

# MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY

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

MARRICKVILLE, PETERSHAM, ST PETERS, STANMORE  
CAMPERDOWN & HURLSTONE PARK



## OUR NEXT MEETING

### JACK MUNDEY – THE IMPORTANCE OF HERITAGE IN SUBURBIA FROM A WORKING CLASS PERSPECTIVE

**Saturday October 28, 10.30 am**  
**Petersham Town Hall**  
**(MHS raffle will be drawn)**

When Jack Munday accepted Premier Bob Carr's recent offer to chair the NSW Historic Houses Trust, Jack, one time communist and builders labourer, declared it was *amazing to have such respectability*. Bob Carr said *there are corners of Sydney which will remain as a permanent monument to Jack Munday. His commitment to our city's history is unmatched.*



Jack was an environmentalist long before it became fashionable. Born on the Atherton Tablelands in north Queensland he came to Sydney at 19. *During the building boom of the 1960s I became aware that the environment of the city was changing as I saw the sun was shining on fewer streets as the high-rise office blocks went up. When we got control of the union, we decided to do something about the environment...then [in 1971] the Kelly's Bush thing came along and the answer was clear.* This posed a dilemma as it meant the Marxist oriented union leadership and the BLF (Builders Labourers Federation) would need to join forces with the Hunters Hill Battlers for Kelly's Bush, a group Jack endearingly called his *Upper-Middle-Class Morning Tea Matrons*. However, it was felt Hunters Hill deserved decent open space as much as any place else did.

*Munday, the trendy radical, resplendent in modish leather jackets and muttonchop sideburns below a neatly styled but bristly mop of hair, had dropped out of school at 14, yet could spellbind an audience of any political persuasion with his eminently reasonable, commonsense*

*arguments.* When Secretary of the BLF, he coined the term *green ban* as the term for this new environmental unionism which was *simply industrial disruption reflecting environmental as well as social significance*. Kelly's Bush remained bushland despite the *combined muscle of the largest Australian homebuilder* (Jennings) and the Askin Liberal Government.

The BLF green bans in The Rocks, the first in a working class area and the first directly targeting a state government attracted nationwide publicity. A number of unions supported the residents, and there were major confrontations, sit-ins to block bulldozers, demonstrations, protest marches, arrests and a complete stoppage by the BLF on every construction site in the city. About fifty green bans (including Victoria Street, Kings Cross) were declared in Sydney within three years of the first one at Kelly's Bush in 1971. The Sydney BLF declared it would not participate in the demolition of any building classified as historic by the NSW National Trust and Jack believes 200 buildings may have been saved as a result.

From 1984 to 1987 Jack was an Independent Councillor with the City of Sydney Council (before it was sacked by the Unsworth Labour Government). During that time he actively, though unsuccessfully, opposed construction of the monorail and demolition of the Regent Theatre. Among Jack's current concerns are neglect of our built environment by environmentalists and erosion of our working class heritage such as in Pyrmont though he is heartened by the Historic Houses Trust's commitment not only to highly significant sites like the Museum of Sydney (on the site of the First Government House) but also to working class areas such as Susannah Place in The Rocks (Primary source: Roddewig's *Green Bans – the birth of Australian environmental politics* Hale & Iremonger, 1978).

## STANMORE HOUSE

Following MHS representations to Premier Bob Carr and Pam Allan, Minister for Environment, a response has been received from Craig Knowles, Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning and Minister for Housing. His Department, together with the Heritage Council, have been working over some months with Marrickville Council to identify a more appropriate curtilage for historic *Stanmore House* and introduce appropriate development standards within the surrounding heritage precinct. It is agreed that in addition to the Permanent

Conservation Order and the existing provisions of the Marrickville Local Environment Plan, a more specific set of controls should be developed to meet the particular requirements of the site. Under the Small Grants Program a \$3,000 dollar for dollar grant has been made to Council to prepare a study and accompanying development control plan (DCP) with the assistance of the Heritage Council. Marrickville Council has deferred consideration of the DA for the 112-116 Enmore Road, Enmore site until it considers the DCP and holds a meeting with property owners in the precinct.

