

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.

DULWICH HILL ENMORE LEWISHAM
ST PETERS SYDENHAM TEMPE

MARRICKVILLE PETERSHAM STANMORE
& PARTS OF CAMPERDOWN & NEWTOWN



OUR NEXT MEETING

Megan Martin talk on Claude & Isobel Crowe and Berrima Bridge Nurseries
Saturday 26 February 10.15 for 10.30 am
Herb Greedy Hall 79 Petersham Rd Marrickville

Claude Colquhoun Crowe AM (1914-99) and his wife **Isobel Florence Crowe**, nee Tacon (1913-2009) were noted horticulturists who, as owners and operators of Berrima Bridge Nurseries for more than 50 years, built a statewide reputation for growing and retailing cold climate trees and shrubs. The early years of Claude and Isobel's partnership were shaped by the outbreak of World War II and their involvement in the Australian Government's wartime "Mother Seed" program, growing seeds for the Commonwealth Vegetable Seeds Committee. Isobel Tacon was one of the first women to qualify in horticulture through Sydney Technical College and was a foundation office bearer of the Australian Institute of Horticulture.



Exhibitor Claude Crowe puts the final touches to an entry in the landscape display class at the Red Cross Chelsea Flower Show in the Sydney Domain, September 1946.

Crowe won first prize in this category.

(Photo: Consolidated Press Ltd. Claude Crowe Papers: CCC/P/3, Caroline Simpson Library & Research Collection. Courtesy Historic Houses Trust.)

Claude Crowe was a foundation member of the Australian Nursery Association (later the Nursery Industry Association of Australia). He was also a landscape planner who developed planting schemes for many gardens in NSW, particularly in the Southern Highlands. His training in this area came from his early employment as manager of the garden planning department of the Sydney firm of Anderson & Co, Seed Merchants, which brought him into contact with the noted landscape designer Paul Sorensen.

Megan Martin is Head of the Caroline Simpson Library & Research Collection at the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, responsible for developing a specialist collection of publications and documentary materials relating to the history of houses, domestic interiors and gardens in NSW.

2011 is International Year of Forests and the 150th anniversary of Marrickville Council

OUR MARCH MEETING

Monday 28 March 9.30 for 9.45 am departure
Admiralty House & Beyond by coach

Meet at Petersham Town Hall. Strictly for members only as numbers limited. BYO lunch. Bookings and prepayment essential: \$40 incl admissions & afternoon tea. Bookings Silas 9569 3417. Advise if cancelling.

Come along for three cultural treasures on Sydney's north shore. Our major stop will be an exclusive private tour of *Admiralty House* at Kirribilli. Originally named *Wotonga*, the house was built in 1845 and was renamed and enlarged for the Royal Navy in 1885. Since 1914 the property has been the Sydney residence of the Governor-General and has hosted receptions for many heads of state and prominent dignitaries. Whilst rarely open to the public this member-only tour will view the lavishly decorated state rooms which include a nationally significant collection of paintings, antiques and decorative arts. For those keen to view the attractive grounds there will be a guided tour of the harbourside garden.

After lunch in a harbourside park we'll head for Mosman Art Gallery to inspect the highly competitive Mosman Art Prize exhibition. Finally a visit to Willoughby Museum (run by Willoughby District Historical Society) where afternoon tea will be served.

Council has extended the period for public display and submissions on **Council's draft Marrickville Local Environment Plan (MLEP) and draft Development Control Plan (DCP) 2010 until 28 February**. Ring duty town planner on 9335 2222 with queries. Submissions can be lodged a) in writing to General Manager, Marrickville Council, PO Box 14 Petersham 2049; b) by fax on 9335 2029; or, c) by email to <marrickvillebydesign@marrickville.nsw.gov.au>.

Nominations for 2011 Marrickville Medal

close on Thursday 10 March. Council advises: "The Medal will be awarded to a development, of any size or type, within the Marrickville Council area, considered to include high quality and innovative conservation/restoration or alteration works. Marrickville Council and the Heritage Promotions Committee encourages owners of old buildings, who have undertaken [such] work in the last three years to enter. A nomination form is available from Council's website" or by ringing council on 9335 2000.

