

# MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.

DULWICH HILL ENMORE LEWISHAM  
ST PETERS SYDENHAM TEMPE

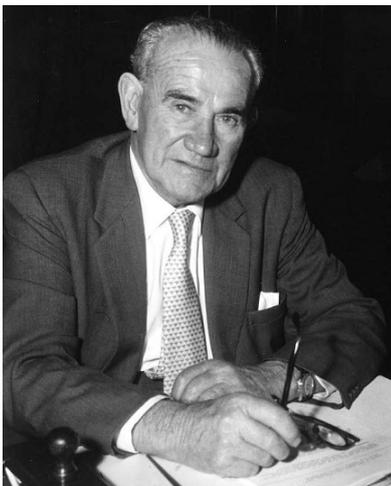
MARRICKVILLE PETERSHAM STANMORE  
& PARTS OF CAMPERDOWN & NEWTOWN



## OUR NEXT MEETING

*They called him Old Smoothie: John Joseph Cahill* with author Peter Golding  
Saturday 28 November 10 for 10.30 am  
Herb Greedy Hall 79 Petersham Rd Marrickville

**John Joseph Cahill**, one of Marrickville's finest sons, died 50 years ago on 22 October aged 68. At the time he was the state's longest serving premier; some



]] Cahill just months before he died  
(photographer unknown)

would say one of the very best. He died in office after three successive heart attacks. Joe was essentially a simple man. Starting out as a railway fitter he was sacked for his part in the 1917 strike and knew what it was to be unemployed. He lived for 47 years in an ordinary house in Warren Road on the corner of Roach Street. He was taught in Marrickville by the Good Samaritan nuns in a school

where the police station is now and he attended WEA night classes in the Shrubland Hall. On Sundays he took his family – his wife, Esme (nee Kelly, a local girl) and their three sons and two daughters – to Mass at St Brigid's where he often took up the collection plate. When he died his name was in the telephone book. Yet this was the man who gave Australia the Sydney Opera House.

**Peter Golding's** craft has always been writing. He was a journalist for 22 years with the long-defunct but revered Melbourne *Argus* for which he wrote politics and then a daily column; after that many years in public relations. Other biographies include *Black Jack McEwen Political Gladiator* (1996) and *Just a Chattel of the Sale* (2003), a retrospective of his own life; and a contributing author to *Australian Prime Ministers* (2000). *They called him Old Smoothie* (Australian Scholarly Publishing) is published this month. Peter will bring copies to sign and sell. Only in hardcover

**LIFE MEMBERSHIP FOR BOB THOMPSON**  
DETAILS INSIDE

**FEES OVERDUE?** They are if you find a coloured notice attached to your newsletter this month. The treasurer will still happily accept your renewal cheque posted to the address below.

**POT LUCK DINNER: SEE BACK PAGE**

## HERITAGE LEGISLATION FORUM

This forum on Saturday 31 October at Newtown Neighbourhood Centre and attended by 40-50 people enabled the Heritage Legislation Amendment Bill 2009 to be publicly debated with interaction from the public. Co-chaired by MHS president **Richard Blair** and committee member **Sonia Laverty**, we heard from **Helen Westwood** MLC (Labor); **Brad Hazzard** MLA, Shadow Minister for Planning (Member for Wakehurst, Liberal); **Sylvia Hale** MLC (Greens); and **Peter Lowry**, National Trust board member.

Labor's representative, notified to us only the day before, acquitted herself well, but it is unfortunate that Labor was not represented by either Planning Minister Kristina Keneally, or Labor's Deputy Premier Carmel Tebbutt, who both declined invitations despite ample notice. Hazzard expressed his dismay that neither of these front line Ministers, both also local MPs, could be present.

