

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY

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

MARRICKVILLE PETERSHAM, ST PETERS, STANMORE
CAMPERDOWN & HURLSTONE PARK



OUR NEXT MEETING

**MOST CURIOUS AND PECULIAR
19TH-CENTURY AUSTRALIAN
WOMEN TAXIDERMISTS
MARTHA SEAR DOES HER STUFF
Saturday August 26, 10.30 am
Petersham Town Hall**

The committee appointed to prepare exhibits of NSW women's work for the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 claimed that *a good deal of bird and animal stuffing done in Sydney is performed by females*. In February 1996 an exhibition showing the truth of that statement will open at the Macleay Museum in the University of Sydney. The exhibition will examine the wide range of work carried out by women taxidermists by taking as its centrepiece the history of one of the most important taxidermy firms in Sydney during the 19th century *Tost & Rohu*.

Jane Tost worked at the British Museum before being appointed as taxidermist to the Royal Society of Tasmania in 1856 making her probably the first woman in a professional position in any Australian museum. Between 1864 and 1869 she was one of two full-time taxidermists working at the Australian Museum, paid at the same rate as her male counterpart. In 1872 with her daughter Ada Jane Coates she set up a business later called *Tost & Rohu* which continued to diversify over the next 60 years into a fancy-work depot, a furriers and tanners, and a curiosity shop, known by the 1920s as the *Queerest Shop in Sydney*.



Margaret Flockton's *The Taxidermist's Studio* c. 1898
(*Home & Hearth, Women's Domestic Arts & Crafts 1800-1930*,
Historic Houses Trust 1988)

Martha Sear (a postgraduate student in the Department of History at the University of Sydney, and curator of the exhibition) will discuss the wider importance of taxidermy in Victorian science and interior decoration with reference to the careers of these two women and the numerous other women taxidermists active in the colony between 1840 and 1900. She will also reveal where *Tost & Rohu* was located and tell us about the Enmore Road connection!

CONGRATULATIONS JACK MUNDEY

We congratulate Jack Munday on being appointed Chairman of the NSW Historic Houses Trust. Had it not been for Jack and the BLF green bans in the 1970s, Lyndhurst (now the Glebe headquarters of the Historic Houses Trust) would not have been saved. Jack said of his appointment that the job gave him *the chance to highlight respect for our built heritage because if we don't respect the past, there's not much hope for the future*.

AUGUST 15 – VP OR VJ DAY?

August 15 marks the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II hostilities, but was it *Victory in the Pacific* (VP) or *Victory over Japan* (VJ)? The *Sydney Morning Herald* in mid August 1945 referred to the first day of *Peace*, Wednesday August 15 as *VP Day*. The *New York Times* (late edition) headline on Sunday September 2 read (in part) *Truman Sets Today As V-J Day* when the Articles of Surrender were signed aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay just after 9am (Tokyo time).
Editor

NEWSLETTER EDITOR'S REPORT 1994-95

When Judith Matheson announced in June 1994 she was stepping down as newsletter editor my indication of willingness to help the new editor quickly catapulted me into the editorship which Judith had so capably carried out for several years; so capably that at last October's Royal Australian Historical Society annual conference she was awarded the Certificate of Achievement for contribution to the successful editorial management of the publications of the MHS.

In early newsletters I would wonder whether I was going to have enough copy, but quickly discovered that there was always more than enough, such that articles were often trimmed or held over to the next issue. A one-off only precedent (I hope) occurred with the December newsletter which was a six pager full of diverse material. In hindsight this also partly compensated for the fact that the Society does not produce a January newsletter.

If there was a newsletter Issue of the Year it was Stanmore House and Person of the Year, Mary Reibey. As you all know by now Mary in the 1840s built Stanmore House which remains one of the few architectural reminders (and the only one in Sydney) of her illustrious life. In Jan Morris' book Sydney, having presented a vignette of Mary's life, she asks could such careers be paralleled anywhere else on earth – not just rags-to-riches, but actually manacles-to-millionaires? Mary's appearance on the \$20 note in late 1994 coincided with the Society's campaign to save Stanmore House by actively opposing the unsympathetic development application on the adjoining property.

