

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.

DULWICH HILL ENMORE LEWISHAM
ST PETERS SYDENHAM TEMPE

MARRICKVILLE PETERSHAM STANMORE
& PARTS OF CAMPERDOWN & NEWTOWN



OUR NEXT MEETING

Every window tells a story

St Peters Cooks River History Group
St Peters Church 187 Princes Hwy St Peters
Saturday 28 May 10 am

(\$2 donation includes morning tea; no bookings but enquiries Diane 9588 4930)

St Peters Anglican Church Cooks River (1838) was the first church built south of the city of Sydney. The windows, manufactured by Lyon and Cottier, were installed in the 1880s and are mostly in memory of local people from various backgrounds – publicans, merchants, brickmakers, solicitors and rectors of the church. Each window, with its vibrant colours, is an artwork. The presentation will tell the story of the people connected to each window and explain the significance of the symbolism (eg, grapes, shepherd, oak leaves).



Sturt's Desert Pea is one of several Australian wildflowers featured in the window for Clara Amelia Smith (photo: Laurel Horton)

Congratulations to the Cooks River Valley Association for receiving the Sydney Metro Catchment Management Authority's 2011 *Regional Urban Landcare Award*. This award is open to groups who deliver projects and initiatives that inspire and involve an urban population in landcare projects and natural resource management. The Mudcrabs, as a vital component of the CRVA's work, are also acknowledged. A \$2500 grant goes with the Award.

150 years ago: The first week of November 1861 saw not only the Incorporation of Marrickville (5th) but also the first Melbourne Cup (7th). Earlier that year on the morning of Friday 12 April the first shots of the American Civil War rang out.

Only in Melbourne!
Renamed in 2007
from Brown Alley,
Dame Edna Place
runs off
Little Collins Street
(photo: Sandy Stone)



Heritage Watch in brief

Part 3A provisions of the Planning Act: At the Society's Heritage Forum in Newtown on 31 October 2009, the then shadow Minister for Planning, Brad Hazzard indicated a coalition government would scrap these provisions. This has now happened with Premier Barry O'Farrell announcing that 'no new Part 3A applications for private residential, commercial, retail or coastal development will be accepted'. This means councils, rather than the Planning Minister, will again be able to 'approve major projects deemed to be of state significance, including massive apartment blocks and shopping centres.' As for the 500 or so DAs in the pipeline, 'transition arrangements' will be put in place but legislation will be required. It may be some time before we see what will replace Part 3A.

Draft Marrickville Local Environment Plan & draft Development Control Plan 2010: A report detailing the submissions and making recommendations will be considered by Council at an Extraordinary Meeting on 24 May. The report can be viewed on Council's website (www.marrickville.nsw.gov.au) from 6 May.

Sydney Park brickworks site at risk: see back page

DA to demolish the Sydenham station master's cottage: Refused by Council at 5 April meeting. Based on the planning report and the strong community response it was decided to further investigate the heritage significance of the site. As it's on Crown land, the matter will go before a Joint Review Planning Panel. At the same time the draft MLEP will address any submissions made about zoning, and this has implications for the cottage site.

The DA to remove pews at St Clements Church Marrickville: before Marrickville Council on 3 May (after printing of newsletter). Council's Heritage and Urban Design Advisor does not support the proposal 'as insufficient information was provided to demonstrate that the proposed development will not unreasonably impact on the heritage significance of the heritage item and as such the proposed development fails to comply with Clause 48(2) of MLEP 2001. Notwithstanding the officer's concerns about the documentation (or lack thereof), the church is listed as a heritage item under MLEP 2001, and any proposal to significantly alter the church's interior is likely to be difficult to support. Removal of the existing pews and baptismal font is considered to be a significant unsympathetic modification to the building.'

Merlingo 49 Stanmore Road Stanmore (c. 1872): was recently demolished. Council advises 'the demolition and development approved was enabled by the state government legislation SEPP which overrides Council's LEP in many cases.' It seems this confusing legislation keeps getting amended.

OUR LAST MEETING

Reading photographs: Every picture tells a story with Robert Hutchinson

Robert Hutchinson is a collector of many and various things. To prove this, in recognition Marrickville Council's 150 year anniversary, Robert wore a badge marking the 75th Anniversary of Marrickville LGA. He probably has a badge for every occasion! But at the Society's meeting on 16 April he brought along his photographs, or rather, a selection of some 70 slides copied from his collection of some 3000 picture postcards and 1000 photographs. Most of them were taken by professional photographers and they ranged across the late 19th and early 20th centuries. There were streetscapes of Sydney, the Marrickville district and rural towns, featuring some buildings that still exist and others that have long since been demolished; rare interior shots of houses, shops and hotels; and social gatherings, weddings, picnics and school groups.