Most of **Helen Westwood's** presentation discussed recent additions to the Heritage Register; she also discussed the heritage grants programs and indicated "the government is committed to making Heritage relevant". **Brad Hazzard** claims that former Minister for Planning, Frank Sartor, now a backbencher, has recently reversed his view that there is no need for a new Environmental Planning & Assessment Act. Hazzard indicated that at a recent developers' debate, Minister Keneally said "I've read the act, and maybe we need a plain English act"! Hazzard's Liberal Party, if elected, would bring out a new EP&A Act and split Planning and Heritage into two portfolios.

**Sylvia Hale** despairs over Part 3A Major Projects (introduced in 2005 and supported by both major parties) which allows the Minister for Planning to switch off heritage protection and make major planning decisions. This effectively exempts from the Heritage Act anything deemed of State Significance. Sylvia queries the appointment of Gabrielle Kibble, so devoid of pro heritage credentials, to chair the Heritage Council? **Peter Lowry** said the National Trust fully supports the separation of Planning from Heritage and decries the composition of the Heritage Council being largely "people who are pro development" whilst the HC lacks any one from the RAHS. Community needs must be given precedence over the demands of developers in the decision-making process.

See inside for a précis of the forum's Q&A. The Society appreciates our guests coming to discuss such crucial matters. We invite societies statewide to organise similar forums to enable the broader public to more fully understand what MHS sees as deplorable.

**Richard Blair**

## OUR LAST MEETING

### 1) David Levell's *Tour to hell: convict Australia's great escape myths*

Our keynote speaker on Saturday 24 October was **David Levell** (author of the above named book) who spoke about early convict myths regarding Australian geography and settlement that led to numerous, and mass, escapes from the Sydney area. He began with a local story from late 1821 when a gang of eleven, mostly from Grose Farm (now the site of Sydney University) took off into the bush, crossed the Cooks and Georges Rivers and ended up in the Southern Highlands. Two escapees separated at some point and ran out of provisions, and appear to have welcomed capture. They were following the myth that "New Holland is not an island", and that if they got away, they would come to a more congenial country.

Such beliefs existed from as early as 1791, when they were mentioned in Watkin Tench's journals and in government reports. Irish convicts were especially likely to believe myths about other nearby lands. An early group of Irish convicts working near Parramatta escaped; some were taken into custody in Narrabeen. They were near starvation and amazed officials by recounting the myth that China existed north of Sydney, perhaps 150 miles along the coast.

By 1798, a new myth had sprung up suggesting that a settlement of white people existed in the unexplored south-west beyond the Blue Mountains. This belief was so widespread that a Parramatta magistrate proposed that four convicts, escorted by knowledgeable men, cross the mountains to see if the belief were true. An expedition was undertaken, with two skilled bushmen leading, John Wilson and John Price. They went as far as the area around Mittagong and the Wombeyan Caves. This expedition was quite important and has not been sufficiently studied. It resulted in the first European written eyewitness accounts of three new animals: the koala, the wombat, and the lyrebird.

On this expedition, Aboriginal people told the group that a friendly white colony did exist over the mountains, supporting the myth. Further "evidence" came in 1802 when an Englishman claimed that he had seen, from a distance, a town in the Blue Mountains. David then asked why such myths were accepted and became widespread in the early decades of settlement, especially among the Irish. He noted that Aboriginal people were often cited as giving the information. Could this have come from the fact that their cultures often emphasised that one should, out of politeness, agree with a questioner?

Further, David pointed out that the convicts were not at all holding ignorant beliefs, for current geological theory postulated a central Australian sea. Even *The Sydney Gazette* reported rivers to the west and suggested that the coast of a central sea might exist as close as 300 miles west of Bathurst. The convicts might therefore have expected another country or another people near this coast. In closing, David said that it was only after the 1830s, when other colonies were established, that the myths died down. By then convicts, instead of fleeing to China, set out for Melbourne or Adelaide. Thank you David for your enlightenment on this rarely-explored aspect of convict life in the colony.

