

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.



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OUR NEXT MEETING

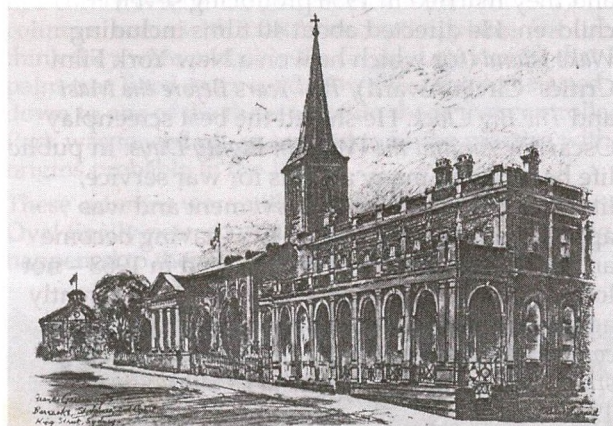
Let us break their bonds asunder: Angela Phippen's

Tales from NSW Divorce Court 1873-1920

Saturday 26 February 10.30 am

Petersham Town Hall

The Divorce Court was instituted in New South Wales in 1873 as a jurisdiction of the Supreme Court. While NSW was one of the last states to have such a court, it led the way in reform: the 1880s and 1890s saw significant changes in the grounds by which parties could divorce and in the access that poorer people or those living in country areas had to relief from matrimonial distress.



Supreme Court & St James Church (Cedric Emanuel)

The stories from the Divorce Court are of people trying to come to terms with broken marriages, of adultery, cruelty, desertion and relationships that break down due to the dislocation caused by World War One. However it is also the story of ideas, reformers and social change that has continued to the present day.

Most people think that *divorce didn't happen in those days* or only the wealthy divorced. By using cases as reported in the Sydney Morning Herald, **Angela Phippen** (Society of Australian Genealogists Librarian) will show this is a fallacy and further areas for genealogical or historical research may be opened up. And, if there is time, perhaps we can engage in a little bit of bigamy!

Now we've arguably entered the new millennium, when the millennium actually begins will continue to be debated along with when Australia Day should be celebrated, the nature of our republic (if we do want one), what our national anthem and flag should be, and what to call the first decade of the 21st century. Another chestnut is what to call the years of this century. *Two thousand* seems to be holding sway over *twenty hundred and twenty oh oh*, and thanks to Arthur C Clarke next year will be *two thousand and one*. But remember 1066 and *All That!* Was it ever called *one thousand and sixty six*?

CALL FOR SPORTING PHOTOS & MEMORABILIA FOR HERITAGE FESTIVAL EXHIBITION SPORT & LEISURE IN MARRICKVILLE AREA

The history of sport and leisure in Australia has a long link to the Marrickville area. From the early European settlers hunting kangaroos along the Cooks River, the unforgettable Annette Kellerman, or the more recent boxing successes of boxing champion, Jeff Fenech, there are numerous examples of sporting heroes linked to our area, plus many not so famous. Following the theme of the 2000 National Trust of Australia Heritage Festival, *Our Sporting Heritage*, Marrickville Council's Heritage Promotions Committee is organising an exhibition of sporting memorabilia for the week 1-9 April.

The committee is calling for old and recent photos, newspaper clippings, articles and other memorabilia of past and present sporting associations for consideration of inclusion in the exhibition and ultimately in the Local Studies Collection at Marrickville Library. Please send any material to Antoinette Buchanan, Local Studies Librarian, Marrickville Library (9335 2170) with your name, return address and phone number. For further information about the festival or the Marrickville Medal contact Catherine Macarthur on 9335 2114.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Lucille Dunstan, Dulwich Hill; Nicola & Paul Krejci, Kevin Peatfield, all of Enmore; Antoinette Buchanan, Penny Hopkins, both of Marrickville; Joan Carey, Katie Humphries both of Newtown; Keith Sutton, Petersham; Beres Shore, East Lismore; Stephen Riley, Hurstville; Anne Livingston, Telopea.

MHS CONGRATULATES:

- local historian, secretary of the Ashfield & District Historical Society and MHS member **Chris Pratten** named Ashfield Citizen of the Year. A great advocate for heritage conservation, he recently co-hosted our Summer Hill walk.
- Jack Munday** for his Australia Day honour AO (Order of Australia), long overdue for his advocacy for our natural and urban heritage.
- notable sports historian and founding MHS member **Richard Cashman** honoured as an Olympic torch-bearer for 500 metres through Marrickville on 14 September. Are there any other torch-bearers among our members?

