

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.

DULWICH HILL ENMORE LEWISHAM
ST PETERS SYDENHAM TEMPE

MARRICKVILLE PETERSHAM STANMORE
& PARTS OF CAMPERDOWN & NEWTOWN



OUR NEXT MEETING

The History of Tall Structures in Australia
with Richard Braddish

Saturday 26 February 10 for 10.30 am

Herb Greedy Hall 79 Petersham Rd Marrickville

Our September 1997 newsletter featured a drawing of the so-called Camperdown Shot Tower in Glebe which was demolished around 1950 (December 1997 newsletter). This Q & A came to the attention of **Richard Braddish**, who has had a passion for everything tall since he can remember. Richard has been employed as model maker at City of Sydney Council for the past 16 years and helped create a scale model of the CBD to assist the city planners & councillors.



*Hotel Australia,
Castlereagh Street
Sydney in 1908 –
Australia's
tallest building in
1891 (State Li-
brary
of NSW)*

Having developed a keen interest in Sydney's history and skyscrapers, over the past ten years Richard has been compiling information, statistics, photographs, drawings and diagrams for a reference book with the view to publication. His book will be *The History of Tall Structures in Australia*. He also moderates tall building websites & forums. Richard's illustrated talk will be a chronological look at the built architecture of Sydney and other cities and places with focus on towers (shot, clock and telecommunication), lighthouses, chimneys, church spires and buildings. He hopes to bring some scale models.

Nominations are sought for **2005 Marrickville Medal (Residential)**. Details inside.

SAVE TEMPE BUS & TRUCK MUSEUM

(Story on back page)

RESCHEDULED JOURNAL LAUNCH

The launch of *Heritage 12* has been rescheduled for Thursday 3 March 6.15 for 6.30 pm at Herb Greedy Hall, 79 Petersham Road Marrickville. Articles were listed in November newsletter. Members can collect their complimentary copy. Extra copies for sale (\$10). Refreshments provided. Bookings Angela 9280 2429 for catering purposes. The journal will be distributed to other members asap after the launch.

OUR MARCH MEETING PARRAMATTA PURSUITS

Saturday 19 March

As Easter is on the fourth weekend of March we have brought back our meeting by a week. As March newsletter won't come out until late in second week we are giving some advance details with more information to follow next month.

Jetcat from Circular Quay to Parramatta for visits to some historic sites. BYO lunch. Bookings and enquiries Lorraine 8565 6511 in working hours. Booking card at next meeting.

Could the owner of the large circular silver tray left at Pot Luck Dinner in December ring Keith on 9564 6948 to arrange retrieval?

RECYCLING CATEGORIES EXTENDED

Members are advised that Marrickville Council has extended the range of items which can be recycled through the yellow Otto bins. Council will now accept all disposable plastic containers numbered up to #7 as well as empty, used pizza cartons (remains removed). For the current brochure and recycling calendar ring council 9335 2222.

THE EDITOR APOLOGISES for inadvertently including the Society's former website address at the bottom of the back page of our December newsletter. Due to high running costs, the website was discontinued in July 2003. Since September 2003 the Society has had a **hotmail address** and this reappears on back page of this newsletter.

HERITAGE WATCH: UPS & DOWNS

Now the Year of the Built Environment is over, one is left wondering whether anything tangible was achieved, other than increasing community awareness about the importance of retaining buildings of significance. However the Land & Environment Court ended the year on a high note by their late December decision to rule in favour of City of Sydney Council and protect the heritage-listed buildings *Hamilton* and *The Abbey*, Bridge Road Glebe – a decision to be applauded. (*Hamilton* is one of several Glebe houses built and owned by Ferdinand Hamilton Reuss, architect, civil engineer and regarded as the Father of Surveying in Sydney. His surveying projects included the North and South Kingston and Lewisham areas.)

