

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.

DULWICH HILL ENMORE LEWISHAM
ST PETERS SYDENHAM TEMPE

MARRICKVILLE PETERSHAM STANMORE
& PARTS OF CAMPERDOWN & NEWTOWN



OUR NEXT MEETING

David Levell's *Tour to Hell: convict Australia's great escape myths*

Saturday 24 October 10 for 10.30 am

Herb Greedy Hall, 79 Petersham Rd Marrickville



Tour to hell (UQP 2008) uncovers a fascinating and little-known aspect of Australia's early convict days – the myths of escape that fired many dreams of liberty throughout the penal colony, particularly amongst convicts transported from Ireland. The idea that China was just a few days' walk northwards was widespread amongst the first Irish trans-

portees. Others were convinced an urbanised white society existed nearby in the bush, or that 'a white settlement called Timor' lay a short distance overland. Many fled penal labour in quest of such mythical places, sure they would be offered sanctuary or a way home.

David Levell's acclaimed *Tour to Hell* received an Honourable Mention at the Manning Clark House National Cultural Award (2008) and was Commended, Melbourne University Publishing Award 2008 (Fellowship of Australian Writers National Literary Awards). A local resident, David has worked principally as a writer, journalist and television producer, having produced or directed some 20 documentaries. He has had a range of articles and short fiction published and in 2003 helped Australian WW2 commando Brian Walpole complete his poignant memoir *My War: Life Is For Living* (ABC Books, 2004). His partner, Josephine Pennicott has had fantasy and crime novels published.

As a curtain-raiser we will hear from another author and member, **Bruce Preston**, who will discuss how he has released his local mystery thriller *The Lion and the Covenant* in print on demand format, in the context of the general evolution of the book. The Society will also bestow life membership on long term member **Robert (Bob) Thompson** (see article inside). It is hoped our speakers will bring their books to sell whilst there will be a sale of some old MHS book stock. And come early for morning tea!

Marrickville Residents for Reconciliation invite members to Melanie Hogan's 53-minute film *Kanyini* which looks uniquely at the world's oldest culture. Marrickville Church of Christ hall, 389 Illawarra Rd **7.30 pm Wednesday 14 October**. No bookings. Entry \$5 (requested donation). Enquiries Peter 0432 142 027.

The Society plans to again run a stall in the grounds of St Stephens Anglican Church, Newtown during the **Newtown Festival** on Sunday 8 November.

**MHS Newsletter 25-year index now available:
Bob Thompson's Introduction inside**

FORUM ON HERITAGE LEGISLATION

With the significant recent changes to heritage protection laws in NSW, Marrickville Heritage Society is holding a forum on the future of heritage in NSW on **Saturday 31 October at 11.15 am** at Newtown Neighbourhood Centre (upstairs) 1 Bedford Street opposite Newtown Railway Station.

We have invited a political representative from each of the major political parties to attend. We have had acceptances from **Brad Hazzard**, Liberal State Member for Wakehurst and Shadow Minister for Planning; and **Sylvia Hale**, MLC and Greens spokesperson for Planning. We invited Kristina Keneally, Minister for Planning and Labor MP for Heffron, but she declined. We then invited Carmel Tebbutt, Deputy Premier, Minister for Health and Labor Member for Marrickville: no reply as yet, though we've been reliably informed a **Labor representative** will attend. The fourth member of our panel will be from the **National Trust** (NSW).

Each speaker will be given ample time to present his or her views with a Q&A to follow. The meeting will be chaired by a Society member. We welcome all MHS members, their guests and interested members of the public.

In accordance with our constitution, a) "the Society is independent of, and unassociated with, any political party"; and b) among the aims of the Society is "to promote the preservation, restoration, conservation, maintenance and use of all places, buildings, monuments, relics, ruins, records and archaeological sites of historic, architectural, cultural and environmental significance, both locally and nationally in the Marrickville Local Government Area".

Enquiries Richard 9557 3823.



