

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.

DULWICH HILL ENMORE LEWISHAM
ST PETERS SYDENHAM TEMPE

MARRICKVILLE PETERSHAM STANMORE
& PARTS OF CAMPERDOWN & NEWTOWN



OUR NEXT MEETING

A Cast Iron Walk 'Round Old O'Connell Town
With Robert Hutchinson & Scott MacArthur
Saturday 17 March 1.45 for 2 pm
Meet at St Stephens Church, Church St Newtown

This free walking tour is a Heritage Festival event and it falls fittingly on St Patrick's Day, as O'Connell Town was named after Irishman, Sir Maurice O'Connell, who married Governor Bligh's widowed daughter Mary Putland. O'Connell Town was a land grant to Gov. Bligh and is now a small section of north Newtown. Come and discover how decorative cast iron was used to enhance the often terraced houses built in the late 19th century. Bookings essential 9559 5736.



Detail from curved end of a balcony from 'Ornamental Cast Iron in Melbourne' by E. Graeme Robertson

**SYDNEY HARBOUR BRIDGE
TURNS 75: SEE INSIDE**

Cooks River Arts and Sustainability Festival
Sunday 15 April 11 am-4 pm
Steel Park, Marrickville South

**NATIONAL TRUST HERITAGE FESTIVAL
3-18 MARCH**

MARCH NEWSLETTER ENCLOSURES

- For the second time we enclose a brochure for the Autumn issue of the **Australian Heritage Magazine**. AHM has subsidised distribution of this newsletter and AHM has been given no member contact details.
- For any Society to continue to prosper, new members are always sought. Hence we are enclosing a **simplified membership form**. You may have a relative, friend or neighbour interested in joining. If they join now, membership will extend until end of May 2008. Remember we are an apolitical organisation.

HARBOUR CRUISE IN APRIL

Our April meeting will be another cruise on Saturday 28 April, 10 am to 2 pm aboard MV *James McCabe*, same boat as last year. Morning tea and BBQ lunch served on board. Ample seating. This year we'll explore the northern reaches of the Harbour and, conditions permitting, Middle Harbour and Bantry Bay. More details, costs and contact information in April newsletter.

WELCOME TO NEW HERITAGE & URBAN DESIGN ADVISOR

The Society welcomes **Vanessa Holtham**, Council's new full-time Heritage & Urban Design Advisor. Vanessa has an architectural, planning and heritage background and is excited about taking up the position. As soon as she started in this position, Vanessa was involved with coordinating the annual Marrickville Medal award (results of which will appear in our April newsletter). Contact number 9335 2114.

HOW TO JOIN THE SOCIETY

Send a cheque or money order made out to Marrickville Heritage Society with your name(s), address & phone number(s). Address below. Membership includes monthly newsletter, journal *Heritage* and monthly talk or outing. Ring Richard 9557 3823 for a brochure or further information. Concession \$12, individual or joint concession \$20, household or organisation \$28. Join now and membership is valid until the end of May 2008.

**EARTH HOUR
SYDNEY TURNS OFF ITS LIGHTS
SATURDAY 31 MARCH 7.30 PM
www.earthhour.org**

OUR LAST MEETING

Heritage Colour Schemes for Australian Houses 1880s-1930s

There was a bumper attendance at our first meeting of the year on Saturday 24 February where **Michael McCowage**, heritage colour consultant, gave a lively talk on the important and final task of any restoration, that of determining and executing a colour scheme. And depending on the era when styles of houses varied, so too there was a tradition of colours to enhance your building; visually and in value.

What is colour? The dictionary defines it as, "noun: sensation produced in the eyes by light of different wavelengths being reflected or transmitted by a substance. The most obvious property of a colour is its hue, the basic ones being red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet." But how does it get into a tin?

By slides we saw how photographs give great clues to help reinstate missing elements thereby conserving the heritage of the house before the final touch – the paint scheme. These clues from the photographs, even faded black and white, show light and dark tones whether it be cast-iron balustrades or verandah roofing painted in stripes. Paint scrapes, early colour charts, and even old paint tins found under the house are clues.

Then to the 'before and after' slides; not only grand houses but simple timber and brick cottages, and a charming little dunny, before our eyes, all restored to their former glory by the colour schemes of a master consultant. The slides included some local examples. We thank Michael for enlightening us with his very interesting talk.

