

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY

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

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

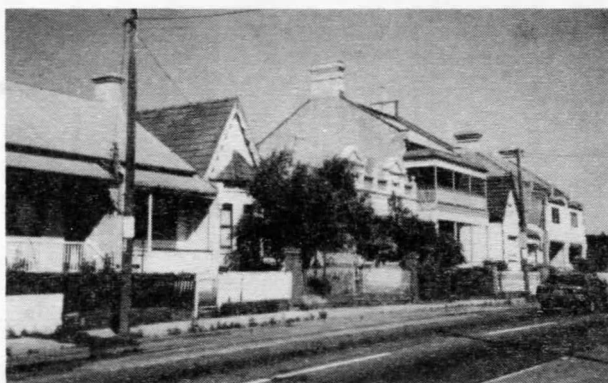


OUR NEXT MEETING

DEVELOPMENT OF A SENSE OF COMMUNITY IN SYDENHAM FROM THE 1880s – DR KENNETH CABLE

Saturday February 24, 10.30 am
Petersham Town Hall

Last year the Commonwealth Government commissioned an historical and architectural study of that part of Sydenham where aircraft noise has prompted acquisition of property. The study by historian Ken Cable and architect Jillian Lye, has been completed and duly submitted. Quite apart from the airport aspect, the study has provided an excellent opportunity for an in-depth investigation of a small but significant district. It is based on documentary research, architectural investigation and oral history. Dr Cable, former President of the Royal Australian Historical Society, will discuss the results of the historical study using slides.



North side of Railway Road Sydenham between Henry Street & Princes Highway, December 1995 & destined for demolition (photo: Richard Blair)

COPTIC ORTHODOX (FORMER TEMPE PARK METHODIST) CHURCH

Four 1901 foundation stones on the front of this church in the federal government's aircraft noise acquisition zone of Railway Road, Sydenham bear witness to the fact that this was originally a Methodist Church, though it actually dates from 1884 and part of the original structure still stands. It was known as the Tempe Park Methodist Church. MHS members Leslie and Joyce Fairbairn, who were married there in 1943, were regular members of the Methodist congregation till the late 1960s. Joyce's father, Henry Tasker was Sunday School Superintendent for a long time after which Les was Superintendent for 22 years whilst Joyce superintended the kindergarten Sunday School.

In 1969 it was reconsecrated as the Coptic Orthodox St Mary and St Mina Church, the first Copts' parish in Australia (and the first Coptic Church purchased outside Egypt). Up to 5000 people have regularly attended this church which has just relocated to Bexley. The church and grounds have been purchased for about \$400,000 by the federal government. The future of the site is unknown and likely to remain unclear until after the federal election. On the front fence of the church is a metal plaque –

Dedicated to the Memory of the Men and Women of The Municipality of St Peters Who served in the Great Wars 1914-18 1939-45

Editor (Note – an article by Leslie Fairbairn on the early history of Tempe Park Methodist Church will appear in the March newsletter)

A PEAL FOR THE APPEAL ! ST CLEMENTS CHURCH SPIRE CONSERVATION APPEAL

In the wake of objections from, among others, MHS, which instigated a petition (collecting over a thousand signatures) to save the spire of St Clements, the DA to demolish the spire lodged with Marrickville Council has been put on hold. On 11 December Mayor Barry Cotter launched the Spire Conservation Appeal after which he rang a short peal of bells – an original Cotter composition.

\$70,000-\$90,000 is still needed. Donations can be made through the church office (PO Box 312 Marrickville 2204) in either of **two** ways–

1) to "The National Trust of Australia (NSW) St Clements Anglican Church Marrickville Conservation Appeal". Tax deductible. Funds will be used for spire conservation as approved by National Trust but should the spire conservation not proceed, the National Trust will not refund donations and funds would be used on St Clement's heritage listed buildings or elsewhere; or

2) to the church, specified for this purpose. **Not** tax deductible. If insufficient funds are raised, donations to St Clements would be refunded unless donors direct that the gift be used in other ways.

Feel inspired and give generously! Remove not the ancient landmark which thy fathers have set (Proverbs 22:28).

