

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.



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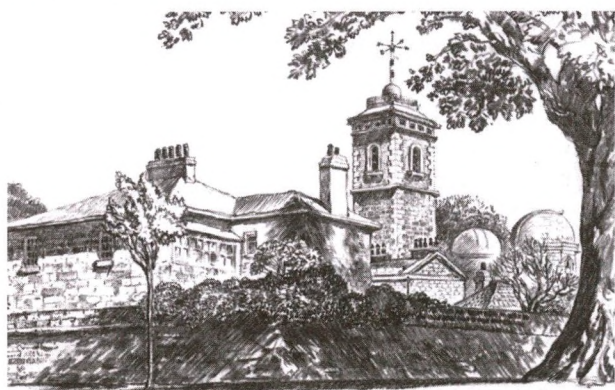
MARRICKVILLE PETERSHAM STANMORE
CAMPERDOWN HURLSTONE PARK NEWTOWN

OUR NEXT MEETING

**Tour of Sydney Observatory &
visit to Society of Australian Genealogists
Saturday 22 June 11 am**

Meet Richmond Villa 120 Kent St Millers Point for short visit; walk up to Observatory, Watson Rd for 12 noon sharp start. Cost \$6 MHS members, \$8 non members. Bookings essential (numbers limited) but advise if you have to cancel. Diane 9588 4930.

Richmond Villa was erected facing the Sydney Domain in 1849 by the Colonial Architect, Mortimer Lewis. Dismantled in 1975 to make way for additions to Parliament House, it was rebuilt on its current site in Kent Street and opened in 1978 as the headquarters of the Society of Australian Genealogists. SAG Librarian **Angela Phippen** will talk about former and current uses.



Sydney Observatory (sketch: Cedric Emanuel)

One of the highest points in Sydney was named Flagstaff Hill in 1788 and was the site of Fort Phillip (1804-45). In 1858 **Australia's oldest observatory** was built there mainly as a time-keeping facility for shipping. Governor Sir William Denison, keen for the new observatory to have work beyond the activities of the time ball, wanted a source of astronomical information and education that would contribute to the trigonometrical survey of the country: the observatory should "connect this colony with the scientific societies of Europe and America".

The observatory issues information on the rising and setting of the sun, moon and planets. Radio station time signals were relayed by an atomic clock until 1984. Our conducted tour will feature a slide show and looking through the telescopes – weather permitting we might see some planets.

Should MHS members become aware of another member who is seriously ill or has recently died, could they advise either the president or a committee member? With over 400 members it is impossible to keep tabs on everyone.

ANNUAL MHS FEES NOW DUE

Annual fees were due on 1 June. A coloured renewal slip will accompany your newsletter advising of fee for return with cheque or money order. No slip to members who have paid in advance. If uncertain check with Diane 9588 4930. Fees still \$10 concession, \$16 individual or joint concession, \$22 household or organisation.

HERITAGE LISTINGS: KING STREET

South Sydney Council is keen to proceed with listing the King Street and Enmore Road Conservation Area on the State Heritage Register, the state's highest level of heritage classification and protection. The area is already recognised by the National Trust and the Australian Heritage Commission. Marrickville and South Sydney Councils jointly manage this important precinct. Both Councils commissioned the Keys Young and David Logan Heritage and Urban Design Study that became a Development Control Plan enacted by both councils. The DCP stipulates that new developments require a heritage impact statement that is then considered by council.

The listing of the area on the State Heritage Register would require developments be approved by the NSW Heritage Council. When South Sydney Council announced their intention to apply for listing, they were surprised to hear that Marrickville Council would not support this listing. The Society understands that unfounded and ill-informed fears among property owners about development restrictions lie behind the opposition of a majority of councillors to any extension of heritage listings in this precinct, and indeed throughout the entire LGA.

Marrickville Council is demonstrating increasing contempt for heritage issues. Council has a one day a week heritage officer and has left the Heritage Study Review (undertaken at great cost) in limbo. Requests for demolition of proposed (and currently unprotected) heritage items identified by the Review are being approved by council.

As council appears to be increasingly unable to preserve its own LGA's heritage resources, the Society will be supporting South Sydney Council's application for the listing of King Street and Enmore Road Conservation Area on the State Heritage Register.