Unearthed in Metropolitan Road Enmore: a rare course of sandstone cobbles around a camphor laurel. Believed they could date from Enmore subdivision in 1880s or earlier (photo: Richard Blair)

OUR LAST MEETING HISTORIC WALLSEND & MINMI

With the state's second severe dust storm in days, on Saturday 26 September, 42 MHS members and friends boarded a coach heading north to tour Minmi and Wallsend. Our host **Geoff Hassall** joined the coach along with our Minmi guide, **Kerry Hinds**, who explained how this coal mining town grew between 1830 and 1850. Set in a valley, the Minmi Hotel has been in continuous operation since 1865; Minmi's only remaining old church recently is now a Coptic Church servicing the Newcastle region. A 1908 guard's van, donated by Coal and Allied as a symbol of Minmi's mining heritage, has pride of place in the park.

Geoff presented an overview of Wallsend's history. In 1860 the Newcastle-Wallsend Coal Company started the first coal mine in Wallsend, but soon after, some miners broke away to form the first Cooperative Mine on the grounds of the present day school. James Fletcher, known as "the Miner's friend", was involved in forming the Cooperative. He was also the first mayor of Wallsend in 1874. Not much of the mine is evident today and the old railway has disappeared. The original station building was removed and relocated, brick by brick, in the school grounds. Unfortunately, due to lack of interest the building has been neglected and is now derelict, with most of the railway records discarded by council.

On entering the stone St Luke's Anglican Church we were told that the original church was built in 1863 but fell into disrepair and was re-erected in 1880 at a cost of £900. Their pride and joy is the (1855) organ which was purchased for £100 from St Mary's Anglican Church in Maitland around 1881.

After splitting into four groups a windswept walking tour took my group around the streets, stopping at the oldest house: *Clarens House* (1887) originally owned by the postmaster, William Johnson. We passed the 1896 Terminus (previously the Travellers Rest) Hotel which used to be opposite the railway, but is now a private residence. Then on to the Pender Bros 1880s School of Arts, built by subscription. All the citizens paid 6d per brick and received a badge for their contribution. Some nine hotels in the town (now businesses or private residences) showed how popular the town once was.

Our afternoon walk started at the imposing new library where we viewed an exhibition of emigrants at the Greta Migrant Camp (1949-60), the second largest such camp in Australia. It housed many Russian and European immigrants who settled in Wallsend and surrounding areas. Then on to the town square with its bust of James Fletcher; its well-restored rotunda, still used for events and festivals; and Lyndal Beazley's 1997-98 concrete mural depicting the difficulties and tragedies of life in a mining town. Opposite the square are the original post office (1882) and court house (1878), no longer used as such but both lovingly restored to their original grandeur.

The 1989 Newcastle earthquake resulted in many of the older buildings and houses being demolished by council, some perhaps unnecessarily, to make way for wider roads without concern for the local heritage. One that was saved was the heritage-listed Wallsend Goods Shed (1877). In 2007 many buildings were flooded by storms due to poor drainage design.

The Russian Orthodox Church of St Nicholas (1964) is brick and was built by the congregants with little tradesmen experience. It contains a pulpit and Icons around the walls, but no seating, characteristic of a Russian church.

Thanks to the organisers: primarily our man in Wallsend, MHS member **Geoff Hassall** (who suggested the visit) and his team of Allan, Ian, Kavil and Kerry) in coordination with **Lorraine Beach**, **Richard Blair** and **Diane McCarthy**. Thanks also to our caterers: **St Luke's** and **Russian Orthodox churches** (delicious morning & afternoon teas), the **Colliery Inn** (lunch) and **Ted Green** (sweets on the coach).

