

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.



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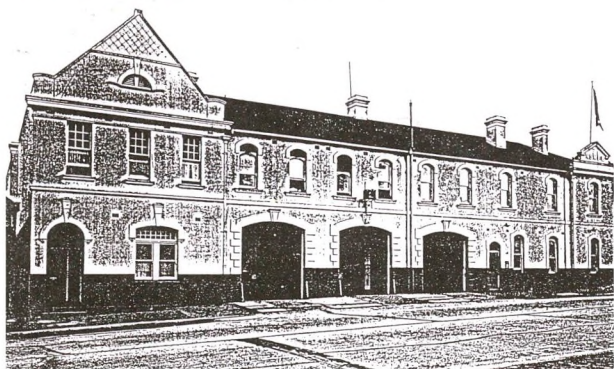
MARRICKVILLE PETERSHAM STANMORE
CAMPERDOWN HURLSTONE PARK NEWTOWN

OUR NEXT MEETING MHS GOES TO THE SILENT MOVIES

The Adventures of Algy
Mastertouch Piano Roll Company
Saturday 25 May 1.45 for 2 pm

Admission (movie, tour & afternoon tea) \$10, \$7 concession & under 18, \$12 non-members. Movie to follow tour. Meet corner Stanmore Rd. & Albert St. Petersham. Entrance Albert St. Bookings Richard 9557 3823.

This activity has a threefold interest. Built by Rowe & Green in 1886 as Marrickville Fire Station it became known as Stanmore Fire Station in 1913. Prior to closure in 1991 it was the "oldest continually occupied, permanently-manned fire station in Australia". In the mid 1990s the building was acquired by the Mastertouch Piano Roll Company which had operated at 96 Crystal Street Petersham since 1975 (see page 2). In 2000 Mastertouch moved into the fire station which is being marvellously transformed.



Stanmore Fire Station in 1922
(from Marrickville Municipal handbook)

Mastertouch was founded in 1919 and Barclay Wright's story of Mastertouch (*Rhapsodies in Wrapping Paper*) was in *Heritage 10*. The LGA is fortunate to have what is described as "Australia's foremost working musical heritage museum" where piano rolls are still made as well as box production, now the main product of the company. A theatre has been established and Barclay has invited MHS members to a special screening of a silent movie.

The Adventures of Algy was a joint 1925 Australian/New Zealand movie comedy produced by Beaumont Smith and starring Claude Dampier and Bathie Stuart. Set in New Zealand and Australia, the film contains "scenic travelogue footage of NZ and two onstage dance sequences, one in a Maori village the other on the stage of a Sydney theatre". Live organ accompaniment by Mastertouch principal recording artist Greg Crease who would like to know "which Sydney theatre"?

2002 AGM IN JULY

The committee has decided this year's Annual General Meeting will be on the **fourth Saturday of July** instead of June when it has long been held. The Society's constitution allows this. The change is to give the auditor sufficient time to complete his annual report for presentation at the AGM. The auditor's position is an honorary one and his professional end-of-financial-year demands take priority over the Society's. The new committee will review this decision. As usual, all committee positions will be declared vacant at the AGM so expressions of interest for the new committee are welcome.

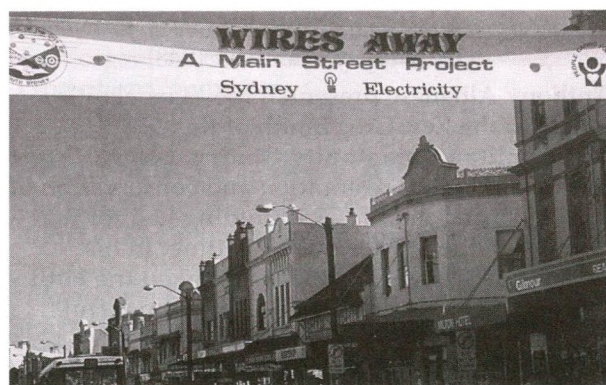
Peter Cousens, President

HERITAGE WATCH: SOME GOOD NEWS

In the wake of the annual National Trust Heritage Festival came some significant announcements about additions to the State Heritage List. Foremost among these was news that 94 buildings in **The Rocks** have been listed on the State Heritage Register. Veteran Green Bans campaigner Jack Munday was quoted as saying "the battle for The Rocks had finally been won".

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Minister for Planning Dr Andrew Refshauge announced there would be a period of consultation preceding the proposed State listing of **Haberfield**, the first NSW suburb to be thus recognised. This follows changes to the NSW Heritage Act allowing suburbs and entire streets to be protected.



