

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.

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MARRICKVILLE PETERSHAM STANMORE
CAMPERDOWN HURLSTONE PARK NEWTOWN

OUR NEXT MEETING
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Petersham Town Hall
Saturday 28 June
10 morning tea for 10.30 am start

Members are invited to the 19th Annual General Meeting of the Marrickville Heritage Society. Reports will be presented by the president, treasurer, publication editors, and convenor of Heritage Watch. All positions will be declared vacant. Nominations for president, two vice presidents, treasurer, secretary, five committee members, heritage watch convenor and membership secretary may be made in writing or on the day. The audited financial statements for the year ended 31 May will be available both before and after the AGM. For a copy ring the treasurer, Stuart Grigg on 9560 8070.

After the formalities **Margaret Wright**, assisted by **Mark Matheson**, will present memorabilia relating to her forebears and former mayors of Marrickville Joseph Graham and Frank Wright, and former Marrickville Municipal Orchestra conductor Frederick Hanney.

As usual we will repair to nearby Maundrell Park for champagne and juice (provided by the society). Bring a few sandwiches to share.

SEE ANY CHANGES TO NEWSLETTER?

Gopher Graphic & Printing Services produced our newsletter from August 1994. However owing to increased workload and the deadlines placed by a growing client-base, Gopher produced its final MHS newsletter in May 2003. The Society was fortunate to have had the services of Gopher at very competitive rates. The manager Ed Jones, formerly of Petersham, has a strong interest in local history. Gopher designs and prints the RAHS magazine *History* and will still produce some of the Society's other publications.

Consequently the June newsletter may look a little different and further modifications are likely. Despite some initial outlays the newsletter should cost less to produce. Richard Blair is still the editor and we propose to maintain the same level of quality content. Newsletter contributions are, as always, welcome and can be posted to the society, emailed to Richard at pemell@tpg.com or discussed with him on 9557 3823.

Diane McCarthy, President

MEMBERSHIP FEES NOW DUE

As outlined in May newsletter due to rising costs membership fees have been increased and fell due on 1 June. Fees are now \$12 concession, \$20 individual or joint concession and \$28 household or organisation. Renewal by cheque or money order by post or pay at the AGM.

SUDAN MURAL DISCOVERY

The conservation of the Sudan Mural in Petersham (for which a Commonwealth Government grant was received) is making steady progress with 28 images now revealed. Owner Keith Sutton is excited about the recent discovery of the following inscription in a corner:

E C Press
Decorator
March 88

The Sudan War was in 1885. It is possible the mural was associated with 1888 Centenary celebrations. Anyone with information about E C Press can contact Keith on 9564 6948.

ADIEU & THANKS TO SHRUBS & TUBS

With the sale of its final shrub on 25 May **Shrubs & Tubs Garden Centre** has closed and the main drag of Petersham will lose some of its character. This nursery first advertised in our journal in 1990 and featured in our newsletter in most issues between September 1991 and February 2003. However, membership secretary, Pamela Stewart, who delivered newsletters there for most of that time, advises that a local link remains. Wally Pickering, who started Shrubs & Tubs before selling the business, later opened the Leichhardt Garden Centre in Norton Street. It has since relocated to 5 Crinan Street near Hurlstone Park station.

WINTER TRIVIA QUESTION

One reflection of our times is that the LGA has only one cinema – the Dendy at Newtown, which now has four screens. Once we had several local cinemas, formerly called picture theatres. What and where were they? (Richard 9557 3823 or pemell@tpg.com)

Wish to place an ad in our newsletter? Not a problem. Reasonable rates. Ring Richard 9557 3823.

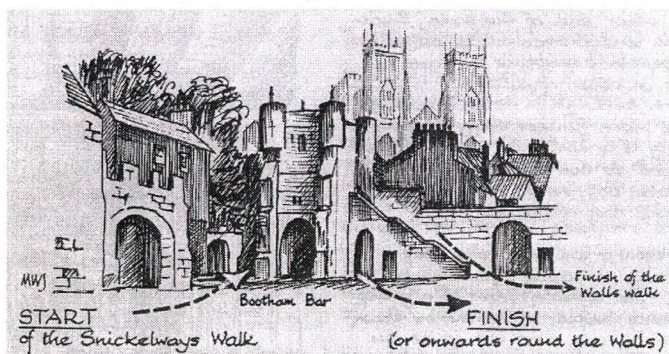
THE SNICKELWAYS OF YORK

To avoid the masses of other tourists who invade Europe in the summer I decided to venture over there in December and January. My theory proved correct and I relished walking the evocative and often empty narrow streets of Bruges, the medieval alleys of Granada, Seville and Toledo (once inhabited by El Greco) and ambling along the meandering snickelways of York.