Shirley Hilyard

AUTUMN TRIVIA QUESTION

What is that which is a friend and an enemy, a blessing and a curse, which saves life and takes it away; is long and short, round and square, rough and smooth, straight and crooked, hard and soft, hot and cold, and most wanted where it is in the greatest plenty; which accommodates itself to all palates; is sweet or of a bad smell, strong and weak; sometimes able to bear the greatest burdens, but at other times will not bear a pin; for which men make long journeys, though they have it in the greatest plenty at home; it is subject to reflection, and has the power of dissolving matrimony; it has the privilege to kiss the lips of the fairest ladies, assist them in dressing, and is highly instrumental towards improving their charms; it is a sign of grief and joy; it is subservient and overbearing, death and an antidote, causes famine and plenty, is a fluid and a solid, a mountain and a valley – has a numerous offspring, yet is an enemy to children; it is the theme of poets, an improvement of music, of great use in fortifications, employed in the finest paintings, and produces the noblest architecture in the world?

(Clue: a maybe not so inconvenient truth; answer is elsewhere in this newsletter)

MARRICKVILLE COUNCIL & OPENING OF SYDNEY HARBOUR BRIDGE

"This year the Sydney Harbour Bridge celebrates the 75th anniversary of its official opening. Marrickville Council actively participated in the original celebrations, held on 19 March 1932. Under the guidance of Mayor, Frank Broome Wright, Marrickville Council joined with Canterbury and Bankstown Municipal Councils to create a Captain Cook themed motorised float. The float was constructed at Schweikert's Garage on Marrickville Road and was decorated with thousands of crepe paper flowers and imagery depicting Captain Cook and his ship, *Endeavour*. The float was one of the first motorised vehicles to cross the bridge."

Visit Council's History Centre at Petersham Town Hall until the end of March to view a display showcasing Council's original contributions to the opening celebrations (source: Historical Fact from *Inner West Courier* 6 February 2007 supplied by Marrickville Council History Services).

HISTORIC WALK OVER BRIDGE

On **Sunday 18 March** from 10 am to 7.30 pm is a rare chance to walk across the roadway of the Harbour Bridge to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the bridge opening on Saturday 19 March 1932. Walkers are asked to pre-register on <www.ourbridge.com.au>.

Linked with this momentous occasion is the first annual **National Trust Day** also on 18 March 10 am-6 pm at the National Trust Centre on Observatory Hill. There will be stalls, a Noodle Market, entertainment and competitions.

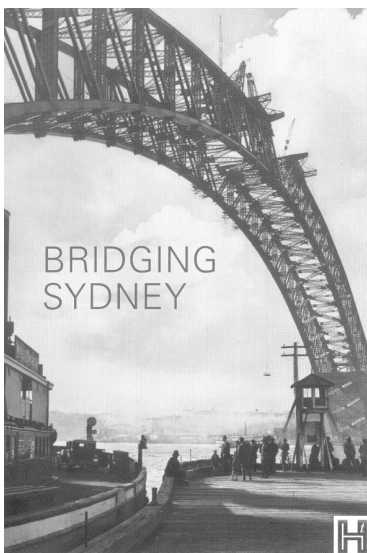


Fort Street girls lead the first students across the Sydney Harbour Bridge on Childrens' Day, 16 March 1932 (p. 70, Ronald S Horan 'Maroon & Silver: Fort Street Sesquicentenary 1849-1999' (Honeysett Press 1999))

The 75th anniversary exhibition *Bridging Sydney* continues at the Museum of Sydney on the corner of Bridge & Phillip Streets until 29 April daily 9.30 am-5 pm.

* * *

Virtually everyone knows the story about Capt. Francis de Groot upstaging Premier Jack Lang and cutting the ribbon at the official opening of the Harbour Bridge.



The Bulletin of 23 March 1932 carried this John Frith cartoon, one of several which illustrated an anonymous article containing these immortal lines:

*Now this is the Bridge,
But the question is moot:
Was it opened by Lang
Or was it de Groot?*

HENRY LAWSON PLAQUE UNVEILED

"Another rainy night on Petersham platform. I don't remember what I was doing there unless I had been out late to see about a job. The sickly gas lamps again, the wet shiny asphalt (sic), the posters on the mean brick walls close at hand, the light glistening on the enamelled iron notice saying 'Second Class Wait Here', and I alone and tired as usual and cold with a shoddy overcoat coarse as sacking and warm as a refrigerator. But it was hear (sic) I struck the keynote or the keyline, of 'Faces in the Street'." (Henry Lawson *A Fragment of Autobiography*, MS 1903, Mitchell Library).*