Shirley Hilyard

MHS & AUSTRALIA DAY

As part of Australia Day celebrations Society members partook of light refreshment at the quaintly-named *Stanmore Library Evening Tea Party* on January 25 where Chris Barrett (Local Government Association) spoke about the history of Stanmore and MHS member Shirley Doolan spoke illuminatingly about the Society. Chrys Meader gave a vote of thanks.

On Australia Day we had a stall at the Hyde Park Barracks Museum courtyard selling a comprehensive range of books, journals plants and edible jarred delights! How extraordinary the number of visitors who had either lived in Marrickville or the surrounding district; but this was also an opportunity to promote heritage in general. Thanks especially to Bob and Angela but also to David, John, Richard, Harold, Gwenda, Anne, Ed, Lesley, Mark, Mary, Margaret, Shirley and Shirley.

ST PETERS CHURCH RECTORY

The rescission motion heard at the Marrickville Council meeting of 12 December was defeated and Council's approval of the DA to build a new rectory at St Peters Anglican Church Cooks River stands.

252 GEORGE STREET SYDNEY – A BURNT-OUT CASE!

The apparent deliberate lighting of the fire in two places which virtually destroyed the fine 1892-95 Queen Anne Revival style George Patterson House on the second day of the year is a sad example of the prevailing greed in our society coupled with the lack of regard for our built heritage. Both major political parties have much to answer for in this respect. The State Liberal Government revoked a temporary protection order on this building in 1992. The current State Labor Government failed to make a permanent conservation order on the building despite repeated requests by the Heritage Council of NSW. Even with such an order the current legislation has its limitations and wanton acts of destruction cannot be prevented.

Not only is this building included in the Register of the National Estate, it is unique in Sydney in being



252 George Street Sydney
(illustration:
Kenneth McGuire)

surrounded by three heritage-listed public lanes leaving this building free-standing. These thoroughfares belong to the people but there remains the possibility of their being sold off by City Council to developers, even though Lord Mayor Frank Sartor has avowed this will not happen.

Whilst it seems too late for this historic edifice, it is hoped that the State Government will begin to do more to protect the remaining important old buildings by giving the NSW Heritage Act greater power. Leo Schofield asks *can we be so confident as we head towards the centenary of Federation in 2001 that the sense of optimism and pride in achievement pervades Sydney as it did when this building was so lovingly constructed?*

One can only hope that in 1996 governments and local councils show more will, begin to introduce more effective heritage legislation and allocate more money to heritage rather than merely make token gestures and throw clichés round at election time. Jack Munday in addressing our Society last October said: *Heritage is part of the environment and...the environment/ecological movement is the most important movement of our time. Those who look upon the economic position as being separate must change their position because if humanity is going to have a future – and I put it as high as that – it seems that the ecological and the economic position must be entwined.*

Richard Blair, Editor (whose father Jim worked in this building as a journalist with *The Bulletin* from 1934 to 1960 and whose brother Tony worked there with George Patterson Advertising from 1960 to 1966.)



(with permission from Cathy Wilcox, Sydney Morning Herald, 10/1/96)

HERITAGE 9 IS LAUNCHED

The Victoria on the Park Hotel restaurant in Marrickville came alive on the evening of Wednesday 13 December when Nance Irvine told the large gathering of Society members of the enormous love Eliza Thomson had for her husband despite the fact he was a *no-gooder, a no-hoper and a swindler*. Stanmore House was built for the widowed Eliza and family in the 1840s by her mother Mary Reibey and for Eliza's sake alone, according to Nance, Stanmore House should be saved. The indefatigable Nance amused and regaled us with stories of Mary Reibey but strenuously denied she was a reincarnation of Mary! After telling us what wonderful work MHS is doing, Nance cut the ribbon on *Heritage 9*.

Archivist Peter Swain spoke of the wonderful heritage left by Hardy Wilson, architect, author and artist. Peter's article on Hardy Wilson and his association with Newington College features in the journal. The Reverend Chris Clerke spoke about the appeal to save the St Clements Church spire and the story behind this. Norma Loughnan, daughter and Pamela Wyles, granddaughter of Edgar Whitbread – whose illuminated address of Lilian Fowler is splendidly reproduced – were introduced.



