

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.

DULWICH HILL ENMORE LEWISHAM
ST PETERS SYDENHAM TEMPE

MARRICKVILLE PETERSHAM STANMORE
& PARTS OF CAMPERDOWN & NEWTOWN



OUR NEXT MEETING

Yaralla & yonder by coach

Saturday 25 September 9 for 9.15 am

Meet 9 am opp. Petersham Town Hall. Expected return by about 4.45 pm. BYO lunch and water. Cost \$35 (covers coach, Devonshire Tea, afternoon tea, tour of Yaralla grounds, museum entry & handout). Prepay (cheque to address below). Bookings Diane on 9588 4930. Advise if you have to cancel.

The Yaralla estate is claimed to be the only pre-1800 land grant still intact in NSW. It began with a 50-acre land grant to ex-convict Isaac Nicholls by Governor Hunter in 1797. Nicholls became the first postmaster in the colony. The estate evolved from Nicholls' farm to Thomas Walker's colonial gentleman's residence *Yaralla* to an Edwardian estate under his daughter Dame Eadith Walker. Edmund Blacket and John Sulman were the main architects of the Yaralla estates.

Our hosts, Concord Heritage Society, will give us a comprehensive tour of the grounds which will include the Dairy interior and farm structures, stables, viewing into the windows of the mansion and *Woodbine* cottage, the historic squash court (first in Australia), gardens, grotto, swimming pool site, Italian balustrade, tennis court, photographic displays and more.



Yaralla House
(from Concord Heritage Society website)

Lunch will be at Brays Bay by the Kokoda Walkway, which is a most fitting memorial to the Kokoda Track in New Guinea and its role in WWII. Other highlights will be the City of Canada Bay Museum, St Alban's Anglican Church (1924), Five Dock and afternoon tea at the 1917 home of MHS members Joan and Geoff Francis which has been in Joan's family for five generations. If time, we will take a ride on the Putney Punt, the sole remaining public punt in Sydney.

Since 1996 the Marrickville Festival been held in September. This year it's on **Sunday 24 October**. If you would like to assist on the MHS stall for an hour or two please ring Vivien on 0431 222 761.

Winged Victory update

Winged Victory was taken down by Council on 24 April 2009 after 'significant cracks' were observed leading to concerns over the statue's structural integrity and associated safety issues. An exhaustive study including radiography was undertaken by a specialist conservator to determine the causes of damage and gain an understanding of the statue's internal construction. This report found that 'the irregular weight distribution of the fill material, movement of the fill and armature, and inherent weakness are the principal causes of damage to the copper exterior'. Interestingly the statue, widely cited as 'the largest known bronze casting on a memorial in Australia', including on Council's website, Wikipedia and elsewhere, is not bronze at all. The conservators pointed out that 'this statue (both figure and capital) are not as robust as bronze monuments typically installed in public spaces'.

Winged Victory's composition has little to do with the importance of this World War I memorial, a local icon since 1919, or with its place in the affections of Marrickville residents, past and present. We want to see it restored to its position adjacent to Marrickville Town Hall, but does this mean 'restored' or 'replaced'?

Faced with an unknown cost and uncertain outcome of restoring the existing statue, Council has decided to have a bronze replica cast of *Winged Victory* via an 'expressions of interest' program, and to place it on the restored column and capital. The Society has supported this decision, conditional upon the cast bronze replacement being an identical representation of the statue. The Society, along with others identified by Council as 'key stakeholders' of the *Winged Victory* statue, has been invited to participate in developing a suitable strategy for the future of the original statue.

Lorraine Beach

Members on email will be pleased to know a home was found for the Dresden piano originally in the Hoyts Hurlstone Park Theatre and relocated to a house in Garnet Street Dulwich Hill in the early 1960s. Even more pleasing is that the piano has gone to a young family living in south Marrickville.

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 2011.

FAREWELL & THANK YOU CHRYS

Chrys Meader started working at Marrickville Library around 1970. She was Local Studies Librarian 1984-94, then Coordinator Reader Services, Manager Library Services and in recent years Marrickville Historian until her resignation from Council on 6 August. Here are some impressions from MHS members who have been associated with Chrys in history services.



Robert Parkinson: In July 2007 I answered a call for volunteers to assist in aspects of Council's work. My interests lay with history and archives, so naturally I gravitated to Chrys' office where I was warmly welcomed. At about the same time the Society announced their first essay competition for which I chose the topic of Marrickville Symphony Orchestra. Not long before, Margaret Wright had donated papers concerning the Hanney family to Council, and, since most of the documents concerned Fred Hanney, founder and conductor of the orchestra, Chrys immediately arranged for me to access them and seek necessary approvals from Margaret. I have subsequently indexed scrapbooks within this collection on Council's database.

