

# MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.

DULWICH HILL ENMORE LEWISHAM  
ST PETERS SYDENHAM TEMPE

MARRICKVILLE PETERSHAM STANMORE  
& PARTS OF CAMPERDOWN & NEWTOWN



## OUR NEXT MEETING

*History of the Cooee with Richard White*  
**Saturday 27 August 10 for 10.30 am**  
Herb Greedy Hall 79 Petersham Rd Marrickville

In the many and varied performances of the 'cooe' since 1790 – the history of a sound – can be found a history of Australian nationalism. When Europeans arrived in Australia they were intrigued and often disturbed by the sounds of the Australian bush. One of those sounds was the cooe, which they adapted from the indigenous people, who in turn had probably imitated the call of the 'cooe bird', or koel. Europeans soon began to use it among themselves, some eventually denying any indigenous origin. It became a conventional part of bush culture, bush etiquette and bush craft, something to be self-consciously taught to 'new chums'.

By the 1840s a number of stories were circulating of another use of the cooe: a means of reuniting Australians separated overseas, especially in the crowds or the fogs of London. The contrast between the cooe in the emptiness of the bush and the cooe in the middle of the London crowd could hardly be greater. These stories are the focus of this talk, which will also sketch in the cooe's later history in literature, music, advertising, ritual and recruitment propaganda in World War I.

**Richard White** is senior lecturer in the Department of History, Sydney University and a MHS member who has lived in Newtown for over 20 years. His most recent publication is *On Holidays: a history of getting away in Australia*, a unique collaboration with some students from his course on the history of travel and tourism (Pluto, 2005).

## WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

George Morgan (rejoined), Dulwich Hill; David Bowron, Marrickville; Maureen Flynn & Jan Whitty, Newtown; Henry Venables, Petersham; David Ryan, Stanmore; Ben Gock, Belmore; Luke Folkard, Erskineville; Rebecca Varidel, Hunters Hill; Walter Smith, Sans Souci; and Wolli Creek Preservation Society, Earlwood.

## OUR SEPTEMBER MEETING COCKATOO ISLAND: 24 SEPTEMBER

Experience the history of Sydney Harbour's largest island, from convict prison to the centre of a thriving shipbuilding industry. **Ferry to Cockatoo Island on Saturday 24 September requires booking and prepayment. Departs 10.25 am sharp** from Wharf 5 Circular Quay: Balmain/Woolwich ferry. For groups of 20 or more there is a significant reduction from \$25 to \$18 each; \$15 concession regardless. Cost includes return ferry ride and a guided tour lasting two hours. **Bookings essential. Ring Pat on 9559 6684. Deadline 31 August.**

## THE GUNYAH 398 MARRICKVILLE ROAD

As noted in our June newsletter, *The Gunyah* is a significant part of the important civic and housing precinct at the intersection of Livingstone and Marrickville Roads. It is an excellent example of the Californian bungalow style and was built by James Wall, the master builder, on allotments purchased from the Shrublands Estate in 1909. It is in fine condition with many original features intact, and along with the other houses that James Wall built on either side of this house, it contributes significantly to the rich residential streetscape. In spite of its importance, and its inclusion in a draft Heritage Conservation Area, **an application has been made to Council to demolish the building and construct an enormous two storey fake-Federation mansion over an underground car park.** The application documentation that the Society has reviewed was unsupported by a Statement of Environmental Effects or Heritage Impact Statement which are obligatory for a development of this scale and sensitivity.

**Council should reject this application immediately on heritage and town planning grounds.** The Society also believes there should be an inquiry as to why this applicant was allowed to proceed so far into the design and approval process without apparent reference to Council's codes and heritage guidelines.

**Scott MacArthur**



World War I enlistment poster  
(Source: Australian War Memorial reference number AWM U5167)



## OUR LAST MEETING

### Decorative tiles walk with Paul Storm

Our tile walk/drive on Saturday 23 July was conducted on "one of those beautiful Sydney weekends" (as so aptly noted by retiring Premier Bob Carr). Our group was in the excellent hands of tilologist **Paul Storm**, an authority on Victorian decorative tiles and etched glass who took us around parts of Newtown, Stanmore and Petersham, where the domestic and commercial uses of these decorative elements are concentrated.