Further potential heritage concerns: see inside

Vale Hilda York

We mourn the passing of member **Hilda Beatrice York** who died on 18 December 2010 aged 95. Late of Millers Point and Marrickville, Hilda had been a member since 1987. In describing the launch of *Heritage 10* at the White Cockatoo Hotel, the December 1998 newsletter said: 'In many ways the night belonged to Hilda York, depicted on the front cover [of *Heritage 10*] with her fox terrier. Hilda spoke with wit and grit. In her matter-of-fact memoirs she relates her grandfather's "story of his terrible accident when plaster dripped into his eye while setting up a ceiling rose. His co-workers had to quickly pluck the eye from its socket to scrape out the plaster before it set".'



Hilda lived most of her life in the Marrickville area and was born at 40 Agar Street. At the age of four, she recalled seeing this tiny single-engine aeroplane flying low overhead and she later learnt it was the historic flight of Captain Ross and Lieutenant Keith Smith on the final leg of their epic journey from London in 1919.

Hilda attended various local schools and performed in tap dancing groups for many years, once appearing at The Hub in Newtown on the same program as 'Mo' (Roy Rene). She continued to enjoy dancing throughout her life. She worked at the Australian Woollen Mills, in department stores and office jobs. After she retired she worked as a volunteer for 15 years

at the Cat Protection Society, taught English in the Home Tutor Scheme and enjoyed writing poetry.

Some of Hilda's memoirs appeared in *Heritage 9* and *Heritage 10*.

Hilda's brother William Hamnett was also a MHS member until his death in 2006 aged 100. Hilda's son and daughter-in-law Robert and Vivien York remain MHS members and our condolences go to them.



Vale James Dibble

James Dibble (1923-2010), fondly remembered as the long time Channel 2 newsreader, died on

13 December aged 87. Dibble read the news on radio and presented the first ABC TV news bulletin on 5 November 1956. He was the face of ABC TV News until 16 June 1983. Born in Newtown, his parents, Roland and Vera, had a flat over the bakery they ran in King Street. James attended St Brigid's Primary School and De La Salle College in Marrickville. His forebear William Dibble (Mayor of Newtown in 1925) established a bakery in Newtown in 1898 and relocated it to the corner of Australia and Lennox Streets in 1909. The Dibble name can still be seen on this building.

On 29 April 1988 the Society held a Bicentennial Heritage Concert at St Brigid's Church Marrickville attracting some 350 people (see May 1988 newsletter). Dibble compered this memorable concert and joined MHS as a result, remaining a member for some time.

Summer Trivia Answer

The couple well known in the Arts who lived in a Petersham flat were writers **Ruth Park** (1917-2010) and her husband **D'Arcy Niland** (1917-67). After moving from Surry Hills in 1945 they lived in the upstairs flat ('above an empty shop') at 20 Crystal Street on the corner of Elswick Street, until 1949.

In their little known co-written autobiographical novel, *The Drums Go Bang* (1956) they write: 'The house was built on a street corner and nobody knew how it had beat a pub to the site. We used to work in the dining-room and listen to feet passing by, conjecturing on the age and sex of their owners, where they were going and why' (p. 171).



In her autobiography *Fishing in the Styx* (1993) Ruth wrote about 'the clean, newly painted flat in Petersham, marvelling at the huge airy bedroom, a living room, a kitchen, a bathroom of our own with real hot water. Probably it was an ordinary apartment, but to us it was a miracle' (p. 113) — this, compared with their minimalist accommodation in Surry Hills.

Born in Glen Innes, Niland is best remembered for his novel *The Shiralee* which was made into a film starring Peter Finch and later a TV miniseries starring Bryan Brown. He married Ruth in 1942. Ruth had moved to Australia from her native New Zealand. She wrote over 50 books including *The Harp in the South* and *Poor Man's Orange* (both set around Surry Hills), *Playing Beatie Bow* and *The Muddle-Headed Wombat* series. She also wrote a two-volume autobiography, *A Fence Around the Cuckoo* and *Fishing in the Styx* and the highly informative *Companion Guide to Sydney* (1973).

It was while in Petersham in 1946 that Ruth won the novel section of the inaugural *Sydney Morning Herald* writers' competition with prizemoney of £2000 for *The Harp in the South*. She later wrote *Poor Man's Orange* whilst D'Arcy wrote *Gold in the Streets* which also won a literary competition. The two eldest children were born in Petersham — they had five in all. D'Arcy died in 1967 aged 49. Ruth died on 14 December 2010 aged 93 (at left: family photo from the early 1990s).

Congratulations to **Anne Morgan** and **Diane McCarthy** who both deduced the answer from newspaper photographs. Ruth's Petersham address was displayed in the SMH at the time of the 1946 competition win.