Carole Adams

**Note:** *Tour to Hell* (UQP 2008) RRP \$34.95.

### 2) *From pictograms to print-on-demand with Bruce Preston*

Librarian-turned-writer **Bruce Preston** knows a lot about books, having worked at Fisher Library and written a mystery novel. At our 24 October meeting, Bruce gave a potted, but colourful account of the evolution of the book: Cave and rock paintings / pictograms and baked clay tablets (Sumerians) / papyrus rolls (Egyptians) / the codex dating from about 1900 years ago and consisting of multiple separate leaves of pages bound between protective covers / parchment (7th C AD, Europe and Middle East).

Meanwhile China advanced the process considerably by inventing paper around 105 AD, and in the ninth century printing from engraved wooden blocks. Gutenberg's printing press using cast metal type didn't arrive in Europe until the 15th century. Improvements and refinements were continuous until offset printing first appeared in 1904 and from 1968 computers became involved. In 1983, the offset printing plate progressed to a format involving the laser-beam transference of stored *digital* information.

By creating a digital file containing the entire layout of the book and all the information required enables a copy to be electronically printed. Bruce explained how the digital file becomes the book itself: – the e-book. So versatile is this phenomenon that you can print a new copy of any existing book at any time, in other words print-on-demand. This means production costs are lower and only printed when required.

Bruce's publication mode of choice for his novel *The Lion and the Covenant* was print-on-demand and it is clear from the size and length of the book that his sale price of \$20 would cost more like \$35 over the counter if published in the traditional way. Accessing it by e-book would make it cheaper still. For the traditionalist who prefers the physicality of a hard copy book it gets worse as the world's biggest bookstore, Amazon.com has recently introduced an e-reader device called the Kindle, which communicates wirelessly with the Internet: hence no computer is required. Scary? Could it be the way of the future? If it's going to save substantial sums of money it could well be and Bruce says Dymocks, for one, are already offering downloadable e-books.

Bruce feels print-on-demand machines, currently around \$80-90,000 each will soon be sought after. Perhaps several societies could combine in the purchase, and print their own publications at minimal cost, however this may raise more problems than it solves.

So is the end of the physical book nigh? When I did a Graduate Diploma in Library Studies in the late 1980s, I heard the death knell for the book could be at hand. Over 20 years later, the Australian book trade continues to flourish though no doubt new books in Australia are overpriced compared, say to the US. Thank you Bruce for this glimpse into the trends and future of publishing. How about we get you back in ten years for an update?

Richard Blair

For details of *The Lion and the Covenant* by B. Victor Preston check Google. To purchase, check sites for print-on-demand or ring Bruce on 9519 0205.



## SOME Q&A AT HERITAGE FORUM IN NEWTOWN ON 31 OCTOBER

**"Why is the heritage listing process is so slow?"**

**Helen Westwood** (MLC Labor): there is a need to "bring the community with you". If the minister does not approve applications, she has to give reasons.

**Brad Hazzard** (MLA Liberal): the Government has little or no interest in heritage issues so it spends less money in this area. If a Minister does not like a Heritage Council recommendation, they can appoint a ministerial review panel to consider the matter for a year or two, and make a contrary decision.

**On heritage, "Who is listening? Is the ALP listening?"** Westwood, as a former Bankstown Councillor, found not everyone wanted everything listed and protected, and if something was not listed, there was not much council could do. Some owners fear heritage listing as they believe it could cause a property's value to drop. She saw the need for government to be representative of community views on this. Co-chair Sonia Laverty said this highlights the "call to be ever vigilant".

**"The delisting process is not transparent."** Westwood: to de-list an item, it needs to have no heritage value, or be in a state of disrepair, or be no longer economic (financial hardship provision). Proposals go to the Minister, and they need to be justified. **Sylvia Hale** (MLC Greens): the old process was "extraordinarily thorough"; now the Minister receives, but can ignore, advice from the Heritage Council.

