

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.



DULWICH HILL ENMORE LEWISHAM
ST PETERS SYDENHAM TEMPE

MARRICKVILLE PETERSHAM STANMORE
& PARTS OF CAMPERDOWN & NEWTOWN

Our September Meeting

'Harp in the South' tour with John Derum
Saturday 24 September 9.45 for 10 am start

Meet in Chalmers Street at top of Devonshire Street tunnel steps, Central Station, near statues of South American heroes. Cost \$20 (pay on day). Bookings essential as numbers are limited: Mary 0407 487 157.

Throughout a performance career in theatre and television that now spans more than half a century John Derum has followed a particular interest in the work of Australian writers of the 19th and 20th centuries, especially CJ Dennis, Joseph Furphy, Henry Lawson, Banjo Paterson, Ruth Park and Lennie Lower. This work has led him to develop a number of walking tours through relevant areas of Sydney including The Rocks, the Domain and Woolloomooloo, Kings Cross, Darlinghurst and Surry Hills.

This tour includes places and streets of Surry Hills from *The Harp in the South* – Ruth Park's novel set in 1950s Surry Hills – and its sequel *Poor Man's Orange*.

Annual Heritage Watch report 2015-16

Once again, the Heritage Watch activities of the Society have kept the executive committee very busy this year, with the pressure for development in our area throwing up so many Development Applications and rumours that it was sometimes hard to keep up. We had our busiest summer 'recess' with dozens of notices from council about new developments which verified our suspicion that developers lodge applications at Christmas hoping that no one will notice!

One of our saddest activities was joining with the owners of the 1930s Dynamo Auto Electrician Garage on the Princes Highway at St Peters to save it from demolition for the WestConnex M5 project. The owners were losing their family business of over 50 years, and the community, a landmark heritage building. After extensive lobbying by the owners (with support from MHS members) and anti-freeway activists, a bizarre 'victory' was achieved: the government bought the building but evicted the owners, promising only that the building *might* be used for a cafe or shop in the future. That the building will be perched on top of the tunnel opening and under an exhaust stack does not auger well for a successful outcome of this important part of the motor history of Australia.

The Society is grateful to our members who were active in saving the fine weatherboard house at 34 Belmore Street Enmore from demolition. Having been alerted to the DA, the Society pointed out to Council that real estate advertisements for the house had described it as 'one of Enmore's original homesteads'. Council agreed to make an Interim Heritage Order (IHO) over the property to investigate its history. Aided by a land title

Our October Meeting

Yabba, Cricket's legendary barracker:
talk by Richard Cashman

Saturday 22 October 10.15 for 10.30 am
Herb Greedy Hall, 79 Petersham Rd Marrickville

Stephen Harold Gascoigne (born 1878) was a genuine talent, a wit, an actor and a crafter of words with a booming voice. He was the ultimate self-publicist, who promoted himself as the 'one and only Yabba'. He was a serious student of cricket watching the game intently, his interjections being mostly informed, fair-minded and occasionally quirky. A Boer War veteran,



he was a simple man who enjoyed drinking beer, smoking, gambling, cracking jokes, family parties and watching and talking about sport. Yabba lived to barrack. His reputation has not diminished and he was immortalised in bronze at the SCG in 2008. However, barracking is now a lost art.

Richard Cashman has written and edited 12 cricket publications, the most recent being *The Demon Fred Spofforth* (2014). As the manager of Walla Walla Press, he has edited and published a number of cricket works including biographies of Jack Marsh and Tibby Cotter. He also co-wrote *Marrickville: rural outpost to inner city* (1990) and *Marrickville: people and places* (1994). He is an Adjunct Professor at the University of Technology, Sydney and was President of Marrickville Heritage Society (1987-89). Book will sell at a discount price of \$30.

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search of the property by MHS member Graham Hunt, council established that the house was called Ashley or Ashley Villa, and dated it from 1881. Demolition was declined by council, and the house will be listed as a heritage item. The owner has since put it back on the market, so the Society is hopeful that Ashley (Villa) is now safe.