SUMMER TRIVIA ANSWERS

a) **Nike**. Following the withdrawal of Reebok as official Olympic Games clothing sponsor, *Nike*, a "well known brand of sportsgear", was awarded the contract prompting Olympics Minister Michael Knight to immodestly declare "Nike is the goddess of victory ... and now *Nike*, the company, will be part of the great victories of the Australian team at the Olympics and Paralympics". In late December Bill Bowerman, co-founder (with Phil Knight) of Nike died in the US aged 88. In the late 1960s while a university athletic coach, he pressed foam rubber into his wife's waffle iron and invented the modern running shoe!

Marrickville's own goddess of victory *Nike* stands in front of the 1922 Marrickville Town Hall. It was unveiled on Empire Day, 24 May 1919, taken down in 1962, eventually restored, and re-unveiled on 11 November 1988. Various known as Marrickville Memorial, the Marrickville Soldiers' Memorial, Mourning Victory or Winged Victory, it is, of course, our Society's symbol, emblazoned on the front of our newsletter. Stories of the statue and sculptors Gilbert Doble and Alex Kolozsy, who undertook the restoration, appeared in *Heritage* issues 2, 5 and 9.

Chrys Meader, Manager Library Services Marrickville Library and involved in Nike's re-erection, sent a cutting (found in the back of a book) about the *Marrickville War Memorial* from the *Evening News* of 3 March 1919. The soon-to-be-unveiled 13 foot high statue was described as the "largest bronze casting in Australia ... the beautifully moulded and uplifted left arm holding aloft a sword, being typical at once of Victory, and also of a victory of justice; and the depending right arm and hand carry a laurel wreath as a tribute to those fallen warriors who have made the supreme sacrifice. ... Looking up to the downturned eyes, one is impressed with the beauty and dignity of the work."

The *Evening News* writer welcomed the feeling of relief of this statue from the common, stereotyped soldier standing on a pedestal of stone. The writer applauded the fact that this was "the largest Australian memorial yet done and that everything pertaining to it is purely Australian. It was designed here, modelled here, and the casting itself was done on the premises of the sculptor [Gilbert Doble, Hillcrest Street Tempe]. This was quite unusual anywhere, especially for such a large figure. ... Marrickville citizens will certainly have good cause to be proud of the possession of a public work of art which will challenge attention from visitors from all parts of the world."

Wayne LeClos' recent memories of LeClos Lane Marrickville prompted a letter from West Wyalong member and former Ferncourt School student **Shirley Kirkman** (nee MacLean) whose parents lived in Illawarra Road. Shirley's mother occupied a house which backed on to LeClos Lane for 46 years until her death in 1992.

b) Photographed are **John, Prudence and Mia (born Maria) Farrow**, and **Maureen O'Sullivan**. Whilst the late Maureen O'Sullivan and Mia Farrow have long been household names, who was John Farrow? From the little written about him it is often difficult to distinguish fact from fiction as he seems to have distorted some facts about himself. Mia's autobiography somewhat romanticises her father's life, suggesting he may have resulted from a liaison between Lucy Savage, said to have died giving birth to him – she actually died three years later – and King Edward VII!

John (registered as Jack Farrow) was born in Marrickville on 10 February 1904. It seems his family lived in Juliet Street. In 1914 a Joseph Farrow (name of Jack's father) was listed in Sands at *Strathview* in Premier Street Marrickville, below *Jesmont*, now Ferncourt School (curiously 92 Premier Street is called *Strathleven* – perhaps the same house?). Jack attended Newtown Public School and Fort Street Boys High School (1917-June 1918).

According to the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* 1940-80 an adventurous life led to Jack becoming a screenwriter in the 1930s. While working on *Tarzan Escapes*, he met Tarzan's Jane, Maureen O'Sullivan, and they married in 1936 producing seven children. He directed about 40 films including *Wake Island* (for which he won a New York Film Critics' Circle Award), *Two Years Before the Mast* and *The Big Clock*. He shared the best screenplay Oscar for *Around the World in Eighty Days*. In public life he received many awards for war service, literature and scientific achievement and was appointed honorary CBE in 1953 having become an American citizen in 1947. He died in 1963 – not long after Mia began her screen career apparently against his wishes – having made an *Australian contribution to international cinema unmatched and still little known in his homeland* (ADB Volume 14 1940-1980).

