

# MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.



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MARRICKVILLE PETERSHAM STANMORE  
CAMPERDOWN HURLSTONE PARK NEWTOWN

## OUR NEXT MEETING

**Historic Houses Trust Research Library  
Saturday 26 May 10.30 am**

Meet at *Lyndhurst* 61 Darghan Street Glebe  
(booking details below)

*Lyndhurst* was built in the 1830s by architect John Verge for Dr James Bowman, principal Colonial Surgeon. *Lyndhurst* later served as a Church of England school and as the Roman Catholic St Mary's College before being converted in the 1890s to three terrace houses. By the 1970s the building had become derelict and was only saved from demolition following a large public campaign against the north-western freeway. *Lyndhurst* now houses the headquarters of the Historic Houses Trust following its superb twelve year long restoration.



Senior HHT Librarian **Megan Martin** will show us their specialist collections relating especially to NSW. These contain material of historic domestic design, interiors and gardens; and a collection of 19th and 20th century architectural pattern books and trade catalogues.

BYO picnic lunch after the tour. Numbers limited. Please advise if cancelling. Cost \$5 (includes tea/coffee). Bookings Peter 9550 3809.

## MARRICKVILLE DISTRICT INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE EXHIBITION

During the Heritage Festival, Marrickville Council's Heritage Promotions Committee conducted an exhibition on the Industrial Heritage of Marrickville. The exhibition ran from 22-28 April at various venues including three days at Marrickville Metro where around 1200 inspected the display which paid homage to former prominent industries in the Marrickville LGA. Among the visitors was John Vicars, one of the final directors of the woollen mill which long stood on the site of Marrickville Metro.

The HPC comprised Matthew Devine (convenor), Catherine Macarthur, Antoinette Buchanan, Vivienne Larking, Richard Blair, Donna Braye, Scott MacArthur, Mark Matheson and Karen Urquhart. Special mention to Antoinette for coordination of the exhibition and Catherine for organisation of this and the Marrickville Medal (see separate story).

## MEMBERS' DINNER PARLIAMENT HOUSE

**Wednesday 30 May  
6.30 for 6.45 pm**

Meet on verandah of  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street, Sydney  
(booking details below)



*Parliament House  
Sydney*

At the invitation of Dr Andrew Refshauge, Member for Marrickville, Deputy Premier, Minister for Urban Affairs & Planning, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs & Housing, the Society will dine in the Strangers Dining Room at Parliament House. Prior to the three course dinner (including drinks) at 7.30, there will be a tour of the vestibules and chambers of the House. Numbers limited & MHS members only. Please advise if cancelling. Cost \$40. Bookings Shirley 9569 1768.

**Note** This newsletter sometimes publishes memories or excerpts from oral histories. Recollections are not based on research: they are one person's point of view and not necessarily an accurate account of events.

**The Friends of Camperdown Cemetery** has been established by Society member and naturalist **Danie Ondinea** following the response to her 2BL radio interview and the story in the SMH about the remnant native grasses. Council environment officer Jan Orton has provided temporary signage to alert visitors, and Danie is now mowing paths around the stones so that the area does not look neglected. Depending on funding, Danie hopes to start planning for community involvement soon.

The **Esther Abrahams Project** has resurrected a long overlooked historical figure. Born Abrahams, Esther's preferred premarital name was Julian (Cashman & Meader *Marrickville* p83) whilst after marriage in 1814 she became Johnston. Whilst the name of the Johnston estate *Annandale* was bestowed upon a suburb, the house, with its extant gates and piers (shown below in 1860s, but now at Annandale School) were in present day Stanmore. The old gatehouse still stands in Corunna Lane.





## OUR LAST MEETING (28 April) FROM FEDERATION TO GREAT WAR

Though not quite a magic-lantern show, **Robert Hutchinson's** old postcards on slides took us back to a distant world when only a single vehicle could be seen on a dusty Stanmore Road, when restoration was unnecessary as the houses had just been built and when many long gone church steeples were still visible. The exception to this was the magnificent St Clements Church in Marrickville (whose 1907 spire was saved by MHS efforts and whose restoration won a Marrickville Medal). A new estate had just been built on the corner of Durham Street and Salisbury Road, Stanmore and a postcard was sent to Miss Thomas of Bondi to prove it; Duntroon Street houses in Fernhill, later Hurlstone Park; washable Wunderlich ceilings; landmark old buildings lost; others like the elegant Newtown Dispensary Hall still standing.

