

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.



DULWICH HILL ENMORE LEWISHAM
ST PETERS SYDENHAM TEMPE & PARTS OF

MARRICKVILLE PETERSHAM STANMORE
CAMPERDOWN HURLSTONE PARK NEWTOWN

OUR NEXT MEETING

Gems of the Mulgoa Valley
Saturday 24 March 9am sharp

Meet Petersham Town Hall 8.45 for 9am (sharp) departure. BYO lunch. Priority to members; numbers limited. Cost \$28 (incl coach, entry fees & morning tea). Please advise if you have to cancel. Bookings Richard 9557 3823.

The Mulgoa Valley has great heritage and environmental value possessing the oldest remaining collection of early colonial homesteads, with local church, anywhere in NSW, with the landscape relatively unaltered.

The original inhabitants, the Mulgoa people, were part of the Dharug tribe. After British settlement, the Valley's rich agricultural potential was soon recognised. Foremost among the pioneers was the Cox family who were closely linked with *St Thomas' Church* (1836) and several extant homes including *The Cottage* (c1811) and *Glenmore* (1825). The Georgian style golden sandstone *St Thomas Church* has been described as the earliest true Gothic Revival church in Australia. William Cox built *The Cottage*, one of our earliest timber-framed brick-nogged structures. *Glenmore*, a sandstone bungalow, built by Henry Cox, further developed by owners Thomas Sutcliffe Mort in 1851 and James Riley, Mayor of Penrith, in 1871.



Glenleigh (C. Stickley's The Old Charm of Penrith)

Our tour will commence at the ruins of Sir John Jamison's magnificent 1820s mansion *Regentville*. Though destroyed by fire in 1869, the site is significant due to the mansion, but also "as a rare example of probably the first wine estate to use the terraced vineyard technique". Then to James Ewan's 1880s Scottish Baronial two storey *Glenleigh* with its distinctive white bricks and red lintels. The interior is magnificent especially the delicately detailed painted ceilings, stained glass windows, fine cedar joinery and marble fireplaces. House and gardens all beautifully restored.

MUDGEER TOUR 4, 5 & 6 MAY

An enthusiastic response from members to the *Magical History Tour* has ensured it will go ahead departing from Petersham Town Hall at noon on Friday 4 May, returning late afternoon Sunday 6 May. The cost includes air-conditioned coach, two nights' twin share accommodation in Mudgee at a 3½ star motel, full breakfast daily and a 3-course dinner on Saturday night. We will visit many places of historic and natural interest in Mudgee, Gulgong and Rylstone, and a couple of vineyards. We'll allow time to explore areas of special interest at your own pace and enjoy the leisure of a weekend in the country.

The cost is \$220 per person (plus \$90 for a single supplement). Send cheque in full payable to Marrickville Heritage Society plus your details by Monday 9 April. Put "Mudgee Weekend" on envelope. Confirm your initial response or secure one of the last few places by phoning Lorraine 9590 3309. If you get answer machine *please wait for the beep before you speak.*

'Granny' Scholtz brought **Sir Donald Bradman** into the world at her hospital *Irena*, now a museum, in Cootamundra. Her daughter lived in Petersham which is where 'Granny' died. Petersham Oval is where Bradman scored his first grade cricket century (110 in even time) playing for St George against Petersham on 27 November 1926. With 3/26 he also had the team's best bowling figures (see February 1998 MHS newsletter article).

2001 MARRICKVILLE MEDAL details

were in December newsletter. For a nomination form to enter your house or one in your neighbourhood, or if you want more information, contact Catherine Macarthur at 9335 2114. Applications close Friday 23 March. The Medal will be presented during the Heritage Festival on 22 April.

JOIN MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY NOW ...

... and receive bonus membership. Simply send a cheque or money order with your name(s), address & phone number to the PO Box below or ring Peter 9550 3809 for a brochure or further information.

Annual membership \$10 concession, \$16 individuals or joint concession and \$22 households or organisations. Includes monthly newsletter, journal *Heritage*, and monthly talk or outing. We record the local history and keep an active watch on the built and natural heritage of Marrickville LGA.

