

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.

DULWICH HILL ENMORE LEWISHAM
ST PETERS SYDENHAM TEMPE

MARRICKVILLE PETERSHAM STANMORE
& PARTS OF CAMPERDOWN & NEWTOWN



OUR NEXT MEETING

Paul Storm *Australiana in the Applied Arts*
Saturday 28 October 10 for 10.30 am start
Herb Greedy Hall 79 Petersham Rd Marrickville

Towards the end of the 19th century it seems Australian artisans were brave enough, proud enough, astute enough to adapt Australiana themes for decorative purposes on all manner of day-to-day items, from doorknobs to documents. Australiana, had of course, been subject matter in its own right from the earliest days of European contact with the continent, but now it was applied to decorate tastefully, or otherwise, practical objects.



*Desert peas
in striking
red, green
and black;
pre-1910
English
T & R Boote
& Co. tile
(photo:
Paul Storm)*

Either from demolitions or flea markets, many examples of a minor portable format have come the way of **Paul Storm**, who presents these with stories of acquisition. Retirement from teaching (German initially, and later remedial maths and reading for high school students) has allowed Paul extra time to concentrate ideas in this field, and also to continue with his amateur restoration dabbings with glass and tiles. Paul conducted the Decorative Tiles walk through Newtown, Stanmore and Petersham for MHS in July 2005.

MHS GARAGE SALE

There is still time to donate retro, classic or bric-a-brac to our garage sale on **Saturday 21 October from 9 am at 70 Hopetoun Street Newtown**. Donations can be delivered or collected (by arrangement). Ring Sue 9519 9980. Come on the day. Proceeds to Society.

**KEEP NATIONAL ART SCHOOL AT
DARLINGHURST & INDEPENDENT!**

MHS STALL AT ST STEPHENS CHURCH FOR NEWTOWN FESTIVAL SUNDAY 12 NOVEMBER

St Stephens Church, Church Street Newtown has kindly invited the Society to conduct its annual stall in its grounds at the Newtown Festival from around 11 am. We will have a comprehensive range of books and journals on sale and a display depicting buildings the Society endeavours to save from harm. South Sydney Heritage Society will have an adjoining stall. St Stephens will be selling refreshments and other items while there may be tours of Camperdown Cemetery. Come to this historic enclave and escape the crush of the festival.

BRICKPIT WALK AT OLYMPIC PARK

Those who ventured to Homebush on Saturday 23 September experienced the fantastic aerial circular ring brickpit walk. As well as the walk being an architectural marvel (award-winning design by Durbach Block Architects) there is an imaginative approach to the presentation of the history of the site, the flora and fauna. Entry is free. Open to the public virtually all year. See inside for Corinne O'Loughlin's report.

EGYPTIAN ROOM FREE TOUR

Members and friends are invited to inspect the Egyptian Room at the Royal Arch Masons United Supreme Grand Chapter at **23 New Canterbury Road Petersham on Friday 10 November at 7 pm**. Tea & coffee will be provided. No charge; no bookings; no disabled access. Enquiries 9569 5699. As indicated in our August newsletter, the Egyptian Room was relocated in 1977 from its original site in the Scottish Royal Arch Temple, College Street, Sydney. An article on the Egyptian Room appeared in *Heritage* 3 (1987).

HOW TO JOIN THE SOCIETY

Send cheque or money order made out to Marrickville Heritage Society with your name(s), address & phone number(s). Address below. Ring Richard on 9557 3823 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 organization \$28. Membership valid until the end of May 2007.

OUR LAST MEETING

BATS & BRICKS AT SYDNEY OLYMPIC PARK BY COACH

Saturday 23 September

My initial impression of the brickpit ring walk at Sydney Olympic Park was somewhat overwhelming due to size and make-up of steel, concrete and glass. The various displays along the walkway provide a great opportunity to learn about how Sydney landscapes were formed — the brickpit contains the oldest rocks in Sydney — and the history of the brickworks which provided over three billion bricks during Sydney's development. It describes the early transport by trawler of bricks on pallets from a jetty at Homebush Bay down Parramatta River to Blackwattle Bay. Since the closure of the brickpit a wetland as habitat has been created for the preservation of the Green and Golden Bell Frog and other native species.

