

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.

DULWICH HILL ENMORE LEWISHAM
ST PETERS SYDENHAM TEMPE

MARRICKVILLE PETERSHAM STANMORE
& PARTS OF CAMPERDOWN & NEWTOWN



CALENDAR OF 2010 EVENTS

Saturday 27 February
Alan Croker, Heritage Architect on Joinery

Saturday 27 March
Parramatta Female Factory Precinct et al

Saturday 24 April
Grace Karskens *What sort of colony?*

The President, Richard Blair and the executive committee wish all members and their families a Merry Christmas, a safe and Happy New Year.

MARRICKVILLE DRAFT LEP

As foreshadowed in our September 2009 newsletter and as reported in Marrickville Council's December 2009 *Marrickville Matters*, "the draft Local Environment Plan (LEP) and Development Control Plan (DCP) are moving into their third, and final, stage. This represents years of work going back to the 2007 Marrickville Urban Strategy, and more recently the Marrickville Village Centres Study, the Heritage Review, and the St Peters Village Masterplan, as well as associated public consultation processes.

"Council has now requested the Department of Planning endorse the draft LEP for public exhibition. The draft LEP can be viewed on Council's website. Supporting documents and studies are also available. The draft LEP is the first full review of Marrickville planning controls – such as permissible land use and the amount of development that can occur – in 30 years. This is in response to the Department of Planning target of 4,150 additional dwellings for the Marrickville local government area for the period to 2031.

"Key aims of the plan are to revitalise the business centres, retain and generate new affordable housing and protect the character and diversity of Marrickville Council's suburbs. Industrial areas will be renewed, breathing new life into Marrickville's communities, and at the same time preserving local heritage and the character of our neighbourhoods. Everyone will have a chance to contribute to the final contents of the LEP and help establish the future direction of the area.

"The draft LEP is also proposing to reduce the potential for medium density development in out-of-centre locations, and to introduce 33 new heritage conservation areas and approximately 120 new heritage items."

It is expected the draft LEP and DCP will be placed on public exhibition early in 2010. All citizens will be invited to make submissions to Council.

New Year's Day 2010 marks the 200th anniversary of Lachlan Macquarie becoming, in 1810, the Colony's fifth governor. He was to serve for 12 years. The Summer 2009 *Insites* magazine of the Historic Houses Trust contains several articles on the Macquarie era.



MHS member, **Keith Sutton**, receives his RAHS Certificate of Achievement from RAHS President **Dr Ian Jack**. The citation reads 'for his dedication to the recognition and preservation of the heritage of the Marrickville area and his practical guidance to the committee of the Society'.

See page 3 for report on 2009 RAHS conference.

(photo: Lorraine Beach)

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Jan Pickering, Greg Ross, both of Dulwich Hill; Heather Davie, Jean Hartman (rejoined), Greg Jones, Cas Liber, Jacqueline Yetzotis, all of Marrickville; Dale Kreibig, Nora & Frank Salter, all of Newtown; Barbara Cox, Petersham; Eva Lederhilger (rejoined), Max Phillips & Clare Sives, all of Stanmore; Beverley Martin, Blacktown.

NEWSLETTER RUNNER SOUGHT

Seeking a member living in central Marrickville (near Calvert St) willing to deliver a few newsletters each month. Ring Richard (phone number back page).

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) and email. Address is below. Ring Diane 9588 4930 for a brochure or further information. Membership includes monthly newsletter and monthly talk or outing. Concession \$12, individual or joint concession \$20, household or organisation \$28. Membership renewable on 1 June 2010.

OUR LAST MEETING

Peter Golding's biography *They called him Old Smoothie: John Joseph Cahill*

Former journalist Peter Golding chose to write about Joe Cahill largely because no-one else had! He interviewed many people who knew him and Peter told members and friends at our meeting on Saturday 28 November personal and often amusing anecdotes to bring to life the real JJ Cahill. Biographies and jigsaw puzzles, he said, have a lot in common. Some pieces are big and some small; some are hard to find. But all have to be found to make the picture complete.

The son of Irish immigrants, Cahill was born in Redfern in 1891, was taught at Patrician Brothers College Redfern and by the Good Samaritan nuns in Marrickville. Not a good student, he left school at 13; his first job was sweeping floors at Eveleigh Railway Workshops before becoming an apprentice fitter and turner. He was sacked for taking part in the 1917 railway strike leading to his first bout of unemployment.