My next job was to begin indexing Council's general correspondence, and I hope this will continue despite Chrys' departure. Chrys has been an effective driving force in preservation of these and many other council records. She has always promoted the history of Marrickville district with enthusiasm, not least by co-authoring various local publications. Finding out I had an interest in exhibition of motion pictures, Chrys suggested I prepare two detailed histories, which are well on the way to finalisation. Chrys has been extremely helpful to me with her vast local knowledge, and her support and encouragement will be greatly missed.

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TRETHAWAY AGAIN ON THE MARKET

Not for the first time in recent years *Trethaway* (18 Shaw Street Petersham) went up for auction on 28 August. Despite an expected \$3.6 million plus, it was passed in at \$2.6 million — some shortfall! It had sold for \$1.551 million in 1998, went up for auction again in late 2000 and sold for \$2.7 million in 2003. This superb two storey Italianate villa was built in 1896 by engineer John Briton who called it *Paritana*. His daughters renamed it *Te Whare* and the name was later changed to *Trethaway*. For many years *Trethaway* was a wedding reception and function centre whilst MHS held its tenth anniversary celebrations there in April 1994.

Several members gave the editor a newspaper clipping indicative of the significance of and interest in this mansion. Briton had 11 children and according to member **John Chappell**, eight were girls, and at least two married timber merchants: One of the elder girls married Frederick L Langdon of timber merchants Langdon & Langdon (also Mayor of Petersham 1905-08) and lived at nearby *Tresillian* on the corner of Addison Road and Shaw Street. The youngest, believed to be Edith, married AE Primrose (who founded Gladesville Timber Yard in 1922 which later became AE Primrose & Co). John says he met Edith in 1967 at a function also attended by her sister-in-law, Alice Euphemia Briton (nee Taylor) of 47 Livingstone Road Petersham. Alice was married to the younger Briton son and they had a chicken hatchery at North Ryde.

Trethaway (from Mark Matheson's *Victorian Villas of Newtown/Marrickville* 1996)

Sonia Laverty (current MHS President): I have represented Marrickville Heritage Society on Marrickville Council's Heritage Promotions Committee for the past year. I understand Chrys served on the HPC for about nine years. I recognise that her depth of knowledge of the local area, and her commitment, made a very considerable contribution to the work of that committee and she will be greatly missed.

Diane McCarthy (MHS Treasurer and former President): The resignation of Marrickville Historian Chrys Meader brings to a close over 90 years of service by one family to Marrickville Council. Chrys' father Charlie Meader (1926-2000) had 51 years (1943-94) with Marrickville Council whilst Chrys served for many years. I had the pleasure of working with Chrys in the library in the 1970s. She brought a passion to the promotion and history of Marrickville. She willingly shared her knowledge, talked to schoolchildren and community groups and led walking and bus tours. Marrickville Council will miss her expertise, dedication and knowledge of the LGA. Her connections to MHS have been significant. She was a founding member in 1984, served for five years as Secretary and was made a Life Member in 2000.

Richard Cashman (third MHS President): Chrys Meader has long been the public face, and keeper of the community memory, of Marrickville Council. Over three decades I have heard her deliver numerous talks with passion, humour, a rapid-fire delivery, hardly pausing for a breath, and the use of the telling anecdote. She has been equally professional in her organisation of many Council functions. I enjoyed working with her and Anne Carolan on the two-volume history of Marrickville. The books benefited from her deep knowledge of Marrickville and drew on material, which she had helped to collect for the Local Studies Library. Chrys Meader has been a good friend over a long period. It's hard to imagine Marrickville Council without her. I wish her well in her life after Council.



OUR LAST MEETING

Unlocking the secrets of joinery

At our meeting on Saturday 28 August, in enlightening words and pictures, architect and heritage expert **Alan Croker** unlocked for an enthusiastic audience some of the secrets of traditional joinery. Although he said that the real experts in this field were, and are, the joiners — those fine craftsmen in timber, who assemble doors, windows, chimneypieces, staircases and the like — it soon became clear that Alan, too is an informed expert. Showing examples from the many buildings his practice has conserved, and also from *Traditional Joinery*, the book he wrote with Wal Murray (Watermark Press, 2005), Alan illustrated the finesse of Australian house joinery from as early as 1815.