## MATERNAL HEART OF MARY CHAPEL

Several MHS members recently visited the Maternal Heart of Mary Chapel at the former Lewisham Hospital site, now owned by the St Vincent de Paul Society. The chapel was opened in 1927 to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of the establishment of the Little Company of Mary, the *Blue Nuns* who had been founded in England in 1877.

The conservation plan prepared for St Vincent de Paul in 1990 describes the chapel as a *superb interwar Romanesque style building with a classically symmetrical Latin cross plan and features include a barrel shaped nave ceiling, half dome apse, stained leadlight clerestory windows, timber panelled choir stalls and carved choir screen... the building demonstrates a very high degree of craftsmanship in all the trades involved particularly in the excellence of the brickwork, stained glass leadlighting and internal joinery.*

Other features of the chapel are the magnificent high altar imported from Pietrasanta, Italy, and the four side altars built by the well known Sydney firm of Melocco Bros, who also provided the mosaic sanctuary floor. Also of note are the large suspended bronze crucifix imported from Rome, the mosaic stations of the cross designed in Venice, and the excellent pipe organ, the work of Möller Inc. of Maryland, USA.

Some urgent maintenance work is required, however the owners have other priorities, and do not seem to have focussed yet on the implications of being the custodians of one of the most important and most beautiful buildings in the district. Several MHS members have been in contact with St Vincent de Paul and hope to prod them into action, even if this only means, at first, giving permission for simple repair jobs such as the clearing of gutters and the repair of loose downpipes. More information can be obtained from MHS member **Michael Pearce** on 558 1191.

(Note – Mass in the traditional Latin rite is sung using Gregorian Chant on Sundays at 12 pm, Thursdays and major feast-days at 7 pm.)

## PETERSHAM REVISITED

In the wake of Geoff Ostling's interesting Heritage Week *Aeroplanes and Ponies* walk last April, the Women's Committee of the National Trust held a highly successful House Inspection day in Petersham on Tuesday 12 September. Three of the four houses open were by courtesy of our Society members. We went first to Ed and Lesley Jones' beautiful 1886 Victorian terrace *Dalerevan* in West Street where the dining table was resplendent with its Royal Doulton dinner set.

On to Palace Street to Sylvia Hale's elegant home built in 1883 for the American Consul G. W. Griffin, followed by nearby *Zanobi* given to Percy Hordern and Anne Wright as a wedding present in 1886. Robert Hutchinson and John Waterstreet welcomed us to *Aberdoure* in Terminus Street

where we would have liked to stay and pull up a chair in front of the cosy open fire to partake of the afternoon tea spread... but we had to move on to make way for those clamouring to see the marvellous collections everywhere in this house.

Also open on the day and evincing much interest was the Chapel of the Maternal Heart of Mary built for the Nursing Order, the Little Company of Mary, or *Blue Nuns* at the former Lewisham Hospital. Here MHS member Michael Pearce showed us its amazing features (see separate article) and a pair of choristers demonstrated in Gregorian Chant the wonderful acoustics in the chapel. Complimentary tickets were sent to some MHS members who helped the Women's Committee in their planning for this day.

Shirley Hilyard

## LOCAL ORAL HISTORY

With the *Marrickville Remembers* oral history project in full swing the forthcoming MHS Journal *Heritage 9* will also feature comprehensive oral histories of two women who spent most of their lives in the district. One focuses on the long life of former MHS member, the late Margaret Phillips (nee James) whose forebears, the Porters, were notable pioneers. Margaret's memoirs, written for her children and grandchildren, reveal interesting insights into a typical Marrickville family. The story of Joyce Allen (nee Robertson) as told to oral historian Caroline Plim follows the life of a working mother when this was a less common phenomenon and women really **were** discriminated against. Joyce and her husband Arthur both worked at the now defunct Australian Woollen Mills in Sydenham Road.

Member Hilda York recalls an historical aeronautical event from a time when *planes weren't as noisy as the large ones of today*. To round off this quartet of recollections Ken Haylings gives his history of Petersham Boy Scouts and a few scouting yarns.