Nevertheless that same court was unsympathetic earlier in the year when it overturned Marrickville Council's decision to retain two houses in **Kroombit Street Dulwich Hill**. Now it seems this council may support the demolition of two single storey cottages at **203 and 205 Australia Street Newtown** dating from around 1870. A *Courier* reporter advised that a Marrickville councillor has described these empty cottages as "rundown". One might describe *Lyndhurst* in Glebe in the early 1970s as having been "rundown" before it was saved from bulldozers, restored and acquired by Historic Houses Trust. These Australia Street cottages appear eminently restorable though encumbrances could be removed. At this rate there will be few, if any c. 1870 houses left in our area.



Council did spare the fire-damaged *Hebden* (c. 1880), pictured above at 34 Station Street Newtown, after community opposition to demolition plans. A DA has been lodged to restore the front and demolish the rear for one and two storey town houses. This seems a reasonable compromise though has been met with a mixed response by local residents. *Hebden's* owner had the single storey **Victorian ladies college in Baltic Street Newtown** demolished last year for a block of four 3-storey town houses. Beware the buyer!
Richard Blair

TWO SPRING GARDEN WINNERS

Once again MHS members were among council's ten annual Spring Garden Competition winners. The Society extends congratulations to 2004 winners **Bob Hayes** for "Best Large Garden" and to **Robert Mitchell** for "Best Courtyard". Coincidentally both Roberts have co-hosted MHS soirées.

Council Development Applications often include the words "**to demolish existing improvements**". If these "improvements" were **not** "existing", they would not need demolition, so the use of the word "existing" is superfluous. As for "improvements", these may or may not have been improvements as such; they are generally additions which had more to do with expediency and often end up as eyesores. Often "demolishing existing improvements" is merely *councilspeak* euphemism for "demolishing everything"!

The Mastertouch Story as told by **Barclay Wright** (MHS member) answers many questions about the history of piano roll production in Australia and Barclay's close association with Mastertouch since 1956. This charming booklet is available from Mastertouch at \$6.10. This is totally different from Barclay's story of the Mastertouch Piano Roll Company *Rhapsodies in Wrapping Paper* in *Heritage* 10 (1998). Mastertouch is at 308 Stanmore Road, Petersham or phone 9569 5128.

FIREY TALES

In my days in the NSW Fire Brigade, I was fortunate to spend a few good years at Marrickville – No. 28 Station – in the early 1950s. It was a beautiful suburb, lovely homes and alive with youth and their activities – sport, dancing, pictures etc. And now a couple of tales in the life of a firey.

Discipline was strict. Officers and high ranks were saluted and addressed "yes sir, no sir". Marrickville still had a 1927 Dennis fire engine painted in khaki colours from the war, and way past its use-by date. One time, attending to a fire call, sitting on the outside of the fire engine, an officer and five men proceeded down Marrickville Road to Seymours Corner when the gear box exploded and pieces shattered onto the road. Our officer, an old English army man, calmly gave the order, "Dismount and form up in single file." He then led the troop up Marrickville Road back to the fire station in perfect step. Of course, it was Saturday morning shopping time. Boy, were we cheered and clapped! The fire, well Stanmore [Brigade] attended to it, a tow truck attended to our motor, and we marched back with our golden helmets on.

The firemen were on hand always to help the community. Next door to the fire station was the town hall with a registry office with a lady in charge to record births, deaths and marriages. Very often she would come into the fire station and request a couple of fireys to witness marriages. We also acted as parking attendants for patrons at the Strollers Dance in the town hall. With a white coat and a cap and an eye on the car was all that was needed to be paid a shilling or two for the trouble. Of course sometimes a call of fire interrupted our activities and we missed our tips and the cars were left unprotected. That's life.

Ron Piper (husband of member Jean Piper and an "old Dulwich Hill-Earlwood-Canterbury boy" now in Taree)

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR 2005 MARRICKVILLE MEDAL

2005 is the tenth anniversary of the prestigious Marrickville Medal, awarded to conservation works that contribute to the understanding and preservation of Marrickville's rich cultural and architectural heritage (this will be the eleventh Medal). The first Medal was awarded in 1995 to St Clement's Parish Centre on Marrickville Road. The award was one of the first of its kind in NSW and is the keystone event in the Marrickville Heritage Festival, which is part of the annual statewide heritage festival organised by the National Trust of Australia (NSW) in April.