OUR LAST MEETING A BLOODY DRAMATIC TRAGEDY

Our first meeting for the year on 24 February was attended by 55 members all curious to learn the answer to the Macquarie Street boarding house mystery. Our speaker, also a MHS committee member, **Deborah Edward** introduced us to English actors Amy and Arthur Dacre from the start of their 1895 professional tour of Melbourne, where they received bad press, to Adelaide, where it was even worse, to their eventual arrival in Sydney. Here we see the middle-aged actor Arthur, a qualified doctor, now treading the boards with his wife. It seems the expression "Don't give up your daytime job" applied to him!

Amy seemed to be in failing health whilst the frenetic pace of rehearsing and learning lines in 24 hours for each new venue made Arthur nervous and irritable. Although the critics were kinder and money was not a problem, there was an air of unease. Whatever happened on that November morning brought this disastrous tour to an end in murder/suicide, Arthur taking Amy's life and then his own. It was interesting to learn that the population of Sydney took this couple to their hearts, with a spectacular funeral procession to Waverley Cemetery accompanied by beautiful floral tributes from the Lieutenant-Governor down to the everyday member of the public and stage-hands.

Audience participation at question time was very spirited with speculations of why and what, laced with Deborah's interesting anecdotes. We await completion of Deborah's novel on the Dacres. It will be a pleasure to cheer her at the book launch.

Susan O'Connor

(Note: Talk given at 1999 RAHS annual conference)



Demolished late last year was this garage at Dulwich Hill Five Ways on the corner of Constitution and Windsor Roads. Photo taken from Arlington Street. In centre background is top of former Waratah Flour Mill (photo: Richard Blair)

MARRICKVILLE BACKYARDS

In the October 1997 newsletter we reported the formation of the **Marrickville Community History Group** aimed at publishing social history about Marrickville's rich cultural diversity. This project has come to fruition with their book *Marrickville Backyards* to be launched on 7 April. Over the last 50 years people from numerous ethnic backgrounds have made their homes in the area and done

extraordinary and creative things in their backyards. Becoming settled involves designing private spaces, both indoor and outdoor, as a reminder of where they came from. Authors Jane Gleeson, Mary Ann Hamilton, Megan Wynne-Jones and George Morgan interviewed a number of long-term residents and were astonished at how they applied their skills and revived their cultures in the very limited spaces of their gardens.

"Many people we interviewed grew up on small farms in Europe and Asia and still keep certain of their rural traditions alive in the city" said George Morgan. "Some bake bread in huge outdoor ovens, others tread the grapes they grow for home-made wine and others cultivate unusual vegetables, or herbs for folk medicines that are dispensed to friends and relatives". One interviewee commented: "People ask me why I keep on growing vegetables for my family when the markets provide such cheap produce, but I like the freshness of my own vegetables and also I was born and raised doing this – it is in my blood."

Marrickville Backyards also records their concern for the environment. The conservation ethic is often expressed in a variety of ways in their own gardens: one interviewee uses permaculture methods, another has rigged up an elaborate system for using rainwater run off to irrigate his garden and yet another recycles waste material and turns it into whimsical sculptures of animals.

The book tells stories of migration and contains a series of vignettes describing the lives and backyard labours of people from places as varied as Portugal, Greece, Indonesia, China, the Middle East, North America and the Pacific Islands, as well as those who were born in Australia of Anglo-Irish backgrounds. *Marrickville Backyards* is published in conjunction with Blooming Books and with the assistance of a Federation Fund grant. For information on launch ring Mary Ann Hamilton 9559 1095.

Marrickville Council has thanked the Society for advertising the **Streetscape Maintenance Survey** in the newsletter. 200 local residents responded. Copies of the detailed findings are available for reading at Marrickville Library. Findings indicated high levels of awareness for streetscape maintenance but not consistently high levels of satisfaction for streetscape appearance and quality of Council services. Council is commended for affording residents the opportunity to provide feedback in this way.

