

# MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.

DULWICH HILL ENMORE LEWISHAM  
ST PETERS SYDENHAM TEMPE

MARRICKVILLE PETERSHAM STANMORE  
& PARTS OF CAMPERDOWN & NEWTOWN



## OUR NEXT MEETING

### Annual General Meeting

**Saturday 26 June 10.15 for 10.30 am**

**Herb Greedy Hall 79 Petersham Rd Marrickville**

The president invites all members to our 26th Annual General Meeting. Reports on the progress of the Society over the past year will be presented and all executive committee positions will be declared vacant. Nominations for president, two vice presidents, treasurer, secretary, assistant secretary and up to six committee positions may be made in advance in writing or on the day. Committee meetings are held on the first Monday evening of each month (except January). For more information about the committee or meeting requirements ring Richard on 9557 3823.

Members are reminded that they must have paid their 2010-11 membership fees to stand for office, to nominate or second a candidate, or to vote at the AGM. Fees can be paid on the day or beforehand. The AGM will be followed by lunch consisting of soup and bread, pat , cake, tea and coffee. Stay and mingle with fellow members and the new committee.

## WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Robert Irving, Dulwich Hill; Maree Doyle, Pamela Horsnell & Jamie McIlwraith, Mary Oakenfull, Jane Robertson (rejoined) all of Marrickville; Alfred Rankin, Tempe; Elizabeth Uhler, Abbotsford; Helen Cooper, Ashfield; Hazel Blair (rejoined), Hurstville; Janet Hemming (rejoined), Potts Point.

## MHS ANNUAL FEES NOW DUE

Watch for the light blue coloured slip with your newsletter which we would like returned with your membership renewal. No slip means either you're paid up, have joined recently or your slip was lost in transit. You may pay at AGM or post a cheque or money order made out to Marrickville Heritage Society with your slip to PO Box 415 Marrickville 1475. You can also now renew by direct debit (see below). Ring treasurer Diane on 9588 4930 if you have any queries. Fees remain: concession \$12, individual or joint concession \$20, household or organisation \$28.

## Fee Renewal by Direct Debit

For the first time MHS members can renew their membership fees by direct debit:

Name of Account: Marrickville Heritage Society Inc. (Account No. 85663) with Sydney Credit Union (BSB 802 804). **Make sure you add your name as reference for payment.** Any queries ring Diane 9588 4930.

## 2010 is International Year of Girl Guides

### The resurrection of Colchester Hall

If you go down to Woodcourt Street today you're in for a big surprise! A year ago the c. 1880 two storey villa at **11 Woodcourt Street Marrickville** was extremely run down. Having survived two fires (in 1985 and 1996) it had been exposed to predatory redevelopment. Fortuitously it 'phoenixed' and now presents as affordable accommodation of exceptional standard.

An early occupant of *Colchester Hall* was James Beaumont, a painter, house decorator and builder and a Marrickville Council alderman 1880-81, who in 1885 moved to *Woodcourt*, very close to *Colchester Hall*, which stood on the Woodcourt Estate until its 1907 subdivision. *Colchester Hall* was owned by the Farrugia family from 1956. Antonia and Gerard not only lived in this 'mansion', raising five daughters, but also used it as a boarding house. They sponsored and fostered migrants from Malta & Italy until they became self-sufficient.

From the mid-1980s Antonia Farrugia yearned to have *Colchester Hall* renovated and more functional but this mammoth ambition never eventuated in her lifetime. However last year, the Boyce Group, who have been involved in other local affordable housing projects, purchased *Colchester Hall*. They worked with the Farrugia family to realise Antonia's vision. In collaboration with heritage architect, Greg Patch, they created a sensitive design, with faithful reproduction and detail, quality workmanship, materials and fittings — it's now a resplendent jewel in that leafy tree-lined street.

Just recently, as it approached completion, I happened upon this 'surprise' as workmen were leaving for the day. One, with seeming pride, boldly exclaimed "Great, isn't it!"

**Ian Phillips**



*Colchester Hall Marrickville* (photo: Richard Blair)

## OUR LAST MEETING

### Marrickville Road history walk with Laurel and Bob Horton

On 22 May about 30 of us (to the amusement of some shoppers) gathered outside Marrickville Town Hall for a history walk with **Laurel and Bob Horton** along both sides of Marrickville Road between Livingstone and Victoria Roads (c. 1 km). As the history of the 1922 Marrickville Town Hall and the Winged Victory (currently dismantled for preservation work) are well known, this report will focus on other Marrickville Road buildings. First, some background.