Richard Blair

## NEW MHS BROCHURE

The Society has a new brochure with some refinements though it has much the same look and most of the same graphics as before. The proposed restoration depiction of *Stanmore House* appears on the front and a graphic of St Peters Anglican Church Cooks River has been added.

## MEMBERSHIP FEES

Treasurer Harold (569 5183) would love to hear from members still to renew their 1995/96 Society membership, either at our monthly meeting or by posting their remittance.

## TREE-LINED DAVID STREET

This magnificent Marrickville street with its residential precinct of Federation houses is listed in the Marrickville Local Environment Plan. Residents are up in arms about a Marrickville Council proposal to remove some or all of the splendid, long established *Cinnamomum camphora* (Camphor Laurel) trees in the belief that this would result in cheaper and easier maintenance. Whilst the roots have caused some damage, surely the kerb and gutter could be reinstated without wholesale tree removal and/or replacement by other species such as the ubiquitous *Lophostemom confertus* (Brush Box).



David Street, Marrickville (photo: Ed Jones)

Following a report and recommendations from a professional arborist, and some community consultation, Council's Technical Services Committee will examine the matter in October. Most David Street residents have signed a petition to Council seeking careful conservation and maintenance to be undertaken. After a letter to the Society from a long time MHS member and resident, a Society subcommittee recently attended a street inspection and met many of the residents. We urge Council to take into account the views of residents and the heritage significance of this beautiful street.

John Zinsmeister & Richard Blair

## DULWICH HILL HISTORY REQUEST

(The present) Dulwich Hill Public School opened on 11 September 1975 and I am writing a history of the site before its current pedagogical incarnation. Of particular interest are housing on the Hercules & Kintore Streets & Blackwood Avenue frontages, Western Timber Company sawmill (1928-1973), Tom Hoskins (MLA for Dulwich Hill 1913-1920), Thomas Saywell (entrepreneur of Brighton-le-Sands), Francis Whysall (GPO Chief Clerk 1914), Priddle family and construction of the school. Perhaps members (and casual readers) can assist with photos, anecdotes, newspaper clippings etc – the kind of information not already available from obvious sources such as the Cashman & Meader books and the Mitchell Library.

John Edwards (558 1327)

## OUR LAST MEETING A WALK AROUND OLD NEWTOWN

O'Connell Town was old when New Town was new. One has disappeared, the other developed into Newtown. On Saturday September 23, over 60 members and friends gathered near the Post Office and wandered down Wilson Street passing terraces old and new, reminders of the local Jewish community, the Masonic Lodges and the boxing world of McQuillan's gym. Some of the recent developments are compatible with their surroundings, some not. Through Brock's lane we became conscious of the mix of small factories and cottages that was Newtown's past. Then to the grander homes and terraces around Hollis Park and up beautiful Georgina Street.

A dash through the traffic of King Street, then down to Campbell Street sighting the mansard roof of *The Trocadero*, which may have influenced the roof line of nearby terraces built later. Past a sandstock terrace of 1850 to Missenden Road and a glimpse of KGV Hospital as we crossed to Longdown Street, then on to O'Connell and Hordern Streets, where there is a two storey weatherboard terrace. A view of St Stephens Spire and into Mechanic Street from which we entered Crooks Lane, a narrow passage leading past what may be the last slab building in the area. Crossing Church Street at the Baptist Church we left the *foreign* territory of South Sydney and returned *home* to Camperdown Memorial Park and the Lennox Street terraces (with *lilac* being the missing flower) facing it. Our journey finished in Australia Street with Dibble's Bakery, Newtown Courthouse and Town Hall, and a vote of thanks to our enthusiastic guide Bruce Baskerville.

Our tour was but one of several which could be based on an excellent booklet produced by Bruce and available from the South Sydney Heritage Society. Richard Blair, who organised this saunter, tells me this booklet will soon be available (by courtesy of Bruce) through our Society for a small fee. So if you were unable to be with us, you can do it yourself.