A visit to the Sydney International Tennis Centre Museum, created by four founding members at White City and moved to Olympic Park in 2005, revealed a collection of memorabilia including a library of old magazines, books, photographs, costumes and tennis racquets from many of Australia's great players. The museum aims to show the great successes Australians have had in the history of tennis and to establish an educational section. We saw three films on tennis, one focusing on the evolution of tennis racquets and their manufacture by Slazenger at Alexandria. From the museum we took the walk along the players' tunnel on to centre court whose stands hold 10,000 people. Quite an experience and very hot under foot.



The Heritage State Abattoir precinct was a pleasant setting for lunch. Here we admired the brick and tile Walter Liberty Vernon building, and the beautiful gardens designed by Joseph Maiden, Director of Sydney's Botanic Gardens. Then a leisurely stroll through the Haslams Creek wetlands in Bicentennial Park. Here the Fields Study Centre offers educational opportunities for students.

While Ian Phillips ponders childhood days running around his grandfather's long gone Ewart Street Marrickville tennis courts Princess wonders what the deuce she's doing in a tennis museum (photo: Joanne Sippel)

Together with the brickpit ring walk and tennis museum, we saw many diverse facets of Sydney's history and heritage on the one site. Many thanks to **Joanne Sippel** and **Dora Hutchinson** for providing morning tea and facilitating our tennis museum tour. And thanks to **Sue Miller** and **Scott MacArthur** for coordinating the tour.

Corinne O'Loughlin

Note: The tennis museum has a growing collection of old wooden tennis racquets. Old racquet presses are sought to limit possible warping of racquets; also certain old racquets, though they need to be in good condition and may not be accepted if an identical one is already in collection. If you can help contact Joanne on 9763 7644 or email <jsippel@tennisnsw.com.au>.

1930s POSTIE IN MARRICKVILLE

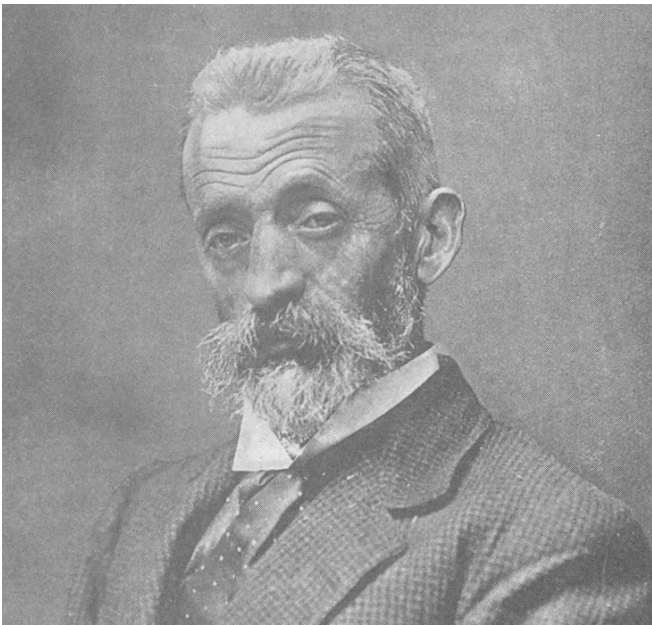


Dapper postman of the mid 1930s outside 39 Pine Avenue Marrickville where MHS member **Shirley Kirkman (née Maclean)** lived in her early years. Shirley's mother took the photo during a birthday party which explains why the smiling postie is wearing a fancy hat while his own hat is perched on top of the picket fence. The house, which was owned by her grandfather, is still standing, but has been altered beyond recognition. The (hard to read) house name has disappeared. Pine Avenue has been absorbed into the eastern end of Pine Street. When her grandfather died, the family moved to 228 Livingstone Road. She attended Marrickville West and later Stanmore School. At 17, she went to West Wyalong for a holiday, met Allan, got married and has lived there since. Shirley is involved with the local historical museum.

SPRING TRIVIA ANSWER: LOUIS DE ROUGEMONT, HOAXER

For a few months in 1898 a thin, bearded traveller who spent much of his life in Australia was the most talked about man in the world. Henry Lawson described him as having “made a bigger splash in three months than any other Australian writer had begun to make in a hundred years”. He was **Louis de Rougemont** and the “splash” followed publication in instalments of *The Adventures of Louis de Rougemont* – being a narrative of the most amazing experiences a man ever lived to tell in the London-based *Wide World Magazine*. The editor of the magazine had claimed he would only print true-life stories. De Rougemont related his amazing adventures living with Aborigines in north-west Australia for nearly 30 years with tales of amazing feats and creatures. However it was not long before these extraordinary claims were revealed to be a fake, and a year later de Rougemont was billed on vaudeville programmes as “The Greatest Liar on Earth”.