On Sunday 4 March a plaque, which includes part of this quote, to 'poet and storyteller' Henry Lawson (1861-1922) was unveiled by Marrickville Mayor Cr Morris Hanna, OAM. The ceremony was conducted by Marrickville Historian Chrys Meader who said Lawson had lived locally, perhaps for a time at the Carrington (now White Cockatoo) Hotel. MHS member Jack Teiwes read *Faces in the Street* and *My Literary Friend*. (Ironically, Jack shares with Lawson a Norwegian ancestry.) The ceremony was held at Petersham Town Hall and morning tea was served. Bureaucratic delays by Railcorp prevented the plaque being affixed on time at Petersham Railway Station. Here is the third verse of *Faces in the Street*:

*In hours before the dawning dims the starlight in the sky
The wan and weary faces first begin to trickle by,
Increasing as the moments hurry on with morning feet,
Till like a pallid river flow the faces in the street -*

*Flowing in, flowing in,
To the beat of hurried feet -*

* This was the preface to Peter McLaren's article *The Petersham Footbridge: From Grime to Glory?* in *Heritage* 8 1994, p. 1

GENEROUS DONATION TO SOCIETY

The Society wishes to acknowledge the thoughtful donation from the recently defunct **Lewisham and Petersham Residents' Group** for 'the future benefit of the citizens of the Marrickville Municipality'. The Lewisham and Petersham Residents' Group, founded in 1979, was largely involved in issues relating to pollution and traffic management and organised two festivals in Petersham Park in the early 1980s.

Remaining members, Rod Young and Brian Nugent, decided that the Marrickville Heritage Society was the most appropriate destination for their donation of \$2153, being the existing funds on the winding up of the group. The Society is most grateful to Rod and Brian for their consideration and we can assure them and our members that the donation will be used in a respectful and appropriate way.

Keith Sutton

We note the passing on 18 February of **Eleanor Muriel Hughes, previously Dr Eleanor Nixon**, late of Hunters Hill. A former MHS member, Eleanor was in medical practice in Fort Street Petersham 1946-1985 and wrote an article for *Heritage* 2 in 1985, *Memories of Fort Street, Petersham*. Her family's practice dated back to 1882. Eleanor was in a nearby operating theatre during her residency at Lewisham Hospital on 31 January 1946 when a plane crashed into the hospital killing three people. She attended the 50th anniversary ceremony of that event in 1996.



FAREWELL TO PRINCESS

Ian Phillips's little dog, a Sheltie, who unobtrusively attended our meetings and tours as an associate MHS member for nearly 15 years, sadly died last month. She had widespread admirers wherever she travelled, be it by backpack, bicycle

pannier or on foot. Her gentle personality softened many people throughout Marrickville and beyond. Was she the ghostwriter of *Wag of a Dog's Tale*, a report on a Cooks River walk in the October 1996 newsletter? Ed Jones's photo *Backpacker Extraordinaire* was in the September 1996 newsletter. Fond memories.

AUTUMN TRIVIA ANSWER

Water. Source: *More Puniana or, Thoughts Wise and Other-Why's* edited by Hugh Rowley, Chatto & Windus 1875, page 113. Rowley also asks, 'How can you prevent water coming into your house?' 'Don't pay the rates.' The final word on water, however, is from Mark Twain who quipped, 'Water taken in moderation cannot hurt anybody.'

CALENDAR OF MHS EVENTS

Saturday 17 March

A Cast Iron Walk 'Round Old O'Connell Town

(Week early due to State Election)

Details on front page

Saturday 28 April

Harbour Cruise – see front page

TEMPE WALK

On behalf of the St Peters Cooks River History Group and as part of the Heritage Festival **Laurel Horton** is conducting a Tempe Walk **Saturday 31 March at 2 pm**. Free. Meet at Tempe Railway Station. Bookings essential 9558 7504.

RiverLife Cooks River Tours

Free but limited spaces. Bookings essential: Marrickville Council 9335 2222 for venue.

Sunday 25 March 10am-12 noon

(also on Sunday 27 May)

Cooks River Sweet & Sour History and Photo Tour Old photographs are compared with current locations.

Sunday 1 April 10 am-12 noon

Bridge To Bridge Discover the advantages provided by local bridges throughout history.

Sunday 15 April 9.30 am-12.30 pm

Discovering Your Neighbourhood Loop tour from Tempe to Undercliffe and back via Wolli Creek, discovering this area's beauty, character and rich history.

Sunday 22 April 10 am-12 noon

Cooks River Clearwater Revival Bicycle tour from Canterbury to South Strathfield.

