

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.

DULWICH HILL ENMORE LEWISHAM
ST PETERS SYDENHAM TEMPE

MARRICKVILLE PETERSHAM STANMORE
& PARTS OF CAMPERDOWN & NEWTOWN



OUR NEXT MEETING

Catherine Brew - Why should I have my house heritage listed?

Saturday 22 October 10 for 10.30 am

Herb Greedy Hall 79 Petersham Rd Marrickville
(see note on right re Peter Sage's 'Railways')

Catherine Brew will give an illustrated talk about heritage listing and what it means for the home owner. She will provide a general overview of the subject, including some case studies and will clear up the common misconceptions about what listing means.



Experiment Farm, which is included on several heritage registers, disproves the misconception that changes cannot be made to a heritage listed property
(photo: Catherine Brew)

Catherine is a landscape architect employed by the National Trust of Australia (NSW). She specialises in cultural landscapes and is responsible for overseeing the Trust's conservation work in cemeteries, parks and gardens. Catherine also runs her own business, most recently working with a team on a Site Management Plan for the Mt Grenfell Aboriginal Site, near Cobar and a Site Management Plan for an art site near Bourke. The latter project won two Planning Institute Australia Awards for Planning Excellence - NSW (2003) and National (2004).

The National Trust is a non-government, not-for-profit, community based conservation organisation working to conserve our built, natural and cultural heritage.

CALLING OUTSTANDING FEE PAYERS!

Any member whose fees are outstanding will receive a reminder slip with their October newsletter. Fees are \$12 concession, \$20 individual or joint concession, \$28 household or organisation. Address below. Enquiries Diane 9588 4930.

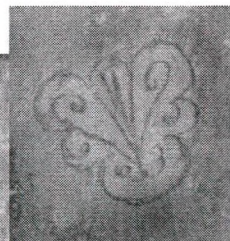
The Society regrets to advise that Peter Sage is unwell and unable to give his long-awaited slide presentation on the history of the state's railways in NSW to coincide with the railway sesquicentenary. The Society has sent a card to Peter on behalf of members, who will fondly recall his illustrated talks on Sydney's trams and Rookwood Cemetery. Not only are his slides of a high quality, but his delivery is entertaining and he has an encyclopaedic knowledge on many topics.

Strenuous efforts were made, in limited time, to find an alternate speaker on railways, but everyone we approached was either off the rails or unable to leave their station on the day. Perhaps we can line up a trained speaker to get us back on track next year!

Following the recent retirement of long-serving state member Dr Andrew Refshauge (see Sep. newsletter), the Society congratulates our new local state member Carmel Tebbutt, who won the recent by-election. Carmel is Minister for Education in the Iemma government. Carmel served for several years on Marrickville Council including a period as deputy mayor.

At the local government level MHS congratulates incoming mayor Cr Sam Byrne who replaces Cr Morris Hanna, who has stepped down after 18 months in the chair. Dimitrios Thanos is new deputy mayor.

WHO IS THE PRELATE?



The emblem on the beret of the 'Prelate' is one of the mysteries Keith Sutton is

trying to resolve regarding the 'Sudan' mural in his house. He'd welcome any clues! An article on the mural, its artist and its images is scheduled for our next journal *Heritage* 13. Keith 9564 6948.

JOURNAL ARTICLES SOUGHT

If you have an article you think would be suitable for publication in the journal, submit it to the Publications Committee, c/- Marrickville Heritage Society; or for further information ring Mark 9559 5502.

OUR LAST MEETING COCKATOO ISLAND – 24 SEPTEMBER

Over 60 MHS members took the ferry from Circular Quay on a sparkling morning to Cockatoo Island, our harbour's largest. Two Harbour Trust guides Tony and Vicki held us captivated for the whole morning with a detailed inspection sharing the remarkable history from convict days.

The last of the convicts were brought here in 1839 and quarried the sandstone for building works around Sydney. Left behind were the dramatic, towering cliffs we see today – remember it was pick and shovel work. Grain silos were carved out of the sandstone and used later as water tanks. Life in the barracks was grim – a plank of timber for a bed and poor ventilation with the guardhouse nearby in case of insurrection. Nowadays there are guard dogs in residence!