Prior to 1855 much of the Marrickville area was market gardens. After the steam tramline opened in 1881 and the population increased, the business area shifted from Chapel Street (about 750 metres) and market gardens started to slowly disappear under the subdivisions of private residences, shops, hotels, churches and other businesses that went up along Marrickville Road. The road itself was unsealed and this created a lot of dust which was dampened with water carts. As late as 1910 the block of land between Frampton Avenue and Victoria Road was still a market garden until its subdivision in 1911. With electricity being officially switched on in October 1928, Marrickville Road became known as the *White Way* due to all the hanging lights under the awnings.

Among the earlier buildings was the 1879-97 *Empress of India* (one of Queen Victoria's titles), a hotel on the corner of Illawarra Road. This corner had been known as *Blackguards Corner* where shrubbery kept the cock and dog fights hidden. Later hotels here included the Marrickville Hotel, since 1988 called the Marrickville Tavern, though much reduced in size. The corner opposite was rounded off to allow the trams to turn easily. Another hotel, the *Royal Exchange* on the corner of Garners Avenue has been on the same site since 1888.

St Clements Church was built in two stages from 1898. The church was not consecrated until December 1914 complete with its almost 41 metre high 10.2 tonne steel spire with zinc interlocking plates and eight bells within the brick tower. Cinemas were popular with the *Victoria* (1911-24), *Hoyts* (1921-59) and *Kings* (1937-71). All were decorated with state of the art designs and ornate furnishings. Among other entertainments available were several billiards saloons and a *Gentleman's retreat*. The *Excelsior Hall* (1894-1913) at no. 193 was the venue for debates in 1899 on the Federation Bill.



Marrickville Pork Roll in Illawarra Road (off Marrickville Road) was formerly a travel agent, but is fondly remembered as a men's public loo! (photo: Richard Blair)

Many buildings display the names and dates of construction. Half-demolished buildings, such as on the corner of Petersham Road, continue to reveal old advertisements giving clues to previous occupation. An early post office was vacated for one purpose-built opposite (1891), designed by

James Barnett. This has now been modified with the front portion now a cafe. Seymour's Store from 1913 stood on the corner of Marrickville and Victoria Roads as a *Universal Provider*. The building was destroyed by fire in 1940. On the opposite corner atop the Travel Spot building, a dance scene around a Hills Hoist in the 1992 film *Strictly Ballroom* was filmed.

Private houses included *Clyde Cottage* (1883), *Walmer* (1887), *Hinemoa* (1906), *Ormond* (1908), *Montrose* (1912). Probably around 1910 as the horseless carriages started working their way up Marrickville Road, *Ormond*, on one corner of Petersham Road was replaced by a motor garage. It is now a Chinese restaurant. *Clyde Cottage* was demolished for Schweikert's Garage, which later housed McFarland's Pianos and now Bing Lee. *Walmer* next door to *Clyde Cottage* became a private hospital well into the 1930s. *Hinemoa* is today a doctor's residence and surgery.

Many thanks to **Laurel and Bob** for their enlightening tour which was supplemented by illustrations, photos and readings from old cuttings and advertisements. Thanks also to **Ian Phillips** for his audio on wheels.

Iain Carolin

## TELSTRA MUSEUM VISIT

On the third stroke it will be 9 . . . 55 . . . and 20 seconds beep beep beep . . . On the third stroke it will be . . . Those with long memories will recall this but whose mellow tones were they? When was the last official Morse code message sent in NSW? And which was the first post office in the state to have a public automatic exchange? These were some of the questions answered on the Society's visit to the Telstra Museum in Bankstown on Tuesday 18 May. This impressive museum is a communication artefact treasure trove and what is displayed is only a fraction of the collection. With Morse code (invented by **Samuel Morse** and **Alfred Vail** in the 1830s) each letter had its own code consisting of combinations of dots and dashes. An expert could transmit at lightning speed. The last Morse code telegraphic message in NSW was sent to Bombala in 1962. Telegraphy developed through subsequent systems, but the telegram became obsolete with developments in telephone usage, computerisation and the digital age.

Our enthusiastic guides showed how private and public telephones and exchange systems evolved from 1878, the transmission of photographs, teleprinters, telex machines and all other manner of telecommunication. By the way, Hunters Hill post office had the first suburban exchange in NSW; Newtown post office had the first public automatic exchange. And, from November 1954, broadcaster, critic and actor, **Gordon Gow** spoke those immortal and timely words 8640 times a day until September 1990, when this 'talking clock' was replaced by a digital system, the replacement voice being former ABC broadcaster, **Richard Peach**. The museum is open Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 10 am (gold coin donation). Many thanks to **Brian Mullins** and his museum team and **Ian Phillips** who suggested the visit.

