

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY

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

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



OUR NEXT MEETING


**ST JOSEPH'S INVESTMENT &
BUILDING SOCIETY PAPERS –
TALK BY BRONWYN LAYTON
Saturday 25 October 10.30 am
Petersham Town Hall**

(Note – Talk follows special short meeting on
Incorporation starting at 10.30 am sharp. See below.)

The St Joseph's Collection, held by the Society of Australian Genealogists, is made up of the bills and receipts of a small to medium sized building society which operated in Sydney for over a 100 years. From 1868 St Joseph's lent money to "working and industrial" class members to finance their homes. After the 1890s depression the Society became the owner of a group of cottages, terraces, hotels, coffee

palaces and the Surreyville Dance Hall (on the site of the Wentworth Building, City Road) mostly located in Sydney's inner suburbs. These bills and receipts, which both detail the history of the maintenance and repair of these buildings, and name owners and tenants, offer a unique view of a particular Sydney lifestyle from about 1880 to the 1950s.

The collection is being progressively made ready for use. The names and addresses of tradesmen, tenants, owners and others, such as bailiffs and investors, along with the addresses of the houses concerned, are currently being indexed, so that detailed histories of particular houses and suburbs, trades and workmen, can be found. Project archivist, Bronwyn Layton will talk about the collection and its importance as a tool for local studies and family history researchers.



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MARRICKVILLE Sydney, *Aug 12 1924*

Mc Joseph Building Society

Dr. to L. Prevost & Sons,

CHIMNEY SWEEPS.

By Appointment to the Government

INCORPORATION OF SOCIETY

A reminder is given that as previously announced a recommendation of the committee that the Society become incorporated will be put to a special general meeting at Petersham Town Hall on **Saturday 25 October at 10.30 am sharp**. The business is to consider the following motions as special resolutions:

- 1) That the Marrickville Heritage Society apply to become incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act.
- 2) That upon incorporation the name of the Society will be Marrickville Heritage Society Incorporated.
- 3) That upon incorporation the recommended set of objects and rules will be those of the Society.
- 4) That Harold Welsh will be authorised to apply for incorporation and be appointed the Society's Public Officer.

In accordance with the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act, the resolutions must be approved by at least three quarters of members who vote at the meeting.

Richard Blair, President

ST CLEMENTS CHURCH SPIRE

Next time you're in Marrickville go and see the splendidly restored St Clements spire. The Society, led by the late John Zinsmeister, played a significant role in saving the spire. Rector Chris Clerke is confident the refurbished spire will last at least as long as the original, so if you're still around in the year 2087, let us know!

MANY SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE STILL OUTSTANDING. Of course you haven't forgotten! You just haven't yet got around to renewing. Easily remedied. Just send us a cheque for \$8 concession, \$14 individual or joint concession, \$20 for household or organisation. Otherwise pay at one of our meetings.



**FANCY A WEEK ON
NORFOLK ISLAND?**

Full details on back page.

FROM THE AZORES

An article *Marrickville Airman Far From Home* in the August 1993 newsletter contained a request from Maureen Diehl, Honorary Supervisor, Commonwealth War Graves, Azores (Portugal) seeking information about Warrant Officer Neville Vincent Ryan, 422812 RAAF 8th March 1945.

Age 20. Son of Thomas and Amy Ryan, Marrickville, NSW. He is buried on Terceira Island. Maureen, a MHS member, exchanged letters with Shirley Hilyard (then MHS President), the late Mary Tait, and latterly with me. Maureen writes:

"What a coincidence you should pick up the project at the present time! About a month a month ago I received a letter from a former RAF man from England, who sent me a photo of NVR and asked me if he was buried here at Lajes War Cemetery. He told me he and Neville had been crew mates, and that Neville was killed when he flew with another crew. He had no information about any family etc. and asked if I did."



So who was Neville Ryan? There is only "T. Ryan" with a quite different service number listed in the Marrickville Honour Roll. Maureen wonders if he could be a brother. Maybe this time a photograph will stir memories. (Neville Ryan is not the only omission from the Roll; I know of four others, but that is another story.)

Harold Welsh

MARRICKVILLE FESTIVAL

Shine, rain and hail in that order was the story of the Marrickville Festival on Saturday 20 September. With perfect weather early on, Marrickville Road was festooned with colourful stalls, multicultural bands and all the fun of the fair until Thor opened the heavens.

Special thanks to Margaret (plants & marmalade), Gwenda (marmalade) and Barclay (gift boxes). Thanks also to helpers Angela, David, Mary (Angela's mother and new member), Gwenda, Harold, Richard, Anne, Cheri and Ian.