The long running saga of the redevelopment of the former Starr-Bowkett building in Enmore Road, Newtown seems to have concluded with council approving a scheme that retains the 1920s facade under a modern apartment building. The Society does not support this development as it still fails to provide a building that is sympathetic to the character of this important Conservation Area. The approved building now represents a lost opportunity for council and developers to have demonstrated their commitment to providing high quality heritage design solutions for our important character retail precincts.

(Continued on back page)

Our July Meeting: Ashfield-Summer Hill walk

If the aim of an historical walk – apart from exercise on a warmer-than-average wintry day – is to learn about an area's history and heritage, then this was fulfilled in spades on the Saturday 30 July trek led by **Dr John Ward**, President of Ashfield & District Historical Society. John is a former 5-year Ashfield Mayor and an erstwhile activist (member of a resident action group in 1974 opposed to demolishing the ill-fated historic St Andrew's rectory). For the walk John provided extensive notes on the local history, elements of the architecture and fabric of present and past buildings and several images, maps and newspaper reports.

Starting in Ashfield Park we saw the 1921 'trachyte ensemble' war memorial and the statue of PL Travers (creator of the character Mary Poppins), who lived for a time in nearby Pembroke Street. This charming statue fittingly stands inside a children's playground.

In Ormond Street John pointed out the heritage-listed (in the Ashfield Heritage Study) postwar large blocks of home units. This listing might surprise some, but the study described the units as 'harbingers of a new mode of living [which] symbolize the incipient prosperity and the population growth of the period'. By contrast, in the same street, we saw a substantial two-storey house (previously called *Tangley*, *Romsey* and *Ormond*) built in 1882. Described as 'Victorian Free Classical/Filigree' John says it is 'a remarkable survivor of a lost era'. It has great potential but alas, is now a neglected boarding house destined for likely demolition.

South of Liverpool Road sits the James Barnet-designed police station (1888) and the adjacent fire station (1901), 'a rare example of Federation Anglo-Dutch styling'. The walk ended at the Summer Hill Church, built as St Andrew's in 1885 and designed by Alexander Leckie Elphinstone Jnr. In the book *Summer Hill* (1999), edited by Chris Pratten, he claimed this church 'must rank among the top ecclesiastical designs in Sydney'. Though we were unable to have a formal guided tour, we were allowed to inspect this beautiful church.

Since John conducted this tour for the Ashfield & District Historical Society in April, Ashfield Council has been merged with those of Leichhardt and Marrickville such that 'local' now has a broader context. We thank John for his comprehensive walking notes and for sharing his expertise in showing us around these two *now more local* Inner West suburbs.

Richard Blair

Thanks from the Newsletter Editor for 2015-16 to our newsletter runners in the past year: Rod Aanensen, Mary Barthelmy, Lu Bell, Richard Blair, John Blattman, Tricia Blombery and Stuart Grigg, Iain Carolin, Lucille Dunstan, Michael Egan, Rosemary Fallon, Ann Fenton, Audrey Furney, Roger Gazard, Colin Hesse, Shirley Hilyard, Marg Ludlow, Ruth Olip, Monica Oppen, Allan Outlaw, Ian Phillips, Peter Robertson, Greg Ryan, Pamela Stewart and Ken Turner. There was back-up from: Caroline Craddock, Chris King, Anne Morgan, Margaret Newman, Corinne O'Loughlin, Chris Rizos and Bob York. I also thank Ian Phillips for reliably delivering bundles of newsletters to runners; our drivers: Anna Breinl, John Mara, Diane McCarthy, Graeme Napier, Keith Sutton and Ken Turner; Pamela Stewart for sending the postals; and Diane McCarthy for her labels and much more.