Hillary Goldsmith

PEACOCK LANE NEWTOWN

Recently gazetted from a previously unnamed dead-end lane, Peacock Lane runs off Alice Street and is behind 493-503 King Street Newtown. The name is from the two-storeyed Peacock Jam Factory (c. 1880) which stood at 8-28 Camden Street and also housed IXL Frozen Foods. The 1986 Marrickville Heritage Study stated it featured "an exceptional 19th century industrial facade and is a good example of an inner city jam factory which would have been a major local employer"; factors which didn't save it from being demolished about 20 years ago. At 31-41 Bridge Road Stanmore was a larger Peacock Jam Factory (formerly occupied by the Stanmore Preserving Company).

POSTCARD FROM SAMOA REVISITED

The deathroll and trauma caused by the recent tsunami in Western Samoa brings to mind **Gregory Robertson**, an early active MHS member whose journal articles included *Mourning Victory: The history of the Winged Victory*, (*Heritage* 2, 1985). In 1992 Greg went to work with the Australian Embassy in Samoa. The August 1992 newsletter contained *Postcard from Samoa*. Some excerpts:

"I still have my home in Petersham but am currently living in a small paradise called Samoa. I have been particularly busy since I arrived, in my diplomatic posting here as Second Secretary responsible for Australia's aid program to Western Samoa. The worst cyclone in 100 years (which defoliated 90% of the country) hit the country a week before I did."

"There is a very rich and interesting culture focussing on singing and dancing. Handicrafts include wood-carving, the weaving of fine mats and tapa making. The traditional culture has been overlaid during the colonial period with many other interesting aspects. There are many fine old German buildings and houses in the capital, Apia, as well as a very rich endowment of beautiful churches. The home of Robert Louis Stevenson is at Vailima and is currently undergoing renovation for the 100th anniversary of his death here in 1894. From my home, 1000 feet above the Pacific, I look directly across to the small white tomb where Tusitala, or the 'teller of tales', as he was known, is buried."

"The country is rich in natural beauty, verdant landscapes, dramatic waterfalls and soft grey and apricot sunrises. I feel very strongly that whether a person lives in Petersham or Samoa there are always things of beauty to value and preserve for the future."

25-YEAR INDEX FOR NEWSLETTER NOW AVAILABLE ON PDF FILE

Robert (Bob) Thompson, formerly of Tempe, was the Society's second president (1986-87) but since 1993 he has been quietly beaver away on a neverending work-in-progress: indexing the MHS newsletter. He previously produced three parts of this index in hard copy, but has now completed a 25-year index to the end of June 2009, which will be available on a PDF file. The introduction to Bob's index appears below and as Bob says, "much of what is published in the Newsletter will appear nowhere else, so an index to its contents is vital."

I can only endorse Bob's view that "the initiatives and activities of Marrickville Heritage Society will ensure its relevance to a wider society, encouraging the protection of our heritage into the future." The index will soon be emailed to members. It will also be available on CD or in hard copy format (all 175 pages) for a small charge to cover costs on request. The CD will also be donated to Marrickville Council and RAHS. Hopefully the PDF version will be updated annually.

Richard Blair, newsletter editor

* * * * *

INTRODUCTION TO 25-YEAR INDEX

The first issue of Marrickville Heritage Society's Newsletter appeared in June 1984, just a short time after the formation of the Society. That first issue boldly declared itself to be 'vol. 1 no. 1'. That we are now able to present an index to Volumes 1 to 25 is due to the determination and skill of each of the editors and contributors who have continued to produce a publication of such high quality.

An early decision taken by members of the Society was that it should be an active organisation, rather than a remote one where members would simply pay their subscriptions and leave all the work to a committee. Because of its superb program of activities it has become a true 'society'. The resulting comradeship has seen members working together to preserve not only the built environment of Marrickville but, perhaps more importantly, our social history as well. The story of Marrickville's people is a vibrant, ongoing one in which each of us continues to play a part. And while members' research will uncover and document more of our past, the initiatives and activities of Marrickville Heritage Society will ensure its relevance to a wider society, encouraging the protection of our heritage into the future.