Robert firmly believes that 'every picture tells a story' and Society members were happy to prove him right. Not only did they appreciate Robert's commentary, but they also enjoyed remarking on details from his photographs. Were they the St Peters brickworks chimneys to be seen behind a 1920s funeral cortege in Rochford Street, Newtown? Why would there have been so many different styles of chair around the formally set dining tables in the Hydro Majestic at Medlow Bath? How would you explain the different styles of clothing in the men-and-boys-only photo of the Bank of New South Wales annual picnic of 1907? And in a photo taken on the steps of St Peters Town Hall, what lodge did all those men (and two women) in their aprons and sashes belong to?

Some of the special treasures from the collection included a photograph of Robert's father in the doorway of his general store in Harden, NSW, taken in the 1930s. In one window was a marvellously decorative display of stacked food tins, in the other an array of fibre-board suitcases ranging in price from 6/11d to 10/6d. There was also the 'Sydney Clothing Company' shop in Young whose less stylish window display would have included shirts sewn by Robert's aunt. A photograph of a class of Manly schoolgirls bought at a local market turned out, when Robert later read the names handwritten on the back, to include author Kylie Tennant. A tree trunk covered with white encrustations in front of the Belgravia Hotel at Medlow Bath turned out to be the top half of the Explorers Tree, transported from further down the mountains and pinned with tourists' business cards.

We could have pored over those photographs for hours. Many thanks to Robert for providing a top reason to go out on a very rainy Saturday. We look forward to seeing what else he has to show us.

Megan Hicks

Street names in concrete

In some of Sydney's older municipalities the names of streets and parks were once set into the concrete footpaths. Many examples of these remain in parts of Marrickville LGA, particularly in Petersham, Lewisham and Stanmore, where the lettering is embedded in the paving slab in contrasting red concrete. Some are broken or mutilated, but local councils have begun to recognise the heritage value of these relics of an earlier time when people got about

on foot more regularly than they do now. The Marrickville Heritage Study of 1984-86 lists street names on footpaths and kerbing as interesting examples of the types of works undertaken in the old Municipality of Petersham, adding that the remaining examples help to define the character of the area.

The preservation of a street name in concrete was a feature considered worthy of note when the conversion of a carpet warehouse at 2 Douglas Street Stanmore to apartments was commended as a 2011 Marrickville Medal finalist (photo courtesy Marrickville Council).

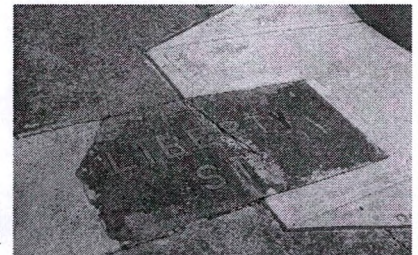
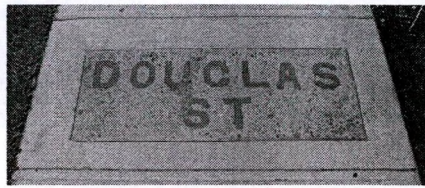
For several years I have been monitoring a badly cracked 'Liberty Street' name in the footpath on the corner of Cavendish Street, Stanmore. In May 2010, I thought its days were numbered when I saw sprayed marks on the footpath indicating that Council was going to construct a pram ramp on the kerb. However some months later I found that the rectangle of old concrete bearing the name had been saved, although it was surrounded by incongruously white modern concrete and a straight cut had been made to make it conform to the slope of the ramp (photo: Megan Hicks).

Despite the recent interest in preserving them, I have not been able to obtain any

specific information about how and when these pavement embellishments in the Petersham area were originally made. However I did find from the 1988 Haberfield Conservation Study that 'blue and white enamel street name signs and red cement lettering of street name signs let into the footpath were . . . distinctive features' of the model suburb of Haberfield developed by entrepreneur Richard Stanton between the years 1901 and 1922.

It seems likely that the Petersham street names came somewhat later. In 1929 the former Municipality of Petersham took out large loans to commence a program of paving its roads with concrete and replacing its asphalt footpaths with concrete at the same time. These types of works became a major part of a program to provide employment for men during the Great Depression of 1930-37. By 1948 Allan Shepherd's book *The Story of Petersham* was able to boast that 'today only a very small proportion of the total length of all the footpath paving of the Municipality is not of concrete' and that 'there are no unmade roads, lanes or footpaths, and every thoroughfare is in good condition'. Shepherd's book does not mention the concrete street names specifically, but it is safe to assume that the making of these was included in that great concreting project of the 1930s. I would be interested to hear from any MHS members who might have some more information about the names in the footpaths. Perhaps some of our senior members might even remember seeing them being made.