* * * * *

Thanks to Ian Phillips for suggesting the Nike question. Only Shirley Doolan, who has written about Joseph Farrow, answered both questions correctly whilst Diane McCarthy, Pat Mullen, Marie Colbron Conroy, Mark Matheson and Caroll Phillips identified the Farrowes. (Coincidentally Maureen O'Sullivan and Vivien Leigh, cited in last newsletter as the Pocket Playhouse's most illustrious visitor, were classmates and close friends when they both attended the Convent of the Sacred Heart at Roehampton, near London).

Richard Blair

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MARRICKVILLE OVAL MEMORIES (1)

A few memories of my childhood years in Marrickville and in particular Marrickville Oval which was known as Livingstone Oval until the late 1940s as I recall. Our yard [in Stoke Avenue] backed onto Marrickville Oval which will explain the close association I had with that place. We'd climb the back fence and roam the environs – the many sheds, the grandstand and what we used to refer to as "the hills" – the raised mounds of earth surrounding the northern and eastern sides of the ground and closed off from the rest of the area in order to contain the dozen sheep that roamed there to keep the grass down. We were the scourge of the caretaker/groundsman Mr Crawford whom we regarded as our enemy, a challenge to be avoided at all costs otherwise we'd be on the receiving end of his tongue to "Get out of there!"

There were three turnstile sheds serving the oval: one at the bottom of Porter Avenue, one at the end of the palm tree drive, and one near the lawn tennis courts. After school "big boys" (to us, but probably only 13 or 14 years old) could often be found in these sheds smoking. On weekends when sport was played large hessian curtains would be pulled out from cupboards next to the Porter Avenue and "palm tree" turnstiles to prevent non-payers from seeing the games.

In the later years of World War II one of the sheds of particular interest to us was a large open one near the lawn tennis club in which were parked a number of Civil Defence ambulances for use in the event of Japanese bombing. These were privately-owned cars lent by public-spirited locals (including local MP Mr Lazzarini who lived next door to us) for the "duration". Their bodywork had been radically altered to provide stretcher accommodation and they were painted khaki with a large red cross on each side. We kids (eight and nine year olds) would get in them and pretend to drive but we never damaged them, nor did anyone else damage them – something I couldn't see happening today. After the war, the cars were restored to their original condition.

During the War the US armed forces regularly used Marrickville Oval on weekends for baseball events. The grounds would be invaded by large military trucks carrying players and spectators. I recall the Americans as very friendly who always gave us inquisitive kids peering over the back fence chewing gum. One Sunday when the US Air Force was playing the US Navy – obviously a big game – a flight of Bell Airacobra fighters swept low over the oval (I swear just clearing the light poles) to boost the morale of their team mates.

In a corner behind the grandstand in the shade of a huge peppercorn tree [see story below] was a pile of stone columns, some with marble inscription plates. We used to pretend that they were gravestones, but on reflection I think they were probably the original park gates that I guess would have been located at the top of the formal palm-tree lined entry road (now filled in) that started at the junction of Frazer Street and Livingstone Road and led down to one of the three turnstile sheds that controlled entry to the oval. It is possible that the original Livingstone Park was fenced off, as seemed to be the practice with public parks last century although this park I believe had its origins probably in the 1910s.

These columns were still there in the early 1950s when my childhood passion to roam the grounds of Marrickville Oval finally petered out. Does anyone know anything about the columns – what they were and what finally happened to them? They are surely not there now. *

Peter Chinn



Marrickville Oval cricket match. Some spectators watch from horse-drawn buggies avoiding small lake caused by poor drainage. Pile Street houses behind oval, Athelney to the left, peppercorn tree (not visible) and original grandstand centre right (from 1912 Marrickville Jubilee Souvenir)

MARRICKVILLE OVAL MEMORIES (2)

My grandfather Alfred James Gaston was born in 1846 and after marrying Emma Wilkison in 1869 they made their home at Athelney 96 Pile Street Marrickville. The grounds of Athelney extended to the rear to include the hard tennis courts on the park alignment which still exist, known under my grandfather's ownership as Kiora Tennis Courts.

It was around 1900 that cricket was first played on the Marrickville Oval. Accordingly a seat was placed on the surrounding green for spectators. My grandfather was a foundation member of the Marrickville Cricket Club.* He transplanted a young peppercorn tree from his "horse paddock", which backed onto the park area, to the site where the spectators' seat was originally placed. The peppercorn tree still spreads its branches today.