Other suburban areas may be named for State listing though the fate of **King Street Newtown** is unclear. King Street is listed on the Register of the National Estate whilst the 1992 *Wires Away* project (pictured above in Vines' *Streetwise* 1996) transformed the King Street vista. This long, busy, colourful, snake-like shopping strip with its great mix of architectural styles surely warrants State Heritage Listing.

Richard Blair (more back page)

MARRICKVILLE MEDAL 2002

Bridging the Divide was the theme for this year's National Trust Heritage Festival and was launched locally on 21 April by Anthony Albanese MP, Member for Grayndler, at the Herb Greedy Hall, Marrickville. A photographic display with interviews, showing the diverse mix of Marrickville, was on show – the work of Vivienne Larking and Mark Matheson. Also displayed were the Marrickville Medal entries and the stunning photographs of Roslyn Sharp for the publication *Marrickville Backyards*.

After a *Welcome to Country* by Allan Madden, Cadigal Elder, and some evocative Vietnamese music from Julie Dang (Dang Lan) and her trio came the Marrickville Medal presentations. The Medal was for commercial or public buildings and spaces. Architects Elisha Long, Caroline Pidcock, Scott MacArthur and MHS President Peter Cousens judged the 12 entries. Three commendations were awarded by Marrickville Mayor Barry Cotter to a) *Last Drop* coffee shop Marrickville Road Dulwich Hill; b) the JF Laxton Reserve, Union Street Dulwich Hill; and c) the Domain Apartment building, Marrickville Road Marrickville.



*Metropolitan Community Church Petersham
(The Story of Petersham 1948)*

Anthony Albanese presented the Marrickville Medal to the Rev. Greg Smith of the **Metropolitan Community Church**, Crystal Street Petersham for the restoration and conservation of the 1940 brick church. The building had for many years been the Mastertouch building. In his acceptance speech, Rev. Smith thanked the Fifth Church of Christ, Scientist for this wonderful building and Barclay Wright (owner of Mastertouch) who "kept every object and scrap of timber" so that everything that had been removed could be reinstated. The interior is now as built. Rev. Smith invited everybody to visit the church, or attend a service there, as it is a church for the whole community.

Mathew Devine, chair of the Marrickville Heritage Promotion Committee, invited everybody to view the displays and winning entries and enjoy the food and wine, to the wonderful sounds of the music of Vietnam.

Robert Hutchinson

METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH

The old Christian Science Church on the corner of Crystal and Brighton Streets, Petersham was built in a geometric Art Deco shape in 1940 (architects Minnett & Cullis-Hill, builder Alex Speers & Co.). Redundant as a church by the 1970s, in 1975 it became the headquarters of the Mastertouch Piano Roll Company (founded in 1919). Giant box making machinery was moved into the church auditorium and a mezzanine floor installed near the organ pipes. For the next quarter century, the basement area became the studio where the piano music was recorded on rolls.

In May 2000 Mastertouch moved to a nearby local heritage building, the former Stanmore Fire Station, and the unique red brick church became redundant for the second time. Purchased by the Metropolitan Community Church as their Sydney home, 25 years of accumulated industrial dirt and grime were scrubbed from the walls and ceilings, using mostly voluntary labour. Numerous holes were filled in the octagonal auditorium floor and the timber was repolished. The gold, pale blue and cream interior was restored and because of its address 96 Crystal Street, it became known as the *Crystal Street Cathedral*.

Spring flower festivals have been held for the past two years showing the church at its very best. The winning of the 2002 Marrickville Medal has brought further prestige to this fine mid 20th century building.

Geoff Ostling

NO RAINCOATS AT NEWTOWN HUB!

At short notice a small group of MHS members on 18 April attended a rare performance at Newtown's (in)famous Hub Theatre. Rare in the sense that the theatre had been unused in recent years and prior to that had long catered for the 'raincoat brigade' of live acts and cinema aficionados. Also rare in that Shakespeare's little performed *Cymbeline* had a season staged by the Factory Space Fringe Theatre. Despite the poor acoustics, most enjoyed the play.

While The Hub looks neglected on the outside, the interior, with its minimalist Art Deco features, has had a facelift. It is hoped that further use will be found for this wonderful old theatre (formerly Clay's c1911), though one cannot be too hopeful given that there are already several fringe theatres in the area.