Harold Welsh

**MORE FLAMIN' TRIVIA!** The plaque on the 1913 Newtown Fire Station we passed on the Old Newtown walk reveals the architects were *Spain & Cosh* and the Chief Officer of Fire Brigades was – honestly – *N.G.Sparks!* **Editor**

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## CALENDAR OF MHS EVENTS

**SATURDAY OCTOBER 28 10.30 AM**

**Petersham Town Hall**

**Jack Munday talks on the importance of heritage in suburbia from a working class perspective.**

Details on front page.

**SATURDAY NOVEMBER 25 10.30 AM**

**Petersham Park Rotunda.**

**Show and Tell followed by annual Christmas picnic with string quartet.**

**SATURDAY DECEMBER 9 7 PM**

**Annual Pot Luck Dinner**

Gwenda and Harold Welsh of Stanmore will host our seventh pot luck culinary experience.

## SPRING FESTIVALS & FAIRS

**SATURDAY OCTOBER 21 NOON - 7 PM**

**Marrickville Festival on Marrickville Road**

See below.

**WEEKEND OF NOVEMBER 4 - 5**

**2nd Sydney Family History Fair**

**University of Western Sydney-Nepean**

**Westmead North Campus, Westmead**

Ring 872 6255 for details.

**SUNDAY NOVEMBER 12 10 AM - 6 PM**

**Newtown Festival**

**Camperdown Memorial Rest Park**

The Society will run a stall at **both** the Marrickville and Newtown Festivals.

Angela (564 6370) would love to hear from you for donations of jams and plants or from any member (especially newer ones) who would like to spend an hour or two helping on either stall.

## SPRING TRIVIA ANSWERS - LOCAL SCULPTURE

Attention all potential Amy Needham Prize seekers! Sculptures of Imhotep, Meleager and Captain Cook enhance our local area. A beautiful life-size bronze statue, by the sculptor Stephan Pokora, of the sitting **Imhotep** (Im-ho-tep) stands in front of Gloucester House at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in Camperdown (yes I know, just outside our LGA). It was unveiled by Lady Wakehurst in November 1938 when the Sydney Medical School adopted Imhotep as the patron saint of the healing art. And who was Imhotep? He was an Egyptian (c.2770BC from a family associated with a long line of architects) who is thought to have designed and built the first Pyramid of Egypt at Sakkarah near Memphis. He has been described as the earliest philosopher, astronomer, wise man and poet known to the world's history; indeed a poem attributed to him *Song of the Harper* is contained in



*Imhotep*

(photo: Richard Blair)

the *Papyrus Harris* at the British Museum. Furthermore as court physician to King Zoser he became so famous for his skill in healing disease that he was eventually recognised as the Egyptian God of Medicine and shrines and temples were built in his honour. Sir W. Osler called him *the first Figure of a Physician to stand out clearly from the Mists of Antiquity*.

The statue of **Meleager** (Mel-e-a-ger) with boar's head stands in the courtyard of Fort Street High School, Petersham. It is said to have been one of

twelve *modern* statues (sculptor(s) unknown) modelled on ancient Greeks brought out from England for the 1879-80 Great International Exhibition at the fated *Garden Palace* in the Royal Botanic Gardens. Later they lined the arcade to Shakespeare Place in the Gardens before being moved to Mitchell Library for safety in 1941. In 1946 *Meleager* was placed on the north east front lawn at Fort Street High where it greeted thousands of young students. The current construction of a footbridge caused its recent relocation whilst the ravages of vandalism and weathering have led to its proposed restoration. *Meleager* was an Argonaut from Calydon who killed the Calydon boar at a hunt and presented its head to his beloved Atalanta. A different *Meleager* was a poet from Tyre who compiled a collection of Greek epigrams.

As for **Captain James Cook**, his bust continues to sit on its unsteady pedestal next to the Marrickville Golf Club House (see August newsletter). Cook also came from England, but unlike the inanimate *Meleager*, who followed a century later, he did not stay, and met his death in Hawaii in 1779.

Richard Blair

## STOP PRESS

*Demolition of the first airport-affected Sydenham house has started in Rowe Street.*

INFOLINE Ed 569 9281

NEWSLETTER Richard 557 3823

HERITAGE WATCH John 550 6447

MARRICKVILLE REMEMBERS Angela 564 6370

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