

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.



DULWICH HILL ENMORE LEWISHAM
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MARRICKVILLE PETERSHAM STANMORE
CAMPERDOWN HURLSTONE PARK NEWTOWN

OUR NEXT MEETING

Brian Madden talks on Herne Bay Hospitals in World War II
Saturday 24 August
Petersham Town Hall
10 am morning tea for 10.30 start

Herne Bay (now Riverwood) on the East Hills Railway Line was the site of a huge hospital complex during World War II. It was built by Australia for our American Allies under Reverse Lend-Lease and cost £1,000,000 (about \$40,000,000 today). It was in fact five hospitals, with accommodation for 4,250 patients plus staff. Fortunately, this number of beds was never needed. The first US Army unit to occupy the buildings was the 118 General Hospital formed by doctors and nurses from the John Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland. When it moved to the Philippines as part of General MacArthur's liberation of the islands, a Royal Naval Hospital to serve the British Pacific Fleet moved in. After the war, the buildings were converted to the Herne Bay Housing Settlement.



Local Historian and author **Brian Madden** will give an illustrated talk from his 2001 book *Hernia Bay: Sydney's Wartime Hospitals at Riverwood*. Brian has written several histories of south west Sydney and with Dr Lesley Muir has co-written histories relating to Canterbury, Campsie, Earlwood and Wolli Creek Valley. An active member of several societies, Brian also belongs to MHS.

PETERSHAM NORTH WALK

As part of **History Week** Marrickville Council's Heritage Promotions Committee in conjunction with the Marrickville Heritage Society is conducting a walk around Petersham North on **Saturday 14 September at 10 am** starting from Petersham Town Hall. Included are a Victorian interior, a room with a unique mural, the Metropolitan Community Church (winner of 2002 Marrickville Medal) and Petersham Park whose old Petersham Town Hall gates form a memorial to those who served in WWI. Wear walking shoes. **Bookings essential:** Robert Hutchinson 9568 3079.

OUR LAST MEETING

WHO'S WHO ON THE EXECUTIVE

Almost 70 members attended our 18th AGM at Petersham Town Hall on Saturday 27 July. Secretary Joyce Roy read the minutes of the 2001 AGM. President Peter Cousens presented the annual report which included the publications report (see page 2). Vice president Diane McCarthy gave the treasurer's report, Scott MacArthur the Heritage Watch report, Angela Phippen both the War Memorials and Website reports and Richard Blair the Newsletter and Oral History reports.

All committee positions were declared vacant and Peter took the chair as returning officer for the annual election. The new committee is: president Diane McCarthy, vice presidents Lorraine Beach and Richard Blair (also newsletter editor), committee members Tricia Blombery, Robert Hutchinson, Graeme Napier, Angela Phippen, Ian Rumsey, Maureen Salier, Heritage Watch committee convenor Scott MacArthur, publications committee convenor Peter Cousens (also immediate past president) and membership secretary Pamela Stewart. Since the AGM Ellie McKenzie has been accepted as secretary. **The position of treasurer remains unfilled.**

Peter thanked two committee members who have stepped down after significant contributions: Joyce Roy who was secretary for the past five years and Mark Matheson who was on the executive for ten years (1988-90, 1994-2002), the Heritage Watch committee for many years and edited the last three issues of our journal *Heritage*. Presentations were made to them and also to Susan Hicks who served for a year as treasurer, to Robyn Johnson and Pat Mullen each for two years on committee, and to honorary auditor Barry Simmons. Diane made a special presentation to Margaret Sinclair for "her enthusiasm and not missing a single activity during the year" and to Peter Cousens for his two years at the helm as president. Peter was especially commended for generously availing his house to members for meetings and other functions.

Diane, our first female president since 1994, said she was proud to take on the role of president and looked forward to the challenges of the next year. We saw some newsreels from Screensound of the demolition of the Kings Cinema in Marrickville and the Grosvenor Cinema in Summer Hill, a local 1980s murder, mini-skirted women at the movies in the 1960s, army personnel learning Morse code and a Newtown fire in 1916. Chrys Meader provided commentary for the silent footage. Many members then repaired to Maundrell Park for the traditional post AGM picnic lunch.

PRESIDENTS REPORT 2001-2002

(presented at AGM 27/7/02)

The past year has been a good one for the Marrickville Heritage Society. Our membership numbers continue to rise, we have a healthy bank balance and our activities are well patronised. Recently we had over 60 people on the Tempe walk and Mastertouch visit, and over 90 attended the morning talk *Marrickville Backyards* during the National Trust Heritage Festival. I hope everyone is satisfied that their needs are being met and that they find a welcoming community of like-minded people within our membership. Nevertheless the committee is always striving to do better. We welcome your feedback – positive and negative – as it is only by learning from disappointments that we can improve. We also welcome suggestions for activities, outings, guest speakers etc. with our Suggestion Box.