We saw how a door leaf was assembled from rails, stiles, muntins and panels, and how its surround or doorcase was put together with architraves and reveals. As with doors, windows were similarly assembled, from separate components. The term 'joinery' indicates the skills needed in putting them together. Their junctions were concealed and edges treated with delicate strips of decorative mouldings, shaped by distinctive planes, forming profiles which varied in different architectural periods. Indeed, as Alan demonstrated, it is possible to date a house by studying moulding profiles. Georgian mouldings, for example, typically had Greek precedents, in which fine profiles were based on elliptical curves. Victorian houses often used Roman forms, where heavier profiles were based on the circle. Alan said that finished mouldings can be so delicate and seductive as to invite 'fondling'.

The timbers used in traditional joinery likewise varied according to period and fashion. In New South Wales, Georgian joinery was most commonly cedar, often polished but also generally painted, or treated by 'graining' so as to imitate English oak. As the cedar forests diminished, pine was used, also grained or often painted in two colours. And when cedar and pine were used together, the work was painted for uniformity. By contrast, the RAHS's History House joinery — doors, windows, chimneypieces and stairs — displays an exceptional Victorian ensemble of polished cedar.

Alan's pictures and diagrams demonstrated conservation techniques such as preservation and restoration rather than replacement — treasuring the intrinsic values of existing traditional joinery. He advocated the 'don't throw it away' approach, echoing his appreciation philosophy of 'fondling the mouldings'.

Bob Irving (who, Alan advised, had lectured him in architectural studies at UNSW some years ago)



Ian Phillips listens intently to Geoff Ostling in Palace St on 24 July Petersham walk (photo: Richard Blair)

Finding a home for memorabilia

I am a great believer in finding a home for interesting things which I can't house or no longer want and with a usually social history which may be lost. Too much is lost these days. I tend to hang on to something until I find a home for it — and no, my home is not full of junk! I consider what type of organisation might be interested and then make contact by phone or email. If my first point of call is not interested, I am usually referred on with a contact name or I just think harder about who or where might be a likely candidate.

In recent years I have given things to the War Memorial in Canberra — a 1946 Guide Book — and the Powerhouse in Sydney — my Beatles scrapbooks collection: Google 'Powerhouse Museum' then search no. 2000/127/1. The Powerhouse has recently added an accessible PDF document describing my collection.

I have also sent a few things to the State Library of NSW including a box of "Precious Promises" which had belonged to my mother, Doris Quigley (nee Silvester)*. The National Library of Australia has one in its collection and has a very accurate description in its online catalogue. When approached, the NLA suggested I contact the State Library because "Precious Promises" was published in New South Wales, so that was a success on my part. The State Library acknowledged my "gift" in a delightful thank you letter.

Some of Sydney's theatre companies and playhouses have happily received programs from the 1960s for plays which I attended at their respective venues.

If you have an interesting item with no obvious monetary value but you really don't want to keep it, please don't throw it out. I encourage you to find a good home for it. It is a satisfying exercise.

Dianne Galofaro

* Dianne's mother lived at 14 Despointes St Marrickville periodically from c. 1914, but continuously there with her husband Les from c. 1944 until 1996 when she moved into a retirement home. She died in 2002.

Spring Trivia Question will be in October newsletter

The Sydney Bus Museum, for many years at Tempe, has relocated to Leichhardt. The old Tempe Tramsheds are being upgraded by State Transit. Tempe House is still there but on the other side of Cooks River. Tempe Tip remains though is nothing like the original Tempe Tip. Not to worry. Another of Sydney's icons, **Harry's Cafe de Wheels**, has just opened a new outlet at 886 Princes Highway Tempe. This is not a free ad: it's serious stuff as the original Harry's at Woolloomooloo (established 1945) was Classified by the National Trust in 2004!

With the closure of the History Centre, Marrickville Council is recruiting key personnel (incl. an archivist) in developing its **historical and heritage programs and collections**. Council has advised the history collection will now be accessible over longer hours and at more locations. Acting Coordinator History Services, Kathryn Cass attended our MHS meeting on 28 August and spoke enthusiastically about the future of the LGA's history services. Kathryn is on 9335 2132.