When I first presented an annual newsletter report at the AGM in June 1995 I thanked the runners, among whom were four people who remain runners to this day: Lu Bell, John Blattman, Pamela Stewart and me. A fifth person only recently retired as a runner and she was a runner long before 1995. I speak of Shirley Hilyard, who was at the forefront of the Society's operations in the late 1980s and 1990s and was President for two years from 1992 to 1994. Shirley is not as fast on her feet as she used to be but it was with some reluctance that she recently retired from this long-held honorary position. Shirley continues to proofread the newsletter, which is still much improved by the scrutiny given to and appraisal afforded by both Shirley and Hillary Goldsmith. Scott MacArthur remains a bedrock with his regular reports, which keep us all up to speed about local heritage items and precincts at risk.

Our 27 August Meeting: Sydney University

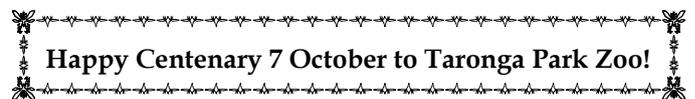
Robert Hutchinson, postcard collector extraordinaire, took his audience back in time to when the few buildings of Sydney University sat prominently on Petersham Hill (so named by the grantee of Grose Farm). Early postcards showing a few horse drawn vehicles, an unmade Parramatta Road cutting through the hill and a Grace Brothers department store still under construction evoked another time.

Postcards collected by deltiologist **Jill Brown**, a former staff member at Fisher Library, Sydney University, now published in *The University of Sydney: postcards 1899-1955 and photographs* (2015) as well as postcards and photos from Robert's extensive collection kept us well entertained. Views of the processional road from the City Road gatehouse to the Great Hall, the 'Horse Pond' with its elaborate bridge, the Victoria Park Bowling Club (now the site of a car park), attractive shrubbery, and grazing cattle on the gentle slopes leading up from Broadway showed just how much has changed; and yet the precious open space of Victoria Park has been preserved for all to enjoy.

We were shown photos of an anatomy class (c. 1907) in the Medical Building, the few women students conspicuous in the front rows; the quadrangle under construction, its beautiful colonnade still to be added; a Women's College hockey team in their long skirts, starched white blouses and cravat ties; and female geology students at their Hunter Valley field trip campsite. Of particular interest was a photo showing the public reception in the Great Hall for Professor Edgeworth David on his 1909 return from Antarctica. From his personal collection, Robert showed many exterior and interior views of Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and University Commemoration Day floats.

It was interesting to learn that postcards were commonly sent as Christmas greeting cards; one didn't have to be a genuine tourist, perhaps just a dreamer. These snapshots in time are an invaluable and true record of 'times past'. Thank you Robert and Jill for transporting us back to a more innocent and simpler period, to those readily identifiable buildings, which miraculously have survived and remain so familiar to inner west residents.

Jan Garaty



Happy Centenary 7 October to Taronga Park Zoo!

Vale: Keith Smith (1923-2016)

Keith Smith died on 14 July aged 92. Keith had joined MHS in 2000 and had been associated with the Marrickville area throughout his life. His grandmother had known Louisa Lawson and delivered milk to her. Keith's family lived at 92 Premier Street (once the residence of film director John Farrow) and he attended Ferncourt and de la Salle schools in Marrickville. During World War II he signed on with the RAN and his war service included 18 months in New Guinea as a writer/secretary. He also lived in Eastwood and Manly, became a glazier and among his many jobs was installing glass in the AMP building and the Sydney Opera House.



As a devoted Catholic, Keith did a lot of voluntary work with the Carmelites and Vincent de Paul Society. Always keenly interested in local history, he assisted in some church publications. He recalled: '... in the early 1940s boats netting prawns in Cooks River. When the river was dredged that was the end of the prawning era. Oysters and prawns were sold next to residences at the end of Unwins Bridge Road ... I remember the first hamburger shop in 1937 or 1938 opposite Seymours Store in Marrickville ... In 1942 my neighbour Mr Munro was an air raid warden and he and other men used the tunnel at the bottom of Richards Avenue alongside the river as their assembly point. The tunnel was originally connected to the Warren Mansion.'

Keith moved to a retirement village in Lewisham in the late 1990s. Our condolences to his family including his devoted niece Kathleen Fisher, who has now joined the Society.