Megan Hicks (creator of website 'pavement graffiti' <www.meganix.net/pavement>: phone 9557 3703)



MARRICKVILLE MEDAL 2011

For the first time since 1997 the Marrickville Medal event was held in Marrickville Town Hall. The evening was compered by Cr Mary O'Sullivan and Mayor Fiona Byrne presented the awards. As last year, the Welcome to Country was warmly presented by Phemie Bostock. Guest speaker was Nadia Wheatley, notable author of several works including her iconic *My Place* which draws on local settings, in exploring the natural and built environment of the city. Above all, typography shows how the city is built on Aboriginal land. Nadia (an ardent local environmental advocate around Cooks River) encapsulated the Heritage Festival theme of *Amazing Stories*.

A new dimension was added this year with the inaugural **Marrickville Urban Photography Competition**, which attracted an impressive 53 entries. There was some irony attached to Francis Johns' winning photo – View of St Clements steeple – featuring the church spire as the backdrop to Marrickville Road buildings awaiting redevelopment: the very first Marrickville Medal was awarded in 1995 to the newly-built St Clements Parish Centre which stands adjacent to the landmark church. There were also two highly commended and four commended photographs.

The **Special Achievement Award** was presented to Don Mamouny, founder in 1979 of the Sidetrack Theatre in the grounds of Addison Road Centre, Marrickville. Though the wording on the citation has not been ascertained, it is known that Don has contributed significantly in promoting the cultural heritage of the area especially in relation to the migrant experience. He is also involved in documenting 'a scholarly archive of the Sidetrack Theatre's productions which will record interpretations of migrant and multicultural and refugee stories'.

Most of this year's 13 entries in the **Marrickville Medal** were private houses. The Medal winner was **Jeannette 8 West Street Lewisham** (restoration and additions: conservation by Haitham El-Hassan & Malcolm WS Day) which the judges felt best met the judging criteria. They said 'the villa was originally a grand house, so the scale of the conservation work required was much greater than that required for the other properties entered in the Medal. The original details were lavish, including large folding doors between rooms, ornate ceilings, original hardware, floorboards, staircase, mantlepieces and hearths, floor tiles and external "French" style doors.'

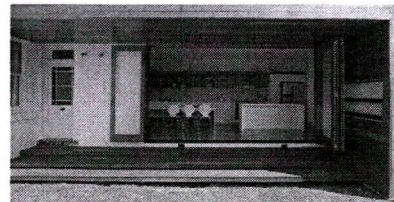
'It was felt there was enormous effort by the owners to restore the front parts of the house eg, stripping the

paint off the doors, architraves and staircase and restoring the original clear finish to the dark wood. The skirtings were all reconstructed. The wrought iron was cast from a mould of the remaining balustrade, and the wrought iron fencing was restored. The gardens were very suited to a Victorian Italianate villa and offered excellent views to the heritage-listed Lewisham Vent. Whilst the additions were an exaggeration of the Victorian aesthetic, the use of salvaged items from a demolished church and house in Victoria was considered a positive aspect of conservation in the design, and the improvement to the streetscape through façade restoration, front garden and front fencing, as well as the major additions being secreted behind the dwelling all added up to convince the judges it was the overall winner.'

One reservation about the winner related to the judging criteria, 'Separation/relationship of original and contemporary components'. The judges felt 'the style of the additions and reconstructions were Victorian Italianate in attitude rather than in detail, meaning that grandeur was the desirable effect rather than authentic conservation.'

The **three Commendation Awards** were all considered 'much better at differentiating new work from original significant features, however the scale of restoration and reconstruction involved at those sites was not on par with the winner.' Curiously all three are in Stanmore:

38 Lincoln Street Stanmore (restoration and alterations: architect David Boyle): 'The original Victorian terrace has been extended to the side creating a lap pool with en suite extension over, and a new rear wing.'



97 Cardigan Street Stanmore (alterations and additions: architect Sam Crawford): 'A single storey Federation cottage which has had an attic conversion and reconfiguration of the rear.'



2 Douglas Street Stanmore (adaptive reuse of warehouse: architect Phil Corben): 'The shell of a large brick industrial building has been retained and new luxury apartments created within.'

The **Peoples Choice Award**, decided by online voting, went to **Colchester Hall 11 Woodcourt Street Marrickville** (restoration and adaptation of burnt out ruin: architects Greg Patch & Rod Howard): 'Complete restoration of former Colchester Hall, heritage item listed as a Victorian villa, into a number of apartments.'

We commend the Medal judges Sara Reilly, Heritage Architect, Woollahra Council; retired Heritage Architect and MHS member Peter McLaren; and owner of last year's Medal winner, Peter Miller, entomologist; along with Council's Heritage Promotions Committee who organised this prestigious event.