MARRICKVILLE COMMUNITY HISTORY GROUP

The Marrickville Community History Group is a new, non-profit collective of historians and interested people aiming to publish social history about Marrickville. Projects will look at Marrickville's diversity in culture and work, and residents will be asked to help shape ideas and to contribute their experiences.

The Group's first project is called *Backyards in Marrickville*. Case studies using interviews, photography and archival research, will document how Marrickville settlers have shaped its cultural and physical landscape over the last 50 years. Much about people is reflected in their use of backyards – for growing vegetables, making wine, baking bread or engaging in legal or illegal small business activity.

The Group welcomes new members. Membership fee is \$3 per annum. Please phone Jane Gleeson on 9564 1082 for enquiries or if you would like a membership form.

Jane Gleeson

BOB THOMPSON WRITES

MHS member and our second MHS president (1986/87) Bob Thompson of Taree, formerly of Tempe, in renewing his subscription writes:

"I hope I'm in time to renew so I don't miss my copy of the journal. The standard of the newsletter is as high as ever and it's always well received in this household. ... In February you asked if anyone has all the newsletters of the Society. Yes, we do. A couple of years ago I was inspired to index them all. ... If you like, I can still do it, if you feel it would be of use."

Isn't that the mother of all offers too good to refuse? Not only was Bob a very early MHS member (joining May 1984) who served on the second, third (as president) and fourth committees, he also wrote articles for *Heritage* 1, 2 and 4. Bob's wife Anne made the wonderful Society blue and white banner before the family moved to Taree in 1988.

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OUR LAST MEETING GOAT ISLAND TOUR

On Saturday 27 September MHS members and friends were treated to a spectacular, sunny day on historic Goat Island, which we had to ourselves. I was struck by the cultural overlays of all the occupational phases of the island from early settlement – the convict-worked stone quarry, storage for the colony's gunpowder, Water Police base, emergency centre for bacteriological research, shipyard and base for the Maritime Services Board port operations. Since 1994 the National Parks & Wildlife Service has managed the island as a natural and historic resource.

We marvelled at the beautiful yellow sandstone Queen's Magazine, fuze store, and the stockade wall (with superior graffiti carved by sentries), architectural monuments to Australia's convict heritage. A part completed archaeological investigation of the Queen's Magazine drainage system may reveal more about the technology used in its construction. We also saw the elegant Regency officers' quarters now a museum (currently closed), the colonial architect Mortimer Lewis Water Police station, the lovely Harbour Masters cottage in urgent need of repair, the convict lime kiln, and the site of the former 1950s dance hall.

Among the island stories is the tale of convict Bony Anderson who, as punishment for refusing to work, was chained for two years to a 38 foot runner, bolted to a rock face, in which he carved a seat. Meanwhile our guide regaled us with trivia about the TV series *Water Rats* (which is filmed on and around the island) and the antics of its main characters Frank and Goldie. On the *Water Rats* set Danie Ondinea could not resist drawing a parallel with the numerous native water rats (with their *super water repellent luxurious fur*) which once inhabited the harbour.

The potential for this island is enormous, but funds are desperately needed. Among our party was member Keith Lawson who worked on the island for 20 years until the mid 1980s with the MSB. Thanks to NP&WS guide (and unofficial *Water Rats* promoter) Greg Taylor for his fascinating insight into the island's early convict occupation, Danie for her botanical commentary, and to Cheri Lutz and Anne Catton for organising this successful day.

Noeleen Curran

(NB: MHS last went to Goat Island in June 1987 – Editor)

SPRING TRIVIA ANSWERS

1. The **Petersham paperboy** who later achieved fame and fortune was (neither Leo Schofield nor Jack Shanahan who were suggested as possible candidates but) **James Robert Tyrrell** who became one of Australia's best known booksellers and publishers in the first half of this century being the first to publish some of Henry Lawson's books.

Born in 1875 he lived in Reynolds Street, Balmain (1880-87) before moving to Petersham which as described in his classic autobiography "*Old Books, Old Friends, Old Sydney*" *stays in my mind largely as a clattering procession of steam trains*. The family lived at what is now 53 Palace Street, three doors from Brighton Street, where his father George was a fruiterer.

At twelve while attending Petersham Public School James was told that *a boy was wanted for the bookstall on Petersham station*. Writing over sixty years later Tyrrell could still recall the names of a dozen papers, childhood publications and books including the yellowbacks which later became synonymous, somewhat unfairly he felt, with trash. One regular bookstall client was Fred Searl, founder of the then well known Petersham nursery and city florist. Tyrrell worked for twelve months from five to nine in the morning at Petersham station and after school resumed his job at Summer Hill station till six, and for his efforts received about five shillings a week including commission.