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We note the death of **Elizabeth (Betty) Drabble** who died on 15 July aged 93. She had lived in Dulwich Hill with husband John and daughter Karen for many years and had told neighbours they 'could once see Botany Bay from their upstairs window'. The family joined MHS in 2003. Condolences to John and Karen.

Winter Trivia Answer

This Government Savings Bank of NSW was in Audley Street, Petersham. In the early 1930s all GS banks became Commonwealth Savings Banks. It is not known when this bank was built or demolished but a Commonwealth Bank remains on the site. This postcard, dated 22/9/1913, was sent by Walter to his parents 'so you can see what Australian Petersham is like.'



No one identified the building. Thanks to **Robert Hutchinson**, from whose postcard collection this comes.

Spring Trivia Question

What is this statue and where in the local area would you find it? Richard on 9557 3823 or email heritagesociety@optusnet.com.au.



Vale: Pat Mullen (1926-2016)

Patricia (Pat) Mullen died on 28 July aged 90. Pat had been a member since 1994 and had three stints on the MHS committee totalling six years (1994-95, 2000-02, 2004-07). Pat participated in the *Marrickville Remembers* project. She was a feisty and often outspoken woman with broad interests, and could frequently be heard on ABC Radio talkback spruiking about some cause or recalling old times. She shared the political views of her son, the late Geoffrey Mullen, who was a regular contributor to the letters page of *The Sydney Morning Herald*. They both attended several pot luck dinners. Pat lived in various parts of Marrickville (David Street included), Newtown, Hurlstone Park and Summer Hill. These photos were taken on the Society's 2009 Braidwood trip. Condolences to Pat's twin sister Jacqueline and sisters Norma and Wilma.



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Vale to **Joy Smith**, late of Petersham and Forster, who died on 17 May aged 81. Joy grew up in Palace Street Petersham, her family owning the Sanderson news-agency. Joy attended Petersham Public School with long time member Lu Bell. Both were present on the day of the Petersham Plane Crash (2 May 1945). Joy joined MHS in 1986 and took part in the *Marrickville Remembers* project of the 1990s. One recollection was when WWII ended and they were given the day off. She found: 'a couple of the teachers were crying and I couldn't understand why anyone would be crying. I remember Miss Knight saying that even though it was a joyous and happy time, there were lots of people who were going to be unhappy now because they would never see their sons, husbands or brothers.' Condolences to Joy's daughter Tracy.

(all obituaries by **Richard Blair**)

Coptic Church, Sydenham update

The Coptic Church was temporarily saved from a Christmas demolition by the NSW Government issuing an Interim Heritage Order (IHO) so that the Heritage Council could determine if the Church was worthy of protection as an item of state heritage. The heritage assessment report commissioned by the Heritage Council and an independent report from Prof. Paul Ashton of UTS, Sydney, agreed the church was of social and cultural significance at a state level due to its strong connection with the Coptic Church and the wider Coptic community. Inexplicably, this was insufficient grounds for council to recommend listing to the Minister, and so State Heritage protection was officially declined by Minister Speakman. The full report of the Heritage Council recommendation to the Minister has yet to be publicly released.

The church is again at the mercy of Council's demolishers. The Coptic community and the Society will continue to lobby council to look for creative and sustainable outcomes for the church. However, council's rigid requirement that any new user must provide millions of dollars to repair the damage that council's own neglect has caused is outrageous. The fate of the church now depends on finding a rich benefactor. We note that the Rev Fred Nile has asked the NSW Premier for a grant for the church.

Scott MacArthur

Calendar of MHS events

Saturday 24 September

'Harp in the South' tour with John Derum

Details on front page

Saturday 22 October

**Yabba, Cricket's legendary barracker –
talk by Richard Cashman**

Details on front page

Saturday 26 November

Bruce Lay & Laurel Horton talk on Lymerston

Photographs sought by Council

Request from ML & HS: "Marrickville Library and History Services has a collection of historical photographs dating back to the early 1830s. However, there is a significant gap in the collection after 1970. Residents are asked if they could lend their own photos of events, streetscapes, local business, characters and streetlife of the former Marrickville Council LGA so there is a lasting public pictorial record. All photos copied and returned, with donors receiving a credit in the archives. You can either visit any Marrickville Library branch where there are free scanning facilities; or email your photos to <history@marrickville.nsw.gov.au>. For more information, visit <marrickville.nsw.gov.au/history> or ring Aleem 9335 2167."