**"What is the panel's attitude to politicians receiving donations from developers?"** Hale: an "absolute scandal"; money goes where the influence is". Her private member's bill on this, which provides that a donor cannot submit a DA within 12 months of making a donation, has been sent to committee. Hazzard: "the bill was sent to committee because Sylvia's proposal needs refinement, eg, an individual who made a donation could not lodge a DA for a dual occupancy. As Premier, Mr O'Farrell would cap donations and campaign spending." **Peter Lowry**: if the system for heritage worked properly, there would be no need to regulate donations.

Westwood and Hazzard said we need to remember that most heritage matters are dealt with by local governments. From the audience, Peter Olive (a Marrickville Councillor) said that while Marrickville Council is reviewing their LEP (Local Environment Plan) and DCP (Development Control Plan) to produce some guidelines for developers, Codes SEPP (State Environmental Planning Policy Exempt and Complying Codes 2008) won't recognise DCPs, therefore there will be no heritage protection. Westwood said that while the federal government has made some reforms, more is needed at federal and state level. Hazzard said that within 18 months of winning government, they will review the EP&A Act. He highlighted the need to "strike a balance" between heritage conservation and economic imperatives.

Other questions were asked about adapting the brick pits buildings at Sydney Park for use as a ceramic art studio and why heritage responsibility has been moved to the Department of Planning.

Dale Kreibig

## LIFE MEMBERSHIP FOR BOB THOMPSON



*Life membership of the Society was conferred on Robert (Bob) Thompson at our meeting on 24 October. The citation reads: "In recognition of his untiring dedication to the task of indexing the Society's newsletters over many years and in appreciation of his long term support of the Society from its inception in 1984." Our October newsletter featured Bob's introduction to the 25-year index. Pictured on the right is MHS president, Richard Blair.*

(photo: Lorraine Beach)

## STATION STREET NORTH IN NEWTOWN

The name of **Station Street Newtown** must puzzle some, given it's a couple of minutes walk from Newtown Station. Puzzling, that is, until one learns that Station Street ran up to and across the original 1850s Newtown Railway Station. After the station was relocated eastwards in 1892, the site became the Crago Flour Mill until its recent redevelopment as the Silo Apartments. Station Street runs from Camden Street to the railway line, but continues for a block north of the line. Station Street north is flanked by the side of St Josephs Catholic Church to the west and the backs of houses to the east.

For aeons, this has caused confusion to visitors to Station Street south, given the diversion may take 5-10 minutes by foot or car in heavy traffic. Long term local resident, musicologist **Denis Condon** always found it frustrating when hosting his famous piano roll appreciation soirées only to be phoned by guests stranded and confused across the railway line. Denis frequently urged former mayor Barry Cotter to re-name that remote part of Station Street, to no avail.

A chance to remove this confusion and provide a new street name! Denis Condon has an international reputation in player piano and piano roll (not just pianola) preservation with his vast collection and knowledge which he has shared with many. Now that the soirées have ceased due to Denis's declining health, what better tribute to this remarkable man than to rename that stretch of street, Condon Street.

Richard Blair, Editor



For members not on global email, what does BMI stands for (and forget Body Mass Index)? It was produced by the Aeroplane Jelly people: Bert Appleroth's 'Traders Limited' in Alice Street Newtown from the 1930s. Ring Keith on 9564 6948.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Saturday 28 November**  
**Peter Golding talk on John Joseph Cahill**  
Details on front page

**Saturday 5 December**  
**Pot Luck Xmas Dinner**  
Details below

### ANNUAL POT LUCK XMAS DINNER

**Saturday 5 December 6 for 6.30 pm**

Our annual Pot Luck Christmas Dinner this year will be in a charming c. 1910 Federation house in Dulwich Hill near the Abergeldie estate. Plenty of street parking. Book with Lorraine on 9550 6608 or by email <lbeach@iprimus.com.au> to obtain address, to advise what food you will bring and if you would like a lift. BYO drinks.