De Rougemont was born **Henri Louis Grin** (later also known as **Grien, Grein, Henry Green, Henry Redmond** and **Redman**) in Switzerland on 12 November 1847. He came to Australia in 1874 as valet to Sir William Robinson, Governor of Western Australia. Before long he was travelling around northern Australia (Broome, Cambridge Gulf and Cooktown); he worked as a photographer at Port Douglas, dug for gold around Palmer River, was cook on a pearler and eventually went to Sydney where he married shop assistant Elizabeth Jane Ravenscroft in April 1882.*



Louis de Rougemont 'The World Wide Magazine' 1898

They had seven children, four of whom survived – Blanche, Cecil, Charles and Gladys. He supported his family working as an artist (listed thus in Sand's 1888 Directory along with artist MJ Ravenscroft), enameller, share canvasser, spiritualist, inventor, waiter and real estate salesman. In 1897 he abandoned his family (who later disowned him) fleeing to New Zealand and thence to England where he reinvented himself as de Rougemont. After his brief, though spectacular,

writing and stage careers, his star somewhat faded. He was bigamously remarried in 1915 to Thirza Wolf, but died a pauper in London in 1921, having been admitted to the infirmary under the name Louis Redmond, while the wooden vessel containing his body bore the name Louis Redman.

Ironically, according to Clune, there was a priest named Louis de Rougemont (author of a treatise on the 'Virgin Birth') “whom Butler Henri had buttled while in the employ of Sir William Robinson.” Grin had even named his oldest surviving son, born in 1888, Cecil de Rougemont Grien.

Henri Grin and Elizabeth married at the Presbyterian manse of St Enoch's Church in Wellington (now Chelmsford) Street Newtown; the marriage index gives his name as Henry Lewis Green. The family lived at several local addresses including Stanmore Road Stanmore, Marian Street and Station Street Newtown, though precise dates and locations have not been ascertained. Grin worked as a waiter in a Newtown cafe. (Note: John Le Gay Brereton, Banjo Paterson and Mary Gilmore were submitted by members; though wrong, each made more than a “splash” and were far superior writers to Henri Grin!)

Sources: Frank Clune, *The Greatest Liar on Earth* (The Hawthorn Press, Melbourne 1945) who described Grin as “the first and greatest of the Aussie leg-pullers”; James Blair, *Grin's Fairy Tales* “The Etruscan” (Bank of NSW Journal), Vol. 6 No. 3, 1956, who puts Grin “in the class of Baron Munchausen for tall stories”; and most recently, Rod Howard *The Fabulist: The Incredible Story of Louis de Rougemont* (Random House, 2006) – a comprehensive account of Grin's life. I am indebted to member **Norman McVicker** for alerting me to Howard's book and the local connections; and to **Rod Cox** for BD&M information.

Richard Blair

Member **Ron Smith** knew some of the boxers of yesteryear and as a kid once helped push **Vic Patrick's** car to get it started. He used to watch Vic and others train (“as long as we kept quiet”) at **Ern McQuillan's** gym on the corner of King and Holt Streets Newtown in the 1940s before it was burnt down. Later, Ern McQuillan relocated his gym to its better known location at the old Oddfellows Hall in Wilson Street Newtown which he ran until his retirement in 1983.

AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH

If you're a one-movie-a-year person, then this is the one. Should you not give a toss about global warming and climate change (but who, these days, would dare admit that?), you should still see this documentary. Even PM John Howard told Al Gore he might see it! Some may argue it is too alarmist or that some facts are unsubstantiated. But then, Gore was actively concerned and writing about the global environment long before he became vice president for eight years under Bill Clinton. He remains a possible future president. And those who felt Gore a bit dull when VP, will be surprisingly entertained and illuminated.