We began in Lennox, Australia, Albermarle and Probert Streets Newtown, where there are some very well known and unique examples of tile work. These included the famous Kangaroo and Waratah, the assorted collection of window piers of Art Nouveau tiles, and the beautiful framed butcher's panel. These items are illustrated in Willem Irik's article *Decorative Ceramic Tiles in the Marrickville Area* in *Heritage 12* (which is well worth reading prior to looking at tiles). Paul surprised us with a further revelation regarding the Kangaroo tile: if some of the tiles in the stair risers were isolated and rotated, they would form part of a panel – kangaroo in a landscape – at least six tiles wide.

Commercial applications include the entrance to Dibble's 1909 bakery, the 'modernised' Victorian façade of the Court House Hotel, the 'blood and bandages' stringing on the H May building façade, all in Australia Street, and tiles set into the substantial marble bar of the Carlisle Hotel in Albermarle Street.

In Trade Street Newtown, Paul indicated some fantastic flower panels between and under windows in a group of spec built houses; then to Stanmore Road where we saw some highly decorative Minton tiles in the stair risers. With the aid of reproduced tile manufacturers catalogues it is often possible to date houses to within a few years by the fashion for certain tiles. On to Middleton Street Petersham where we saw several examples of 'cascades' of riser tiles on steep stairs; we marvelled at the elaborately tiled façade of *Richmond*. Our tour concluded in Marshall Street, Petersham.

Paul showed us the variety of tiles and some of the stylistic differences which influenced the decoration of these highly decorative tiles. We also observed wonderful examples of etched glass, decorative stucco work and fine woodwork. Paul presented **Audrey Furney** with a tile pot stand for identifying similarities in stucco work seen on the tour. These tiles tend to be clustered only in certain areas of Sydney and are rarely found in other Australian cities. Marrickville LGA is indeed fortunate to be blessed with so many superb examples of decorative tile work.

Tour members can now distinguish decorative periods: Aesthetic, Art Nouveau and Art Deco; and pick hand-finished from transfer printed tiles. And of course we all now know how encaustic tiles are made! The way we look at tiles will never be the same. Thank you Paul for an illuminating day, to Michelle for close inspection of the tiles at *Richmond* and to those who provided cars.

**Peter Cousens**

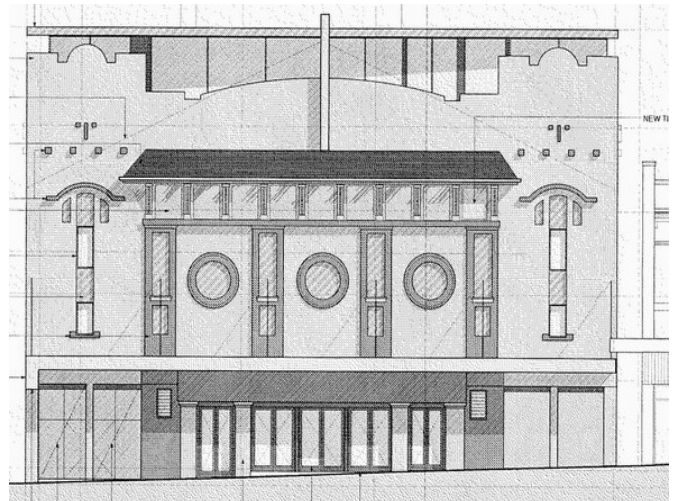
Thanks to **Peter Cousens**, who helped Paul Storm coordinate the walk. Peter took many of the photographs in Willem Irik's tile article in *Heritage 12*. – **Editor**

## MAJESTIC ROLLARINK (EX CINEMA) 49-59 NEW CANTERBURY RD PETERSHAM

By way of contrast with *The Gunyah* DA (see front page), the proposed redevelopment of the **Majestic Rollarink** has much to commend through its design and consideration of heritage values. The Majestic Theatre was constructed in 1921, after the earlier 1911 vaudeville theatre on the site was demolished. It was built to a design by Karberry and Chard at a cost of 25,000 pounds and was able to seat 3,500 people. It was renamed the Odeon Theatre when it was sold to the Greater Union chain in 1946, and in 1953 the foyers and lobbies were refurbished in a streamlined Art Deco style in keeping with contemporary trends in cinema design. The fall in suburban cinema attendance from the mid 1960s saw it first become a foreign language cinema, and then, after Marrickville Council thankfully declined to purchase and demolish it for a car park, it was converted into a roller skating rink in 1979 (from *Conservation Plan for the Majestic Rollarink formerly the Odeon Cinema*, 1995 by Caroline Plim).