Our activities this year have ranged from walks around Tempe and Haberfield, tours of the Tempe Bus & Truck Museum, the Society of Australian Genealogists & Sydney Observatory, and the Mastertouch Piano Roll Company. We have heard about Brian Nicholls' childhood in Petersham, 20th century architecture in the Marrickville area, two of Sydney's maritime disasters, and some of our members' oral histories. We have learnt about the multicultural heritage of Marrickville, as we tried to "bridge the divide" and looked over the fence into other people's backyards. Last week we had a delicious dinner at *Alexander the Great* Greek Restaurant in Marrickville. We have seen the silent film *The Adventures of Algy* as he unwittingly finds the answer to the crossword's 4-letter clue, and today we will continue the filmic theme as we see some of our district's newsreel heritage that Marrickville Council has recently acquired.

This year the Society has tried to tap into our multicultural heritage. This has been somewhat neglected in the past, as our membership is mostly from Anglo-Saxon stock. It is somewhat ironic that as soon as we begin to look at Marrickville's multicultural heritage, the recently released details of the 2001 census show that in Marrickville, the Australian-born population and personal incomes have risen due to gentrification, and that the overseas-born population has fallen into a minority from the 62% it occupied a decade ago – but I suppose it is the nature of heritage societies to look at the past.

Other activities included our regular stalls at the Marrickville and Newtown Festivals. Unfortunately our stall at the second Dulwich Hill Festival was abandoned due to inclement weather and a garage sale was held in May to compensate for this – we ended up with more material. These are our major fund-raising events and are also great fun. We are always looking for donations for these stalls and their success is due to the generosity of our donors and those who help man the stalls. This year we will have a double-size stall at the Newtown Festival so all help will be greatly appreciated.

The other major function of this Society is our **Heritage Watch**. Scott MacArthur is our Convenor. Marrickville Council has still not implemented the revised Local Heritage Study. There appears to be some opposition from residents about having their properties listed. This seems to derive from a misguided attitude that a heritage listing will cause problems for the owners when in actual fact various studies have proved that listings have the potential to increase property values, especially now that gentrification is continuing to change the character of the municipality.

Publications

Last December the Society launched *Heritage 11* with a musical introduction by members of the Solidarity Choir. *Heritage 11* was Mark Matheson's third production as editor. It was up to the high standard of his earlier works and has been widely appreciated for content and quality. Mark has firmly established our journal as a leader amongst heritage/historical societies throughout NSW. *Heritage 11* was his last production as editor and we hope the next issue will live up to Mark's standards. Mark will continue, I hope, to assist with the layout. Thanks also to Ed Jones at Gopher Graphics for printing *Heritage 11*.

Heritage 12 is well in hand under the guidance of a small committee with numerous articles being edited. We are always on the lookout for articles and would welcome contributors. Another subcommittee is working on a book on Petersham to cater for the increasing interest from residents for information regarding their suburb. The Petersham book is the first of a series of publications on Marrickville suburbs.

We are about to announce the launch of *The War Memorials of St Peters Municipality, Sydney, New South Wales (incorporating the suburbs of St Peters, Sydenham and Tempe)*. Angela Phippen has been working energetically on this significant publication. Our other work on the potteries of Marrickville is also nearing publication. Robert Hutchinson, Mark Matheson and Geoff Ostling are hoping to have it finished soon. Both of these publications cost a substantial amount to print and although we have received generous grants, we are planning a Trivia Night to raise money for these publications.

I am sure all of you will recognise and value the high quality of our flagship publications *Heritage* and our monthly Newsletter. The Newsletter editor, Richard Blair, continues to stimulate our interest and keep readers in touch with the Society's activities every month with his publication.

At a recent workshop for affiliated societies held at the Royal Australian Historical Society, the activities, newsletter and journal of the Marrickville Heritage Society were announced as exemplars for other societies to emulate. This uninvited comment was most welcome and it makes one feel that MHS is doing a great job. I am sure that everyone in this Society should feel proud that the Marrickville Heritage Society is so well respected amongst our peers for the high quality of our newsletter and journal over a number of years, and our interesting activities.