But not just buildings. We saw the 1907-08 Newtown Brass Band members proudly displaying their four time Championship of Australia medals; male and female members of the Waratah Rovers Bicycle Club in 1901 outside the original Petersham Town Hall; and a festive ball inside. We speculated at an unknown feast laid out on tables at an unidentified venue whose only clues were the date (1908) and a telephone number "680 Pet". Some postcard messages caused much mirth and we marvelled at the twice daily mail service. The Society is fortunate to have Robert who happily shares his "fascinating hobby" and these wonderful century-old moments frozen in time.

Bill Stennett

## ATTERTON'S DECORATIONS

The Society first became aware of the Atterton house decorations in *Trelowarren* (originally *Valetta*, built by Rev. Priddle in 1874) during our Petersham walk in April 1995 when owner Robin Appleton invited walkers to an impromptu inspection. Members again visited recently on 21 April. The house was given as a dowry to signwriter Frederick Atterton on marriage to Julia Salt. Atterton lived there from 1889 to 1929, though family members remained until 1969. Prior to Robin's acquisition in 1994, some decorations had been painted over and the ceiling in the rear half of the parlour had collapsed and been covered over. Nevertheless most of Atterton's work survived.

So why is it significant? Robin is certain the decorations were painted as samplers so that prospective customers could inspect and order, hence the comprehensive range of styles. Though not regarded as a great illustrator, he was a proficient and technically skilled decorator using mostly oil paint and with attention to detail, excellent use of colour and shade, and able to adapt from standard contemporary pattern books. The numerous decorations include a Turkish rug on the ceiling, with striking Egyptian red; fine examples of gold lines and gold leaf, geometric patterns, the four seasons, cherubs, birds, flowers

and Scandinavian Norns. In the parlour is an autographed brick "Dec 03 F Atterton".

Robin, who deplores restoration in this setting, appreciates the slow conservation process. Large ceiling cracks have been painstakingly glued by syringing from above; cracks, after all, 'allow the character to show through'. The decorations contrast with those at the much-restored *Glenleigh* (visited by members in March). Robin believes the Atterton decorations are highly significant and is adamant the next owner of *Trelowarren* shares her commitment to conserving the decorations.

Richard Blair

## OBITUARY: DOROTHY GASTON

"Everyone should have an aunt like Dorothy" was how a niece described Dorothy Gaston at her Mass of Thanksgiving at St Brigids Catholic Church, Marrickville following her sudden death at home on 17 April. Her life was devoted both to the church for which she did untold voluntary work (including many years assisting Father Madigan with his *Sunday Telegraph* column) and to the service of others, who she inspired by her generosity, energy, uncomplaining nature and sense of humour.

Dorothy was born and died in the same years as Sir Donald Bradman. Her grandfather Alfred Gaston built *Athelney*, virtually the first house in Pile Street, Marrickville in 1879 and was a foundation member of Marrickville Cricket Club. A pepper tree planted by him a century ago, survives beside the grandstand at Marrickville Oval (see February 2000 newsletter). Proud of her family's long association with the district, she had a great sense of preserving the past, once donating a beautiful chifffonier to Grossmann House in Maitland.



She served on the Marrickville Hospital Auxiliary for many years and joined the Marrickville Heritage Society in 1986 sharing her memories as a volunteer with CUSA (Catholic United Services Association) in WW2 in *Marrickville Remembers*. More recently she was interviewed for our oral history project. At 92 she still spoke about saving for her old age and retirement. She walked everywhere, gardened, mowed her lawns using a push mower and climbed ladders to tie up her beloved banana trees. Having grown up in Porter Avenue where Dorothy lived most of her life, I feel privileged to have known such a quietly remarkable woman.