Advocating for the retention of the Tempe Tram Depot and its World War I Memorial was another prominent issue. We were privileged to publish part of the story sent by the Griffith descendants of the gallant Lieutenant John Lyons; killed in France and awarded the Military Cross, he was the most decorated man in his battalion. His name is the foremost on the Tempe memorial.

The newsletter has followed a similar format to its predecessors – firstly to inform members of coming events and report on past activities; secondly to cover both bread and butter heritage issues on the one hand, and items of topical, historic or nostalgic interest on the other. Looking back through the year's issues there have been over 30 contributors, however as I wish to continue as newsletter editor I would like more contributions so please inundate me with phone calls or letters, no matter how apparently trivial or ordinary your offering may seem to be.

And so to the thank yous. Mark Matheson provided invaluable guidance in early newsletters especially regarding style, layout and use of graphics. Julie Drew gave me ready access to her computer and patient tuition on the intricacies of Microsoft Word. Ed Jones also demystified some of these intricacies as well as allaying editor anxiety over excessive copy, layout dilemmas and despatch. Thank you Ed, Kelly and Harlow

Printing for making the newsletter look great!

Cheryl Flynn, acting Local Studies Librarian at Marrickville Library has been a tremendous resource for photographs, historical data and general advice whilst Libby Maher, Council's heritage architect has willingly pursued enquiries over missing or damaged items. Bob and Laurel Horton along with Lori Short, have kept me informed about the St Peters, Sydenham and Tempe areas.

I have been fortunate in having an active bunch of co-executive committee members (including former Secretary Pat Mullen, now in Adelaide) who have given me tremendous support. I have really valued John Zinsmeester's energetic Heritage Watch contributions whilst ginormous thanks go to Shirley Hilyard, roving reporter and proofreader, whose insight into the workings of the Society, her extensive range of contacts, her architectural savoir faire, sharp wit and enthusiasm, plus the odd par, did not go unnoticed.

Finally thanks to Gwenda Welsh who, as Assistant Secretary, is responsible for getting the newsletter to you and this requires considerable organisation and co-ordination. The delivery people are mysteriously called runners – the mind boggles when I try and imagine Mary Tait tearing down Illawarra Road; but they are a most important link in our chain of communications. Ably assisted by husband Harold, Gwenda's runners have been Barbara Gibbons, Anne Cherry, Lu Bell, John & Betty Blattman, Brian Nugent, Shirley Hilyard, Roslyn Yeomans, Richard Blair, Mary Curcio, Geoff Francis, Angela Phippen, Pamela Stewart, Zena Hodges, Fred Ellis, Valerie McLeish, Lindsay Smyth, John Zinsmeester and Mary Tait who also posts about 120 newsletters every month.

Richard Blair (presented at AGM 24/6/95)

RAFFLE REMINDER

Please sell your tickets and return butts and proceeds to Treasurer by post or our next meeting. Ring Harold on 569 5183 for more tickets. Raffle to be drawn on Saturday, 23 September after Newtown heritage walk.

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HERITAGE WATCH

- After accepting a copy of *Dear Cousin The Reibey Letters* as a token of thanks for conducting the recent Greenway tour, heritage architect Clive Lucas said our best gift would be to succeed in lobbying for the conserving of **Stanmore House**. Have you yet written to Council?
- Some issues come to our attention too late for us to act such as the 1880s double-fronted Victorian villa with a bay window and verandah at **349 Old Canterbury Road, Dulwich Hill** which has been approved by Council for demolition. Go and see it before it disappears from our streetscape.
- Excavations at the former Shell service station on the corner of Princes Highway and Victoria Street, St Peters have revealed a **beehive well** on the site of the original St Peters Town Hall (demolished 1927). The well has been reported to Marrickville Council which has issued a stopwork order pending investigation.
- The **Trocadero** building at 69-77 King Street, Newtown has been listed on the National Trust Register and its owners, Moore Theological College have commissioned a conservation plan from heritage architect Alan Croker.
- **Mastertouch** owner Barclay Wright has approached the State Government seeking purchase of the redundant 1885 Stanmore Fire Station (till its closure in 1991 the oldest in continuous operation in NSW) to handle its box-making operations. Piano roll manufacture would continue in its present nearby location in Crystal Street, Petersham. Both sites would also function as working museums.

