAY 1 JUNE 8 PM

St Clements Anglican Church Marrickville
In the second fundraising concert for the restoration of the historic church spire the Concordia String Quartet will perform an excellent program of chamber music. \$15, \$10 concession. Auction of old church harmonium at end of concert. Enquiries 558 0315 or 569 8804 (ah).

SUNDAY 2 JUNE 3 PM

Prescott Hall, Newington College
Chocolates and Strawberries! Soprano Helena Sindelar, tenor David Hamilton and pianist Paul Wang combine luscious musical ingredients to create a perfect diversion for a winter's Sunday afternoon. \$15, \$10 concession.

NEW LOCAL STUDIES LIBRARIAN - DONNA BRAYE

Welcome to Marrickville's new local studies librarian. Donna comes well-qualified as she spent the last five years as LSL in Leichhardt and before that was officer manager and archivist at the Royal Art Society. She has a BA, a Graduate Diploma in Art Gallery Management at the Sydney Art Institute and has co-owned an antique business so she should feel rather at home with the Diana Pottery and other artefacts at Marrickville Library. Donna looks forward to meeting MHS members doing research. Ring her on 335 2173.

HOW TO JOIN THE SOCIETY

Membership is \$8 for concession & seniors, \$14 for individuals & joint concession, and \$20 for households & organisations. Subscriptions renewable in July. Members receive a monthly newsletter and the annual journal *Heritage*. Meetings/outings on the fourth Saturday of each month.

Write to PO Box 415 Marrickville 2204
or ring Harold 569 5183

INFOLINE Shirley 569 1768

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HERITAGE WATCH John 550 6447

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