Scott MacArthur

Barclay Wright of Mastertouch would love to hear from volunteers to assist in the ongoing refurbishment of the fire station. Ring 9569 5128. Last meeting reported on page 2.

MAJOR ROBERT LENEHAN BVC

The centenary of the execution of Lts. Harry *Breaker* Morant and Peter Handcock on 27 February (see March newsletter) prompted member Anne Carolan to draw my attention to Major Robert William Lenehan, who was also court martialled during the Boer War over the alleged shooting of a German missionary and Boer prisoners. Lenehan had served with distinction in the Boer War and had been promoted to major in February 1901 to command the Bushveldt Carbineers (BVC). Charged with two offences, Lenehan was found guilty of one – failing to report the shooting of Boer prisoners, for which he was reprimanded, relieved of his command, sacked from the forces and deported back to Australia.



Major Robert Lenehan from Bleszynski's book
(photo: courtesy Mitchell Library, Sydney)

It took years for Lenehan to clear his name, but following broad public disquiet and criticism in parliament in 1904 by Prime Minister John Watson over his treatment, he was restored to the active military list. Eventually in 1913 he was promoted to lieutenant-colonel and trained reinforcements for the AIF during World War I. Born in 1865 at Petersham his mother was Maria Louise (nee Gannon) whilst his father Christopher in the 1890s ran Brooklyn's Sanatorium Hotel (on Australia's first £5 note). The family lived for many years at Silver Street and 41 George Street Marrickville (recently restored). Before the war Lenehan was a lawyer with the NSW Supreme Court and continued as a practising lawyer until his death in 1922 (source: ADB).

Note A new book by Nick Bleszynski *Shoot Straight You Bastards: the truth behind the killing of 'Breaker' Morant* states (p 368) "Major Lenehan revealed that Morant and Handcock had been offered a reprieve if they would only say that it was he and not Army HQ that gave the order to shoot the prisoners. They refused and died with the truth on their lips."

Richard Blair

YOUR NEW HIDEY-HOLE

in beautiful downtown Marrickville

John Wright & his willing team welcome Heritage Society members to the very best tea & coffee with generous helpings of fine, light foods

KraKaJaK café

293 Marrickville Rd, Marrickville (opp. St Clements)
8-5 weekdays 8-2 Saturdays
Also Take-away. Phone 9564 6822

OUR LAST MEETING TOUR OF MASTERTOUCH & THE ADVENTURES OF ALGY

In what seems a miniature version of the old Parramatta Roxy, the Mastertouch theatre was filled to capacity (65 seats) on Saturday 25 May. The former Stanmore Fire Station has been transformed into a working early 20th century factory. This is the Mastertouch Piano Roll Company that started out in City Road Chippendale in 1919, and moved to Alexandria, Canterbury and Crystal Street Petersham before relocating in 2000 to Stanmore Road Petersham.

Barclay Wright, who joined Mastertouch in 1956 and acquired the business in 1961, gave a potted history of the ups and downs of the player piano and piano roll business. He comes from a family of entertainers which was evident in his mixture of history and reminiscence. The popularity of pianolas reached its peak in the 1930s, but they still have sufficient following to warrant ongoing production of rolls. The company also makes boxes. The machines are operated by hand and the process was explained to us over the noise during the tour following the talk. The piano roll collection is not just old time music: I spotted The Carpenters, Elton John, movie soundtracks etc. I noticed a stuffed monkey in amongst rare mechanical musical instruments.

The Adventures of Algy (1925) made by One Take Beaumont Smith (who had a cameo role) starred the comic actor Claude Dampier and (my new favourite) Bathie Stuart as a thoroughly modern woman (named Kiwi) who helped Algy discover the missing bit of the puzzle was ... **love**. There were fabulous scenes of Circular Quay, the Manly Ferry, Dunedin, Taranaki, the Tivoli Theatre and a Darlinghurst bedsit. The plot nearly took a very exciting and à la mode turn when Mollie and Kiwi kissed on screen years before Ellen DeGeneres. We may have been left a little puzzled about what exactly Kiwi saw in Algy, but they knew it was love in the end. It was a terrific film with non-stop organ accompaniment by Greg Crease and the subtitles beautifully read by Ella James. A lovely Saturday outing. Many thanks to Barclay and his Mastertouch team plus the MHS organisers.