The Newsletter records each of our excursions and the speakers — from within and outside the Society — who have entertained and informed us; the fascinating, the horrifying and the sometimes bizarre in Marrickville's unique story. It documents the awarding of the coveted Marrickville Medal and the achievements of the ever-vigilant Heritage Watch Committee. Indeed, much of what is published in the Newsletter will appear nowhere else, so an index to its contents is vital.

The first index to the Newsletter covered the period from June 1984 to June 1996 and was supplemented by two further parts, for the periods July 1996 to June 2000 and July 2000 to June 2004, respectively. These are now incorporated into a revised and expanded

index covering the first 25 years of the life of the Society. In addition, the names of new members — more than 1200 entries — have been recorded, according to when their name appeared in occasional lists of new members in the Newsletter, having joined MHS shortly before that month.

Inevitably, because the index has been compiled over some 16 years, inconsistencies have crept in. I have quoted the subject entries from the text of each edition of the Newsletter, except for those with an ongoing coverage, whose entries are grouped under one title, or at least appear in a block. Spelling of surnames has, where possible, been standardised.

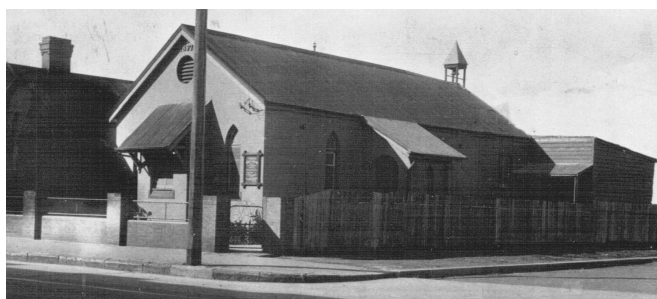
I congratulate the Society on its 25th anniversary and hope that it continues to thrive as new generations take up its work.

Robert Thompson

MARRICKVILLE MEANDER

Given the only deviation from Marrickville Road on **Sunday 20 September** was along David Street, this was hardly a meander, however, **Laurel and Bob Horton** (operating away from their specialist area of St Peters-Tempe) conducted an informative tour of Marrickville Road between David Street and Victoria Road. Under the auspices of the **National Trust After-Hours committee**, the tour, which attracted participants from all over Sydney, ended in Marrickville Town Hall where afternoon tea was served and members of the Theatre Organ Society of Australia entertained the group on the famed Wurlitzer organ. Perhaps the versatile Hortons may one day lead MHS members along Marrickville Road!

SPRING TRIVIA ANSWER



Diane McCarthy knew this was **St Andrew's Church of England** at 144-6 Victoria Road, on the corner of Victoria Road and Chalder Street Marrickville, but also that this picture with story was in the April 1998 newsletter. Member **Ken Turner**, who has always lived in Marrickville, remembers the church, whilst **Geoff Ostling**, whose father, Bill, was rector of the mother church of St Clements from 1972 to 1982, has a comprehensive knowledge of the church history.

The date on the church is 1897. According to the 1898 Sands Directory it was originally called St Clements Mission Hall, but it was later renamed St Andrews and by 1908, 200 children attended Sunday School there with 17 teachers. By the 1950s that part of Marrickville had become highly industrialised and most services at the church had finished by 1958. The building was sold in 1963 and the memorials were transferred to St Clements. St Andrew's was demolished soon after to make way for a nondescript factory.

Richard Blair

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Saturday 24 October

David Levell's *Tour to Hell*

Details on front page

Saturday 31 October

Heritage legislation forum

Details on front page

Saturday 28 November

Peter Golding talk on John Joseph Cahill

Saturday 5 December

Pot Luck Xmas Dinner

Saturday 27 February

Alan Croker talk on Joinery

MARRICKVILLE FESTIVAL



Lorraine Beach & Robert Hutchinson on festival stall (photo: Jacqueline Yetzotis)

The crowd at the festival on **Sunday 27 September** seemed well short of the anticipated 50,000 people. Perhaps the gusty (if sunny) conditions blew them to other venues, but

nevertheless the occasion was very festive.