His own private grandstand adjoining the tennis courts was popularly used. Carnivals were held on the oval for the Marrickville Hospital about 1913, and a childhood memory of mine was being in his grandstand and watching the clowns on stilts making revelry to the delight of all. Athelney had one of the few two-piece hand-rung wall telephones of the era, and this was always available to members of the Kiora Tennis Club and the Marrickville Cricket Club to give results of matches to the press.

Dorothy Gaston

* Founded 1908 about when the oval was constructed. Columns may have been inscribed pillars given by Graham Estate trustees and erected as park entrance gates. – Editor

CALENDAR OF MHS EVENTS

SATURDAY 26 FEBRUARY

Let us break their bonds asunder: Tales from NSW Divorce Court with Angela Phippen Details on front page

SATURDAY 25 MARCH

Chrys Meader on history of Henson Park & **Glen Dwyer** on history of the Newtown Jets.

SATURDAY 29 APRIL

Bus tour to the Nan Tien Buddhist Temple Berkeley and more

Geoff Howe's *Words of War* about the South African War (1899-1902) is based on letters from and contemporary newspaper interviews with soldiers from Sydney's Inner West (including the Marrickville area) who fought in this war. This was Australia's first major military commitment. Cost \$20 plus \$4.50 p&h from Geoff Howe 2F Stiles St, Croydon Park NSW 2133.



At our annual Pot Luck Xmas Dinner on 4 December roving photographer Diane McCarthy snapped Audrey Furney, not trying to roll a cigarette but checking her winning raffle ticket. Looking on are Ellie McKenzie, Lorraine Beach, Paul Roy, Joyce Roy and Lu Bell. In the kitchen Pip Preston, Angela Phippen and Caroll Phillips demonstrate washing up skills.



The Society regrets the passing of member **Brenda Llewellyn** (Pittard) of Undercliffe, formerly of Dulwich Hill, on 24 December 1999 after a long illness. Brenda was on Marrickville Council's Heritage Promotions Committee in the mid 1990s and on the MHS 1998-99 executive committee before leaving for health reasons. She was actively involved in local conservation issues. An editor by profession, she also edited the first edition of *Fairfield: A History of the District* (1982) and the history of the Bardwell Park Bowling Club. Her daughter Jan Pittard was an early editor of this newsletter. Our condolences to Brenda's family.

HERITAGE WATCH

- A revised DA has been submitted for the 1921 **Globe Worsted Mill** in Marrickville to convert the former factory to residential apartments with basement and ground floor carparking. The major change from the previous proposal is demolishing parts of the floor slabs to create central voids for light wells and vertical and horizontal circulation spaces in the middle of the building. This is in part to comply with Council's requirements for the apartments to be naturally cross-ventilated between the central voids and exterior.

While the Society applauds Council's concern for "Green" buildings, we have requested that the remaining structural and roof framing should be expressed in the redeveloped apartments. The distinctive fenestration of the building is proposed to be modified by removing some window frames to insert recessed balconies and louvred screens to the carparks. The Society has requested Council to require that the existing frames be retained in these areas to stop disruption of the strong geometry of the facades; also that any remaining wool milling machinery be incorporated into interpretive displays within the development.

- The sorry saga of **Curtis Cottage** (128 Wardell Road Dulwich Hill) is drawing to a close with the owner applying to Council to demolish the fire-damaged remains. As members will recall, the Society repeatedly warned Council of the risk of damage to the Cottage if maintenance and security issues were not pursued with the owner. We trust Council has fully documented this 1870s cottage.

- Society is actively supporting the efforts of Council's Planning and Heritage Officers who are attempting to get the significant buildings and open spaces of the **Eversleigh Hospital site** listed as heritage items. The new developer (SOMA) is revising plans in the wake of further community consultation.

- Care to buy a Blacket? Up for auction is State listed and National Trust listed *Monticello*, also known as *Aylesbury*, **38 Albermarle Street Newtown** described by estate agent as "a superb example of Regency colonial architecture, partially restored leaving scope to modify and improve". Agent claims it was built in 1853 and designed by Edmund Blacket, though this is debatable.

Following representations by the Society, Council recommended to the Geographical Names Board of NSW that a small public reserve in Liberty Street Enmore be renamed the **Eve Sharpe Reserve** to honour our late Patron. The board has gazetted this name and a formal ceremony should occur soon.

PRESIDENT Robert 9568 3079

TREASURER Diane 9588 4930

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HERITAGE WATCH Scott 9559 5736