

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.

DULWICH HILL ENMORE LEWISHAM
ST PETERS SYDENHAM TEMPE

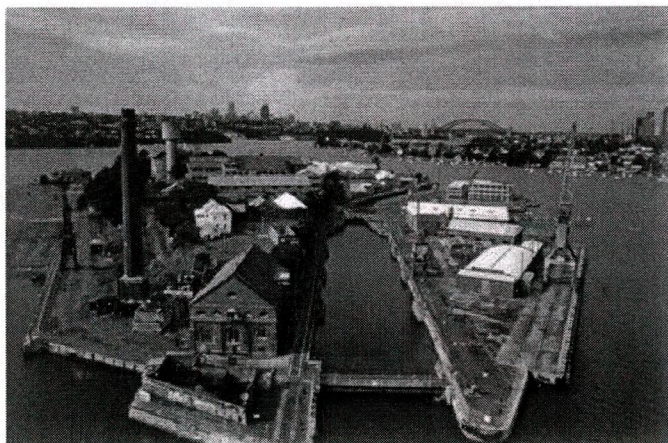
MARRICKVILLE PETERSHAM STANMORE
& PARTS OF CAMPERDOWN & NEWTOWN



OUR NEXT MEETING COCKATOO ISLAND SATURDAY 24 SEPTEMBER

Tour is fully booked. Meet Circular Quay wharf by 10 for 10.25 am sharp departure

Cockatoo Island, occupying a prominent spot in Sydney Harbour, has not been used for almost ten years, but today tours of its facilities present important evidence of the history and development of Australia. The island's industrial heritage includes its 1839 convict prison, courtyards, underground grain silos, tunnels, vast industrial workshops and ship-building facilities of cranes, jetties, slipways, docks, a powerhouse and machinery. Cockatoo Island hosted a successful music weekend last Easter and expressions of interest are being sought for its future use.



© Sydney Harbour Federation Trust

A visit is only possible as part of a Harbour Trust guided tour. As per last newsletter **bookings closed 31 August and prepayment was required**. There may be a standby list in case of cancellations. Ring Lorraine 8565 6511. Anyone turning up on spec has no guarantee of a seat and priority will go to those who booked.

HOW TO JOIN THE SOCIETY

Send a cheque or money order made out to the Marrickville Heritage Society with your name(s), address & phone number(s). Address below. Ring secretary Diane 9588 4930 for a brochure or further information. Membership includes monthly newsletter, journal *Heritage* and monthly talk or outing. Concession \$12, individual or joint concession \$20, household or organisation \$28. Members may recruit a friend with a gift membership. Members renewing should remit with purple renewal slip issued in June.

HISTORY WEEK: 17-25 SEPTEMBER

History Week is the annual, statewide celebration of history organised by the History Council of NSW to celebrate and promote the practice of history throughout the community". For details ring 9252 8715 or visit www.historycouncilnsw.org.au.

Marrickville Council History Centre is presenting an exhibition *From Dairies to Factories: Marrickville in the 1940s* at Marrickville History Centre, Petersham Town Hall, Crystal Street, Petersham from Tuesday 20 to Friday 23 September 10 am-4 pm (closed 1-2 pm). Photographs and other material will be displayed on the transformation of Marrickville in the 1940s, when the last vestiges of rural Marrickville disappeared and industrial Marrickville became a reality.

NOTE ON FAMILY HISTORY

We are sometimes approached by members and non members to either seek or reproduce family history information. We have occasionally run "information sought" items and have published some local family history material both in our journal and newsletter. The basic issue is whether a given family history either relates to local families, properties, places or events of some significance and/or would have sufficient interest for the general membership. After all, everyone has a family history. Whilst a history may have unlimited interest for an individual, it may be of no or only marginal interest to another. The bottom line is we are not a family history group.

Recently a letter was received from MHS member Pam Horstman who was inspired by our May article on James Johnson of The Boulevarde. Her letter relates to her family, the dynastic Elphinstones, and one can appreciate her passion for family history. See page 2.

Editor

Our February 1999 newsletter reported on the impending closure of the Valhalla Cinema in Glebe for distribution reasons. It then got a new lease of life. With falling cinema attendances and the Valhalla now on the market, will history again repeat itself?