The Majestic has one of the tallest parapet facades within the surrounding retail precinct, and has a tiled awning to the first floor windows and heavy projecting detailing to its decorative pilasters and circular 'window' openings. The foyer retains much of its Art Deco style detailing. The rink is framed by the theatre/cinema boxes which are ornately decorated. It is a listed heritage item under Marrickville LEP 2001.

The proposal will require the demolition of the auditorium for the construction of a mixed retail / residential building containing three shops, 25 apartments and parking for 26 vehicles. Many decorative elements and spaces associated with the foyer and lobbies, and the principle street facades of the building will be retained in the development. Unfortunately, the large number of units proposed is in excess of Council's floor space guidelines, and to achieve this density of development, the new units are constructed under a new roof that is higher than the existing sculptured parapet. The visual impact of this is graphically illustrated in the developer's own photomontage pictures, that show that when viewed from New Canterbury Road, the distinctive scalloped profile of the parapet will be completely replaced by a characterless rectilinear box.



*Majestic's Proposed New Canterbury Road elevation*

The Society recommends that Council require the development to comply with all of its relevant planning codes, and require that the special heritage and streetscape values of the building be protected. The massing and form of the new development should be recessive and unobtrusive so that the distinctive façade of the Majestic retains its prominence in Petersham.

**Scott MacArthur**

## LINKS WITH ANNETTE KELLERMAN

It was long believed that Annette Kellerman (AK) was born in Marrickville, an assertion made by no less an authority than the Australian Dictionary of Biography (1983). One wonders about the ADB source, as according to AK's birth certificate and a recent biography by Emily Gibson and Barbara Firth, AK "was born on 6 July 1886 at 101 Victoria Street Darlinghurst."

Her parents, Frederick and Alice Kellerman were musicians who ran the Conservatoire de Musique at 43 Phillip Street in the city. They co-founded the Sydney Orchestral Society, the Australian Musical Association and the Sydney Philharmonic. In the 1880s and early 1890s they were at the centre of Sydney's music society entertaining, staging soirées and giving music lessons. This was all terminated by the 1890s depression when lessons could no longer be afforded. The family moved to Melbourne around Federation where Alice got a teaching job at Mentone College for Girls.



*Neptune's Daughter's made in 1914 was AK's first movie. She also pioneered swimsuits and water ballet (courtesy Barbara Firth)*

The Gibson/Firth biography *The Original Million Dollar Mermaid: the Annette Kellerman story* (Allen & Unwin, 2005) relates AK's extraordinary life from having to wear heavy iron leg braces because of rickets, taking up swimming to gain strength, and going on to become a champion long distance swimmer and diver, and one of the highest paid Hollywood and vaudeville stars of her day. **Barbara Firth**, in her capacity as coordinator of the Sydney Opera House Archive of Theatrical Memorabilia met Annette in the final months of her life in 1975 and acquired her vast private collection on behalf of the Opera House. She was appointed Annette's authorised biographer, however she eventually collaborated with **Emily Gibson** who researched and wrote the script for the recent documentary film of the same name.

This comprehensive biography omits any Marrickville link. However, according to Sands Directories the Kellerman family lived on the corner of Silver and Calvert Streets Marrickville from 1889 to 1892. The 1891 Sands Directory lists both Frederick Kellerman and Mrs Charbonnet Kellerman at this address as music teachers. The valuation books at Marrickville Council archives indicate the Kellermans owned 128 Silver Street Marrickville from the 1890s to c. 1903-04, when it was purchased by Eindrich Andreas (of Petersham's pioneering family). The two storey house was called *Fernie Hill* and later *Petoria*; it still stands on

the corner opposite the Baptist Church. Further substantiation of the Kellerman presence in Marrickville is that AK's younger brother Frederick was born in 1891 and his birth was registered in Marrickville.

On 22 September 1962 the Enmore Park Swimming Pool was opened. In recognition of AK the pool was renamed the Annette Kellerman Aquatic Centre in July 1994. Some MHS members will recall seeing Mary Haire's clever play *Dive Divas* staged there (and at the Fanny Durack Pool in Petersham) in March 1999 with imaginary encounters between AK and Fanny Durack, who spent the latter decades of her life in Stanmore. The two women were born just three years apart but it seems they never met. Fanny died in March 1956, only months before AK attended the Melbourne Olympics where she was honoured. Ironically, both had lived in south Marrickville early in their lives, though not concurrently.