Anne McDonald

Postscript from Ray Edmondson (former Deputy Director, ScreenSound & MHS member): Beaumont Smith, who died in 1950, left all his films in the care of his brother, who stored the numerous nitrate reels in his house and garage. One day in the 1960s, he mentioned to an acquaintance in the local fire brigade what he was storing, and was promptly advised to destroy it all because of the fire risk. The obliging acquaintance arranged to do the job. Six months later, Rod Wallace at the National Library – who was progressively writing to every fire brigade in Australia pleading for assistance in tracking down old nitrate film for preservation – learned of this story. He promptly visited Smith's brother and brought back half a reel of *The Digger Earl* – all that had escaped the destruction. *Algy*, Smith's only surviving silent, we got from a NZ collector.

OBITUARIES OF MEMBERS

- We belatedly heard of the death of **Zena (Rosena) Hodges** who died on 9 March of cancer aged 73. Zena lived most of her life in Keith Street Dulwich Hill and worked for many years in the office of Anthony Horderns. She was a lifetime parishioner of Holy Trinity Dulwich Hill and an active member of the Anglican Historical Society. She was a MHS newsletter runner for several years and a familiar face at meetings. Zena will be remembered for her quiet friendliness and uncomplaining nature.



Zena Hodges (photo: June Law)

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- **Ethel Joyce Fairbairn** (nee Tasker) of Earlwood died 16 May aged 84 after a long illness. Joyce grew up at *Araluen* 52 George St St Peters and attended Tempe Public School. She cared for her aging parents and after marrying Les Fairbairn they continued living in *Araluen* until 1964 when they moved to Earlwood. Both were dedicated parishioners of the Methodist, later Uniting Church, firstly in Railway Road Sydenham then Earlwood. They were especially proud of their pioneer associations with the district. Joyce and Les (who died in October 2000) regularly attended monthly meetings and are remembered with much affection. Our condolences to Joyce's family and friends.



Joyce Fairbairn (photo: Graham Fairbairn)

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- **Violet Olwen Hanney** (nee Wright) of Enmore died on 22 May aged 93. Though Olwen was born in Tasmania, her Scottish-born grandfather Joseph Graham was nine times Mayor of Marrickville after 1870. After living in Broken Hill and Thirroul, Olwen's family moved to Marrickville. She attended St George Girls High and after teacher training, taught at Woodcourt Private School and St Brigid's Catholic School both in Marrickville. Her father Frank Wright

was also an alderman on Marrickville Council and mayor in 1932 and 1941. When his wife was unable to perform the duties of mayoress because of illness, Olwen stood in and accompanied her father in this role. On one of these occasions she attended a ball on a ship in Sydney Harbour and was introduced to the Duke of Gloucester.



Olwen Hanney in 1946

During World War II she was a VAD (Volunteer Aid Detachment) and worked closely with the Red Cross. Just after the war Olwen married Fred Hanney, a talented musician who was musical director of the Marrickville Municipal Symphony Orchestra and helped start both the Marrickville and Rockdale Musical Societies, the latter which still flourishes. After Fred died in 1962 Olwen took on private tuition of schoolchildren, became president of the local Parents & Citizens Association, and was active with Marrickville Hospital Auxiliary.

With a strong interest in local history she gave talks to Marrickville & District Historical Society and wrote several articles. Our condolences to her niece Margaret Wright who has lived mostly with Olwen and cared for her in recent years. Margaret is also a MHS member (extracted from Margaret's eulogy).

Our condolences also go to our Federal Member Anthony Albanese MHR and his wife Carmel on the death on 25 May of Anthony's mother **Maryanne Therese Albanese** late of Camperdown aged 65.

WINTER TRIVIA QUESTION

The first duel fought in Melbourne took place on 30 May 1839 between George Arden and a man with the same name as a well known Sydneysider of today. Name him (Richard 9557 3823).

Congratulations to **Ferncourt Primary Principal Darelle Duncan** for co-winning the NSW Primary Principals Association Frank Farrell Award. Darelle will study school leadership in Nottingham. Ferncourt School is a MHS member.

Metal letters embedded in Crystal Street Petersham approaching Stanmore Road intersection spell the word 'SLOW'. Ian Phillips says the letters have been there as long as he remembers. Heritage Listing sought!