During this time his family moved to Vauxhall Terrace, Wilson Street Newtown next door to the Ivery's Family (now the Royal Edward) Hotel. He recalls Newtown with a certain eeriness, due to a combination of the then large Camperdown cemetery, the Eliza Donnithorne story and an experience where he caught the funeral train at night by mistake. Shortly after he found work as a shop boy at Angus & Robertson's Market Street bookshop where he stayed until opening his own bookstore in 1905. He died in 1961, but Tyrrell's Bookshop is still going strong.

2. Former Petersham Oxford Tavern owner Malcolm Tanswell was inspired to name **Rita's Restaurant** after Norman Lindsay's favourite model Rita Young (nee Lee, pictured) who posed for most of Lindsay's oil paintings and is believed to be still alive. Norman's subjects were invariably semi-

clad or unclad [to be of assistance!] a condition not out of keeping with the nature of the establishment (any correspondence on this should be directed to the ever inquisitive Council archivist Cheri Lutz who provided the Q&A).

3. The November newsletter will name the wine winners who correctly located the whereabouts of the **Camperdown shot tower**, which in fact was in Glebe, near Wentworth Park.

Richard Blair



CALENDAR OF MHS EVENTS

SATURDAY OCTOBER 25

Bronwyn Layton on St Joseph's Investment & Building Society papers.

Details on front page.

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 22

Get in the groove for Anne Warr's talk on corrugated iron!

FRIDAY DECEMBER 5

A musical soirée with Denis Condon and his reproducing pianos followed by pot luck supper.

The next meeting of the South Sydney Heritage Society **Newtown Erskineville Group** will be a visit to the RAHS library at History House 133 Macquarie Street Sydney on 1 November at 11 am followed by picnic lunch.

MYSTERY CANAL IDENTIFIED

My wife Elva and I appear to have convinced Robert Hutchinson about the location of the canal in his mystery postcard (May 1997 newsletter) previously believed to be in the Marrickville area. Because the postcard's photographer was in Haberfield, together with the key features of a canal and a flat grassed area, prompted Elva to say *It's the Hawthorne Canal in Haberfield.*



The road guide reveals that the only spot that matches the canal bend in the middle ground is roughly 250 metres north of Marion Street. Looking back from a suitably chosen vantage point a further 150 metres north, we found that the stone blocks forming the canal wall in the postcard are repeated in today's wall (often covered by soil) and, to our great satisfaction, the foreground sweep of the wall to the right is again matched (with allowance for added soil and rock) at a widening of the canal.

Today's view (as in above photograph) differs in that there are many trees and in the foreground a prominent footbridge. The billboards in the background would be on Marion Street, where there are still some today. The long, low hill on the left is the goods railway embankment. The high ground in the right background persists today, but is obscured by trees.

David Blair

MHS DOES NORFOLK ISLAND MAY 6-13, 1998

Yes it's official. Having just done Goat Island, the Society invites members and friends to venture to Norfolk Island for a week next May with our own special guide. MHS member Peter McLaren is a heritage architect who has spent considerable time at Norfolk working on conservation projects. Peter not only has a strong affinity with the island, but has a range of contacts who will facilitate our visit. If you want to go and lie in the sun, forget it; if you want a week with a strong focus on the island's fascinating history, plus a fun time, this is for you!



Our non-profit making tour will be from Wednesday 6 May to Wednesday 13 May. Estimated cost is \$1,000 (based on a party of 20) for return airfares, seven nights twin accommodation at the Hillcrest Hotel, transport hire, Head Tax, Noise Levy and expert commentary. Excluded are meals, share of petrol, museum entry fees, commercial tours and private expenses. If we get fewer than 20 people the tour will cost more. Current passport necessary. Individuals will be responsible for their own travel insurance.

Expressions of interest are required by Sunday 9 November. Deposit of \$100 to be paid by Monday 17 November.

Enquiries Gwenda 9569 5183, Richard 9557 3823, or Peter 9207 6724 (work), 9569 2460 (home).

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Laura Dunn, Dulwich Hill; Audrey Furney, Paula & Peter King, Enmore; George Morgan, Ilza Achjian, Marrickville; Steven & Victoria Allen, Petersham; The Archivist, Newington College, Stanmore; Rosemary Cass, Mt Victoria; Mary Phippen, Roselands.

NEWTOWN FESTIVAL - 9 NOVEMBER

This is one of Sydney's largest annual festivals and will be held on Sunday 2 November in Camperdown Memorial Rest Park where MHS will run a stall. Bring your donations along or ring Richard on 9557 3823 if anything needs collection. See you there from 10 am.

PRESIDENT/NEWSLETTER Richard 9557 3823

HERITAGE WATCH Mark 9516 2788

INFOLINE Harold/Gwenda 9569 5183