

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.

COVERING DULWICH HILL ENMORE LEWISHAM
ST PETERS SYDENHAM TEMPE & PARTS OF

MARRICKVILLE PETERSHAM STANMORE
CAMPERDOWN HURLSTONE PARK & NEWTOWN



OUR NEXT MEETING CASTLEREAGH DISTRICT TOUR & ROUSE HILL HOUSE

Saturday 25 July 9 am

Meet Petersham Town Hall 9 for 9.15 am (sharp) coach departure. BYO lunch. Return about 5 pm. Cost \$18, \$16 concession (coach and entry fee). Please advise in time if you have to cancel. Bookings Shirley 9569 1768.

Settled in the early 1790s Castlereagh was the first official settlement on the Nepean River and produce from here ensured the survival of the Sydney colony. Aboriginal artefacts dating back 90,000 years have been found in the Castlereagh gravel beds. Castlereagh Road, surveyed in the early 1800s by James Meehan, is one of the oldest in Australia and still follows its original alignment. In 1810 Governor Macquarie visited and established Castlereagh as one of his five towns (along with Wilberforce, Pitt Town, Windsor and Richmond) and many early buildings and original land grants remain – the last remnant of early settlement on the Cumberland Plain.



Puddledock, Castlereagh (sketch: Daphne Kingston)

However the Castlereagh fertile floodplain farmlands are currently being quarried and further degradation of the Nepean River will occur. Historic farmhouses and outbuildings will be demolished so that sand and gravel can be mined for the short term building development of Sydney, unless Planning Minister Craig Knowles, who has sole consent, rejects the DA from the Penrith Lakes Development Corporation. **Penrith historian and secretary, Friends of Nepean Inc. Marilyn Jones** will guide us through this endangered area and introduce the little known history and heritage of the Castlereagh district.

After picnic lunch we will visit **Rouse Hill House** (1813-1818) which remained in the one family for seven generations, a period of 180 years. The rich collection of objects, inside and out, provides proof of the family's continuity. Purchased by the state government in 1978, it is now under the Historic Houses Trust.

OUR LAST MEETING WHO'S WHO ON THE EXECUTIVE?

Eve Sharpe, our Patron and MHS Life member was among the 50 members present at our fourteenth Annual General Meeting at Petersham Town Hall on Saturday 27 June. Richard Blair presented the president's report (see inside) and this was followed by reports from the treasurer, journal and newsletter editors, assistant secretary and convenors of the Heritage Watch, Marrickville Remembers and Amy Needham Award committees.

Gwenda Welsh was returning officer for the annual election of officers. The new executive committee is president Richard Blair, vice presidents Robert Hutchinson and Noeleen Curran, treasurer Diane McCarthy, secretary Joyce Roy, assistant secretary Brenda Llewellyn, committee members Peter Cousens, Shirley Hilyard, Scott MacArthur, and Angela Phippen, Heritage Watch/Classifications committee convenor Mark Maloney, newsletter editor Richard Blair, journal editor Mark Matheson. Publications committee will elect editor for next journal after publication of Heritage 10. Other positions are membership secretary Pamela Stewart, newsletter distribution to runners, Ken Turner, Amy Needham Award committee convenor Gwenda Welsh, honorary auditor Angela Collins, honorary solicitor David Cass, and Public Officer Harold Welsh.

Our guest speaker was Kathy Jones, Public Relations Officer for the Airport Link Railway which will run underground from Central to the East Hills line with stops at Green Park, Mascot, the Domestic and International airport terminals and the Wolli Creek Interchange stations. Using overheads, Kathy gave an excellent overview of this five year project due for completion in May 2000. The tunnel boring machine is amazing – the largest and longest tunnelling machine ever used in Australia. The project has been sensitive towards environmental and heritage concerns – hopefully excavated old sandstone blocks will be incorporated into Wolli Creek station – whilst their PR is admirable. We look forward to walking under Cooks River later in the year. The traditional AGM picnic champagne lunch with the old and new committees took place in Maundrell Park.

Richard Blair, Editor

The bad news is that your 1998/99 subscription is now due. The good news is that fees have not gone up: still only \$8 (concession), \$14 (ordinary or joint concession) and \$20 (family or organisation). Send your cheque to our new treasurer Diane McCarthy c/- the Society.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 1997-1998

These are the 14th annual reports of the Marrickville Heritage Society. This has been a serendipitous year as president because a number of things came to fruition. The Society became incorporated following a unanimous decision by members in October. Harold Welsh was primarily instrumental in this and was rewarded for his efforts by being elected Public Officer. Secondly the first of our long-awaited Amy Needham Awards were made. In 1997 several recipients were successful from Wilkins, Petersham and Ferncourt Public Schools. Gwenda Welsh's committee together with Chrys Meader's school liaison brought this project to fruition. Gwenda and the award's benefactor, Amy Needham's daughter Verona Rothwell, participated in each of the prize-giving ceremonies. Schools are being canvassed for this year's awards.