Marrickville Council is calling for nominations for the 2005 Marrickville Medal. Each year the category alternates between residential and commercial. This year's category is **residential** and eligible projects should be residential and domestic in scale, and may include houses (and their gardens) that have been restored, conserved or renovated during the last three years. Entries can include adaptive reuse projects, and residences that have undergone minor or substantial alterations, or even completely new building projects. Public and commercial projects are ineligible this year.

Anyone can nominate a project, but the owner must give written permission. A jury of local residents, including local heritage consultants, judges the competition. Nominations close on Wednesday 2 March. The award ceremony is on Wednesday 13 April at 6:30 pm at Petersham Town Hall. For nomination forms and further information, ring council's Heritage and Urban Design Advisor on 9335 2114.

SUMMER TRIVIA ANSWER



1893 photograph of interior of Newtown Post Office. "Late in the 19th century polished cedar joinery complemented by cedar furniture was extensively used in government buildings to create a sense of tradition and prosperity." This interior has been significantly altered, but the splendid arches in both directions have been retained. Photo is reproduced from *Red Cedar in Australia* p. 18, Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales 2004 (photo source: National Archives of Australia). An exhibition on *Red Cedar* was held at MOS in late 2004. Congratulations to members **Rod Cox** and **Mark Matheson** for correct identification.

DONNITHORNE DISTILLED

It was wonderful to hear that the Donnithorne headstone has been restored and reinstated at Camperdown Cemetery in the grounds of St Stephens Church Newtown (see December 2004 newsletter). To address the perennial problems caused by vandals and drunks, the Anglican Trust is enhancing security by restoring the church gates to their original condition.

Meanwhile the debate about Eliza Emily Donnithorne (EED) continues unabated. MHS member George Gibbons, National Trust Cemeteries Adviser, became engaged in an email exchange with Matt Murphy, <www.sydneyarchives.info/donnithorne.html>.

Matt's comprehensive article *The Truth about the truth about Eliza Donnithorne* is part of his crusade to dispel the "Donnithorne myth". George maintains "it is an indisputable fact that Eliza's grave is highly valued by Newtown residents and those from further afield because of the possible/rumoured Dickens link. As such, it is by definition a fact that it is a significant item of local and regional heritage. If one day, the story is proven, it will be of greater and wider significance. If the story is totally discredited it will have a different significance, possibly decreasing over time."

George has also been engaged in correspondence with John Godl, a mine of information on the conundrum. The speculation is endless. There has even been an opera *Miss Donnithorne's Maggot* (composer Sir Peter Maxwell Davies; author Randolph Stow) about EED.

George's wife Barbara Gibbons wrote "it is possible that Dickens's original source for Miss Havisham could be found." She cites *Camperdown, a history of Camperdown Cemetery & St Stephens Newtown* (Camperdown Press, 1976) which "states, in two places, that Dickens gave a different source for Miss Havisham. It does not specify the source that Dickens quoted." Barbara points out that had EED married in 1848 as claimed by Godl, she would hardly have become reclusive before her father died in 1852 as he would have had callers to the house.

GH Abbott (born late 1860s) was Vice President of RAHS when on 26 October 1937 he read his illuminating paper to the RAHS – *Reminiscences of Newtown and Neighbourhood*. "Our next home was a two-story house opposite to *Cambridge Hall* . . . and its story attracted my attention when a small boy. It stood in what is now called King Street, near L'Avenue . . . Miss Donnithorne was still alive when I lived near her house, and I heard the story of how she was engaged to be married." He tells the familiar story but passes no judgement. No reference to *Great Expectations*.

MHS member Patricia Kennedy was so inspired by the EED story, the Havisham grotesquerie, the cemetery and her King Street *café heaven* that she wrote a young adult's novel *The Mouldering of Miss Havisham* (Greater Glider, 2000) dedicating it to Eliza.

Whether the EED/Havisham connection is fact or fiction, there is no doubt that EED is more famous now, 120 years after her death, than she was in her lifetime!