I do wish, however, that someone had reminded me about the rotten weather! I'd forgotten how bleak and dark and wet it can be in wintry northern Europe where it is dark by 4 pm, not that the so-called daylight hours are exactly adorned by sunshine. However Spain was not so cold and I didn't have to endure the minus thirteen degree temperatures that membership secretary Pamela Stewart was experiencing in Budapest and Prague.

I spent the first two days of the year in York arriving and departing in drizzle, sometimes known as mizzle. Such drizzle that after short unprotected exposure you are still dry, but after fifteen minutes you are quite damp. It had rained so much that the River Ouse was in flood.

My guide book was Mark Jones' *A walk around the snickelways of York through snickets, ginnels, alleyways, courts, yards, footstreets and other ways for people on foot* (7th edition). The book contains 85 maps and sketches. Snickelways are an amalgam of 'snickets, ginnels and alleyways'. Jones gives two definitions of a snickelway: a) a narrow passageway or alley between walls, fences or buildings; b) a narrow place to walk along, leading from somewhere to somewhere else, usually in a town or city, especially in the city of York.



I managed, in a few almost dry hours, to follow most of his charted routes as well as walking the five kilometre ancient wall surrounding most of old York. The snickelway names are colourful: Coffee Yard, Swinegate, Grape (originally Grapc_t) Lane, Black Horse Passage, Finkle Street, Mad Alice Lane, the Shambles in-and-out and Whip-ma-whop-ma-gate which is York's shortest street meaning "call-that-a-street-you-must-be joking".

Not only does Jones evoke the character of this superb medieval city, but he does it with such charm and relish: "... unfortunately [p26] the identity of the foundation stonelayer, and when, has been erased by the ravages of time and the slip-stream of ten thousand bicycles." Both York and this book are a total delight!

Richard Blair

FROM THE ARCHIVES: THE SALLIES IN ENMORE

For generations the Salvation Army were a quaint and familiar sight in our streets – long before being immortalised in the musical *Guys and Dolls*. But they were not always favourably regarded as seen in these extracts sent by **Shirley Doolan** from the minutes of Newtown Municipal Council:

Tuesday 18 December 1888: *Correspondence from Daniel James and others complaining of a nuisance caused by conjugations of the Salvation Army at the corner of Cambridge Street and Enmore Road. Received and to be forwarded to police authorities to prevent the obstruction of the public highway.*

Tuesday 7 May 1889: *In reply to Alderman Peirce, the Mayor said he thought the Council was powerless to interfere with a band of the Salvation Army who post themselves at the corner of Enmore Road and Cambridge Street for hours on Sundays and week nights to the inconvenience and annoyance of the general public excepting through the by-laws against loitering and standing at corners of the streets.*

CRICKETER ERNIE TOSHACK DIES

On a recent visit to the Cobar Museum I discovered that **Ernest Toshack** is a 'Cobar legend', an honour achieved for being a 1940s Test cricketer. He was almost unplayable on wet wickets. Known as Ernie he lived in Stanmore in the early 1940s, but as the Petersham Club would not even give him a trial, he joined Marrickville Thirds, where in his first match in 1944/45 he took 7/28 bowling left arm medium pace. Within a year he was playing for NSW bowling alongside Ray Lindwall.

Now over thirty, at the end of the 1945/46 season Toshack toured New Zealand and in his first Test had match figures of 6/18 off 29 overs. In the First Test against England in 1946 he took 9/99 for the match. His finest performance was against India in 1947 in Brisbane when off 19 balls he took 5/2 followed by 6/29 in the second innings giving him match figures of 11/31. His 5/2 is without parallel in Test cricket.

Ernie toured with Bradman's *Invincibles* in 1948 and took 5/40 at the Lords Test; though only a tail-end batsman, he averaged 51 in the series. Injury shortened his international career. Ernie died on 11 May aged 88.