For 47 years he and his family lived in an ordinary house in Marrickville (44 Warren Road). He was always "Joe" to everyone and could be contacted by looking up his name in the telephone book. Each Sunday he and his family went to Mass at St Brigid's Marrickville where he often took up the collection plate. He enjoyed playing "500" on Sunday nights with his family, but hated losing, even though they only played with matches. He was happy playing with his children and grandchildren, or walking in the Royal National Park, dressed in old shorts and shirt.

However, he was a born politician. He was shrewd, fair, and left no doubt about where he stood on issues. He was always focused on his goals, a hard worker, a good man who had a deep concern for Australians like himself. His first attempt at Parliament was unsuccessful, but in 1925 he won the seat of St George after 17 ballots. He lost this seat in 1932, but such was his determination that in 1935 he won the seat of Marrickville – a very "Labor" seat, very Irish and very Catholic. The 9 am Mass at St Brigid's was known as the "Politicians' Mass"!

In 1942, Labor was returned to power, and Cahill became Minister for Works and later Minister for Local Government. He built badly-needed schools and hospitals, restructured local government, introduced compulsory voting in municipal elections, fixed up the electricity supply, and was largely responsible for the County of Cumberland Scheme (the Green Belt) and the Snowy Mountains Scheme. Although loyal to his leaders, Cahill wanted to be Premier and in 1952 he achieved this goal. He held this position for 2758 days, dying in office in 1959 after three successive heart attacks. As Premier, he removed trams from the Harbour Bridge, gave his name to the Cahill Expressway and legalised poker machines, whilst his greatest gift to the people of Sydney was the Sydney Opera House.

Joe was one of Marrickville's greatest sons. He felt that ordinary people have a God-given right to the good things of life and that, regardless of background, anyone could reach the top with hard work and dedication. Just as he did. Enthusiastic applause followed Peter's most informative talk. Many thanks Peter.

Joan Francis

Note: Peter Golding's biography of Cahill is available in bookshops for \$49.95 hardcover and \$40 paperback.

RAILWAY AVENUE STANMORE ODDITIES

Previously canvassed in this occasional series were **Grove Street, St Peters** (July 1997 newsletter: odd numerical sequence of street numbers); and **Liberty Street, Stanmore and Enmore** (February 1997 and February 2007: where numbers run in opposite directions on either side of street).

A new candidate is **Railway Avenue, Stanmore**. On the southern or railway side of the street, the only dwelling is at the Kingston Road end (on the site of the former Philadelphia Chocolate Factory, where The Australian Pickle & Condiment Co. Ltd. was previously located: see newsletters March 2001 and August 2002). These apartments are numbered 7-33. Why number 7 when the first apartment is on the corner at the start of Railway Avenue?

To find out, one crosses the road to discover number 1 Railway Avenue is on the same side as the even-numbered houses. Bizarrely, the houses are numbered 1, 3, 5, 2A, 2, 4, 6 and so on. Work that one out! On the other side of Cardigan Street is a group of Federation cottages numbered up to 24. Most of the houses have name plates which are either female names, place names or Maori words; some house names are missing. A further oddity is found in the way each house name is in inverted commas. Why so? Further along we find at number 68, the house quaintly named *St Anmore* (cited in February 2002 newsletter) and at number 86, *Mari-ville* (pictured below) perhaps echoing 'Marrickville'. It's well worth a stroll along this winding avenue to see the diversity of housing styles not least of all number 50, the imposing 1889 two-storey *Dundoos* complete with belvedere.

Richard Blair



DICTIONARY OF SYDNEY

<www.dictionaryofsydney.org>

Though this project was originally launched in 2006 the Dictionary of Sydney (a digital encyclopedia of the history of Sydney, Australia) has only recently become accessible to the public. The project is being undertaken by the City of Sydney with contributions from a horde of researchers.

The site states "the Dictionary of Sydney is a groundbreaking project to produce a new kind of history of Sydney: online, growing and changing, covering every aspect of human life in this place. This website is the first window into the Dictionary but, over time, it will also be accessible through other technologies, including mobile delivery, print-on-demand and others yet to be developed. The Dictionary contains new historical writing enriched with other resources – images, maps, sound, music, oral history, film, documents and pointers to important objects in Sydney collections. New material will be added regularly, and linked to what is already there. At the start, there will be large gaps – they'll get smaller with time." The Dictionary of Sydney will be a great resource, albeit a potential time-consumer!