Richard Blair

CALENDAR OF MHS EVENTS

Saturday 26 February
Richard Braddish on *History of Tall Structures*

Thursday 3 March
Launch of *Heritage 12*

Saturday 19 March
Parramatta Pursuits

ALL DETAILS ON FRONT PAGE

VALE TO TWO GREAT CONTRIBUTORS

Member **Joyce Waterworth**, of Undercliffe, died on 31 December 2004. Born in 1923, Joyce was the eldest of 11 children and of true pioneering stock. She was the great granddaughter of Adam Schwebel, who quarried stone in the Marrickville area from 1863, supplied stone to Marrickville Council for kerbing and guttering, and constructed the Roseby Memorial Uniting Church in 1871. Her grandfather George Schwebel married Jessie Meek (from another pioneering family) and her father Roy and five brothers were all in the quarry business.

Joyce married Cyril Waterworth in 1947 and had three sons. She was given awards for her work on behalf of Cooks River and as a long term active member of the Cooks River Valley Association. She received a certificate from Marrickville Council in 2001 during the Centenary of Federation celebrations. Our condolences to Joyce's three sons and their families.

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We note the death of **Hector Gibb** who brought pleasure to many through music. Hector, of Dulwich Hill, died 23 December 2004 aged 95. Hector's father Bert started the Strollers Dances in the early 1920s. Bert conducted the Strollers Orchestra with Hector on drums. The dances started at Shrublands Hall in Livingstone Road, then moved to Marrickville Town Hall in 1922 where the Gibbs held dances three times a week, often with 800-1000 in attendance. They both continued to conduct dances for over 40 years. In April 1997 to commemorate the 75th anniversary of Marrickville Town Hall Hector was thrilled to be a special guest at a Back to Strollers Night, attended by several MHS members (Thanks to member **Mary Cleghorn** for notifying Hector's death).

John H Edwards' splendid book *Edward Baker Boulton: Australia's Forgotten Artist* (Norrong Press, 2004) was launched by Rae Jones (Mayor of Ashfield, teacher, poet and novelist) at the Writers' Centre, Rozelle on Sunday 6 February. Two of Boulton's great grandsons, John and Peter Ryrrie attended and MC was Angela Phippen. RRP \$45. For orders and enquiries ring John on 9558 1327 or email <norrongpress@hotmail.com>.

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MHS MEMBERS WIN OAM

The Society congratulates two of its members who were awarded the OAM in the General Division announced on Australia Day. **Chris Pratten's** citation reads "for service to the environment and to the conservation of natural and built heritage areas as a grazier, educator and administrator". Chris has conducted a talk and a walk for MHS; he has written historical books and numerous articles, and is a stalwart of Ashfield & District Historical Society.

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The **Rev. Dr Peter Swain's** citation reads: "for service to the Uniting Church in Australia and to religious education, particularly through Newington College and the Australian Association for Religious Education". Peter served on our MHS executive committee in 1989-90. He organised two Newington walks and a concert for the Society; and contributed articles to the journal and newsletter.

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The Society also congratulates another worthy local recipient, Marrickville Mayor **Morris Hanna** whose citation said: "service to the community of Marrickville particularly through local government and the Egyptian Coptic Church". Morris has been a councillor since 1995 and mayor since early last year.

TEMPE BUS & TRUCK MUSEUM

Supporters of this museum continue to lobby for retention of the Bus and Truck Museum on the old Tempe Tram Depot site. The Tempe site has a National Trust Classification. Representations are being made for listings on the State Heritage Register for both the historic site and the museum collection. Both are most worthy for inclusion. Letters of support can be sent to The Director, Heritage Office of NSW, Locked Bag 5020, Parramatta 2124. Submissions can also be made to the local state member Kristina Kenneally MP.



The museum lease does not expire until 2009 and another concern for developers is possible site contamination. Should the state government proceed with plans to sell the site it is surely incumbent on the government to facilitate a suitable relocation for this most significant collection. Relocation of this collection would be an enormous loss to the people of Marrickville. Museum representatives are trying to arrange a meeting with the new Transport Minister (photo Inner Western Courier 30/11/04).