



MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Vol 2 No 5 October 1985

OUR NEXT FUNCTION

Saturday October 26

At last, a chance to visit the famed Egyptian Room of the Masonic Temple, Petersham! Don't miss this rare opportunity. Meet in front of the Temple, 23-25 New Canterbury Road at 10.30 a.m. There is a convenient parking lot beside the Temple. A donation of \$1 (to recompense the commentator) would be appreciated.

Our thanks to our Vice President, Eve Sharpe, for arranging this function and keeping the Society running on a very even keel during her recent stint as Acting President.

FUTURE PROGRAMME

Saturday November 23 (at our regular venue, the Aldermen's Room, Petersham Town Hall at 10.30 a.m.).

That intrepid traveller to the northern hemisphere, Richard Cashman, will give an illustrated talk on his visit to the justly famous village of Marrick in the wilds of North Yorkshire.

Afterwards we will adjourn to Petersham Park for a picnic to celebrate the end of the Society's year. All members are welcome. Games for the children will be organised by Aunty Chrys.

We hope that our journal, *Heritage*, No 2 will be published in time for this meeting.

LIFE AND DEATH IN THE INNER WEST

This was the title of a most entertaining talk given to the Society on Friday 13 September by Chris Pratten of the National Trust. Life and death happens in family histories, in the complexity of architectural styles which is our heritage, and of course in that largest of all nineteenth century necropolises, Rookwood Cemetery.

Chris is writing a biography of his grandfather, H.E. Pratten, who started in life as an Ashfield grocer before becoming Mayor of Ashfield and finally a member of Federal Parliament. Tracing your family history is, he pointed out, an interesting way of finding out about your locality. Chris traced H.E. Pratten's various residences, located old photographs of them and then contrasted them with the harsher, sharper-focused modern location shots. He also mentioned the value of interviewing elderly relatives. Their facts may not always be accurate, but their stories give the flavour of events in a way that no table of dates and figures can.

The Inner West experienced the death of trams when the motor lobby had its way in the 1950s. Trams were visually, and because of their distinctive bells, audibly attractive. The Darling Harbour Redevelopment Proposal for 1988 includes a plan for an elevated monorail. **We should be asking if the public really wants such expensive toys ploughing through the skyline, rather than a light rail system (in reality a tramway).**

The early days of rail travel were exciting, as can be seen by remnants of the past such as the recently-restored Central Mortuary Station. The Rookwood Station was relocated in Canberra where it became a church. The closing of the rail link brought problems to Rookwood as mausoleum development along the old line has detracted from the nineteenth century graves. Rookwood's significance as a heritage site extends beyond the graves to its architecture, sculpture, drainage system and even its botany. The National Trust is lobbying for conservation objectives for the botanical sections.

The revitalisation of the Inner West, popularly called 'gentrification', is breathing new life into old buildings and saving much of our architectural heritage. But it is necessary before restoring old houses to gain some feeling for the period and style. There have been some unfortunate efforts. Chris urged would-be restorers to spend time identifying what should be restored as opposed to what should be adapted. Identify the significant aspects of your house. It could be the facade, the decoration, or even the bathroom. For those embarking on painting their homes there is now a large range of 'heritage colours' available. Chris told us that the National Trust now has 33,500 members and its aim is to reach 50,000 by 1988. As Rolf Harris didn't say--'Trust the Trust? Sure can!'

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE STUDY

Annette Green spoke to the Society on September 28 and outlined the whole range and complexity of the historic, environmental and architectural heritage of Marrickville. She traced the history of the area through evidence of Aboriginal settlement, early land grants, and subsequent land division. Names of English villages became townships: North and South Kingston had their moment of glory and then became subsumed in Stanmore and Camperdown. At one stage Petersham was Sydenham and Lewisham was Petersham. Railway stations were built as the result of residents' petitions. The strength of Marrickville is not in a Glebe or Paddington-like homogeneity, but rather its very chequerboard development. A typical Marrickville street could contain a great mansion, a mid-Victorian cottage, a late Victorian terrace, a 1920s bungalow or two, all rounded off with some 1960s flats built on the site of a demolished mansion. It is this diversity which must be preserved, not just the individual pieces of architecture. But at the same time it is important that change, which is in harmony with the past, should not be stifled.



LILIAN FOWLER PLACE

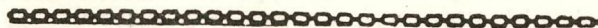
Marrickville Council recently decided to honour Mrs Lilian Fowler by naming a Newtown street after her. Although her manner was blunt, and even rough, Lilian Fowler was a colourful and well-known personality of Newtown who achieved a number of firsts for women in politics. Daughter of a Cooma alderman, she entered local government herself when she topped the poll for the Camden Ward, Newtown in 1928, and became the first woman alderman in the state. When she was elected Mayor in 1938-39, she became the first woman Mayor in the country. In 1944 she was elected M.L.A. for Newtown, being the first woman elected to the state parliament. She held the seat until 1950. Lilian Fowler was not related to the prominent Camperdown pottery family.

Incidentally, our own Vice President, Eve Sharpe, was virtually the first woman elected to the reconstituted (post 1948) Marrickville Municipal Council. Mrs Sharpe was technically the second woman elected to Council but the first woman returned, Eileen Anderson, died very soon after the elections.



BUDGET CRISIS HITS MASTERTOUC

Mastertouch Piano Rolls is an unfortunate victim of the recent rationalisation of the tax system. From now on piano rolls will attract a 20 per cent sales tax. Small scale manufacturers of piano rolls should not be treated in the same way as manufacturers of video recorders. Mastertouch is **the only Australian manufacturer of piano rolls**, and as such is a vital part of our heritage. Please lobby your Federal member, or any New South Wales Senator, and write to that well known collector of eighteenth century clocks, the Federal Treasurer, Paul Keating, at Parliament House, Canberra, A.C.T. 2600.



FIRST SOCIETY DINNER

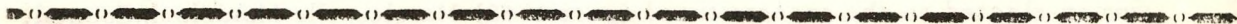
Some 30 Society members and friends enjoyed this occasion at the Edelweiss Inn. Congratulations to Anne Carolan and her Social Subcommittee (Robert Thompson and Ken Henderson) on a successful event.

NEW MEMBERS

Virginia Kennedy and family, Howard Perry, Graham Short.

HOW TO JOIN THE SOCIETY

It's only \$7 for individuals, \$10 for households and institutions, \$2 for pensioners and students. In addition, you will receive copies of the monthly Newsletter and **Heritage**, published annually each December. The first issue appeared in 1984 and a few copies are still available at \$2 a copy. Post your subscriptions to Chrys at Marrickville Library, Marrickville Town Hall, 2204. (Phone 560-9333 Ext 282). You don't have to wait until the AGM or the end of the financial year. Our 'rolling membership' enables you to remain financial for twelve months from the time you join.



VALE

It is with regret that we heard of the recent death of Lois Conway, one of the early members of the Society.