COOKS RIVER FORUM

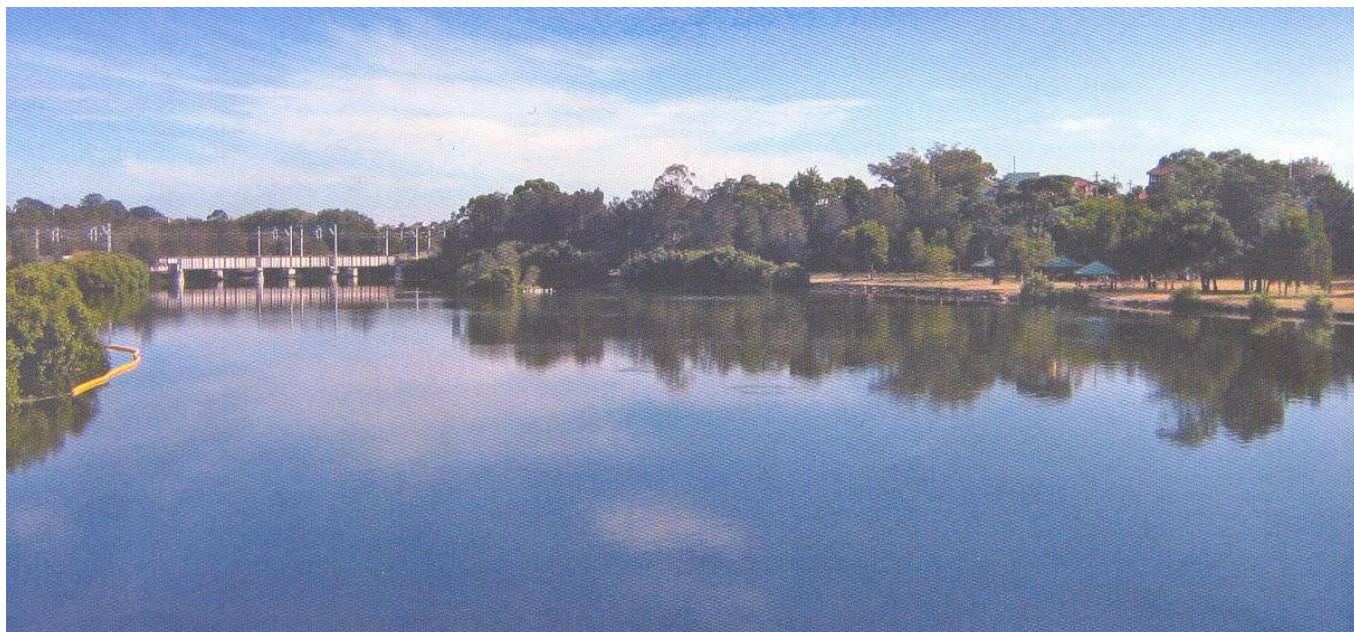
Over 200 people attended the latest forum organised by the Cooks River Valley Association, on Saturday 24 February at Canterbury-Hurlstone Park RSL Club. Several associated organisations had information stalls. The forum was addressed by politicians from the major parties (ALP, Liberal & Greens) and by Dr Richard Sheldrake, Director-General, Department of Natural Resources.

We learnt that the decades-old sheet piling on the river banks, now deemed inappropriate, will soon be removed; that \$150,000 is the projected cost to install much needed gross pollutant traps along the river; and that a state proposal to give refunds for aluminium cans and plastic drink bottles is under consideration. Contradictory opinions were expressed about the effects of dredging. There was considerable concern about the projected growth in population when the existing infrastructure inadequately copes with the excessive litter which ends up in the river from stormwater, as generated by the existing population.

Global warming, the drought and the national water debate have focused attention on Cooks River like never before and it is hard to keep abreast of the range of community groups and initiatives. Members are urged to suss out the websites for the Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority, the Cooks River Foreshore Working Group, Cooks River Valley Association, Wolli Creek Preservation Society, Friends of Ewen Park, and Mudcrabs Eco Volunteers, to name a few; Marrickville Council and other Cooks River-associated councils have effective projects.

Also, there is the Cooks River Integrated Interpretation Strategy which aims to tell the stories of the river. The contact person is Cath Renwick 0419 491 104 or <cathrenwick@optusnet.com.au>. Finally I learnt that Lesley Muir, OAM, is to spend part of her retirement writing a book about the history of Cooks River.

Richard Blair



PRESIDENT Scott 9559 5736

HERITAGE WATCH Scott 9559 5736

TREASURER Stuart 9560 8070

NEWSLETTER EDITOR Richard 9557 3823

*Cooks River, Kendrick Park and railway bridge
(from Cooks River Community Update of the Sydney
Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority)*

COME TO COOKS RIVER FESTIVAL 15 APRIL