(All photos courtesy of Marrickville Council)

Richard Blair



Thick as a brick — news from St Peters

Brief history lesson

About 170 years ago the brickmakers of Brickfield Hill were given their marching orders by a government desperate to shift manufacturing out of a residential and commercial district that continues its existence as today's Chinatown and Haymarket. The expulsion and resulting diaspora made sense if you consider the impact of brickmaking in these early days. So off they went, pushing handcarts and wheelbarrows, sitting atop bullock carts loaded with pugging machines and brick presses. And where did they go? Anywhere but Brickfield Hill, which, believe it or not, was a postal district until the 1960s. Down they went to Broadway, Camperdown and along the stretch of road through Newtown to the rich clays and Ashfield Shales of St Peters. The rest is history, as they say.

Yard closures, 1983

Fast forward to 1983 and the closure of the last of the yards, the former Bedford Brick Works whose magnificent chimneys still stand alongside the rectangular Hoffman kiln (with one end demolished to accommodate road widening) and the splendid Hardy Patent kiln. These two structures, and the adjacent single chamber downdraught kilns once used to burn face bricks, are the vestigial remains of a once-thriving inner city brick industry that sprawled across the southeast, creating employment, community and giving the area a distinctive working class culture. Nothing is forever: put simply the yards had reached their use-by date as manufacturing facilities. Today, things are moving at Sydney Park, which incidentally, was built over one of the city's largest rubbish dumps. The deep and extensive clay and shale pits were resumed by Sydney Council in the late 1950s but had reached capacity by the early 1980s.

Troublesome child?

Over the past three decades there have been many suggestions about what to do with the 'brick precinct'. So far nothing has progressed beyond the drawing board. The iconic chimneys are maintained for reasons of public safety, and because, I like to think, they are iconic and fine examples of a lost industrial heritage. In recent months a new proposal has surfaced, to locate a City Farm immediately adjacent to the kilns. The idea of a farm is laudable, but there are a number of issues that the proposal has failed to address such as the adaptive reuse and future use of the precinct, recognition that the structures were a significant part of our industrial heritage (ie, how they worked and what they produced) and deterioration of brick structures if a working farm is placed in close proximity.

A public meeting will be called to address concerns and discuss ideas for adaptive reuse. Watch this space.

Ron Ringer

Notes Though Sydney Park is in Alexandria, it is just across the Princes Highway from both Newtown and St Peters. In bygone days when the brickpits were in full production most of this area was St Peters.

Ron is a social and economic historian and the author of the epic *The Brickmasters 1788-2008* (Dry Press Publishing Pty Ltd, 2008). He has addressed the Society. Ron has long campaigned to do something really useful with this site. Detailed information on the City Farm proposal can be gleaned from City of Sydney Council's 'City Farm Feasibility Study'.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Saturday 28 May

Every window tells a story

St Peters Cooks River History Group

Details on front page

Saturday 25 June

Annual General Meeting

Saturday 23 July

Coach tour of the Hills district

Preserving the Bedford Brickworks site

Apropos the proposal to locate a City Farm near the Sydney Park brick kilns, **Richard Gentle**, great grandson of Josiah Gentle, has written to City of Sydney Council. Here are some excerpts from his letter:

'This site has significant historical importance with manufacturing starting on the site in the 1840s by Henry Goodsell and then modern mass production starting when my great grandfather, Josiah Gentle, purchased the site in 1893. Brick production continued there until the Depression when his sons sold the business to Brickworks Ltd. Many Sydney buildings, especially in the inner west, have been built using the blue bricks produced by the Bedford Brickworks.'

'The Bedford Brickworks precinct was preserved in Sydney Park as a gesture to history for the new millennium and it would be crass and criminal to see that work undone in such a brief period. The people of Sydney like to connect with history. Just go to any historic site in Sydney and Sydneysiders are out enjoying the sights and atmosphere. We need to preserve these features for the future. The City of Rome has magnificent historic sites but unfortunately not enough effort is being applied to preserving them.'

'Yes, have a City Farm but not in the kiln precinct. A City Farm would be a fine addition to Sydney Park and would compliment its other features. Your own website lauds the fact that "the area's industrial heritage has been preserved". Unfortunately if the City Farm gardens are located near the kilns, history will be lost for future generations. I hope the time of politicians wanting to get rid of those old structures, as happened in the 1950s and 1960s, is over.'

'Please reconsider the location for the City Farm and preserve historical evidence for the future.'

Richard Gentle

Soil and toxics expert Barrie Cooper is 'stunned that there is a proposal to have a city farm amongst the old brick kilns and buildings at St Peters. Fertilizers used in gardens contribute greatly to the deterioration of brickwork from the salts they contain. Nitrates and sulphates are common salts in fertilizers and they also happen to be the most detrimental to masonry — the existing kiln and chimney walls are already showing signs of decay due to the salts migrating into the brickwork from rising damp and this will increase tenfold with the addition of new salts.'

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TREASURER Diane 9588 4930

HERITAGE WATCH Silas 9569 3417

NEWSLETTER Richard 9557 3823