VALE: DR JOAN HATTON

Dr Joan Hatton of Kogarah died on 25 April. Joan, a member of MHS since 1989, was a well known Sydney local historian. She had several local history booklets on the St George area published and had long associations with several historical societies, but especially Kogarah and Hurstville. She had worked in accounting and pathology and had completed a doctorate. Our condolences to her family and friends.

OUR LAST MEETING MARRICKVILLE BACKYARDS

On Saturday 27 April George Morgan and Mary Ann Hamilton gave a large Heritage Week group of 90 members and visitors an interesting insight into a range of local residents, mostly born overseas, and the way they use their backyards. With a background of the people and slides of Roslyn Sharp's excellent photographs, we had a peep into their social lives, all featured in the award-winning book *Marrickville Backyards*.*

Backyards are used for celebrations, growing fruit, vegetables, herbs and flowers. Some use reticulated water; others have ovens for baking bread and meats while one woman has a good market for her remedial herbs – all part of introduced cultural backgrounds showing the important role of backyards in daily life. It was particularly interesting to hear of José (who "believes he was the first Portuguese person to settle in the Petersham area") with his prize orchids, ferns and vegetables. They are so valued by him that he takes his washing from the line while still wet so his plants do not miss any of the precious sun.

Sheds are used for a variety of purposes such as entertaining, winemaking and carving wooden animals, but a Greek man has covered his shed wall with decorations and other memorabilia from war and government service. Kamahl and Laila from Egypt have converted their garage into a radio broadcasting studio with regular broadcasts on community radio. Gail, an award-winning potter, works in her backyard overlooking Cooks River; it was good to see Bob and his historic backyard well, appreciated by recent Xmas Pot Luck diners. An excellent presentation which, I am sure, we all found fascinating.

Phyllis McCorquodale

* MHS congratulates the Marrickville Community History Group on winning the Multicultural Award (Community Groups) for *Marrickville Backyards* in the Energy Australia National Trust Heritage Awards 2002 on 26 April.

CULTURAL SITES TOUR

With the Bus & Truck Museum at Tempe, it is not uncommon to see double-decker buses cruising up King Street of a weekend. On Saturday 27 April two of these archaic but very mobile omnibuses were seen in the back streets of Marrickville negotiating Optus cables and overhanging trees, facilitating visits to three local and diverse cultural experiences. At Cadigal / Richardsons Lookout, site of the once imposing Warren mansion, Lester Bostock gave a *Welcome to Country* and told of the 10-15,000 Aborigines who once roamed the region and the many identified Aboriginal sites in the district. The Yidaki Dancers performed several Aboriginal dances and songs featuring traditional instruments. Who'd have thought the didgeridoo such a versatile instrument!

Friends of Camperdown Cemetery advise next two working bees are Saturday 25 May and Saturday 22 June at 9.30 am. Nell 9335 2197 weekdays.

Greeks migrated in their thousands to Australia from the late 1940s and Marrickville became a popular destination. In response St Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church, Marrickville was built in 1965. Tassos Kalogerakis explained the characteristic features inside the church full of beautifully painted iconography, though it is not as detailed or complete as traditional churches. Tassos advised that Livingstone Road would be crowded the following weekend with Greek Easter.



Many believe the Portuguese were the first Europeans to reach Australia in the 1600s. Though Petersham is regarded as the cultural heart of Sydney's Portuguese community, the Portuguese Ethnographic Museum is in Australia Street Camperdown. The museum, opened in 1997, contains a 1795 document confirming departure of cargo in transit from Lisbon to Angola and later to Sydney. Most exhibits are described bilingually making it very accessible. The museum (open weekends 1-5 pm) topped off this stimulating cultural afternoon, indeed a marvellous complement for those who visited Marrickville's Backyards in the morning (see separate report). Tour organised by Marrickville Heritage Promotion Committee.

Richard Blair

SEYMOURS STORE FIRE

Our astute members don't miss much! The information in our March newsletter about the Seymours Store fire being in 1949 (gleaned from *Marrickville Rural outpost to inner city*) was wrong. It actually occurred on the evening of Tuesday 19 November 1940. The *Herald* of 20 November reported "Damage of £30,000 was done by a fire which gutted the upper floors and part of the ground floor of the premises of HT Seymour Pty Ltd in the main shopping area of Marrickville last night . . . It was brought under control by 9 pm with a crowd of 20,000 watchers." Thanks to Keith Smith, who recalls a bridge across Seymours Lane to the hardware building, and Shirley Kirkham, our member in West Wyalong. Shirley recalls "I was a flower girl for some Debut turn-out for the Masonics that was the night Seymours was burnt down".