. - . . . - . - . . . . - . - . - .  
- . . . . - . - . - . - . . . - .

(alias **Richard Blair** with thanks to **Samuel Morse** and his long-overlooked collaborator **Alfred Vail**)





*A garage named 'Marrickville' at 1 Kuku Street, Te Awanga, a coastal village south of Napier, New Zealand. But why so called? When this photo was taken on a recent trip to NZ, no one was home and a neighbour said the previous owner, an elderly man, had recently died. Another of life's unsolved mysteries! (photo: Richard Blair)*

## A Marrickville soldier's letters find a home

Mum (Florrie Scott nee Gosper) kept all her old letters and photos in a battered tin trunk in her bedroom and I loved looking through them when I was a small girl. I'd often ask her about the people in the photos and the letter writers — sometimes I got an answer, sometimes not. There was a bundle of letters written during World War I and a faded photo of a young soldier in an old frame. Who was he, I wondered? Mum said he was Walter, an old boyfriend and he came back from the war, but she didn't marry him.

Mum died suddenly over 40 years ago and I went through her photos and letters. There were several postcards from "Wal", two Christmas cards from "Mr & Mrs Werner" of John Street Petersham and, eureka, a card from "your loving boy Walter Werner". Inside the card was an ink drawing of a little bear saying "to my wife". Walter had written "not yet". So it was a serious romance. I had to find out more.

Letters to the "Werners" in the phone book and residents of "Doonbrae" in John Street Petersham were fruitless. Something would turn up — and it did. I found out Mrs Werner, a widow, moved to St Ives in the late 1920s. Walter had enlisted as recruit 2667, private, on 21/9/1916 and sent to the 5th A.N.T.S.\* His occupation was "motor driver". He later joined the 38th infantry battalion and returned to Australia on 21/1/1919. He wrote interesting letters in a good, clear hand. There seemed to be no further contact between them after his return.

They had probably met when my grandfather (Edwin Gosper) worked for Johnson's Bakery in Stanmore. Mum was the bookkeeper and did the orders. Papa bought the Acme bakery, Katoomba, in 1913 and the family went to live there. Walter's first letters (written in September 1914) were sent there.

I thought the letters and photos deserved to be kept somewhere safe — they have little relevance to my family and I'd hate to see them destroyed after being kept for almost a century. As I know Carmel Andrew from Marrickville History Services, I gave her the photos and letters and now they're in a safe place. They're just a small part of Marrickville's social history and maybe, in the future, someone connected with the Werners will find them.

**Joan Francis**

\* Possibly Australian National Training School.

## The Siege of Union Street

Number 143 Union Street Newtown, which has just gone under the auctioneer's hammer, is a house with a history. Seventy nine years ago this month, on 19 June 1931, when the house was still a small two-up, two-down terrace, it was under siege from a force of dozens of armed police, watched by an angry crowd, in a bloody confrontation aimed at evicting the tenants for failure to pay the rent. It was the height of the Depression.

Trigger-happy police fired into the house which was barricaded with sandbags and defended by tenants and a force from the Unemployed Workers Movement. A bullet hole is still clearly visible in a bedroom door. The police were victorious after just 20 minutes, liberally bashing the defenders with their truncheons and leaving the downstairs room "absolutely bathed in blood", as the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported next day.

The house is now gentrified and extended, and would be scarcely recognisable to the tenants from 1931. As would their long narrow street, now lined with cars and upmarket, renovated terraces worth upwards of \$800,000. Nadia Wheatley's novel *The House that was Eureka* is based on the siege. A new book, *Radical Sydney: Places, Portraits and Unruly Episodes* by Terry Irving and Rowan Cahill, published this month by UNSW Press, includes a chapter on the siege.

The next Marrickville Heritage Society journal (*Heritage* 13), to be published later this year, will include an article with more detail on the siege and the circumstances surrounding it.

**Yvonne Preston**

**Carl Green**, Executor of the estate of our late member, **Michael Pearce** (see last newsletter) wrote in appreciation of receiving the newsletter to advise "Michael truly loved the whole heritage and fibre of the Inner West and despaired when development encroached. He eagerly showed his history books to friends and neighbours, and was always taking people to sites of interest, even in his final weeks. Michael was highly appreciative of the efforts of the Society and always admired its acumen and activism."

## WINTER TRIVIA QUESTION

Which denomination and where in Marrickville LGA was this church? Ring Richard 9557 3823 or email c/- MHS bottom back page.