MARRICKVILLE FESTIVAL: 18 SEPTEMBER

The annual festival is on Sunday 18 September from 10 am along Marrickville Road. Look for the Society's stall. We encourage members to come and make yourselves known to us or maybe chat with potential members. The festival is always well worth a visit even if you've been before.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR ON THE ELPHINSTONE DYNASTY & LEITHVILLE

(Our May 2005 newsletter told how sole Dunbar survivor James Johnson spent his twilight years at 85 The Boulevarde Dulwich Hill. Next door Ethel Elphinstone conducted a private school. The article prompted this letter from MHS member **Pam Horstman** of Queensland.)

"Have intended to write for some time but a catalyst always eventuates and it was your article on the Johnsons of The Boulevarde, Dulwich Hill and your reference to the Elphinstones which led me to write.

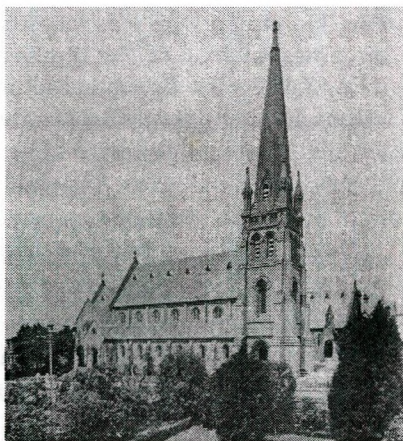
I was an Elphinstone before marriage and researching the family has become my passion. I don't think "dynasty" is too grand a description for the Elphinston/Elphinstone family as, even by colonial era standards, they were a very large family. Over a period of 40 odd years and two marriages, the Elphinston patriarch, William Sen. fathered 16 children and of the 14 who survived to adulthood, nine were sons. William Elphinston Sen. and his wife Janet were paid to settle in the colony as bounty immigrants – he was a ship carpenter and joiner.

They arrived in Sydney from Leith, Scotland in 1832 with three little boys – William Jun., Alexander Leckie and James Balfour. In true Scottish naming pattern the first was named after his father, the second after a maternal grandparent, and the third after a paternal grandparent. William Jun. became an alderman on Petersham Council for the Lewisham Ward 1885-1894; I am descended from Alexander Leckie (my great grandfather); James Balfour, among other things, would become a founder of PLC Croydon. William Sen.'s grandson Charles E Elphinstone was NSW Surveyor-General 1960-63 whilst a great grandson was Bob Elphinston of our Olympic committee fame.

You will have noticed that the name was Elphinston when the family arrived and over time, mainly the older sons, adopted the more common Elphinstone. The family were fiercely Free Church of Scotland Presbyterians and were very influential in the early history of the

establishment of the Presbyterian Church. In the fledgling colony, William Sen. and all but one of his sons became builders, surveyors, architects and developers. The Elphinstone impact was greatest in The Glebe and to a lesser degree in Ashfield and Summer Hill.

Some of the outstanding surviving examples are Chalmers Street Church, Surry Hills (now being redeveloped) designed and built by James Barnett c. 1860s, interior by Elphinstones; Glebe Presbyterian Church (later Abbey Restaurant, now being redeveloped) designed by Thomas Rowe 1879,



St Andrew's Church Summer Hill (courtesy Meredith Taylor and Ashfield DHS)

building and interior by Elphinstones; Ashfield Presbyterian Church (1885) designed and built by Elphinstones; St Andrews, Summer Hill (1885) designed by Elphinstones; Ramelton 52 Derwent St Glebe (1872); Prospect Rd Summer Hill (1890), cluster of Elphinstone houses.

William Jun. and his wife Elizabeth lived at Derwent Street, Glebe. Nine children were born to them in Glebe – five daughters and four sons. One son died before his first birthday. William was a building contractor with his father and brothers. When the Master Builders Association was set up in 1873, William was one of the inaugural 25 builders who subscribed their names as members.