This month the committee invited committee members from neighbouring heritage/historical societies. This was a get-to-know-you meeting, as there is usually not much communication between us and our neighbours regarding our common interests. Everyone agreed that this meeting was worthwhile and we hope to have regular meetings in future.

Of course all the achievements of the Marrickville Heritage Society are due to the work of many people. We always welcome anyone who wishes to join our various committees associated with publications, heritage watch, and oral history so please get involved. As my term as President comes to its constitutional time-limit end I must thank the journal and suburbs publications committee* – Richard Blair, Lorraine Beach, Shirley Doolan, Geoff Hassall, Graham Hunt, Scott MacArthur, Mark Matheson, Pat Mullen, Peter Robertson, Pamela Stewart and Keith Sutton – our membership secretary, Pamela Stewart; honorary auditor Barry Simmons, Chartered Accountant; honorary solicitor David Cass.

I must acknowledge and thank Marrickville Council for their continuing support. They allow us free use of our meeting rooms, provided a generous grant towards the publication of our journal, and their staff are always very willing to help.

But my special thanks go to the executive committee for their hard work and support. The 2001-2002 committee members were vice presidents Diane McCarthy and Lorraine Beach, secretary Joyce Roy, treasurer Susan Hicks, newsletter editor Richard Blair, journal editor Mark Matheson, Heritage Watch convenor Scott MacArthur, and committee members Robert Hutchinson, Robyn Johnson, Pat Mullen, Angela Phippen and Ian Rumsey. Thank you to all the members.

Peter Cousens

* Peter Cousens is convenor of publications committee – Ed



Peter Cousens congratulates new MHS President Diane McCarthy as Joyce Roy looks on (photo: Lisa Angus)

OLD FACTORIES OF STANMORE:

1. BAD NEWS: DEMOLISHED IN JULY ...

... was the former **Philadelphia Chocolate Factory** on the corner of Railway Avenue and Liberty Street Stanmore next to the railway. It will be replaced by a four storey medium density townhouse development, some of which will be built on the triangular carpark which had been rezoned for open space. Part of the demolition was **The Australian Pickle & Condiment Co. Ltd** built in the early 1900s. The Society supported local residents last year in opposing the DA (see March 2001 newsletter).

2. GOOD NEWS:

STARKEYS STUNNING RESTORATION

One of Sydney's oldest cordial and soft drink manufacturers was **Starkeys Ginger-Beer Factory** believed to have been established about 1838 in Elizabeth Street Sydney by brothers John Thomas and William Augustus Starkey. They soon started making cordial and aerated water and became a household word and the largest outlet in the southern hemisphere. As the business grew Starkeys moved several times to larger premises – to the corner of Castlereagh Street and Foxlow Place (now Martin Place) whilst in 1873 a new factory was also opened in Phillip Street. The price was then a shilling for a dozen bottles with a refund on the bottles, demonstrating that recycling has a long history.



*Starkeys Phillip Street factory 1870s
with inset of one of their trademarks*

After the brothers died the business was taken over by their nephews John and James Brogden. A new factory was opened in Redfern before the two branches of Starkeys Ltd. reunited and relocated to purpose-built premises on the corner of Bridge Road and Salisbury Road Stanmore around 1913. The company continued to flourish but declined after the war and went into voluntary liquidation in 1956 when the Bridge Road property was sold. The machinery, stock-in-trade, trademarks and goodwill were sold to Shelley & Sons Cordial Factory Pty Ltd (in Marrickville) such that Starkeys continued to be sold for quite some time.

The building then had various uses but in more recent years was occupied by Aladdin Industries. Starkeys factory has been stunningly redeveloped by Amitran, Bridge Studios and converted for 28 small business spaces. Humphrey & Edwards Architects & Interior Designers have restored the main features of

the interiors "while the entire fibro façade of the building was pulled down and replaced with expansive balconies, windows and doors which look as though they are part of an original structure". Restoration took two years with a team of 40 tradesmen and craftsmen using heritage materials rescued from other commercial developments including Jones Bay Wharf. A display case containing numerous old clay Starkeys ginger beer bottles found during restoration can be seen in the entrance foyer.



*Starkeys Ltd after restoration (SMH, May 2002:
photographer & date unknown)*

William Starkey built the heritage-listed *Gladstone Hall* 114 Ewart Street Dulwich Hill around 1870. It is a sandstone single storey villa in the style of a Colonial Bungalow. It has been a hostel for the disabled for over 40 years.