Richard Blair

(Note **Bill Brown**, Australia's oldest surviving Test cricketer, also an *Invincible*, lived and attended high school in Dulwich Hill. He played grade cricket for Marrickville before moving to Queensland in the late 1930s. The Petersham and Marrickville District clubs joined forces in 1951. A couple of years ago this club amalgamated with Randwick.)

BLANCE'S BLINDS ARE BEST

June Cameron does not recall how she acquired this advertising card for James M. Blance of Dulwich Hill. Nor is it clear when the photo of the front of his work-



shop at 127 Wardell Road was taken. The final Sands Directory of 1932/33 lists him there as a Venetian Blind Maker, though there is no mention of him then in Lincoln Street, which runs parallel to Wardell Road at the back. In 1920 he was at 121 Wardell Road with his residence in Clyde in Lincoln Street. Was he ~~was~~ then three doors away, or were the house numbers changed in that

time? The adjacent building is an undated electrical substation which is still operating. In 1914 Blance was at #121 as a "window blind maker". Blance showed some enterprise with his alliterative slogan. In 1932 there were ten venetian blind makers listed in Sydney mostly in the inner west. (Thanks to June and to Mark Matheson for submitting this card.)

Phone 515 Petersham

JAMES M. BLANCE,

PRACTICAL BLIND MAKER

VENETIAN VERANDAH BLINDS A SPECIALITY
REPAIRS PROMPTLY EXECUTED.

"CLYDE,"
6 LINCOLN ST.,
OFF PILE ST., DULWICH HILL

WORKSHOP:
127 WARDELL RD.,
NEAR TRAM

For Workmanship, Quality and Comfort
Repeat Quickly 4 times **BLANCE'S BLINDS ARE BEST**

MARCHING BILLY'S MEDALS DOWN GEORGE STREET

Last year as I stood watching the Anzac Day March a thought came to my mind. My Uncle Bill had died in WWII and had therefore never had the chance to participate in an Anzac Day March. My father had fought in World War II but chose, for whatever reason, never to march and I think it would be arrogant to wear the medals owned by someone who made that decision.

But Uncle Bill's medals should be marched down George Street at least once as, in his case, he was never able to make the choice.

William Bruce was the son of William and Catherine Bruce of Railway Parade, Marrickville and enlisted in July 1940. He died on the Causeway at the Fall of Singapore in February 1942.

One of Bill's sisters, Joan Bruce, my sister, Patricia Donovan and I decided to march, but first we had to make contact with the relevant group. I knew he had been in the 8th Division, 2/20th battalion and I expected there to be difficulties. Did we need to register; would it be all right if more than one person marched, were we contacting them too close to the event, would they resent our involvement?

I contacted the RSL who provided contact details for the 8th Division and through them for the particular battalion. We were given a warm welcome both on the telephone and on the day. Interestingly, of the 50 or so people who marched behind the battalion's banner there was only a small number of men who had actually fought in WWII. Most of the people were baby boomers or younger!

We divided up the medals he had been awarded (which I have since been told is the wrong thing to do!) and carried his picture. It's easy to dismiss the Anzac Day March as 'old diggers' and forget that these men and women were once young. Uncle Bill was 30 when he died, having celebrated his birthday three days before his death.

Despite projects I have worked on for MHS involving the oral histories of people on the Home Front in WWII and the recording of war memorials in the Local Government Area I do not have a particularly militaristic turn of mind. In fact, the last time I walked down George Street was in protest against the Australian involvement in the war in Iraq. I proudly walked that day and it was with the same level of pride that I marched on 25 April. I make that point to emphasise that marching on Anzac Day does not make you a warmonger in the same way that marching against a particular war does not make you a pacifist.

It was a great honour to be part of the March and to walk past the Cenotaph. As we turned into George Street the crowds cheered and more than once we heard the comment 'Good on you girls'. Yes, even I am getting to an age when being referred to as a girl is flattering.

My sister, aunt and I cried at different times. For me it was when the battalion's banner was unfurled and we stood behind it. All I could think of was that Billy's other sister, my mother, Mary Phippen, who died at the end of last year, would have been so proud. No doubt, if she had still been alive she would have been marching with us too. The March itself was surprisingly short and all too quickly was over.