In 1879 the family moved to [New] Canterbury Road Petersham (between Eltham and Pigott Streets). William was now a building surveyor. The home, which I presume William built, was called *Leithville* – the description "all that property situated on [New] Canterbury Road, Petersham having a frontage of 134 feet to [New] Canterbury Road and running through to The Boulevard with a frontage of 132 feet." *Leithville* consisted of a drawing room, dining room, four bedrooms and kitchen. A few weeks after the move Elizabeth Elphinston died suddenly and unexpectedly, she was 47 years of age.

The working lives of the first generation of Elphinstone builders was almost at its end by the 1890s and the crash of 1893 destroyed them as it did most of their contemporaries. After serving as an alderman on Petersham Council for nine years, William Jun. died of heart disease in 1894 aged 67 years. His occupation on his death certificate was given as valuator for a building society. In his will, William left his "real estate" to his three unmarried daughters, Florence, Ethel and Annie as tenants in common. Annie's name never appeared in the Sands Directories, so I presume that only Florence and school teacher Ethel lived on at *Leithville*."

* * * *

This is abridged from Pam's letter which details the family's ongoing occupation of *Leithville* according to Sands Directory bearing in mind the occasional renumbering of houses and Sands not always reliably recording. By 1930 *Leithville* was listed at 369 New Canterbury Road. Simultaneously between 1895 and 1930 mostly Ethel and Florence are recorded as being at 83 or 85 or 85½ or 87 The Boulevarde. In the 1903 Sands Directory 85 The Boulevarde is shared with James Johnson of *Dunbar* fame. For many years from the late 1890s Ethel conducted a private school at The Boulevarde address. In any case the two addresses (New Canterbury Road and The Boulevarde) were linked).

A sad postscript relates to the deaths in 1936 of two of Ethel's siblings – James Balfour Jun. who was (according to the inquest) "found drowned probably through accidentally falling into Cooks River in a fit of giddiness"

According to Ashfield historian **Chris Pratten** in *Summer Hill* (ADHS 1999) St Andrew's Church, designed by Alexander Leckie Elphinstone Jun., "is Summer Hill's finest building and must rank among the top ecclesiastical designs in Sydney". In his article *Living with History* (p. 211) about his Prospect Road house *Hillcrest*, built by architect/builder David Elphinstone, Chris says the Elphinstones were "a great family of builders." Many references to Elphinstone buildings appear in the ADHS journals.

aged 69. On the same day James's younger sister Annie died "as the result of a heart attack" aged 65, presumably after hearing of her brother's death. By the 1940s Ethel and Florence had moved to 96 Albany Road Stanmore but died in 1947 and 1949 respectively. *Leithville* suffered the same fate as so many local mansions – replaced by flats!

Pam has some unanswered questions: When was The Boulevard portion of the land sold? When did the Elphinstones sell *Leithville* and move? When was *Leithville* demolished? And no doubt more. It seems the family historian's work is never done!

SPRING TRIVIA QUESTION



Who am I and how am I linked to Marrickville LGA?
Richard 9557 3823 or pemell@tpg.com.au

DR ANDREW REFSHAUGE MP RESIGNS

Members residing in the state electorate of Marrickville would recently have received a letter from the retiring member The Hon. Andrew Refshauge MP. Dr Refshauge was Deputy Leader of the Labor Party for 17 years, Deputy Premier for over nine and had been Minister for the portfolios of Health, Planning, Housing, Education, Treasury, State and Regional Development and Aboriginal Affairs. He had been Member for Marrickville for 22 years. He has been the only local state member since Marrickville Heritage Society began in 1984.

Dr Refshauge has supported MHS in various ways – some heritage watch issues, regularly advertising in our journal and by hosting dinners held at Parliament House – in 1991 (twice), 1994 and 2001. In his August letter he says [the electorate of Marrickville] "is one of the most vibrant, diverse and exciting places to live in NSW. I look forward to spending more time in the electorate now as a proud local resident." Our brochure will be in the post! The Society wishes Andrew all the best as he dives into his life after politics.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR THANKS . . .

I'd like to initially thank all those members who furnish me with letters, cuttings, photos and a variety of other items which are invariably of some interest. As much as possible I endeavour to record and acknowledge contributions. If something submitted has not yet appeared it may well still. I tend to throw little out and often hang on to something with the view to it being used later in conjunction with some other item.