SHRUBS AND TUBS GARDEN CENTRE

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Old Fashioned Climbers and Roses, Cottage Garden Plants, Camellias, Azaleas, All Herbs, Terracotta Pots, Lattice. Everything to keep your garden healthy

HERITAGE WATCH

The saga of **Tempe House** drags on. The Society sent Rockdale Council a strongly worded response to the DAs for the Conservation Works and the master plan for the surrounding high-rise development. There were a large number of heated responses from residents and groups such as the National Trust, Australian Heritage Commission, National Parks and Wildlife Service all expressing concern at various aspects of the development. The number of responses and the depth of feeling and concern in the community they demonstrate may be in part responsible for the Heritage Council's decision to postpone their final judgement.

* * * * *

Philadelphia Chocolate Factory The Society has joined many concerned local residents in calling for Council to refuse the proposed redevelopment of the site (originally The Australian Pickle & Condiment Co. established a century ago) at 7-9 Railway Avenue, Stanmore for a four storey medium density townhouse development. The Society is particularly concerned about the impact that such a large development may have on the fine collection of Federation cottages across the street at 6-24 Railway Avenue, which are classified by the National Trust.

* * * * *



15 Dickson Street Newtown (c. 1880) which has sold for \$861,000 is one to watch as it's a double block, is not listed and is in poor condition photo: (SMH 24/2/01)

Fraser Park Gateway The Society notes that the reconstruction and repair works of the railway bridge (off Marrickville Road, Marrickville) is almost complete. The handsome face brick retaining walls of the embankments are upwards of a century old. They are now completely covered by characterless bare concrete walls which will soon be embellished by the local graffitists. We note with dismay that the original gateway that was removed for the works has not been reconstructed. In fact, the sandstone piers, gates and iron palisade fencing remain disassembled and vulnerable to further damage in an unsecured site yard. The plans for these works did not show where the gateway would be reconstructed.

The Heritage Study for the works suggested that the piers may have originally come from the Mortuary Station (near Central) and could justifiably be returned to that site at a later date. The Society's own

investigations refute this claim – the Fraser Park piers (pictured in November 1997 newsletter) are larger and of a completely different design to those at the Mortuary Station. The gateway was a landmark item of local significance and MHS has advised Council that they should require the reinstatement of the gateway at the completion of the bridge works.

NEW THEATRE UNDER THREAT

The "New Theatre" in King Street, Newtown is facing closure due to lack of funds. Despite its name, it is believed to be the oldest continuously operating theatre in Australia. It started in 1932 and moved to Newtown in 1973. As well as being a source of entertainment, it has been a significant training ground for theatre people and a vehicle for satire, social and political comment. This significant item of our heritage should be preserved at all costs – at the macro level by government agencies and at the micro level by local commerce and the general public. Donate or go see a play!

COMMENDABLE CONSERVATION INITIATIVES IN QUEENSLAND

We know they do things differently in Queensland, but in some respects they lead the way, as the editor found on a recent visit. Two examples: a) Brisbane (the world's third largest single local government municipality after New York and Los Angeles) has an edict that prior to redevelopment, developers must replace demolished buildings with temporary public parkland, resulting in less premature loss of buildings, fewer large holes in the ground and more green space; b) Apropos Ted Mack's erstwhile North Sydney scheme, Queensland National Parks do **not** have rubbish bins in their parks resulting in, believe it or not, almost rubbish-free parks.

SHORT STORY COMPETITION

The Friends of Marrickville Library (FOML)

Annual Short Story Competition is open to anyone who lives, works or attends school in the Marrickville LGA or who belongs to a local community group. To celebrate the Centenary of Federation, entries must contain two elements – **Marrickville area** and **Unity**. They must be under 2000 words and come with an official application, available at local libraries or by ringing Antoinette Buchanan on 9335 2170. Competition closes 30 March. Awards evening 10 May. Winning entries to be published.