Richard Blair (Thanks to Ted Green who inspired article and provided some material & Esteban Olmos from Humphrey & Edwards who sent additional background information)

ALEXANDER THE GREAT NIGHT

Among the things we learnt during this Grecian culinary experience was that Greeks don't normally eat before 9.30 pm, the average Greek appetite is twice as big as the Australian norm, Greek dancing is only for the extremely fit and the Greeks certainly know how to enjoy themselves. Not that the 25 members and friends who celebrated mid year Xmas at the Greek Macedonian Club Alexander the Great in Marrickville on 19 July did not eat well or have a good time. Our renditions of Zorba's Dance were probably a bit suss, but it was fun trying. Many thanks to Lorraine Beach for organising this fabulous evening.

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CALENDAR OF MHS EVENTS

SATURDAY 24 AUGUST

Brian Madden's Hernia Bay

Details on front page

SUNDAY 22 SEPTEMBER

MHS stall at Marrickville Festival

SATURDAY 28 SEPTEMBER

To be advised

SATURDAY 26 OCTOBER

1930s Movie Matinee at MOS

(see box this page & enclosed flyer)

HISTORY WEEK ACTIVITIES

SATURDAY 14 SEPTEMBER

Petersham North Walk

Details front page: Bookings essential

SATURDAY 21 SEPTEMBER

Cooks River Walk

Details in September newsletter

CAMPERDOWN CEMETERY WORKING BEES

Dates for next four Saturday working bees are 10 August, 21 September, 19 October and 30 November. From 9.30 to 11.30 am (morning tea provided). Wear sturdy shoes, sunscreen and a hat. Bring water. Everyone is welcome to come and either join in Bush regeneration or find out more about the project. Contact person Nell Graham, Council's Environmental Education Officer 9335 2197 & enved2@marrickville.nsw.gov.au

INTER SOCIETY GATHERING

On the initiative of Peter Cousens and Diane McCarthy several MHS executive committee members met informally on 13 July at the president's home with committee members from neighbouring heritage/historical societies (Ashfield, Leichhardt and South Sydney). This was an opportunity to pool ideas, share respective views and approaches to running a society and mingle with other like-minded people.

Everyone agreed this event was successful and a letter of thanks has been received from the President of Ashfield & District Historical Society offering to hold the next such gathering in their area early in 2003.

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1930s MOVIE MATINEE AT MOS

Our October meeting will be an entertaining afternoon at the movies in conjunction with Historic Houses Trust. Films will include newsreels of the Marrickville LGA, Felix the Cat cartoons and the film record of Australia's 150th Anniversary Celebrations. Following a delicious Devonshire Tea the main feature will be comic vaudevillian George Wallace making his feature film debut in the burlesque *His Royal Highness* (1932).

Date & Time Saturday 26 October 2-4.30 pm

Venue Museum of Sydney on the site of first Government House corner Bridge & Phillip Streets, Sydney

Cost (incl museum entry & Devonshire Tea) \$18; concession or MHS member or HHT member \$15

Bookings essential Peter 9550 3809

Prepayment required by cheque or money order to MHS PO Box 415 Marrickville 1475 (see flyer)

FATHER DAMIEN CONNECTIONS

Born in Belgium Joseph de Veuster became Father Damien. With the release of the Paul Cox movie *Molokai: The Story of Father Damien* about Father Damien's devotion to a leper colony on an island off the coast of Hawaii, are a couple of Marrickville connections. Firstly is that Fr. Damien is sensitively played by David Wenham, who was born and raised in Marrickville and whose parents Kath and Bill are MHS members.

Before John Farrow (1904-1963) became famous as a Hollywood film director, he visited Tahiti and wrote *Damien the Leper*, a biography which became a classic and has been reissued to coincide with the film. His now more famous daughter Mia Farrow says "reading it today I find it is still an inspiration and I'm struck by the beauty of the writing". John Farrow, also born in Marrickville, was educated at Newtown Public and Fort Street High Schools (see February 2000 newsletter).

In the film the role of the bishop is played by Sydney born actor, the late Leo McKern in his last cinema role. Leo lived at 133 Macquarie Street Sydney during World War II when his parents worked for Dr George Bell, who used his building as residence and consulting rooms. The building later became History House, home of RAHS.

The Society regrets the recent untimely death of **Fred Grotto** who, during our March 2001 Mulgoa tour, showed MHS members over his magnificent William Wardell-designed house *Glenleigh*, with its beautiful painted interior decorations, at Regentville.

PRESIDENT Diane 9558 4930

HERITAGE WATCH Scott 9559 5736

PUBLICATIONS CONVENOR Peter 9550 3809

NEWSLETTER EDITOR Richard 9557 3823

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