In the past year I have received considerable assistance from **Chrys Meader**, **Glenn Wardmann** and **Natasha Trpezanovski** at Marrickville Council and have again been assisted by fellow committee members who have all contributed to the newsletter in some way in the past year. May I single out **Ali Wright**, who actually volunteered to do an *Our Last Meeting* write-up on top of another one I asked her for. Thank you **Scott MacArthur** for keeping our members informed of our heritage at risk via the newsletter and for writing with such clarity that we lay people can understand. Whether the decision-makers are influenced is another matter. As I say most years, the heritage watch aspect of the society is our most important work. **Lorraine Beach** as president has been most supportive, not just in producing copy, but in her unstinting encouragement.

I'd like to acknowledge the valuable contribution of our runners, who go out in all weathers getting the newsletter and attachments to members. This process saves the society around \$2000 a year in postage. Alphabetically they are Jan Armstrong, **Lu Bell**, **Richard Blair**, **John Blattmann**, **Glynnis Burnet**, **Nigel Butterley**, **June Cameron**, **Iain Carolin**, **Peter Cousens**, **Fred Ellis**, **Rosemary Fallon**, **Joanna Fielding**, **Audrey Furney**, **Barbara Gibbons**, **Monica & Joe Grabowski**, **Shirley Hilyard**, **Laurel & Bob Horton**, **Peter James & Joan Sinclair**, **Cathy Law**, **Hillary Morrissey**, **Pat Mullen**, **Allan Outlaw**, **Ian Phillips**, **Peter Robertson**, **Pamela Stewart**, **Ken Swinbourne** and **Ken Turner**.

Thank you **Pamela Stewart** for continuing to maintain the membership records and handle the postals. It is Pamela who clarifies such issues as fee payments. I ended my stint of several years of driving newsletter deliveries to runners earlier this year when my car gave up the ghost and I decided not to replace it. My search for replacement drivers has yielded a roster of five or six. Thanks to **Keith Sutton** for driving and relief running; to recently recruited driver, **Tony Breinl**; and to **Diane McCarthy**, driver and envelope generator; even though Diane stepped down from committee earlier this year for health reasons, she continued to prepare the monthly envelopes and maintain the master lists of members.

Thank you to the ever cheerful **Ian Phillips** who has never missed a month in almost seven years assisting with getting the newsletter to runners. **June Cameron** and **Ken Turner** deserve a mention for dropping newsletters each month in the Marrickville Library as well to local parliamentary members; likewise **Iain Carolin** delivers to St Peters Library, **Barbara Gibbons** delivers to Stanmore Library, while I drop a batch into Newtown Neighbourhood Centre. **Shirley Hilyard** calls to Petersham Town Hall each month with newsletters for key council staff. Shirley has a perfect 100% score in never missing a proofreading session in eleven years. I really do appreciate your support. We may not always agree, but I know I can always rely on you.

I usually present a small award to one of the runners or newsletter contributors and this year there has never been a clearer winner. Not only does she now have one of the largest runs, but she approaches her 'running' with tremendous enthusiasm and conscientiousness; and like Oliver in relation to the gruel, she asks for more ... deliveries. Thank you **Audrey Furney**.

Richard Blair (abridged from 2005 AGM report)

CALENDAR OF MHS EVENTS

Saturday 24 September
Cockatoo Island Tour
(fully booked)

Saturday 22 October
NSW Railways: 150 Years with Peter Sage

Saturday 26 November
Heritage & highlights of Parramatta River:
Talk by Gregory Blaxell

On Sunday 28 August, the Marrickville Heritage Society attended the New South Wales Post Card Collectors Society's fair held at the Imar Community Hall at Concord. Angela Phippen and Robert Hutchinson ran the stall and sold copies of our latest journal and the 3 Potteries book. Robert did a display of some of his Marrickville postcards, which were of great interest to many of the collectors.

As this happened the day after our last monthly meeting and the very interesting talk by Richard White, it was great to find a greeting card with "COO-EE" on it at one of the dealers' tables. We would like to thank Ron Pollard and the other committee members of the society, for asking our society to attend their fair.