Along with slipways and jetties the Fitzroy Dock (1850) and large Sutherland Dock (1890) form part of Cockatoo's great heritage of shipbuilding and repairs. It closed in 1992. We inspected several of the work sites, Turbine Hall and Powerhouse which still has large machinery in place, including a remarkable marble switchboard. Various gawky looking cranes etc. dotted about the site resemble industrial sculptures and the plan is to keep these. Tragically the great icon of Cockatoo, the Titan Crane was allowed to go; while in tow to Singapore, it sank off Port Macquarie.

A long tunnel built straight through the island allowed for quicker access from one side to the other and could double for an air raid shelter. Although not a lot of natural vegetation remained, seagulls are nesting high up in grassy hummocks. Snakes have left but rats have arrived. One has the feeling of ghostly spirits, perhaps of Captain Thunderbolt who escaped in 1863 or maybe of the girls of the industrial school, accused of unseemly behaviour. Disadvantaged boys were housed in reform ships off shore.

Last Easter the island was taken over for a successful pop music festival – the first time in 165 years that the island was open to the public en masse. Cockatoo is a very special place at the centre of change within our working harbour. Thanks to Lorraine Beach for facilitating our tour, a great way to end History Week!

Pam Burden



Rock band Eskimo Joe in concert in Turbine Hall during Easter's Cockatoo Island Festival (photo: Gary Ramage)

THE ASHES OF CRICKET

We enter the domestic cricket season with more interest than usual, following the enthralling Ashes series where England outplayed the long time "world's best cricket nation". Forthcoming matches against the World XI may further expose this vulnerability.

The Ashes legend was created after Australia's first Test win over England in England by a mere seven runs on 29 August 1882. Though we recently lost the Ashes, all is not lost, according to **Angela Phippen**: "The Ashes were created in 1882. Cremation of bodies was illegal in Britain until c. 1884. We should mount a High Court challenge or go to the Privy Council or whatever and argue that the Ashes were created illegally and therefore should now be destroyed!"

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Cricket trivia regarding the Dunbar memorial at Camperdown Cemetery is recorded in *Historic Camperdown & St Stephen's Newtown* (late 1950s). **Rev. TG Rees** notes that "one of the first evidences of the fatal wreck of the *Dunbar* was a package of cricket bats washed up at Watson's Bay with the name of the ship on it".

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Just for the record, on 26 November 2004 cricketer **Bill Alley** (85) died. Bill was born in Hornsby and played grade cricket for Petersham and state cricket for NSW in the mid to late 1940s. Though never a household name in Australia, between 1948 and 1968 he was a well known all-rounder in England in both Lancashire League and county cricket. At 38 he first played for Somerset and in 1961, aged 42, he scored 3019 runs – the last county cricketer to score 3000 runs in an English first class season! In 1962 he was one of Wisden's Five Cricketers of the Year.

He has been described as "one of the best Australian cricketers never to represent his country". He later umpired for 15 years and stood in 10 Tests. His autobiography is *Standing the Test of Time*.

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On a more sobering note cricket followers will be hoping **Adam Gilchrist** performs better this season than he did in England, both in front of and behind the stumps. Everyone, as they say, is entitled to one indifferent series. Almost a century ago, **Bert Oldfield**, arguably the best wicketkeeper of his time, attended Newtown Public School and first kept wickets in the Western Suburbs Junior Cricket Association in Sydney. His team was St Stephen's Newtown Cricket Club and according to TG Rees, Bert continued to worship at that church throughout his life.

Richard Blair

HONOUR TO BERYL WINTER

This is rather esoteric but member Beryl Winter has been awarded a diploma for getting third place in the 2005 Jane Austen Society of Buenos Aires writing competition (maximum length 900 words). The topic was *What Jane Austen might have said or written if she had read Jane Eyre or Wuthering Heights*. First two place-getters from Argentina. Perhaps after Beryl has recovered from her broken hip – unconnected with literary achievement – she can read her winning entry to us!



MHS members inspect historic buildings on Cockatoo Island. Tour report opposite (photo: Lorraine Beach)

MARRICKVILLE FESTIVAL

Congratulations to Marrickville Council and all involved with another successful and well-attended festival on Sunday 18 September. Quality books were sold and heritage information dispensed to many visitors to the MHS stall, and Margaret Sinclair's 'heritage marmalade' was a much-appreciated contribution. Much effort goes into our presence at the festival, both behind the scenes and in presenting to the public. My thanks go to Mark Matheson and Diane McCarthy for securing our stall, to Peter Cousens and Scott Macarthur for our new photographic displays (potteries and heritage watch), and to Ali Wright, Robert Hutchinson, Ian Rumsey, Richard Blair and Lorraine Beach who assisted on the day.