Richard Blair



## ENMORE & THE SLAVE TRADE

We know the original *Enmore* is a small Somerset town near Cornwall mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1085. An 1890s memoir by Thomas Alexander Browne\* at the Mitchell Library says his father Captain Sylvester Brown built a grand house in Newtown in 1835 (to the design of John Verge) and named it *Enmore* after the plantation in the West Indies owned by his employer James Cavan and worked by slaves. The memoir paints a picture of a happy childhood here, convicts making the garden, snow falling, and eating strawberries at Cooks River, but glosses over most of the facts.



A new well-documented biography *Rolf Boldrewood* by Paul de Serville (Melbourne University Press, \$60) reveals the Captain (c1790-1864) as an illegitimate garrulous Irish bankrupt who conceived son Thomas out of wedlock en route to Mauritius. It tells of his son's marriage to Margaret Riley, of *Raby* and later *Glenmore*, at St Thomas' Church Mulgoa (visited by MHS in March) his taking a pseudonym to write the best-selling adventure *Robbery Under Arms* and becoming a leader in conservative Melbourne's 'squattocracy' (with two of his sisters marrying the Lieutenant-Governors of Victoria and NSW). It is quite matter of fact over issues of slavery; the economy of the West Indies being built on the labour of thousands of Africans and Indians taken or indentured there. Captain Brown transported them there, and later, in 1831 transported British convicts to Van Diemen's Land.

Paul de Serville has told me that writing the biography was hell because Browne's notions of patriotism and breeding sound like jingoism and eugenics to us, and also because the family were determined to cover up their stormy past. He has not located *Enmore* in the West Indies. The only one found in maps, gazetteers and the Internet is on the coast of British Guiana, now Guyana. *Enmore* is a thriving town east of the capital Georgetown, and the major issue in Guyanan history is the import of the Indian slaves in the 19th century.

(Coincidentally, with the perceived need for cheap labour in NSW, John Lord, *Bello Retiro* Newtown advertised to procure Hill Coolies in the SMH (7/11/1838). The Herald editorial (6/3/1839) thought it charitable to remove the 'Coolies' from their lives of famine, but the colonial government decided against it.)

Mark Matheson

\* Thomas added the 'e' to the end of his surname

## HERITAGE WATCH

Whilst Council has agreed to renovations to **15 Dickson Street, Newtown** after extensive consultations with the new owners, the Society believes continuing close supervision is warranted as significant works on the site previously occurred **without approval**. The threat of demolition or subdivision caused one of the builder's descendants, Leesha Payor, to research the history of the house with the aim of getting it listed by the National Trust and the Heritage Office. This Victorian Italianate terrace (c1880) is arguably of State heritage significance and should immediately be protected by an Interim Heritage Order. It was built by Josiah Gentle as his private residence in grand style with the finest appointments, befitting the successful owner of the Bedford Brickworks. The remains of the kilns and chimneys are preserved in nearby Sydney Park. Gentle also constructed numerous workers houses for his employees.

The house is significant both for its association with the development of a self-sustaining building and construction industry in NSW, and for the rare quality, variety and intactness of its interior and exterior decorative features. The adjoining blocks of land with mature trees form an intact curtilage for the house that is very rare in the inner Sydney region. In spite of years of poor maintenance, there are intact marble fireplace surrounds, iron registers, extensive cedar joinery, decorative paint schemes, and a rare decorative cast-iron balustrade.

The building modifications required for 'modernisation' must not be allowed to take precedence over the retention and preservation of significant fabric. The Society urges Council to protect this gem from inappropriate development and renovation by enacting all statutory processes that can aid in the protection of the heritage significance of this house and its intact curtilage.

\* \* \* \* \*

One of the concerned neighbours who lobbied forcefully against the pathetic development at **5 Gelding Street, Dulwich Hill** (see April newsletter) advises it has been rejected by Council. There are reports that the Salvation Army was initially told by a Council officer that the proposal would be approved. It is encouraging that lobbying by concerned neighbours and the Society can get Council to protect places that are not formally listed as heritage items. This is especially true in this case where the developer, a respected and powerful community organisation and long term owner/resident, should have known better.