On the stall, we were asked the whereabouts of the former South Sydney Women's Hospital in Camperdown; we were told about a WW2 bunker allegedly still in the grounds of Wilkins Public School; we were asked to sign a petition opposing the gigantic proposed Lewisham Towers (see below); and we learnt of various forebears hatched, matched or despatched in the environs. We gained four new members. Robert Hutchinson's postcard display of yesteryear's urban streetscapes attracted much interest whilst sales of the *Pictorial History of Marrickville*, assorted local walking tours and Margaret Sinclair's *Heritage* marmalade were brisk. Thanks to the helpers: Bruce, Carole, Colin, Ian, Lorraine, Richard, Robert and Sue; and also to Margaret (marmalade) and Diane (jam labels).

HERITAGE WATCH

There has been a groundswell of community opposition against developer plans for the **former Marrickville RSL site** on the grounds of height, bulk, streetscape, noise, increased traffic, closeness to railway line, safety issues and the narrow Illawarra Road.

Lewisham Towers

For details about the proposed overdevelopment bordered by Old Canterbury Rd, Longport St and the goods line go to <nolewishamtowers.org>. The developer has bypassed council and gone straight to the state government for approval under Part 3A rules.

PRESIDENT Richard 9557 3823

TREASURER Diane 9588 4930

NEWSLETTER EDITOR Richard 9557 3823

Old Enmore Public School site

The DA proposal to transform the former Enmore Public School building into 15 apartments with parking on site for 20 vehicles has been lodged with council and is available on the website. It looks as though it will have minimal impact externally on the building, but will still have a major impact on the interiors.

Three windows on each of the north and south elevations are to be lowered to the same level as two existing ones, and no changes are proposed to the street elevation or the roof. The rear lane elevation will be lined with garages. The proposal includes strata subdivision, which may be a double edged sword. It would discourage more invasive alterations, but would also discourage conversion to a more appropriate use, should that possibility arise in the future.

Built in 1887 to the design of William Kemp, a leading school architect, and altered in 1905-6, it has remained remarkably intact since then. The place is listed by Marrickville Council as a heritage item and is also on the Dept of Education and Training's Section 170 register, but is not listed on the State Heritage Register.

The subdivision of the interior will remove substantial sections of the original internal walls and floors to allow multi level units and the introduction of stairs and services. Four of the units are on the ground floor only, while the others are over either two or three levels, with a mezzanine inserted into most of the high ceilinged first floor classrooms. The documents note that the existing timber ceilings are to be retained where possible, but experience suggests that they may still be damaged, particularly the ventilator panels and the cornices where the new walls are inserted.

In spite of a prolonged campaign by the local community and MHS, the major damage has already been done by the government in selling the property, particularly the special condition that it must not be used as a school or education facility by anyone other than the government. This condition can only be removed by the minister or via a court appeal. This discourages anyone from keeping the large classroom spaces as they are, and is arguably an act of state vandalism promoting the inappropriate use of much needed former public assets. Definitely contrary to best Burra Charter practice, and a tragic loss to the community.

Alan Croker

Newtown Railway Station

The Society has written to the Dept of Planning largely supporting plans to upgrade Newtown Railway Station involving improved access by a lift and retention of the two-storey tramway building.

However the Society has strong concerns with the proposed walkway and structure along King Street (as depicted on the cover of the *Inner West Courier*, 13/8/09). This structure seems totally out of keeping with the architectural integrity of the heritage-listed 1880s Newtown Railway station building. The proposed rooflines would more befit a Thredbo Ski Resort and part of the roofline is perched directly in front of the Interwar Town Hall Hotel. The proposed walkway half blocks the hotel and fails to blend in with the streetscape, whose architectural integrity has remained remarkably uncompromised. The Society's concerns are being forwarded by the Dept of Planning to the Heritage Council for their October meeting.

Richard Blair