VIETNAMESE IN AUSTRALIA

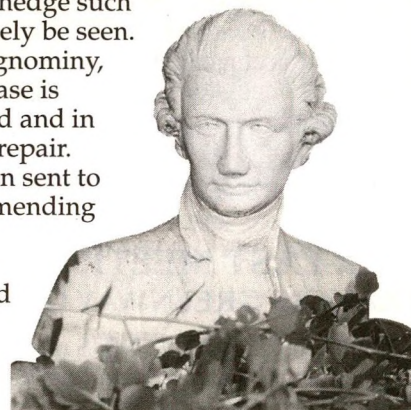
On June 22, I attended the 20th anniversary celebrations of the Vietnamese in Australia at Marrickville Town Hall. There are now about 150,000 Vietnamese in Australia and Marrickville has the third largest such community in NSW. Much of their successful migration and resettlement has been due to the strong support from early arrivals in adapting to new rules and regulations as well as to financial support. Their strong, persecution-free religious faith (Buddhist, Catholic and Protestant) has aided resettlement and the church and/or temple have provided meeting places with readily available comfort, friendship and mutual support. Many Vietnamese Australians are flourishing in small businesses and a large number have graduated from universities. This was an occasion to celebrate their achievements in the academic, professional and political spheres and to express thanks to the Australian people for the chance to establish a new life.

Gwenda Welsh

COOKS RIVER WALK

One of the feature articles in the forthcoming *Heritage 9* will be a guided **Cooks River walk** from Canterbury to Tempe prepared by journal editor Mark Matheson. This river, though rich in history, has suffered ecologically from pollution, neglect and often misguided management strategies from a number of well-intentioned councils and governments. As an aid to doing the walk there will be a tear-out tour guide attached to the journal.

Along the walk one passes the clubhouse at Marrickville Golf Club, which incorporates the historic 19th century twin-gabled home of Thomas Roseby. Here one can see the 1920s **bust of Captain Cook**, probably the only ceramic representation of Cook in the LGA, although he is the centrepiece of the Marrickville Council crest. Little is known about the history of the bust though it is believed to have been made by Fowler Potteries to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Captain Cook's landing; its location may be the point Cook reached in navigating the river. The golf course is owned by Marrickville Council and apparently leased at a peppercorn rent. Unfortunately, the bust is tucked away behind a hedge such that it can scarcely be seen. To add to this ignominy, the terracotta base is severely cracked and in need of urgent repair. A letter has been sent to Council recommending its repair and relocation to a more secure and appropriate site, possibly indoors.



Captain Cook's bust
(photo: Caroline Plim)

Another feature of the river walk is **Fatima Island** visible from Princes Highway at Tempe. After the war pilgrimages to the island had a devout following. In the early 1950s Monsignor Giles, parish priest of the former Sts Peter & Paul's Church Tempe, after strenuous lobbying to Marrickville Council, had it named Fatima Island.

Richard Blair

VALE FRED DALY

Late last year Fred Daly (former long time Federal Member for Grayndler) agreed to speak at our November meeting, but unfortunately ill health forced him to cancel. On August 2, Fred died aged 83 and we lost one of the wildest, wisest and wittiest politicians of yesteryear. When asked recently what was his best achievement, he quipped: *To last*. Farewell Fred and condolences to his family.

CALENDAR OF MHS EVENTS

SATURDAY AUGUST 26 10.30 AM

Petersham Town Hall

Most curious and peculiar

Details on front page.

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 23

Bruce Baskerville leads us around some heritage precincts of Newtown north

SATURDAY OCTOBER 28 10.30 AM

Petersham Town Hall

New Chairman of the Historic Houses Trust

Jack Munday will discuss BLF green bans and how *people power* helped save historic parts of Sydney.