Scott MacArthur

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## CALENDAR OF MHS EVENTS

### SATURDAY 26 MAY

Visit to *Lyndhurst*: HHT Research Library

Details on front page

### WEDNESDAY 30 MAY

Dinner at Parliament House

Details on front page

## WHERE THE CADIGALS ROAMED?

An article I wrote for the June 2000 newsletter about the renaming of Richardson's Lookout apparently caused some consternation: "apparently" in that I only heard about concerns second hand. I have never had any objection to the renaming of this lookout. Indeed in the April 2000 newsletter I wrote: "Few would argue with the 21 March [2000 Marrickville] Council meeting motion adopted to rename Richardson's Lookout, Marrickville, which overlooks Cooks River, *Cadigal Lookout* in honour of the original inhabitants of much of the Sydney basin."

My June 2000 article stated that some descendants of WC Richardson had been upset to learn their forebear's name was likely to be erased from the site (**Fact**). I made the further points that there were conflicting views as to where the Cadigal band lived (**Fact**) and that there is a Cadigal Reserve in nearby Summer Hill (**Fact**).

Peter Turbet's recently revised *The Aborigines of the Sydney District Before 1788* points out that because of little pre 20th century anthropological research, "modern knowledge of names and boundaries is limited and inaccurate" (p18). However he asserts that "the Cadigal were the people from the bay of Cadi (p19) . . . [and] the Cadigal territory stretched along the south side of Port Jackson from South Head to about Petersham. The southern boundary is unknown. There were fifty or sixty Cadigals in 1788 but by 1791, after the smallpox epidemic, only three remained" (p21).

Any negative interpretation of my June 2000 article about my views on Aboriginal issues ought to have been further dispelled by my publicising in the newsletter the Marrickville Residents for Reconciliation gathering at Richardson's Lookout on 26 May 2000, and also the walk across the Sydney Harbour Bridge on 28 May in which I not only participated, but walked with the MRFR. Indeed a photograph of me co-carrying the banner appeared in the August 2000 *Marrickville Matters* (p4) and again in March 2001 (p20). A decision is yet to be made about the renaming of the lookout.

Richard Blair, Editor

*Marrickville Backyards* (previewed in March newsletter) was launched on 7 April at Petersham Town Hall. MHS is selling this handsome publication for \$20 a copy.

## 2001 MARRICKVILLE MEDAL

The 2001 Marrickville Medal for Conservation was awarded by Mayor Barry Cotter on 22 April at the Herb Greedy Hall Marrickville to an **1840s slab hut in Barden Street, Tempe**. Judges (architects Beverley Garlick and Matthew Devine, and MHS President Peter Cousens) said "this extremely humble-looking house belies a very early and interesting house with direct links to the Verge-designed Tempe House across Cooks River. Previous owner **Brian Finn** (pictured below) researched and documented the property and ensured its ongoing preservation."



(photo: Robert Pearce *Sydney Morning Herald* 12/8/00)

"Brian's actions have enabled a rare timber slab hut of heritage significance to NSW, and in particular to the Marrickville and Rockdale Council areas, to be conserved. He carefully exposed the former rear external wall of the hut in the rear room, taking care to retain the original nails, battens, lime putty and other features; sought the advice of Council's Heritage Architect and the NSW Heritage Office; nominated the property to the State Heritage Register and selectively sold the property to owners who would also value and protect the slab building within the cottage".

A Special Award (Highly Commended) was made to MHS member **Maureen Salier**, who restored her Federation house on the corner of Bruce and Douglas Streets, Stanmore "to its former grandeur, full of original period details, colour schemes, furniture, decoration and establishing sympathetic gardens. This project is an excellent example of how an owner has gained pride, knowledge and understanding of heritage values through research and seeking specialist assistance. This award for conserving the cultural heritage of Marrickville recognises Maureen's broader actions in applying the same approach to her investment properties (which were also inspected) in the area."

**Newington Concert Sunday 27 May 2.30 pm**  
Royal Australian Navy Band & Student ensembles  
Centenary Hall, Newington College \$20, \$15 conc.

**PRESIDENT** Peter 9550 3809

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