With little fanfare, **Dulwich Hill Library** closed on 27 August. It had operated from a converted cottage in Seaview Street since 1947 and was the first municipal library in the former Marrickville Council. The future of the building is unknown.

A new library known as the **Emanuel Tsardoulias Community Library** has opened at nearby 362-372 New Canterbury Road, Dulwich Hill. The library was named in honour of the late Cr Tsardoulias who died in 2014 aged 38 after serving on Council for six years, including a year as deputy mayor.

The **Living Museum at Addison Road Community Centre** (142 Addison Road, Marrickville) is seeking donations. The museum is trying to build a small but relevant collection that relates to all aspects of the site's history – produce gardens, army use, role in neighbourhood during peace time, development of a community centre. The idea is to use items, or high quality copies of them, in exhibitions and events, especially those that engage young people and school students.

MHS members able to help or needing further information can contact Museum Coordinator Mina on 9569 7633 or email <museum@arcco.org.au>.

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The Society congratulates **Sue Castrique**, whose essay, 'On the edge of Gumbramorra swamp' was a major prizewinner in the Wildcare Nature Writing prize. Covering environmental history, it's the first chapter of the 'History of the Addison Road Community Centre'.

President Scott 0416 152 501

Heritage Watch Scott 0416 152 501

Treasurer Diane 9588 4930

Newsletter Richard 9557 3823

Heritage Watch report 2016 (cont'd from front page)

Council's determination to demolish the former Coptic Church in Sydenham has been resisted by the Society at every turn for the past six years. Council gave itself permission to demolish the former Tempe Park Methodist Church at the end of last year, only to be thwarted by the intervention of the NSW Heritage Office, who at the last minute imposed an IHO on the church, so that its suitability for listing as a NSW Heritage Item could be assessed. The local Coptic community has established strong links with the building and is moving heaven and earth to protect it, and find it a suitable new use. The Society hopes that the combination of religious passion, heritage sensibilities and high level political machinations can save this building from demolition.

The Society found itself lobbying against the destruction of both the new and old heritage information networks, when both the National Library's internet Trove resource and Council's Local History Collection came under threat. Federal government budget cutbacks have meant that the world class Trove resource will be starved of funding, so that it will be unable to expand its unique digital database of 100 million articles. At the same time, council seemed to have totally lost the plot with the Local History Collection, locking it away from users and misplacing donated items. While Trove is still under threat, council has committed to rectifying the access and storage problems of their library. However, the future of the Local Studies Collection in the new library on the old Marrickville Hospital site is undecided, and the Society continues to lobby for the installation of the collection and rooms for the Society in the Livingstone Road Victorian villas, currently scheduled for demolition by the Mirvac redevelopment. The years ahead for MHS and Local Government Area could usually be anticipated as being variations on established themes. Instead, there are major changes in store for our district from governance changes and transport infrastructure developments. The Sydenham-Bankstown Metro line development corridor is proposed by the state government as a major Urban Renewal project for the Sydenham to Bankstown Rail Line, to increase population density with an additional 100,000 people in 36,000 dwellings within a corridor of 400-800 metres from the line. This will require the potential removal of thousands of existing houses, many of them period buildings, and often close to listed heritage items. It has the potential to totally change the character of our region, so our vigilance and engagement will be critical over the coming years. Another transport project, the WestConnex M5 motorway will push thousands of extra cars a day into our streets, and the state government would seem to have little idea or interest in determining what the impacts of this invasion will be.

And, most proximately, Marrickville Council has been abolished and absorbed into the omnibus Inner West Council, disrupting the good working relationships the Society had established with our former local councillors and staff. The Society will seek to establish connections with the new regime as it recovers from its rocky public debut.

Scott MacArthur