CALENDAR OF MHS EVENTS

SATURDAY 22 JUNE

Tour of Sydney Observatory & Society of Australian Genealogists

Details on front page

SATURDAY 27 JULY

Annual General Meeting

SATURDAY 24 AUGUST

Brian Madden's *Hernia Bay*

Museum Of Sydney's current exhibition *Sydney by Ferry* is highly recommended with Cazneau's photographs, paintings of Streeton, Roberts and Rees & memorabilia of many of Sydney's most beloved "ladies".

MHS GARAGE SALE

It was an unusual event to have a legitimate garage sale in our area as how many houses have garages? Yet the home of the President, Peter Cousens, was perfect on Saturday 11 May with both a garage and front room given over for the purpose. Many members had generously donated items and the range of bric-a-brac, books, plants, general household goods and the ever popular jams and preserves made for a very appealing display.

The day doubled as a new members' day which gave some who had only recently joined our ranks the opportunity to meet other members. Perhaps that was not a good idea. Once the new members saw what had come out of other members' homes, perhaps they started to think twice! Who donated that kangaroo paw (animal, not plant) bottle opener/corkscrew? Did it show good taste that she had disposed of it or bad taste that she had owned it in the first place? Thanks to all those involved with the sale or who donated goods.

Angela Phippen

ART DECO IN AUSTRALIA

It was well worth the wait for this splendid new book *Art Deco in Australia: Sunrise over the Pacific* which is the first comprehensive guide on the Art Deco movement in Australia which flourished between the wars. Edited by Mark Ferson and Mary Nilsson, long time president of the Art Deco Society who addressed MHS several years ago. The selection and quality of the coloured plates is excellent. Well worth the \$100 price tag.

Lawrence Cook of Oatley advises his uncle Harold Thomas Cook (1890-1958) commenced work in Newtown as a Dog Walloper. In the early 1900s goods for sale were displayed on the footpath outside shops. To encourage dogs to move along, Harold was armed with a cane to drive them away!

PRESIDENT Peter 9550 3809

TREASURER Susan 9798 2538

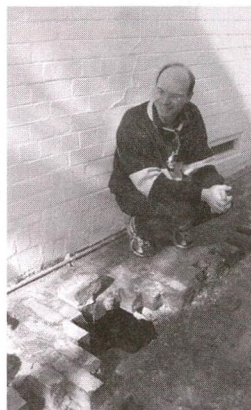
HERITAGE WATCH Scott 9559 5736

NEWSLETTER EDITOR Richard 9557 3823

www.marrickvilleheritagesoc.com.au

BREAKING NEWS: WELL, WELL, WELL

Local resident Linley contacted the Society when her handyman (an MHS member) uncovered an old well at the back of her 1880s house in **Yule Street, Dulwich Hill**. Old time street resident, the late Percy Voyce, years ago used to tell of when the well had been open. The well was covered with brick paving and appears to have been used as a yard dump prior to being covered over, as it is now almost full of broken tiles, bricks and glass. With the paving bricks removed, and from peering inside, it appears that the well is about 3m square and covered by a brick dome with a round oculus that the water would have been drawn through. The bricks appear to be similar to the local *Toyer Bros.* bricks of which the house is built.



Scott MacArthur and well (photos: Bill Tarrant)

The neighbouring house dates from the early 1900s and its boundary wall straddles the well's dome with a brick arch. They are going to remove more paving from around the top of the well and debris from inside in the hope of finding clues to how the well was used and when it was constructed. As an aside, Percy Voyce was an eccentric collector of pianolas and antique musical instruments, and had a huge collection of pianola rolls that were largely destroyed during a house fire.

Scott MacArthur

JOURNAL MATERIAL SOUGHT

Work is well under way for *Heritage 12*. The journal committee is reviewing and editing some very interesting articles for publication. Nevertheless we remind members that we still encourage new journal material, so contact Peter Cousens 9550 3809 if you have written or are writing an article on the history of the Marrickville LGA. However if you would like to write or research a topic but don't know where to start, we may be able to suggest avenues of research, and/or help with the preparation.

Specifically Keith Sutton is looking for material relating to the **army barracks** which operated for many years in **Addison Road Marrickville**. Whether it be fact, recollection or anecdotes could you write to the Society or ring Keith 9564 6948.

First published in 1966 the sixth edition of the *Style Manual for authors, editors and printers* is now available in both hardcover and paperback. An essential reference guide.