SUNDAY AUGUST 20 3.00 PM

Prescott Hall, Newington College

The Prescott Series presents *Trio Con Brio* with David Saffir on violin, Donald Westlake clarinet and Gerard Willems piano for a feast of favourite trios, duets and solos from the classical and romantic periods (admission \$15, \$8 concession, children accompanied by an adult free).

OUR LAST MEETING FRANCIS GREENWAY GOES WEST

On Saturday 22 July, 53 MHS members, guided by distinguished and dedicated heritage architect Clive Lucas, journeyed by coach to Liverpool and Windsor. Our first stop was Liverpool College of TAFE, the former Liverpool Hospital (built in 1821-25). Greenway's central block has been enhanced by the respectful addition (by colonial architect James Barnett) of flanking wings and pavilions. The result is a beautifully arcaded forecourt entered between two small gatehouses reminiscent of their counterparts at Hyde Park Barracks. Internally the cantilevered stone geometric stair rises through several storeys within its cylindrical stairwell. This is capped by a clerestory-lit hemispherical dome coloured an intense blue. The total effect is stunning! It was further pleasing to see that despite the building's institutional occupancy the reinstatement of earlier internal decoration is supplanting the ubiquitous white paint of the 1960s.

St Luke's Church, Liverpool (1819) is the oldest Anglican church in Australia. The nave and tower are Greenway's work, the tower being adorned by its original George III clock – one of only three in Australia. The chancel and north porch are later additions, the latter by architect J Burcham Clamp in 1923. While much of Greenway's Georgian exterior remains, the interior was modified in

Victorian times – notably by the removal of its original box-pews and galleries and the installation of pictorial stained-glass windows – all to suit contemporary High Church aspirations.

After a picnic lunch at Windsor we crossed the road to St Matthew's Church (1817-22) which has been acclaimed as *Greenway's masterpiece*. Clive described it as *the most Georgian church in the Sydney region*. Here Greenway's mastery of scale, proportion, harmony, siting and detail are seen to best advantage. Inside, the original box-pews are largely intact and are divided by two aisles – the latter feature being rarely found today in NSW. The oldest pipe organ in Australia sits on a gallery at the west wall. The present coffered ceiling was built to the design of Edmund Blacket. Ask someone who was on the tour to explain the significance of *Capstan* cigarettes in the colours (blue, black and white) of this ceiling!

The nearby St Matthew's Rectory (1822) is regarded by Clive as *one of the finest early colonial houses in NSW*. It shares with our own *Stanmore House* the distinction of a *breakfront* street elevation. There is no record of who designed this house, but the most frequent attributions are to either Greenway or his arch rival Henry Kitchen, best known as the designer of *Hambledon Cottage* at Parramatta. Especially notable is the front door with its splendid fanlight and bracketed canopy.

Windsor Courthouse (1820-21) is the oldest continuously used courthouse in NSW. A major restoration carried out in 1962 saw the return to view of the lovely colour texture of Greenway's characteristic bricks. This was done by the laborious removal of each brick, turning the rendered side inwards; thus avoiding the degradation of the appearance and weatherproofness of the brick faces if sandblasting had been attempted. Although this building is less ambitious than the others it still exhibits many of the architect's virtues.

Finally, Shirley's *scintillating secret surprise* brought us to *Hobartville* in Richmond. This fine Georgian country mansion was built in 1828 for William Cox, Jnr. There is no proof of the designer's identity but most attributions are again to Greenway. The high degree of competence shown in the design and construction of this house, and similarity of the entrance portico to the one added by Greenway to Old Government House, Parramatta, makes this highly plausible. The house and outbuildings are undergoing restoration; indeed the owners have asked us for help in locating early illustrations of these buildings. Close by the house we found a small pavilion containing a seven-seater dunny – all in together. Surprise! *Nice one Shirley!* Thanks to Clive for sharing his time, knowledge and enthusiasm and to Shirley Hilyard for her stupendous efforts in organising a most successful and enjoyable day.

Peter Witt

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