

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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OUR NEXT MEETING

Saturday May 25 Annual General Meeting 10.30 am
Aldermen's Room, Petersham Town Hall in Crystal
Street

FUTURE PROGRAMME

Saturday June 22 Excursion to Mastertouch Piano Roll Company,
Petersham

1985 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Support us by coming along to our AGM to express your views on how the Society has operated in its first year and what directions it should take in the future. As a member you are entitled to nominate for any positions on the Executive which include: President, 2 Vice Presidents, Treasurer and 3 additional members. Nominations open 10 days prior to the meeting and do not close until the meeting itself. The Society also needs some members to serve on two important sub-committees: Publications, and Heritage Week.

As resolved at our February meeting, which deferred the AGM until May, this notification (by Newsletter) will constitute your official notice of the meeting.



END OF VOLUME 1

Volume 1, Number 10 marks the end of our first Newsletter 'year' and Volume 2 will begin next month. In case you're confused, we operate around the Society year (May-May) rather than the calendar or financial year. Since the inaugural meeting to form the Society on April 28, 1984, and the second meeting when the constitution was adopted on May 26, we have printed 10,000 Newsletters, beginning with June 1984 (now a collector's item--we hope). Copies have been spread widely around the municipality and even outside. Quite a number of our members live outside Marrickville.

The Newsletter has been a co-operative effort. I'd like to thank Anne Carolan who has carefully proof read each issue with her eagle eye. Gregory Robertson has made the Newsletter more visually appealing with his artistic squiggles. Thanks are also due to Gregory for his cover design of **Heritage** which featured the 'Winged Victory' statue. I have heard that there are some possible moves afoot to restore this damaged sculpture to its former glory in front of Marrickville Town Hall. It would be a worthwhile Bicentennial project.

Special thanks are due to Chrys Meader, our indefatigable Secretary-cum-Local History Librarian-cum-Publicity Officer. When she is not providing information for our publications, she is speaking to local groups and schools about our history, or delivering Newsletters or selling **Heritage** or promoting the Bicentennial or signing up new members. Thanks are also due to the Council which provides the Society with a permanent home and phone in the Library. (Ed.)

SUBURBS AND RAILWAY STATIONS

To celebrate the centenary of a number of our railway stations (Sydenham and Tempe in 1884, the old station at Petersham in 1885, and Lewisham in 1886), and the opening up of railway lines (the Illawarra line in 1884) we will begin a series which will cover all the stations and suburbs in Marrickville Municipality.

THE MAIN WESTERN LINE

This railway line was the first constructed in Australia. It originally started from the city Terminus (Devonshire Street) and ran to Ashfield. Construction was begun in 1852 by a private company, the Sydney Railway Company, but by the time both lines had been completed and extended to Parramatta in 1856 this company had become insolvent and the Government purchased the railway. When the line was opened there were 'stations' at Newtown, Petersham, Ashfield, Burwood, Haslem's Creek and Parramatta. Petersham though, in 1856 consisted of a 'flag station'. Trains called there three times a day when the signal indicated that there were passengers to be picked up.

Construction took several years because it involved major excavations at Newtown and Petersham to a depth of 38 feet and the construction of a viaduct over Long Cove Creek which was 60 feet high at its highest point. The line was tested for the first time in 1855 when the Governor-General and numerous VIPS travelled the four-and-a-half miles to Long Cove Creek in eleven minutes. This is about the same time as the all-stops train takes today! Trains were segregated (with first, second and third class passengers) and quite expensive. The train fare from Petersham was 9d first class and 4d third class.

NEWTOWN

Newtown Station is no longer within the Municipality but it was previously, and many residents of Marrickville still use the station. The original station was at the bottom of Station Street now occupied by Crago Mills. The suburb acquired its name from one of the first shops at what is now Newtown Bridge which was a weatherboard building owned by John Webster. He called it the NEW TOWN store to distinguish it from the shops at the other small settlement which had developed along King Street. Webster owned the whole corner block, with a frontage along Australia Street. He had his store on the Eliza and King Street corner of his block before Eliza Street was formed. This site later became the Bricklayer's Arms Hotel and is now the Oxford Hotel.

The original station at Newtown, opened on September 26, 1855, consisted of an open station. It was replaced by the existing island station in 1892.



Liberty Street, Stanmore

Not many streets in the area have as romantic a history as Liberty Street. Toll-bars were introduced in the time of Governor Macquarie to raise funds for the construction and maintenance of roads. The first toll-bar in Newtown was in King Street near the corner of Forbes Street. The toll was 3d (2c) for a one-horse dray and an additional 3d for each additional horse. Pedestrians were not charged. This may not seem much but it represented approximately 1/20th of a day's wage, which in today's terms would be around \$1.50--quite a steep charge. As the settlement at Cook's River grew, many travellers attempted to evade the toll-bar by travelling along Parramatta Road and up Missenden Road or Australia Street, and then along King Street. To prevent this evasion, a second toll-bar was erected across King Street at what is now Newtown Bridge. Liberty Street acquired its name because it was used by persons trying to travel south of Newtown to Parramatta Road without passing through one of the toll-bars. Both toll-bars were not abolished until 1882.

Heritage Study Completed

Stages 1 and 2 of the Marrickville Heritage Study have now been completed by Fox and Associates and were handed over to the Mayor, Ald Barry Jones, at a function at Petersham Town Hall on April 15. Stages 1 and 2 identify heritage items and include a history of the area. Stage 3, which will recommend future planning options will be completed in several months. The whole study will be available for public scrutiny at that point.

New Members

Bernard Agostino, Mrs Butterworth, Kevin Finnerty and family, Geoffrey and Joan Francis, Glynis Jones, David Marr, Katherine Perrin, Patricia Ryan, Susan and Warren Young and children Alison and Cameron. Our membership total now is 132. A special welcome to Mrs Butterworth of Carlton. Her grandmother was a Fairbairn, one of Marrickville's pioneering families.

HOW TO JOIN THE SOCIETY

It's only \$7 for individuals, \$10 for households and institutions, \$2 for pensioners and students. In addition, you will receive copies of the monthly Newsletter and **Heritage**, published in December. Additional copies of **Heritage** can be purchased at \$2 a copy--while they last. Post your subscriptions to Chrys at Marrickville Library, Marrickville Town Hall, 2204. (Phone 560-9333 Ext 282). You don't have to wait until the AGM or the end of the financial year. Our 'rolling membership' enables you to remain financial for twelve months from the time you join.