Despite my earlier thoughts, it will **not** be the only time Billy's medals get marched down George Street.

Angela Phippen

CALENDAR OF MHS EVENTS

SATURDAY 28 JUNE
Annual General Meeting

SATURDAY 26 JULY
Coach trip to Historic Campbelltown
Bookings essential: Shirley 9569 1768
Details in July newsletter

SATURDAY 23 AUGUST
Sydney Tramways 1861-1961 with Peter Sage

OUR LAST MEETING HISTORY OF JOADJA CREEK

Joadja Creek? Never heard of it. This would have been my answer before I visited this area in early May. So I was looking forward to hearing Leonie Knapman, at our meeting on 24 May, reveal the story of one of the more interesting migration groups who came from so far away to settle in Australia. Using slides, Leonie told of her comprehensive investigations over the past 29 years from when she discovered her father had been born in Joadja Valley.

In the 1870s the Australian Kerosene Oil & Mineral Company Limited discovered there were viable deposits of shale in the Joadja escarpments in the Southern Highlands. They organised Scottish miners and their families to migrate and what marvellous workers the Scots were. They mined the valley for shale, building a refining plant with retort ovens and single wire-rope lifts up and down very steep hills to the railway line to Mittagong. They used the most simple but effective means of construction and operation of the mines and plant.

They built a lovely little village producing their own food, with vegetable gardens, a large orchard, cattle and dairy herds. With timber and bricks made from local clay, they built their homes, a schoolhouse, a butchery, a dairy, two bakeries and a general store. They exported the produce from their fruit trees and hives, and using good Scottish stills whisky was discreetly produced from the clear mountain stream.

In 1898 there were 1,200 citizens in Joadja, more than the combined population of Mittagong and Bowral. It was a popular visiting area for the viceregal and politicians. Sadly, all this finished by 1911 and the village became a 'ghost town' to some who say they have seen ghosts among the ruins in this village. I have hardly touched on what our charming visitor presented; suffice to say there is much more in her two books on Joadja. Thank you Leonie and husband Greg (who showed the slides) for one of the most informative and enjoyable meetings we have had.

Pat Mullen

Note John Edwards told of his grandfather James Edwards who lived and was married in Joadja.)

43 GEORGE STREET MARRICKVILLE

The DA for the demolition and redevelopment of the Victorian terrace at 43 George Street went before Council's Development and Environmental Services Committee last month. This is the house featured in Morton Herman's *The Architecture of Victorian Sydney* and that the Society submitted to Council should be protected (see October 2002 newsletter). The report to Council by its Heritage Adviser agreed with the Society's advice and recommended the development be rejected, and that the developers engage a heritage architect to find a sympathetic solution that retains and restores the existing house.

This position was supported by the NSW Heritage Office, which advised that Marrickville Council should place an Interim Heritage Order on the property to protect it while its significance was clarified. **The Society knows of no previous instance where the Heritage Office has advised Marrickville Council to impose a such an order.** At its meeting, Council was addressed by the developer who claimed that some of Council's planning officers had rejected the developers' proposal in favour of retaining the house. On that basis the developers proceeded with their current demolition proposal.

The Heritage Impact Statement from the developer's heritage architect claimed that demolition was acceptable as the house was in such poor condition and was of no particular heritage significance. The committee found the 'conflicting opinions' about the heritage status of the house irreconcilable and resolved to inspect the property.

On behalf of the Society I attended the inspection where there was debate between one of Council's senior planning managers and the developer about what conservation/redevelopment scheme had been rejected by the planners. This 'conservation' scheme appeared to have been nothing more than retention of the facade, supposedly because the rest of the house was beyond saving. However, on inspecting the interior we found that, in spite of some fire damage and years of neglect, many original features were intact including marble fire place surrounds, timber floors and a Wunderlich pressed metal ceiling!

The DES Committee will now reconsider the proposal. The Society has advised the Heritage Office of the status of the development application. If Council declines to protect this important item, then we understand that the Heritage Office will have good grounds to impose their **own** Interim Heritage Order, as they recently did for *Ferndale*. We await news of the outcome of Council's deliberations with interest.

Scott MacArthur

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