AUTUMN TRIVIA QUESTION

Where is this tablet? (Richard 9557 3823)

THIS TABLET
MARKS A TREE PLANTED
BY THE LATE
SIR HENRY PARKES
G.C.M.G.
A GREAT AUSTRALIAN STATESMAN
FATHER OF FEDERATION
AND AUTHOR OF THE
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION ACT
OF 1880

ERECTED BY THE PARENTS & CITIZENS ASSOCN 3.5.33

CALENDAR OF MHS EVENTS

SATURDAY 24 MARCH

Gems of the Mulgoa Valley (coach trip)

Details on front page

SATURDAY 28 APRIL

Robert Hutchinson *From Federation to Great War* from Robert's postcard archive

FRIDAY 4 MAY TO SUNDAY 6 MAY

Mudgee Tour (payment details front page)

AUDLEY PICTURE PALACE PETERSHAM

I have just been reading a book on Sydney's suburban cinemas in the golden days of cinema – not the sterile multiplex era that we experience today. How well-served we were with the choice of cinemas in the Marrickville area before the advent of television in 1956 after which suburban cinemas languished, to be demolished and replaced by service stations, which ironically, have in the main, gone the way of the buildings whose place they took.

No doubt the cinemas of the Marrickville district have been subject of previous coverage in your publications so I shall not indulge in my pleasant memories of Saturday "arvos" at the Britannia or Majestic. However, the book prompted my memory about another local cinema that had closed well before my time, but which existed to serve quite a different purpose until at least the mid 1960s when I left Marrickville.

We knew it as Hickey & Co.'s coffin factory which was on the south-west corner of Audley Street and New Canterbury Road, Petersham. When it served the entertainment needs of the living, I have an idea it was known as the Audley Cinema. It was a large timber-framed building clad in sheet iron that had been pressed and patterned to resemble sandstone blocks, at least in the lower sections, which were painted beige to consolidate the illusion. I think the upper sections were maroon. Up high were large windows for ventilation.

As kids there was always a morbid fascination about the place, especially after seeing some spooky matinee at the nearby Majestic (later Petersham Odeon) we would spy through the open doors to see completed coffins stacked against the walls and quite ordinary mortals at work cutting and assembling the component timbers. There were the no doubt apocryphal stories about boys daring to venture in, hide themselves in coffins and startle the living daylights out of the workers.

My parents used to go to the pictures there during the 1920s and they told me that at interval, patrons would cross the road to the refreshment shop among the shops on the south-east corner of Audley Street. There was even a roof garden where refreshments could be enjoyed on a hot summer's night. In my time this block of shops was also used by Hickey & Co. as a small factory for the manufacture of linings for coffins and associated requisites.

I understand that the Petersham Majestic cinema opened in 1921 – its grandeur overshadowing the shed-like character of its competitor up the road. I would guess that the Audley Street cinema preceded the Majestic by some years and its business would have suffered from the competition posed by the relative luxury of the newcomer. It would be interesting to learn something about the history of this early cinema in Petersham.*

Peter Chinn

* The earliest listing in Sands Directory for a picture theatre or similar venue in New Canterbury Road, Petersham is 1911. On the south-west corner of this road and Audley Street was the Audley Picture Palace, also called Audley No.1. It was so listed until 1925. 1926-28 it was listed as Audley Palais de Danse, after which it was a motor works.

Also in 1911 across and down the road at 49 New Canterbury Road was listed Nable & Smith, Petersham Pictures. This venue had many name changes over the next ten years. By 1920 it was Audley Theatre No. 2 (with same owners as its neighbour). It was replaced in 1921 by the grand Majestic Theatre (designed by Kaberry & Chard) later the Odeon, then the Oreon, and since 1979 a roller skating rink. Whilst theatres on both sites started in 1911, it is unclear which was the first (Ref: MHS member Caroline Plim's Conservation Plan for Majestic Rollarink, 1995) – Editor

AUDLEY PICTURES No 2 PETERSHAM

Special Grand Program

SATURDAY NIGHT, 28th AUGUST

LAST NIGHT IN THE OLD SKOW

DEMOLITION OF THE BUILDING COMMENCES MONDAY, 30th AUGUST, TO PERMIT OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF ONE OF THE LARGEST AND MOST LUXURIOUSLY APPOINTED THEATRES IN THE COMMONWEALTH.

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(Source: *The Sunday News* 22 August 1920)

Our obituary for the late **Tom Pavlakis** in the February newsletter said he joined the Society in 1988. However we have since discovered Tom was listed as a new member in the Society's second newsletter of July 1984. His membership must have lapsed in the interim.

PRESIDENT Peter 9550 3809

HERITAGE WATCH Scott 9559 5736

NEWSLETTER Richard 9557 3823