Mark Matheson, John Zinsmeister & Nance Irvine at launch of *Heritage 9* (photo: Ed Jones)

Journal editor Mark Matheson introduced the other articles and explained the user-friendly format tear-out guide for his Cooks River Tour. Mark thanked his editorial team – Richard Blair, Shirley Hilyard and Geoff Ostling; Ed Jones and Harlow Printing for printing the journal at below commercial rates, The State Library, the Art Gallery of NSW, Marrickville Council and, above all, the authors. Shirley Hilyard thanked the sponsors and advertisers. Our host and president, John Zinsmeister, thanked Mark for his enormous efforts in putting *Heritage 9* together and presented Nance with a bunch of Australian natives. After members received their freebie journal many stayed on to dine in the hotel restaurant.

Thanks are also due to Carol Phillips, Angela Phippen and Harold Welsh for additional proofreading and to Harold and Gwenda Welsh for organising this splendid occasion. All members should have received their complimentary journal. *Heritage 9* costs \$10 (plus \$2 postage). An appraisal of the journal will be in the March newsletter.

Richard Blair

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LEWISHAM HOSPITAL PLANE CRASH

The 31st of January marked the fiftieth anniversary of the 1946 plane crash at (the former) Lewisham Hospital. After a Royal Navy Firefly's rudder control mechanism had failed, the plane went into a spin, plunged, glanced off the chapel bell-tower, crashed into the courtyard and kitchen attached to Ward 26 and burst into flames killing three people. It happened on a Thursday at 9.30 am. According to the 1/2/46 Sydney Morning Herald *when the aircraft was at a low altitude the pilot parachuted to safety, but his observer was trapped in the aircraft and was burned to death. The other two persons killed were kitchen hands employed at the hospital.*

Those who died were observer Petty Officer A.E. Butterworth of Fleetwood, Lancashire, Iris Thompson, 19, of Granville and Jack Smith, 21, of Enfield. Four people were also listed as injured including Mrs Trussell, and John Cowlshaw, 32, both of Lewisham. The pilot was Sub-Lieutenant Colin B. Ratcliffe, 21 of Leeds. Dr Eleanor Nixon (whose family practised medicine in Fort Street, Petersham from 1882-1985) was doing her residency at the hospital and recalls how she was present in a nearby operating theatre where an operation was completed before everyone got out. That day's hospital diary stated: *The pilot had parachuted and hit the electric train wires at Lewisham but the Station Master had seen him parachuting and turned off the current. He later staggered into the hospital quite stunned...The blast was so severe that hospital windows were smashed, walls and ceilings cracked in many parts of the buildings.*

Not only was the crash just nine months after the one at Petersham School, but the two sites are less than 200 metres apart and both were British Service planes. A Herald editorial that day urged the prohibition of low-flying aircraft over congested areas whilst some subsequent letters to the Editor concerned *noise* – *we get the roar of multi-engined planes flying low over us. With planes taking off almost every minute of the day and night in the near future, this nuisance will become interminable and unbearable (5/2/46).* Sound familiar?

A small ceremony, organised by MHS, was conducted at 9.30 am on Wednesday 31 January at the crash site near the chapel (confirmed by Sister Maree Loadman, from the Little Company of Mary or Blue Nuns and a MHS member who was there on the day) to commemorate the event. It is hoped a memorial plaque can be placed there as a permanent reminder of this local tragedy.

Richard Blair

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CALENDAR OF MHS EVENTS

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 24 10.30 AM

Petersham Town Hall

Dr Ken Cable talks on the *development of a sense of community in Sydenham from the 1880s.*

Details on front page

SATURDAY MARCH 23

La Perouse Museum & Bare Island Fort and Pioneer Memorial Park, Botany Cemetery.

SATURDAY APRIL 27

Petersham Town Hall

Dr George Gibbons & Chrys Meader talk on bricks and brickmakers of the Marrickville area.

SATURDAY MAY 25

A walk on the North Side – Historian Shirley Doolan's tour around historic North Sydney.

SATURDAY JUNE 22

Annual General Meeting

EXHIBITIONS

MOST CURIOUS AND PECULIAR 19TH CENTURY AUSTRALIAN WOMEN TAXIDERMISTS

Last August Martha Sear gave the talk, now she curates the exhibition (featuring a kangaroo paw cigar lighter!) to be held at the Macleay Museum, Sydney University from March 1 till January 1997.