We saw the publication of *Marrickville Remembers* late last year, the culmination of our oral history project on the Marrickville area during World War Two. Angela Phippen coordinated this project involving well over 100 participants and requiring much attention to detail, and together with Harold Welsh edited the publication, which was entered in the annual National Trust Heritage Awards. The Society also received reflected glory in the book produced by Mark Matheson for Marrickville Library – *Victorian Villas of the Marrickville / Newtown area*. This book won Mark a National Trust Heritage Award during Heritage Week.

In May a group from the Society travelled out of New South Wales for the first time to Norfolk Island. This very successful venture was the brainchild of Peter McLaren, and those fortunate enough to go, will long remember the trip and the enthusiasm and knowledge that Peter brought to it. Mark Matheson led our first out-of-Sydney bushwalk, up the Old Great North Road near Wiseman's Ferry. Built by convict-labour it was one of the engineering marvels of our early days. The year brought another wonderful evening of reproducing piano music at Denis Condon's where we also had our Christmas Pot Luck supper. In April Anne Catton organised dinner at Perama, a Greek restaurant in Petersham, and last Sunday we went to see *The Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* at Newtown's New Theatre.

Our monthly speakers were Lester Tropman & Dr Ken Cable on the planned Heritage Study Review; Bob Irving talking to slides of Sydney Then & Now; Bronwyn Layton on the St Josephs Investment & Building Society papers; Anne Warr on the history of corrugated iron; Dr Richard Cashman on sporting characters of the area; and David McBeath on the conservation of old building materials. Today Kathy Jones will talk about the Airport Link Railway. Outings included Laurel Horton's street tour of St Peters and Mark Maloney's Stanmore walk. We had a guided tour of Goat Island, and whilst the visit to Victoria Barracks regrettably fell through, Trevor Waters showed us some of Sydney's finest sandstone at a Pymont quarry, Central Station, the Capitol Theatre and Garden Island.

Three committee members – Robert Hutchinson, Cheri Lutz and Richard Blair – were actively involved with Marrickville Council's Heritage Promotion Committee in organising local Heritage Week activities. Members Mark Maloney and Peter McLaren were two of the Marrickville Medal judges. The Society was represented at most quarterly Agenda 21 meetings, a number of Citizenship ceremonies and the refurbished Petersham Town Hall celebrations in August. We had stalls at Lewisham Public School in July, the 100 years of Baseball celebrations at Petersham Oval in August, Marrickville Festival in September, and the Newtown Festival in November. Several members went to the RAHS annual conference at Camperdown in October at which a posthumous Certificate of Achievement was awarded to the late John Zinsmeister and received by John's sister Ellie McKenzie. Society members attended various

RAHS workshops and seminars. Shirley Hilyard's team ran a creditable fifth at the annual National Trust Heritage Quiz.

The Society publicised and strongly participated in Marrickville Council's three Heritage Study Review workshops and submitted a list of recommended items for consideration in that Study. The Heritage Watch / Classifications committee conducted a local bus tour accompanied by Lester Tropman and Dr Ken Cable. Ably led by convenor Mark Maloney, this committee continues its watchdog role. Mark does not believe that all development is bad and, like his predecessor the late John Zinsmeister, brings enormous zeal to protecting our heritage. In addition Mark is an experienced planner who knows how the system works, particularly advantageous when writing letters to Council.

I would like to thank the rest of my committee: Robert Hutchinson, Mark Matheson, Harold Welsh, Joyce Roy, Gwenda Welsh, Anne Catton, Noleen Curran, Cheri Lutz, and Angela Phippen. It's refreshing to see younger members getting more involved. Congratulations to Robert on his wonderful pottery talk during Heritage Week and also on curating, with Donna Braye, the tremendous exhibition at the Chrissie Cotter Gallery. Mark Matheson assures me Heritage 10 should soon be with the printer and it promises to be up to Mark's usual high standard. Angela is co-ordinating our Monuments & Memorials project plus oral histories proposed for the next year.

Cheri, Anne and the Welshs will not be seeking re-election. Having relinquished the position of treasurer at the last AGM, Harold agreed to take it on again after the new incumbent resigned for family reasons, and again did a sterling job. Gwenda and Harold do many things behind the scenes some already mentioned; Gwenda will continue to coordinate the Amy Needham Awards and Harold will stay on as Public Officer.