Lorraine Beach

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE WALK

Members will recall the Marrickville Heritage Walk devised, researched and conducted by Diane McCarthy in July 2004. The walk was developed from earlier walks focusing on the central Marrickville precinct. The Society has produced this as a printed walking tour with map. Fifty copies were produced for sale at \$1 each at the Marrickville Festival and it proved so successful, it sold out before day's end. Thanks to Diane for all her efforts and to Ali Wright for the attractive layout and for most of the photographs. Thanks also to Keith Sutton and Richard Blair for proofreading and polishing. It is planned to do an expanded version of the walk for our next journal. Meanwhile this self-guided walk should be available for purchase at future meetings.

Susan Pinson has unearthed this item in St Clement's Parish Notes, 1921: "Marrickville Road. We hear there is a movement at foot for the raising of a loan to enable the Council of Marrickville to make a first class road from Seymours Corner to Dulwich Hill. Such a road would be a boon to Marrickville. It would help to do away with the dust nuisance and give a good road for traffic. The idea is to ask people owning a property on the Marrickville Road and others who are interested in the welfare of Marrickville to lend small sums of money to the Council. We commend the scheme and trust when the appeal is made there will be a liberal response."

Susan wonders if the scheme worked and if donors received their money back before the Depression!"

WOLLI CREEK PRESERVATION SOCIETY

The society was formed in 1984 to fight for the preservation of the bushland areas of the Wolli and Bardwell Valleys (in Canterbury and Rockdale Council areas) from the threat of the M5E motorway. That struggle was eventually successful when in 1999 the Government abandoned a road corridor route through the valley in favour of the now notorious M5E tunnel. At about the same time the Government took up the Society's proposal to form the 60 hectares of bushland into a Regional Park under the National Parks and Wildlife Service. The Minister for the Environment finally signed off on a Plan of Management for the Park in 2004.

This has freed some of the Society's energies for such things as: undertaking volunteer bush regeneration work; leading guided walks with historical and environmental commentary, giving talks to community groups; organising children's activities and running educational campaigns and events for members. We continue to liaise with Government agencies and to lobby hard when needed to further our aims of improving bush and creek health in the whole Wolli catchment and preventing developments that would impact negatively on them.

Peter Stephens (vice president)

Note: Peter: info@wollicreek.org.au or 9554 3176. The WCPS recently joined Marrickville Heritage Society

Rev. TG Rees in his publication on *Historic Camperdown* (cited opposite) describes a part of the cemetery called *Coo-ee Corner* where several local Aborigines were among the first to receive Christian burial: "This is the title given to this corner in remembrance of the Aborigine because 'Coo-ee' is a typical aboriginal word, used by them with slight variations in nearly all parts of Australia. It has become a world famous Aussie word."

"In a report on the discovery and exploration of the Hawkesbury River in 1789 by Captain Hunter this passage occurs: 'In the woods we frequently saw fires and sometimes heard natives. We called to them in their own manner by repeating the word, 'Coo-ee', which signifies 'come here'. Some assert that, as used by the aborigine, it is imitative of the dingo call and howl, and the far-sounding note of the Wonga pigeon'."

VALE MARGARET DORTKAMP

Margaret Dortkamp died on 12 September aged 74 after a long illness. Margaret is believed to have lived her entire life in Thornley Street Marrickville. She attended Ferncourt Public School and St Brigid's High. Margaret was a quiet, friendly woman who joined the Society in 1994 and regularly attended meetings. She worked for some years at Marrickville Council Employees' Credit Union. She was involved with the Pocket Playhouse in Sydenham during the 1960s where she appeared in some plays, worked backstage and front-of-house. Our condolences to her family.

CALENDAR OF MHS EVENTS

Saturday 22 October
Catherine Brew - Why should I have my house heritage listed?
Details on front page

Saturday 26 November
Heritage & highlights of Parramatta River with Gregory Blaxell

Saturday 3 December
Xmas Pot Luck Dinner

LAUNCH INVITATION

Members are invited to attend the launch of the book *Stanley: A Young Man's Colonial Experience* - Rev. Stanley Howard writing to his family in England 1872-1878 **10 am Sunday 6 November** at St Peters Church, 187 Princes Highway St Peters (opposite McDonald's). The book will be launched by **Errol Lea-Scarlett**, author of *Roots and Branches: Ancestry for Australians* and other local histories.