SYDNEY VISTAS: PANORAMIC VIEWS

The Museum of Sydney on the corner of Phillip and Bridge Streets has an exciting exhibition of 50 images depicting the spectacle and beauty of Sydney's harbour and environs since 1788. Ends April 7.

TAKING PRECAUTIONS – THE STORY OF CONTRACEPTION

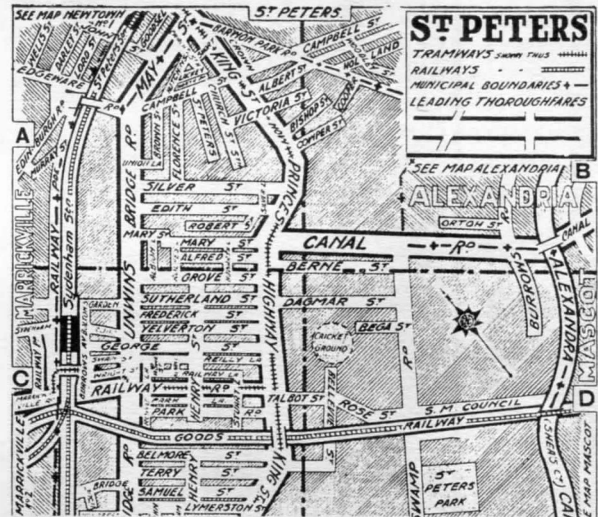
Curated by Society member Megan Hicks at the Powerhouse Museum until November 1996.

POT LUCK XMAS DINNER

The 1995 and seventh annual Pot Luck Xmas Dinner was held on Saturday 9 December at the Stanmore home of hosts Gwenda and Harold Welsh. The Christmas spread was excellent as usual. The name for this annual festive dinner, *Pot Luck* was devised in 1989 by the then president, Geoff Ostling, who held the first at his home. Thanks to Gwenda, Harold and Lynsey Welsh for their hospitality and providing a great atmosphere at their Victorian home.

SUMMER TRIVIA QUESTION – MUNRO'S DOG OVAL

Of all the seasonal trivia questions so far asked, this has received the biggest response. Sand's Directory first lists John A Munro in 1906 as being a *dairyman* at 657 King Street, Tempe. From 1911 he is described as being in "Talbot Street (King Street to swamp)" though separately he is listed in "Bellevue Street (Talbot Street to Salvation Army Home)". From 1925 no occupation is stated; instead there appears the entry "– sportsground". [Listed next door were Richard Roberts, farrier (1922); Asbestos Products Co. (1929); Mrs R. Hollis & Sectional Lugging Co. (1932-33).] Wilson's 1931 Sydney & Suburban Street Directory calls the oval "cricket ground" situated at the northern end of Bellevue Street.



*Munro's dog oval/sportsground/cricket ground,
St Peters (Wilson's Street Directory 1931 p575)*

John (always called *Jack*) A. Munro was known to MHS member Joyce Fairbairn who says *the oval was originally a dairy, but became a dog training track cum football field plus two tennis courts.* It was in St Peters, east of Princes Highway and roughly opposite Railway Road. Joyce also knows Jack's daughter Mavis Judd, now over ninety and living in Leura. Another former resident Walter Dalziel and his brothers played football there in the 1920s. Walter recalls the bog after wet weather and wheat husks being put down to dry it out; unfortunately leaving an awful smell.

It is not certain when it ceased to be a sports-ground/dog oval but it has long since been absorbed by the Cooks River Goods Yard. Many thanks to Joyce & Les Fairbairn, Andy Carr, John Zinsmeester, Walter Dalziel, Leo Brown and Lionel Knight for their interest in this obscure slice of local history.

Richard Blair

INFOLINE Shirley 516 2123

NEWSLETTER Richard 557 3823

HERITAGE WATCH John 550 6447

MEMBERSHIPS & JOURNALS Harold 569 5183

MARRICKVILLE REMEMBERS Angela 564 6370

MHS newsletter is printed by
Harlow Printing tel 559 5660 fax 558 6569