Many other members help in all sorts of ways. Marrickville Council deserves thanks for a grant to subsidise our publications and giving ongoing free use of this hall for meetings. In our all important heritage watch role we may sometimes disagree with Council or other groups. We are after all representing what we regard as appropriate from a heritage conservation viewpoint and/or in the public interest, and we always, as stated in our Constitution, remain apolitical. The Society rightly took major credit for saving the St Clements spire whose outstanding restoration has received wide acclaim. In response to our plea for conservation of the neglected and now verified Bakewell 1928 Captain Cook bust, Council has organised restoration currently being undertaken.

We continue to promote the Marrickville area and provide a broad range of member activities and publications. Though a young Society, our forerunner, the Marrickville & District Historical Society began in 1963. The Marrickville Heritage Society started in 1984 so we turn fifteen next April. Like most adolescents, we may be unruly and unpopular at times, but with over 400 members the Society is not only providing an important service but is financially sound and seems to be effective, well-regarded, and flourishing.

Richard Blair (report abridged)

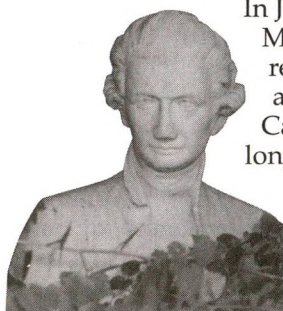
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CAPTAIN COOK BUST REJUVENATED



Captain Cook bust (1995)
(photo: Caroline Plim)

In July 1995 MHS wrote to Marrickville Council recommending the removal and conservation of the Captain Cook bust which has long sat forlornly behind the Marrickville Golf Course clubhouse. The bust was unveiled in October 1928 to mark the bicentenary of Cook's birth.

The terracotta bust and base were recently removed for conservation by International Conservation Services. It is likely to be relocated to a more prominent site yet to be determined. It was believed to have been made by Fowler Pottery. However Shirley Hilyard's view that it may have been made by Bakewell, based on its similarity to a Cook bust at the former Bakewell property *St Aubins* in Scone, has been verified by conservator Catriona Angus who recently discovered the Bakewell trademark on the bust.

ASHFIELD & DHSI TURNS 25

On 27 June the Ashfield & District Historical Society Inc. celebrated its 25th anniversary in great style with a dinner at the historic Mountjoy's Pavilion in the grounds of the Masonic Hospital, Ashfield. Many were attired in the garb of the distant past, Chris Pratten looking sartorially splendid dressed as his grandfather, former MP and local mayor.

Guest speaker and local resident Jack Munday reminded us of the 80 odd places in Sydney saved in the 1970s by green bans which united working class with the *blue rinse set* to fight governments and developers bent on tearing down the city. Has much really changed? MHS was represented by Richard Blair and Shirley Hilyard, also an Ashfield member.

SUMMER OF THE 17TH DOLL

The Doll was written by Ray Lawler and was first produced in Melbourne in 1955 with the author playing the role of Barney. Since then it has been performed – and loved – by both amateur and professional theatre companies all around Australia and overseas, and has even been made into an opera, which, it's been rumoured will be performed at the Opera House next year.

I have seen several productions of *The Doll*, and I think the New Theatre's version was fabulous, and had me totally involved throughout. I have not been to the New Theatre before, and was extremely impressed by both the standard of the acting and the production. Let me know when you're having the next theatre party.

Ann Watson

PETERSHAM'S LYDHAM

This once imposing Victorian residence still stands at 1A Marshall Street Petersham but is now divided into nondescript flats compared to what we see in this photograph provided by the ever energetic Ted Green. The photo belongs to Ted's neighbour Mrs Gwen Styles, 92, whose son was born at *Lydham* on 2 October 1932 when it was a private hospital. As a result of the Depression she was the only patient there. Two nursing sisters, one believed to be Matron Amy Allan, stand at the top of the steps.



Lydham in Petersham in 1932

Assisted by Council archivist Cheri Lutz and Sands Directories *Lydham's* history is rounded out. First listed in Sands in 1890 in Frederick Street, it was called "St Aubyns", but curiously in 1891-92 it was called "St Rubyns" – name change or misprint? By 1894 it was called "Isley House"; in the 1897 Field Book "Islay House". In 1900 the occupant was CG Hatte, draper (of Hatte's Arcade, Newtown). Around 1905 Frederick and Emily Streets were linked to form Newington Road, and in the following year the house was first named "Lydham" which it remained until the 1940s.