Stanley Howard (1850-1883), after almost completing his degree at Cambridge, becomes tubercular. In 1872, for the good of his health, he sails for Australia. From that moment he records his everyday existence in letters to his family in England. Arriving in Melbourne, he goes on to Sydney, the greater Brisbane area and Canberra before settling in Sydney as curate at St Peters Church, Cooks River and later St Johns Church, Darlinghurst. Travelling extensively, he visits Cobbitty, Berrima, the Blue Mountains, Bathurst, the Hunter Valley and North Queensland.

His wide social circle includes both rich and poor: a future Premier of NSW, a founder of the sugar industry, landowners in the Canberra area, merchants of early Sydney, prisoners at Berrima gaol, brickmakers of St Peters and German settlers in the Botany swamps. Domestic arrangements, meals and medical treatment are recorded, providing a unique insight into 19th century Australian life. The letters are enhanced by editor's notes from contemporary newspaper accounts of the times and biographical details of the people mentioned.

Other people who feature prominently in the book are: Henry A Allan, Breillat family, Rev. William Cakebread, Coates family, Dean & Mrs WM Cowper, Rev. John Done, Mrs Francis Dowling, Mrs Harriet Gibbes, Mr & Mrs Alexander Gordon, Richard Guille, Louis Hope, Rev. RL King, Revs. John and Henry Langley, Michael Metcalfe, Rev. AW Pain, Rev. Pierce Galliard Smith, William & Letitia Price and Alexander Stuart (Premier of NSW).

The book is edited by **Laurel Horton** with research and transcription assistance by **Bob Horton**. 560 pages (245mmx170mm) with 16 pages of original photographs. \$30 plus postage & handling.
Enquiries: Laurel Horton 9558 7504.

PRESIDENT Lorraine 9550 6608
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HERITAGE WATCH Scott 9559 5736
NEWSLETTER EDITOR Richard 9557 3823

SPRING TRIVIA ANSWER

I was Sir Thomas Livingstone Mitchell. I died 150 years ago on 5 October 1855 and was buried at Camperdown Cemetery.

According to *Camperdown A history of Camperdown Cemetery & St Stephen's Church* (1976) Mitchell "was born in Scotland in 1792, saw war service for the

Duke of Wellington. In 1827 he succeeded Mr Oxley as Surveyor-General of NSW. His explorations of 1831, 1835, 1836 and 1845 added vast territories to the colony and gained valuable information on geography and meteorology. He was knighted, awarded DCL (Doctor of Civil Law) by Oxford University, and promoted to Colonel. He died at Carthona, Darling Point and his funeral went from there to Camperdown Cemetery."

This photograph appears in Alan Davies' *An Eye for a Photograph: The Camera in Australia* (\$69.95) The Miegunyah Press, State Library of NSW, 2004 (the same source as the James Johnson photograph, subject of Autumn Trivia). According to Davies "Sir Thomas Mitchell was a feisty character and on 27 September 1851, aged fifty-nine, he fought a duel (one of the last in Australia) with Stuart Donaldson. One ball went through Donaldson's hat, but the duelers both survived and five years later Donaldson became the first premier of New South Wales."

Around this time this "rare [hand coloured] calotype portrait" was taken by photographer William Hetzer, "the first professional photographer to import the process, which used paper negatives to print onto salted paper. Hetzer was able to make calotype portraits in half a minute in the shade, but they compared poorly with daguerrotypes and were not popular."

Mitchell's grave is believed to have been designed by Edmund Blacket. It is near the north wall within an iron railing and the stone slab covering the tomb has a relief of a crossed sword and pen enclosed in a wreath. Four of his children were also buried there. On 20 November 1991 the Institution of Surveyors unveiled a plaque at Mitchell's grave site and later restored the grave. A new plaque to mark the restoration was unveiled on 24 March 1996 by the Governor of NSW, Sir Gordon Samuels, in the presence of members of the Mitchell family.

One hundred and fifty years after his death we again remember this man who Morton Herman described as "one of Australia's greatest colonial figures ... a great explorer, a fine practical surveyor and engineer of no mean order, author, poet, sculptor, artist, engraver, inventor and exquisite draughtsman, the chosen cartographer of Wellington's battlefields ..." (*The Blackets: An era of Australian architecture* 1963).

(No answers received)

Richard Blair