2009 RAHS Annual Conference *Layers in the Historic Landscape*

A recurring theme at this year's conference in Armidale (31/10-1/11) was that, of all the layers in the historic landscape, it is people who make the biggest impression on it. Welcoming delegates to Country, self-styled 'apprentice' elder of the Anaiwan people, **Steve Widders**, remarked that we live in the largest museum in the world, the Australian landscape, where, for many thousands of years, his people have been custodians of the land. In his keynote address, RAHS President **Ian Jack** spoke of difficulties caused by the overlapping and confusing arbitrary boundaries created by the three tiers of government, churches and others, superimposed on the ancient boundaries of indigenous peoples.

Angela Phippen, delivering her paper *Libraries: more than a collection of books*, used the word 'inclusive' to describe modern libraries. Alongside the continuing digitisation of official records and rare books, websites such as *Mosman Memories of Your Street* invite individuals to add to our knowledge of local history. A lower-tech program, the *Living Library*, turns people of diverse backgrounds into walking-talking 'books', on hire for conversations with library users. The intention of the program is to break down barriers by putting a human face on our changing society. **Robert Hutchinson's** presentation *Reading photographs: Every picture tells a story* explained that you don't look at a photo or postcard but *into* it. Hence, he had a photo showing washing on the clothes line indicating that the photo was probably taken on a Monday.

We also heard how soldier settlers returning from the horrors of World War I became victims of bureaucratic arrogance and bungling. While Soldier Settler schemes were an experiment and were optimistically entered into, they were often allowed to continue long after it became apparent that they could not succeed. By 1933, only 17 of 51 settlers and their families remained in the scheme at Bective, west of Tamworth. Some settlers had simply given up while others had been forced off by decisions made by the authorities.

Civil Defence, and the role played in World War II by students of Armidale Teachers' College, added local flavour. Other papers told of *The Australian Dress Register*, the career of Deputy Surveyor-General, Samuel Augustus Perry and the archives of the De La Salle Brothers. Other projects preserve the social histories of Dandaloo, NSW, which fell into decline when bypassed by the branch railway from Bogan Gate to Tottenham, and Newstead, a pastoral run west of Glen Innes.

Keith Sutton received a Certificate of Achievement (see front page) whilst MHS Vice President **Robert Hutchinson** hosted the conference's Business Session and was reappointed to the RAHS Affiliated Societies Committee. Also in attendance were Vice President **Lorraine Beach** and **Robert Thompson**.

Robert Thompson

Glebe Public: The Story of a School by Lyn Collingwood traces the history of one of the state's oldest schools. For a copy send money order or cheque (made out to L Collingwood) for \$17 (includes postage & handling) to "School history book" c/- Glebe Society PO Box 100 Glebe 2037. All profits to the school.

VALE BILL WENHAM

Marrickville lost one of its finest recently when **Bill Wenham** died peacefully at home on 11 November aged 87. Bill was married at St Brigid's Catholic Church Marrickville in 1946 and throughout his life was closely associated with this parish, including the Seniors' Group (which he and his wife Kathleen co-



founded), the Family Groups, the Passionist Companions, the Catechists and the Counters. His life of selfless service to others was exemplified in his commitment to the St Vincent de Paul Society. In World War Two he served on the hospital ship *Wanganella* and he later worked for many years at Unilever. There was a huge attendance at St Brigid's for his memorial mass where he was described as having 'great depth of heart and being an outstanding human being'. Bill and Kathleen joined MHS in 1988. The Society sends its condolences to Kathleen, their seven children (who include actor David Wenham), 15 grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren.

Richard Blair

VALE PETER MABEY



Peter Mabey & Anne Carolan in 2001

(photo: Corrie Ancone, courtesy Marrickville Council)

Peter Mabey died on 2 December after a valiant battle with cancer. Peter, husband of Anne Carolan, was a founding member of MHS. Peter and Anne were very active members of the Society in the early years. Peter was a great support to Anne, who served on the executive and editorial committees for some years. Peter never lived in the Marrickville LGA but always had an intense interest in its history. Peter was a quiet and generous man who could always be counted upon to help out. Our condolences to Anne.

Chrys Meader

Apropos the **BMI** label pictured in the last newsletter and **Keith Sutton's** RSVP item in *The Sydney Morning Herald* (14 November), a **Mrs Beale** of Newcastle rang to advise that **BMI** stands for "Brandy Malt Iron". She said the jellies were delicious, red and came in squares. She'd hesitated to ring as she thought that everyone knew! Retired pharmacist **Peter Lynch** of Summer Hill recalls the jingle: BMI / The tonic wine / Makes you fit / And keeps you fine."