CALENDAR OF MHS EVENTS

SATURDAY 25 MAY 2 pm

The Adventures of Algy (1925) silent movie
& tour of Mastertouch, Petersham

Details on front page

SATURDAY 22 JUNE

Looking back and up

Tour of Richmond Villa, HQ of Society of
Australian Genealogists 11 am

Tour to Sydney Observatory 12 noon

SATURDAY 27 JULY

Annual General Meeting

SATURDAY 24 AUGUST

Brian Madden's *Hernia Bay* talk

Sunday 19 May 4.30 pm St Peters Church Cooks
River 187 Princes Highway. Concert featuring
Michael Deasey organ playing Dandrieu, Gross &
Bach; St Marks Players: Haydn's *The Lark*.
Admission by donation.

Sunday 26 May 2.30 pm Prescott Hall, Newington
College. *Trio Novalis* (Goetz Richter violin, Susan
Blake cello, Jeanell Carrigan piano) playing Haydn,
Schubert & Smetana. \$20, \$15 concession.

ESTHER ABRAHAMS MEMORIAL

From the Esther Abrahams Project (see May 2001
newsletter) Mary Haire has developed a walk
and written an article *The Extraordinary Esther
Abrahams* which appears in the National Trust's
current *Reflections*. An ex convict and first fletcher,
Esther married George Johnston and managed
their 100 acre property during George's long
absences and after his death. This property
covered much of Annandale and Stanmore.



Portrait of Esther in 1815 (Mitchell Library)

Haire writes: "Unheralded and unsung for over two
centuries, her resilience and contribution to Sydney
are at last being recognised in Annandale, where a
new pavilion constructed in Bicentennial Park
[Annandale] will be named in her honour." Planned
for morning 26 May. Contact Gail 9367 9047 (w).

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HERITAGE WATCH Scott 9559 5736

NEWSLETTER EDITOR Richard 9557 3823

www.marrickvilleheritagesoc.com.au

MARRICKVILLE'S MUSICAL HERITAGE: INFORMATION SOUGHT

In 1974 MHS member Olwen Hanney addressed
the Marrickville & District Historical Society
about the municipal symphony orchestra, brass
band, musical society and concert orchestra in
Marrickville from the late 1920s to the mid 1940s.
Olwen's husband Frederick Hanney had been
musical director of these groups.

The publications committee is considering
producing an edited version of this address in a
journal but would like to consider any
supplementary material such as photographs,
programmes, newspaper articles, advertisements,
artefacts and recollections. Perhaps members or
their relatives were involved. Contact Lorraine
on 9590 3309 or hollyoz2@hotmail.com

AUTUMN TRIVIA ANSWER

A number of members took educated, but
incorrect, guesses – based either on that great
asset "memory" or "what dad told me" – as to the
whereabouts of the first traffic lights in the
Marrickville LGA. They first appeared, not on a
major intersection, but on the **corner of Salisbury
Road and Australia Street Camperdown on
Monday 30 May 1938**. It is not known why this
intersection was chosen or whether any fanfare
accompanied the event.

Shirley Hilyard went to the source and got the
answer from John Tough of RTA. Thanks also for
interest shown by Mick Timmings, Peter Chinn,
Ian Phillips, Diane and Jamie McCarthy, Christine
Wheatley, Ann Morgan and David Blair.

MORE HERITAGE WATCH

- State Education Minister John Watkins has given
the uplifting news that both **Marrickville and
Dulwich High Schools** will remain open with
new specialist educational roles. There had been
concerted community opposition. Such clemency,
alas, has so far not been granted to other Sydney
schools including Erskineville Primary.

* * * * *

- One wonders how the \$550,000 State grant
given to Marrickville, Strathfield and
Canterbury Councils to improve water quality
by reducing stormwater pollution in **Cooks
River** will actually be spent! No more studies
please! How about something practical like
more street sweepers and more regular street
drain clearance?

* * * * *

- The state-owned Landcom has acquired
controlling interest in the monstrous Interciti
development across Cooks River to be known
as **Wolli Creek**. Bulldozers have begun
excavations and removal of old trees around
Tempe House. Meanwhile in Petersham the
grounds of **Eversleigh Hospital** resemble a war
zone, though, thanks largely to representations
made by this Society, the two original buildings
will remain. Watch this space!