CALENDAR OF MHS EVENTS

Saturday 21 October

Garage sale

Saturday 28 October

Paul Storm: *Australiana in the Applied Arts*

Sunday 12 November

**Stall at St Stephens Church Newtown
(part of Newtown Festival)**

Saturday 25 November

Trocadero Newtown & RPA Museum

Saturday 9 December

Pot Luck Xmas Dinner

UNITING CHURCH MARRICKVILLE 135TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS SUNDAY 22 OCTOBER

Corner Illawarra & Warren Roads Marrickville

10.30 am church service with Mediator Uniting Church NSW Jim Mein followed by Basket lunch & display of historical photographs.

2.30 pm organ recital \$10 individual, \$25 family.

1880 organ built by colonial organ builder CJ Jackson and installed at the Marrickville Uniting (Roseby) Church in 1971. Enquiries Irene Carder 9789 3197.

THE ASHES EXHIBITION

Museum of Sydney corner Bridge & Phillip Sts Sydney 21 October-8 November. Daily 9.30 am-5 pm; Wed 25/10 & 1/11 until 9 pm. \$10, concession \$5

On the eve of Australia's endeavour to regain the Ashes, a unique but brief chance to see the famous Ashes Urn usually housed at Lords Cricket Ground. Discover the fascinating story behind the Urn and see rare blazers, bats, scorebooks, photographs, paintings and other Ashes Test cricket memorabilia.

LOCAL GRADE CRICKET MUSEUM

En route home from our recent Olympic Park tour, several members visited the newly-opened museum of cricket memorabilia in the Petersham Oval grandstand. Exhibits relate to grade cricket both at the Randwick-Petersham club and the former Petersham-Marrickville club. The museum will be open most Saturdays throughout the cricket season. Entry free. Ask for Bobby, Ray or Robyn.

MARRICKVILLE FESTIVAL

The Society had a successful day at the Marrickville Festival on Sunday 17 September with its stall appropriately next to the Marrickville Heritage Promotions Committee's stall on Marrickville Road. Thanks to Sue for coordinating the stall, assisted by Scott, Mark, Robert, Pat, Susan, Rowena, Richard and Ian; also to Margaret for her perennial Heritage marmalade and Diane for the labels.

PRESIDENT Scott 9559 5736

HERITAGE WATCH Scott 9559 5736

TREASURER Stuart 9560 8070

NEWSLETTER EDITOR Richard 9557 3823

BSR IN A SHEA'S CREEK WOOLSHED

Scott MacArthur's piece on the remaining endangered Shea's Creek woolsheds in Alexandria in the last newsletter reminded me that just after World War II, my husband Geoff's uncle, Ray Thurston (who lived in Drummoyne) went into partnership with his friends Bob and Stan to form BSR Welding and Fabrication Co. Ltd. They rented a woolshed on the Marrickville side of Shea's Creek (3rd or 4th along from bridge) and remained there until the mid 1950s.

The shed was made of hardwood and there was a big row of them facing the polluted creek. Ray did welding, and made roller conveyors and steel fabrication. He got his break when he received the contract for making garbage bins on a stand. His wife Grace initially put on the rollers and painted them. Later the partnership broke up and Ray moved the business to Condell Park, where it continues today, carried on by his grandson Michael.

Joan Francis



SHEA'S CREEK / ALEXANDRA CANAL

This aerial photo of the woolsheds lining the Alexandria Canal is from the RTA and is part of a series *From the skies: aerial photographs of Sydney in 1943*. Shea's Creek was named "in honour of Captain Shea,* one of the early residents of Sydney" (*Alexandria 1868-1943 The Birmingham of Australia*). Hard to believe the creek was an early source of Sydney's water before it serviced market gardens, wool scours, tanneries and boiling-down works. In 1901 the creek was renamed Alexandria Canal (after the wife of King Edward VII, despite the suburb being Alexandria) although plans for the canal to link Cooks River and Parramatta River fell through. After World War II many of the woolsheds were hired out (see above) including two on the Alexandria side which became depots for NSW state government records (known as Shea's Creek) before these records were relocated to Kingswood. The Marrickville LGA sheds, left of the canal, have been demolished while only three of the Alexandria sheds, to the right of the canal, survive.

Richard Blair

* Possibly Marine Officer Captain John Shea, who sailed on the HMAS Scarborough in the First Fleet. He died on 2 February 1789, giving him the dubious honour of being the first officer to die in the colony.