Robert Hutchinson

OUR LAST MEETING

HISTORY OF THE COOEE WITH RICHARD WHITE

The topic for Richard White's talk on Saturday 27 August seemed an unlikely one, but turned out to be amusing and informative. I think most of us came away with a new awareness and understanding of the place that the call *Cooee* has had in developing our Australian national consciousness.

The talk began by showing how the early settlers learnt the *cooee* from the Aboriginal people, using it initially as a way of establishing contact between the two peoples. Richard then proceeded to explain how the settlers used the *cooee* amongst themselves to mean a great range of things (breakfast's ready, bring the ferry over, where are you, and so on).

Stories about the use of a *cooee* in London to reunite Australians there marked the beginning of the *cooee* as a symbol of Australian nationalism, and by the late nineteenth century this had become strongly established. The anecdotes about the *cooee* clock (similar to a cuckoo clock) and the words of the song *Cooee Mary* ("I'm riding on my pony, With a view to matrimony") were well received.

Richard left us after his enjoyable talk on his way to the Latrobe Valley for a *Cooee* Contest. Perhaps this is the beginning of a *Cooee* revival!

Ken Swinbourne

Note: Richard is writing a book on this topic. Anyone with additional material on the *cooee* can ring Richard on 9519 5151 or email richard.white@arts.usyd.edu.au

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HERITAGE WATCH

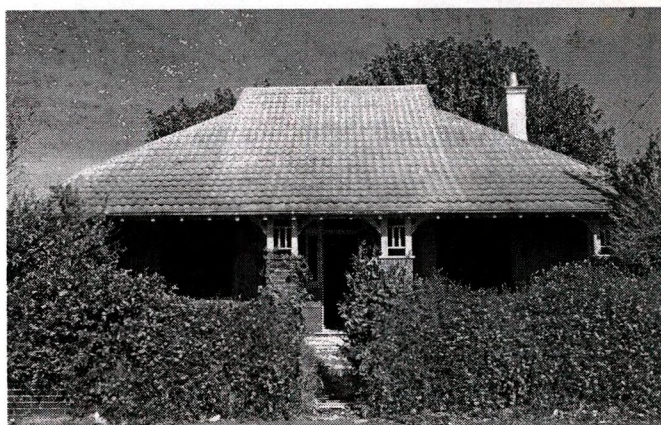
54 FOREMAN STREET TEMPE

Until recently, this charming Federation house sat mouldering in the grounds of Tempe Primary School. Last year a 'For Sale Deceased Estate' sign appeared, followed in short order by removalists, and temporary construction fencing that was more of a visual deterrent to trespassers than truly securing the grounds of the house. It appears the property was being readied for redevelopment, but council had yet to approve it.

As the house was obviously unoccupied and poorly secured, an enterprising demolisher has taken the opportunity to strip the house of all of its valuable joinery and fittings, including the front windows, doors, marble fireplace surrounds and even the marble treads from the front steps! The decorative pressed metal ceilings and verandah joinery that remain indicate that the house had been richly and elegantly finished, and that the pieces that have been stolen would have been of a high quality. The house is now completely open and unsecured, and ripe for firebugs and vandals. The Society understands that Council wants the school to take measures to secure the property and prevent further destruction. Unfortunately, the opportunity to document this house prior to its redevelopment has now been lost.

(Photo: Mark Matheson)

Scott MacArthur



ROTARY DONATION TO MHS

The Rotary Club of Marrickville has long supported MHS through advertising sponsorship of our journal *Heritage*, and in recent months has invited the Society to address two of its meetings. In May Keith Sutton spoke to Rotary about the Sudan Murals in his Petersham home, and in August Angela Phippen addressed a meeting to outline the objectives and activities of MHS. We are gratified by Rotary's interest in and support of the Society, and very appreciative of its generous donation to the Society of \$250. The executive committee will decide on an appropriate use of Rotary's donation.

Lorraine Beach

RG Hely has written in appreciation for receiving *Heritage* 12 which included Ken Swinbourne's article on *Montlingham*, which was Hely's "grandfather's home, then called Rivière. I have enjoyed the other subjects which are most interesting and would complement your committee on an excellent publication." *Heritage* 12 available at \$10; \$12 by post.