



# MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

3392777

ISSN 0818-0695 Vol 4 No 6 November 1987  
Postal Address PO Box 415 Marrickville 2204

## ***Our Next Meeting***

Saturday 28th November, at 10.30am in the Amenities Room, Petersham Town Hall, the Mayor of Marrickville, Alderman Barry Jones, will briefly outline the highlights of the Municipality's Bicentennial Program.

Rhona Clement will then speak on the Marrickville Council Archives. Mrs Clement was employed by Marrickville Municipal Council as the Information Coordinator/Archivist in May, 1987 under a two-year Bicentennial Project to establish an ARCHIVAL REFERENCE CENTRE at Petersham Town Hall. There are two interlinked parts of the project:-  
(1) The restoration of the former Council Chamber and its foyer, the Chamber to become the Search Room of the Archives; and  
(2) The archives project itself, which will bring together the official noncurrent records of the three amalgamated councils (St Peters, Petersham and Marrickville), into safe storage for use by the public.

## ***Christmas Picnic***

At approximately 12.30pm, we will adjourn to the picturesque cast-iron rotunda in Petersham Park for our Christmas Picnic. There will be traditional Christmas games for children of all ages and, we hope, a visit from Santa Claus. Comfortable sheltered seating will be available for the elderly.

Lunch is provided but members and their friends are invited to contribute items of 'Christmas Cheer' if they are able.

Please contact Bob Thompson (Phone 558 5352) if you would like to assist with the Picnic arrangements or if you need transport.

## *Our Last Meeting...*

Last month the Society joined with local publisher Hale & Tremonger for the launching of the book A Place Like Home which tells the story of the notorious Petersham School of Industry.

Approximately 150 people attended the launching which was held in the elegant surroundings of Trethaway Gardens in Shaw Street, Petersham, by courtesy of the owner, Mr Don Monk. Members of the Society, friends of the author and representatives of the publishing industry had the opportunity to wander through the beautifully restored and furnished rooms of this gracious late Victorian Italianate mansion.

The Petersham School of Industry, a home for orphan girls or girls whose parents were unable to care for them, was also in Shaw Street, but further up the hill, close to the Petersham Police Station.

Although the school has been demolished, recent research reveals that the matron's house is still standing surrounded by blue-brick bungalows of the 1920s and 30s.

Edna Ryan, who officially launched the book, described her dreadful fascination at reading A Place Like Home in manuscript form. The three Laverni girls, Ivy, Lena and Isabelle were sent to this awful place because their father had heard the call of Empire and had enlisted to fight in the First World War. Then their mother became ill and was unable to care for her three small daughters. The School of Industry, designed originally to train young girls as household servants, seemed the only answer to an impossible situation.

Life was not easy at the school. When Isabelle and Lilian stole the stale bread crusts which should have gone to feed the chooks, because they were so hungry, the matron forced cakes of washing soap into their mouths, then ordered them to strip off their clothes in front of all the other girls and were each given twelve lashings across their bare bottoms and legs with a hefty leather strap. They were then forced to get into a cold bath to wash themselves, and then each girl was given a large dose of castor oil, before being sent to bed without tea.

'Let this be a lesson to you and all the rest of the children' said the matron, Miss Muir . . . 'The soap was to clean out the dirty things you have eaten. The strap was to chasten your wicked flesh. The oil was to clean the filth from your stomachs' . . . Getting into bed they burrowed under the cold sheets and put their heads down ready to weep themselves to sleep.' (p. 89)

Following descriptions such as this, it seemed ironic that our morning should conclude with the distribution of coffee, tea and biscuits, under crystal chandeliers and surrounded by antique furniture in such splendid surroundings. Our thanks to Sylvia Hale, Don Monk and Richard Cashman for organizing this most stimulating Saturday morning meeting.

- Geoffrey Ostling

## Has Anyone Seen The Flag ?

This photograph was among many of the interesting items brought along by members at the recent Show and Tell evening. It shows the Empire Day tableau at Five Dock Public School early this century and on first sight would appear to have little to do with our Municipality. However, the Union Jack is embroidered with the words 'From the children of Oban Street Poplar, London, to those of Fivedock School in New South Wales'. We know that a similar embroidered flag (still in existence) was sent from the children of Marrickville Public School to the children of Marrick, Yorkshire in 1907 for their Empire Day celebrations. Did the Marrick children return the favour? Perhaps somewhere, someday, someone will discover a similarly embroidered Union Jack.



This was but one of the many items which were described by members. There were photographs and old press cuttings, descriptions of cricket matches, a brass dinner bell, a shiny old door knob and a giant saw for the cutting of cedar trees. There were also lovingly unearthed bottles, pot-lids, bricks and other examples of industrial archaeology. Anne Carolan brought along a selection of silver hunting trophies collected by the Gannon family and the original name plate from the family mansion, Hurlingham. Barbara Le Maistre showed a selection of twentieth-century Fowler Ware pottery and Geoff Ostling described the leather bound book, illustrated with charming watercolour views of St Clement's Church and Rectory and the hundreds of signatures of Marrickville citizens which was presented to the Reverend A.E. Bellingham when he left Marrickville in 1907.

During supper, many members commented on the fact that there is still no Local History Museum within the Municipality, so many of these items could be lost when the owners pass on or move to other areas.

However, the first Show and Tell was such a success that it has been decided that it become an annual event.

## **Evening Harbour Cruise**

On Wednesday, 30th December, from 6pm to 10pm, the Society has arranged a relaxed evening harbour cruise on 'The Grand Trio', a comfortable yacht with capacity to either sail or cruise, depending on the winds. The cost is \$10 per person. Please bring your own picnic supper to eat ashore when we pay a short visit to historic Clarke Island. Bookings should be made at the meeting on 28th November, as numbers are strictly limited. Anne Carolan (Phone 406 4862) has further details.



## **Giant Jumble Sale**

The date has now been set - Saturday 5th December, from 8.30am, for the Society's Giant Jumble Sale at Alex Trevallion Plaza, outside the Marrickville Post Office. Members are asked to donate unwanted items such as children's toys, books, household goods, saleable clothing (Anyone with a spare mink coat?), kitchen equipment and potted plants so please start putting some things aside now and ask your friends to do the same. There will be three collection points in various parts of the Municipality, and we will be happy to collect your goods if you are unable to get them to us. Please contact Tony Deguara at 558 4726, Geoff Ostling at 568 3029 or Bruce Welch at 569 9928.

## **Christmas Raffle**

**First Prize:-** two books, The Islands of Sydney Harbour and How to Trace your Family Tree (and not get caught on a branch), donated by Hale & Iremonger;

**Second Prize:-** two bottles of wine; **Third Prize:-** a Christmas cake.

Tickets are 20 cents each or six for a Dollar, available from members of the executive and at our Christmas Picnic.

## **New Members**

Ms M Lloyd; Dr B J Levien; Mrs Laurel Livingston; Peg Simpson; Deidre Peebles and family; "Glenrock" household; Andrew and Carolyn Thornley.

## **How to Subscribe to the Society**

It's only \$7 for individuals, \$10 for households and institutions, and \$2 for students and pensioners. You will receive copies of our Newsletter (either posted or delivered to your door) and our Journal Heritage. Your subscription is good for twelve months from the date of joining. Write to The Secretary, PO Box 415, Marrickville 2204. The editor would also like to hear from members with contributions to the Newsletter. Please contact Mark Matheson ( 559 5502) or Geoff Ostling (568 3029).