Come to the **Remembrance Day event Wednesday 11 November** 10.30 for 11 am at the memorial niche in Petersham Town Hall. On display will be original WWI postcards of Victor Levitt and WWI badges (from the Graham-Wright-Hanney donation). Morning tea to follow. For catering purposes RSVP Carmel, Local Studies Officer on 9335 2152 or email <history2@marrickville.nsw.gov.au>.

The annual **Back to Marrickville Road exhibition** is in Alex Trevallion Plaza on **Saturday 14 November** from 11 am to 3 pm. Official opening 11 am. Focus is the date 11 November as: a) Marrickville Council was gazetted on 11 November (1861); b) Ned Kelly was hanged (1880); c) Remembrance Day (since 1919); and d) the Whitlam dismissal (1975).

### 170 YEARS AT ST PETERS CHURCH

Come and celebrate the 170th anniversary of the licensing of St Peters Church Cooks River on Sunday 22 November at 10 am. An historical presentation will follow on the history of the local area and church by the St Peters Cooks River History Group. Community lunch after. 187 Princes Highway St Peters. Contact 9558 7504 or email <history@cooksriver.net>.



Several MHS members were among a throng at "An afternoon with **Jack Munday**" at Leichhardt Town Hall on Sunday 1 November to honour Jack's recent 80th birthday. Singers sang and speaker after speaker spoke effusively and affectionately of

Jack's remarkable achievements, contributions, inspiration and personal attributes. And he's still active. Typically, in his brief response, he deflected the praise, and said it was one of the proudest moments of his life, and very humbling. Proceeds went to The Friends of Historic Houses Trust for the conservation of Susannah Place, The Rocks (photo: Richard Blair).

## HERITAGE WATCH IN BRIEF

HWIB has heard that the so-called gateway site development at **362-372 New Canterbury Road and 3-5 Herbert Street Dulwich Hill** (which the developer gained approval from council to demolish: see September 2009 newsletter) is up for auction.

\* \* \* \*

Contrary to what was reported in the October newsletter, the two storey tramway building on the **Newtown Railway Station** site will be demolished along with the long platform building to make way for the new development. A DA has also gone in to develop **Sydenham Station** with improved access. No advice as yet on whether anything is at risk.

\* \* \* \*

Regarding the redevelopment of the **Marrickville RSL site at 359 Illawarra Road**, Council Officers carried out an assessment of the DA and recommended refusal of the application on 13 grounds and insufficient information in three areas. As council is not the consent authority, this was to have gone to the Sydney East Joint Regional Planning Panel on 4 November, however, the applicant withdrew the DA. London to a brick that one will return!

\* \* \* \*

**Newtown RSL** has applied to renovate its building on Enmore Road. Whilst it appears the footprint would remain the same, a five storey building is sought, with new club premises, cafe, shop and hotel accommodation with 66 rooms, and off-street parking for a mere 17 vehicles. With a development under way across the road, this will further increase the volume of traffic and need for parking in narrow Enmore Road.

## ST STEPHENS SPIRE RESTORATION

Three MHS newsletters in 1994 reported on the restoration work (under supervision of Clive Lucas Architects) to Edmund Blackett's fine 1874 St Stephens Anglican Church Newtown. In the November 1994 newsletter Tamsyn Taylor wrote that the sandstone spire had 'not been touched, it needs complete repointing, the replacement of many seriously decayed stones and the repair or replacement of nearly all the decorative carving, including the large floral finial which should surmount the spire but which became so dangerous that it had to be removed. The cost of recarving and replacing the finial alone is about \$10,000 so this part of the project may have to wait for years.'

It seems the waiting is finally over with a federal grant of \$582,000 to fix the spire. The *Inner West Courier* reported (27/10/09) the minister, the Rev Peter Rodgers as saying some of the sandstone on the spire is falling off and needs to be removed. The spire 'will be restored to its original condition' . . . and the 'work will mean we won't have to touch the spire again for 100 years.' Some call, and a bigger call to verify! The work will begin soon.

**PRESIDENT** Richard 9557 3823

**TREASURER** Diane 9588 4930

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR** Richard 9557 3823