Henson Park wall under threat

Most reading this article need no introduction to **Henson Park**, Marrickville and the special place it has in our local heritage and the hearts of thousands of people, not all residing in our local area. What is Marrickville Council thinking, then, by lodging a development application to demolish an extensive section of the 1930s Depression-built brick wall at the park and replace it with a 'lap and cap' paling fence?

Sections of the wall are structurally unsound and unstable and there is no doubt intervention is required. In December 2008 **Dr Scott MacArthur**, a heritage architect, and at that time President of the Society addressed a Council meeting wherein Council's Technical Services Committee presented four options for repairs to the wall. Council's Heritage and Urban Design Advisor assessed all four options and concluded that only one respected the integrity of the wall and Henson Park itself - 'retention of the masonry wall to Henson Park in its entirety, including necessary stabilisation work'. Council voted to go with the paling fence.

What is Council thinking? The fence now proposed is about half the cost of the preferred option. At the time of going to press, we are unaware of the present situation with the DA. Submissions closed on 14 November and the Society lodged an objection urging Council to reject the current proposal on the grounds that it compromises and undermines the integrity of this important local heritage item. We asked Council to adopt the option recommended by its Heritage and Urban Design Advisor; or, at the very least, to defer any decision until it has obtained advice from an external planner and heritage consultant. There are many avenues of fundraising and grants for heritage projects that could be investigated to assist Council with restoration of the wall instead of this crude replacement. We hope Councillors have a long, hard think about their stewardship and duty of care to the history and heritage of the Marrickville area. It matters to many people, not only members of this Society.

Lorraine Beach

Newtown's *The Hub*: report from The National Trust on future plans

"Proposals are being developed in co-operation with theatre owners to re-open both the **Parramatta Roxy** and **Newtown Hub** theatres. The Trust has inspected both theatres and is preparing a proposal for listing on its Register of the Newtown Hub, originally built in 1908 as Cole's Hippodrome, then Clay's Bridge Theatre and then The Hub. It is believed to be the oldest building in NSW continuously licensed for theatre/cinema and the only surviving vaudeville theatre. The Parramatta Roxy is already listed by the National Trust and listed on the State Heritage Register."

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It is to the credit of **Marrickville Council** that in October 2008 a \$3 million proposal was unanimously rejected to convert **The Hub** into retail and commercial space. The rejection was on the grounds that the proposal called for 'a substantial demolition of the existing building, resulting in the loss of a significant icon' (from November 2008 MHS newsletter).



SUMMER TRIVIA QUESTIONS

1) "B for Mutton" they used to say, but in the local context, "B" for what?

2) "To offer any criticism of the work of such a writer would be impertinence; to offer praise would be superfluous." Who said this about whom and in what context?

To answer either question ring Richard on 9557 3823 or email c/- MHS at bottom of page.

2009 POT LUCK XMAS DINNER

Around 40 members enjoyed the ambience of our Dulwich Hill venue for the **annual Pot Luck Xmas dinner** on Saturday 5 December. The weather was perfect as was every other aspect of this year's final gathering. Congratulations to **June West** who won the lucky door Xmas cake (made by **Robert Hutchinson**) and port. Thanks to **Iain Carolin** for his gift poster to everyone of the mail steamer *Orient*. Lovely gesture. Special thanks to our genial hosts **Silas and Stephanie**; to **Lorraine Beach** for her coordination, and to **Joyce**



Our pot luck dinner hosts
Stephanie & Silas Clifford-Smith
(Photo: Richard Blair)

Roy, Audrey Furney and Pamela Stewart for assisting Lorraine with the food. Also thanks to those who brought chairs or who otherwise helped in the kitchen; and to everyone for contributing the delicious range of food.

RAHS President Dr Ian Jack reports that the **Heritage Council**, revamped under the amended Heritage Act, will, after representations, appoint **Dr Rosemary Annable** to the new Heritage Council for two years. Dr Jack has written to the Minister for Planning urging that at the end of 2011 some other historian be appointed to replace Dr Annable.

We know 2009 is the Chinese Year of the Ox. 2009 has also been the International Year of Astronomy, of the Gorilla, of Natural Fibres, and of Reconciliation; and, the Australian Year of the Blood Donor. This is most appropriate as in political spheres there's recently been considerable blood-letting. Whilst **Tiger Woods** has been in the news lately, for all the wrong reasons, beware, as 2010 is the Chinese Year of the Tiger!

PRESIDENT Richard 9557 3823
TREASURER Diane 9588 4930
NEWSLETTER EDITOR Richard 9557 3823