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Saturday 26 June**

**MHS Annual General Meeting**

Details on front page

**Saturday 24 July (morning)**

**Petersham North walk with Geoff Ostling**

**Saturday 28 August**

**Joinery with heritage architect Alan Croker**

### **Riverlife Cooks River Interpretive Tour**

**12 June Saturday 2-4 pm**

**Bridge to Bridge Tour: walk up three bridges - talk up local history on Cooks River!**

Meet at Canterbury Station for an historical discovery of the infrastructure and built history of Cooks River.

All welcome. Free but spaces limited. Bookings essential: Strathfield Council 9748 9999.

***Sin city: crime and corruption in 20th century Sydney***

Justice & Police Museum, Phillip & Albert Sts, City

Daily 10-5 until 22 May 2011.

## REPRESENTING MHS

Australiana, old photographs of Sydney, and Marrickville Pottery are bailiwicks of MHS Vice President **Robert Hutchinson** and on Tuesday 25 May, as part of Library Week, Robert presented *Potteries of Marrickville* at Marrickville Library. At this well-attended event Robert spoke to slides of Fowlers, Diana and Studio Anna pottery and discussed the pottery on display. Such was the interest in the talk, that several copies of the book, *3 Marrickville Potteries*, published by MHS in 2004, were sold.

**Diane McCarthy**, Treasurer, spoke to the Marrickville Rotary meeting on Monday 31 May at the Royal Exchange Hotel on *Shopping in Marrickville in the 1950s and 1960s*. A cheque for \$125 was presented to Diane for an advertisement in the forthcoming MHS journal *Heritage* 13. Marrickville Rotary has been a great supporter of MHS over many years, and has sponsored almost every journal.

## Historic army information sought

**Lance Corporal Paul Fleming** is co-producing a publication on the **14 Field Artillery Brigade** and **53 Field Artillery Brigade** that were based in Addison Road barracks in Marrickville around World War II before departing for and after returning from New Guinea. He seeks information and photographs about the history, building locations or members of these brigades.

**Contact details:** Lance Corporal Paul Fleming  
53 Battery, School of Artillery, Bridges Barracks,  
Morobe Road, Puckapunyal, MILPO Victoria 3662 or  
email: paul.fleming2@defence.gov.au or phone (after  
hours) 03 5792 1238.

**PRESIDENT** Richard 9557 3823

**TREASURER** Diane 9588 4930

**HERITAGE WATCH** Sonia 9519 3137

**NEWSLETTER** Richard 9557 3823

## HERITAGE WATCH

### Reprieve for Sydenham Church

Council's Land Use, Assets and Corporate Committee met on 11 May and was asked to approve a recommendation by Council's Technical Services officers to demolish the Railway Road Sydenham Church, previously Tempe Park Methodist Church, now known as the Coptic Church. Three opponents of demolition addressed the meeting: **Lorraine Beach**, vice president of the Society, **Bishop Brian Iverach**, Anglican Catholic Church of Australia, and **Voya Rajic**, Marrickville resident. The outcome was that Council has requested costings on essential works to make the building usable, interested parties are to be permitted to put in their submissions for operating the church, and Council will seek required funding from state and federal governments. The church's future will be considered again in July and we will keep you informed.

**Lorraine Beach**

### Old Dulwich Hill building gone

MHS was emailed in early May by **Lucien Buddle**, a concerned non-MHS member, asking if the Society was aware of the demolition of a very old cottage at **538 New Canterbury Road Dulwich Hill** over the Anzac long weekend. The Society wasn't. He stated: "the cottage looked as if it was built in the late 1800s, possibly 1860-70s. I would think it was one of the oldest cottages in the area. I was too late in taking a photograph, so the only photo I can produce is from Google Maps. I fear the old red brick church next to where the cottage stood, may also be under threat of demolition as barriers surround the church as well."

Lucien sent a second email saying he'd been advised by Marrickville Council that the cottage was demolished as part of the schools stimulus package, initiated by the NSW government, assisted by federal government funding. The cottage was part of St Pauls of the Cross school and a new library will be built in its place. The original 1907 brick church, long used as a hall, will be spared, but according to the application, one of the side walls of the church will be demolished. The larger 1926 church is adjacent.

It seems the demolished building was once used as a church hall. It seems no building on a church or school site or one acquired by a church or school is sacred; especially where the Nation Building and Jobs Plan (State Infrastructure Delivery) Act 2009 is applied which exempts relevant projects from complying with certain development control legislation. Never mind heritage concerns when it comes to expediency!

**Richard Blair**



↓ marks demolished building next to St Paul of the Cross hall  
(from Google Maps as forwarded to MHS)