Another local link poses a mystery. Emily Gibson told me that when AK and her American husband Jimmy Sullivan came to Australia for the 1956 Melbourne Olympics, the address they gave as where they'd be staying was 101 Warren Road, Marrickville. This house was then owned and occupied by Audrey Dash (later Newman), a nurse, and Kathleen Dash, but the nature of the link with AK is unknown.

In 2004 I emailed Emily Gibson the verse about AK that was in the September 2000 newsletter and advised her of the Marrickville connections. Emily said there was no mention of these in the primary sources – the accounts of AK and her younger sister Marcelle. This is hardly surprising given they were only six and five in 1892. However, surely valuation books and Sands Directories are also primary sources?

**Richard Blair**

## 3 MARRICKVILLE POTTERIES ASSESSED

Some excerpts from **John Wade's** review of *3 Marrickville Potteries* in the May 2005 issue of *Australiana*:

"The Marrickville Heritage Society (MHS) is an active local history and heritage group in Sydney's inner west. Its 400 members make it one of the largest local history societies in Australia. The Society has brought together, revised and added to previous articles and talks on three of the major potteries of the area – Fowlers, Diana and Studio Anna – to create this slim but valuable book. They have substantially enhanced the number of illustrations. It is mainly black and white with a stiff colour cover and an eight page colour centrefold.

I always admire the work of people who produce historical works voluntarily or as a sideline to their real work. What I find surprising is the lack of support MHS gets from the local Marrickville Council. Search the Marrickville Council website for mention of the MHS and you draw a total blank. By contrast the City of Sydney council site lists 12 local historical societies in its local LGA., with a brief statement and contact details for each.

Make sure this book sells out so MHS has to produce a revised edition in the not too far distant future." Cost: \$25, \$20 for MHS members (+ \$2 p&h).



## CALENDAR OF MHS EVENTS

**Saturday 27 August**

*History of the Cooee* with Richard White  
Details on front page

**Saturday 24 September**

**Cockatoo Island Tour**

Details on front page – **bookings essential**

**Saturday 22 October**

*NSW Railways: 150 Years* with Peter Sage

**Saturday 26 November**

**Heritage & highlights of Parramatta River**

At the last committee meeting of 4 July it was unanimously agreed that **Diane McCarthy** would remain as public officer, **Pamela Stewart** as membership secretary, **David Cass** as honorary solicitor, **Richard Blair** as newsletter editor and **Scott MacArthur** as heritage watch convenor. President **Lorraine Beach** thanks all these individuals for their ongoing commitment.

**Daphne Grange** recently spotted an item in the SMH (undated) re **William Ernest Gould** (1879-1966), an AB with the NSW Naval Contingent at the 1900-01 Boxer Rebellion. He later ran a family produce store in Marrickville and was the father of nine.

**PRESIDENT** Lorraine 9550 6608

**TREASURER** Stuart 9560 8070

**HERITAGE WATCH** Scott 9559 5736

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR** Richard 9557 3823

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**Kate Dunbar** writes:

"An observation after reading *Shameful Demolition* in the MHS June newsletter – Numbers 23-25 Harrow Road Stanmore are a pair of 2 storey semi-detached houses of the usual Federation style. When bought some years ago, so a neighbour tells me, the owner immediately put on a façade of bricks so we were now looking at a block of flats. However the owner is slowly removing the façade of bricks and returning the two houses to the previous style. I don't think it is to be a **real** restoration but it is beginning to look a darn sight better! They are the only pair of 2 storey semis in Harrow Road."

**Susan Pinson** writes:

"Found a 1976 book on Camperdown Cemetery & St Stephens Newtown during a recent clean-up. I was amused to read of a **William Nash** who 'around 1859 traded in gold bullion, which used to be wheeled in a barrow every evening to the bank while Nash walked alongside with a loaded pistol.' Could you imagine walking through the streets today in this manner?"



MHS tile spotters on 23 July outside *Richmond*, Middleton St Petersham. Back: Mark Matheson, Warren Moorfoot, Stuart Grigg, Ted Green; from left: Margaret McArthur, Beryl Smithson, Claire Sefton, Peter Cousens, Tricia Blombery, Rosemary Fallon, Richard Blair, Margaret Sinclair, Keith Sutton, Angela Phippen, Audrey Furney, John Waterstreet, Dorothy Skinner, Ellie Zinsmeester, Shirley Hilyard, Barbara Forsyth; squatting: Paul Storm, Sue Miller (photo: Lorraine Beach) Lois Korendijk & Graeme Napier also on walk.