By 1946 its address was listed in Marshall Street. With its grounds sold off and the name changed to "St Reubyns" of Stanmore Hill, permission was obtained to subdivide it into flats. *Lydham* originally faced south overlooking Newington Road and Marrickville. Flats now separate *Lydham* from Newington Road, although the stone wall is still there. The verandahs, porches, French doors and lacework railings are now enclosed. That part of the tower pictured above the roofline has been removed along with the front steps, balustrades, front door, and window displaying the house name. However other distinctive features on the tower put the identity of this once stately home in no doubt.

Richard Blair

(Note: Ironically member Shirley Kirkham of West Wyalong recently wrote that a local friend was born at a private hospital (*Lydham*) in 1943 (*Dr Segal and Nurse Allan*) Marrickville Road Dulwich Hill. Member Dorothy Skinner gave birth to a child at *Lydham* in 1947. From discussion with Dorothy this *Lydham* was identical with *Allerton* at 407 Marrickville Road Dulwich Hill which operated as a private hospital from 1924 to 1960. Perhaps Matron Allan transferred the name *Lydham* from Petersham to Dulwich Hill. However there may have been two local *Lydhams*, notwithstanding *Lydham Hall* at Rockdale.)

CALENDAR OF MHS EVENTS

SATURDAY 25 JULY

Castlereagh District tour
& inspection of Rouse Hill House
Details on front page

SATURDAY 22 AUGUST

*Robert Hutchinson presents a pictorial
ramble from Newtown to Marrickville.

SATURDAY 26 SEPTEMBER

*Picton & Thirlmere Railway Museum

* subject to change if Federal election on

HOW DOES YOUR GRASS GROW?

Do you have a grass nature strip in your street? How often is it mown? Are you aware it is Marrickville Council policy to mow these strips twice a month in summer and once a month in winter? If it's not happening this frequently Assistant Works Coordinator Peter Fairburn can be contacted on 014 627 012.

Inadequate street cleaning (9335 2138) or owners allowing canine street excreta [ie dog turds] (0418 415 513) can also be reported.

The Society regrets the passing of two MHS members: **Eva Dunham** of Beecroft who died on 23 April, a member since 1989; and **Gwen Brown** of Bardwell Park who died in early May, attended Woodcourt Girls School (which closed in 1935) in Marrickville and was the daughter of Canon John Bidwell of St Stephens, Newtown.

THE ROAD AT THE CON

Following the discovery of an early (1820) colonial carriage road beside the Conservatorium of Music, the \$69 million redevelopment of the *Con* must be halted. Indeed under heritage legislation work cannot proceed after discovery of significant archaeological remains without a full Heritage Impact Assessment and then the permission of the Heritage Council.

But what of the unfound practice of excising pieces of the Botanic Gardens, public land, for this new development?

The Conservatorium, former stables of Governor Macquarie, designed by Francis Greenway, is culturally very important **in its landscape** of Botanic Gardens (the former Governor's domain), Government House and Harbour foreshores. Full investigation may prevent the debacle such as we now have at East Circular Quay.

Shirley Hilyard

WINTER TRIVIA ANSWER

It seems our collective memories are not long enough to recall **The Chelsea Theatre Group** or any of its members (see June newsletter). Was the group independent or associated with the RSL? How long did it exist? Why called Chelsea?

However MHS member Ron Smith identified the **Petersham Soldiers' Memorial Hall** (the venue for that theatre group's charity performance way back in 1932) still standing at 9 New Canterbury Road next to the Scout hall. The hall was built in 1924 for First World War servicemen and opened by ex mayor Richard Gendle. The early years were marked by conflict between the citizens who built and ran the organisation and the returned servicemen for whom the hall was built.

Membership grew significantly in the 1940s and by 1947 the Petersham-Marrickville RSL Sub-Branch had the most members in the western district. Marrickville broke away to form its own sub-branch in 1951. In 1961 the Petersham RSL Sub-Branch moved into its new club in Regent Street where it still thrives in enlarged and renovated premises.



*Petersham Soldiers' Memorial Hall as it once looked
(from club's 70th anniversary booklet)*

Ron has vivid memories of the club which he joined in 1957 when it was still in the Memorial Hall. After 1961 it was long used by community groups, but is now merely a storage area. After a gale blew off the awning, the front of the building was rather unsympathetically renovated. Its name has disappeared from the facade and it now looks rather nondescript.

Richard Blair

Why do new buildings sometimes have "AD" before or after their year of construction? Do the owners believe we might otherwise assume it was "BC"?

PRESIDENT/NEWSLETTER Richard 9557 3823

HERITAGE WATCH Mark 9516 2788

TREASURER Diane 9588 4930

INFOLINE Joyce 9519 9228