All sounds positive though some may argue that in a relatively small LGA like Marrickville one centralised centre (including archives) with greater accessibility may be preferable for researchers. Time will tell!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Saturday 25 September
Yaralla and yonder by coach
 Details on front page

Saturday 23 October
Rob Darroch on Charles Rosenthal

Saturday 27 November
Silas Clifford-Smith on Percy Lindsay

An orchestra reborn

On 14 October 1945, after 15 years and 161 concerts, the **Marrickville Municipal Symphony Orchestra**, the first council-supported suburban orchestra in Sydney, performed its last concert in Marrickville Town Hall. On **Thursday 14 October at 7.30 pm**, the **Marrickville Symphony Orchestra** will be born again with a gala performance in Marrickville Town Hall. Works by Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven and the conductor is Brett Weymark. A Reserve seats \$20 include a glass of champagne; B Reserve seats are free, but all bookings are essential. Book on www.mvso.org.au or write to MSO c/- 54 Windsor Rd Dulwich Hill 2203 with contact details and number of tickets sought; or ring 0416 210 771 and leave contact details.

The **Renaissance Players** was founded over 40 years ago and continues under the direction of **Winsome Evans**, Associate Professor in the Music Department at the University of Sydney, who plays multiple instruments. Come and hear the Renaissance Players perform *Andalusian Honey* – Medieval Spanish and Spanish-Jewish music. Winsome and her musicians and narrator will appear resplendent in period costume in the magnificent **Great Hall** at Sydney University at **7 pm** on **Tuesday 19 and Wednesday 20 October**. Tickets \$35 (including program). Bookings 1300 306 776 or pay at door. For MHS group booking (subject to minimum numbers) on Wed 20 October ring Richard 9557 3823 and pay on night (\$25).



One of our ports of call on **Geoff Ostling's** MHS tour of Petersham on 24 July was the home of heritage architect and MHS member **Peter McLaren** in Station Street. Not one to hurry, Peter has been carefully and imaginatively restoring his house over many years. In *Reconstructing Your Heritage* in the journal *Heritage* 7 (1992) he outlined his approach in restoring his Station Street house. He has installed solar panels and proudly told

us he was currently owed \$7 by the grid. Peter added this attractive planter window box on the upper level as his "gift to the street" (photo: Richard Blair).

Phillip Bay Chinese market gardens update

Apropos the Chinese market gardens at Phillip Bay at risk (in support of which many members signed petitions) **Anna Lee** (Treasurer, **Chinese Australian Historical Society**) advises she received a letter from Randwick Council stating they 'support current agricultural usage of the land, and identify further matters to be considered in the assessment, such as correctly designating the gardens appropriately to ensure its security.' They have forwarded a submission to the Department of Lands. 'Randwick Council opposes expansion of Botany Cemetery on the grounds of 'State heritage significance of the market gardens, importance of preservation of local agricultural production and biodiversity preservation.'

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Anna clarified an editorial amendment to **Robert Parkinson's** coverage in the August newsletter of the Chinese Australian Historical Society (CAHS) talks on 22 May. There are two Chinese heritage groups. The older group is the CAHS, but Anna advises that after a disagreement, a breakaway group, the Chinese Heritage Association of Australia (CHAA), was formed. Anna can provide information on CAHS or the Phillip Bay market gardens at either PO Box K556, Haymarket 1240 or [<annalee@workready.com.au>](mailto:annalee@workready.com.au).

Faces in the Street clarifications

Marrickville Mayor **Sam Iskandar** is commended for devoting his weekly column in the *Inner West Courier* (2/9/10, p. 10) to coverage of the *Winged Victory* and History Week. However his column's claim that **Henry Lawson's** poem *Faces in the Street* 'was largely written at Petersham Railway Station' contradicts the view of eminent Lawson authority **Colin Roderick**. In *Henry Lawson, A Life* (Angus & Robertson, 1991, p. 49) Roderick writes:

'There was nothing tame about Lawson's sentiments when he wrote "Faces in the Street" in July 1888 in the cottage in Phillip Street. The keynote of it came to him one rainy night on the railway station at Petersham, where he waited "alone and tired as usual and cold with a shoddy overcoat coarse as sacking and warm as a refrigerator". Beyond that, he could never recall the circumstances of the composition of the poem, in which power leapt up in him to produce a hymn of social protest.' (Internal quote by Lawson.)

As for the column's claim that 'it was the people of Petersham who provided Lawson's inspiration' for the poem, this is both disparaging of the Petersham populace and dubious. Indeed, the third and fourth lines of the poem: "For where the nearest suburb and the city proper meet / My window-sill is level with the faces in the street" suggest he was referring to people from everywhere. Lawson, just 21, was living with his mother, Louisa at 138 Phillip Street in the city centre, from where she first published and edited *The Dawn*.

Richard Blair

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