Richard Blair

Note: Runner-up to Ruth Park in that 1946 SMH competition was **Jon Cleary** (born in Erskineville) for his first novel, *You Can't See Around Corners*. Cleary's numerous novels included *The Sundowners*, *The High Commissioner* and *High Road to China* as well as several crime novels featuring Detective Scobie Malone. Cleary, like both Park and Niland, was born in 1917. He died on 19 July 2010.

Sad irony: Ruth died just days after this trivia question appeared. Uncannily, **Johnny Cave**, aka William Shakespeare, who was the answer to the Spring Trivia Question, also died shortly after the trivia question appeared in October. Future trivia questions will endeavour to divert focus from the living!

HERITAGE WATCH

The rezoning of public sites in NSW

The closing words of former MHS president (2006-09), **Scott MacArthur's** article in the July 2009 newsletter *Pros & Cons in New Heritage Laws* were:

'When the new LEP is enacted in the near future, it is widely assumed that the new conservation areas will be much reduced in size, with the risk that many historic and period buildings will be unsympathetically redeveloped, or bulldozed. Unfortunately, we will all have just two days notice.'

There is still time for submissions to be lodged on the draft Marrickville Council LEP and DCP, however, it is not light reading. Underlying changes to heritage legislation and the devolution of council powers in planning, is a strategy to increase population density in Sydney. But at what cost? Diminishing the **significance of heritage** for one.

The *Sydney Morning Herald* (31/1/11) carried a disturbing front page heritage story (*Zoning changes a developer bonanza*) by Urban Affairs reporter, **Kelsey Munro**. Here are some excerpts:

'Schools, hospitals, churches and other public sites are being systematically rezoned for residential development across the state in what critics say means open slather for land to be sold to developers without safeguards. Standardising local environmental plans will make land use more flexible, NSW government documents say.

'In the City of Sydney alone, more than 120 sites protected as "public purpose" or "special use" will be rezoned for low-density or general housing under the draft Sydney local environment plan, which goes on exhibition on Wednesday [2 February]. They include 30 public schools and daycare centres, 38 churches and community centres and 15 health facilities and hospital buildings. In NSW, 26 councils have adopted a standardised LEP. The rest are to be completed by June next year.

'About 50 sites in the Marrickville Council area protected for community or educational facilities will be rezoned for low-, medium- or high-density residential development.

'Community or public land has typically been given special-use or public-purpose zoning. But the Department of Planning has told councils they must redraw their maps and most public infrastructure sites must take on the zoning of adjoining areas. So if a school is surrounded by homes, the school will be forced to take on residential zoning unless the council can demonstrate it should retain "infrastructure" zoning.

'The department document says the approach "provides greater flexibility and adaptive management of land used for the provision of public or private infrastructure. The future use of particular sites that are currently used for infrastructure is a matter for individual government agencies, based on their needs and strategic planning," a spokeswoman said.'

A second SMH article (*'Special uses' zoning change raises alarm*, page 2) by Kelsey Munro reported: 'The City of Sydney council said it wanted to keep special uses zoning to protect public land from change of use but was overruled by the state government.'

In Marrickville, the rezoning of schools and other public buildings is a compulsory item in the draft

LEP/DCP and MHS has been advised there is nothing Marrickville Council can do about it. The *Herald* cited Petersham TAFE and Australia Street Infants School among the 50 Marrickville sites to be rezoned.



Australia Street Infants (Jubilee Souvenir Newtown 1912)

Scott's July 2009 article indicated the new State Heritage Act would 'make it harder to get properties heritage-listed and easier to get them unlisted.' The September 2009 newsletter article, *Draft LEP and Heritage* foreshadowed: 'our built heritage is now at much greater risk than ever.' Following the MHS Heritage Forum (31/10/09) our November 2009 newsletter quoted the shadow Minister for Planning: 'within 18 months of winning government, we will review the Environment Planning and Assessment Act.'

Members are urged to scrutinise the draft LEP/DCP, submit comments to council; and lobby politicians of all persuasions at both state and local levels.

Richard Blair

Station Masters house, Sydenham

The Society opposes the DA to demolish this house at 117 Railway Road near Sydenham Station. External inspection reveals this exceptional cottage is remarkably intact and we wonder why it was omitted from the heritage listing of Sydenham Station, which we believe is listed on the State Heritage Register. The station was first called Marrickville Railway Station in 1884 when the Illawarra Railway Line was opened; the name was changed to Sydenham Station in 1895, when the Sydenham to Bankstown line opened.

We've no idea what affects the land requiring 'remediation', but it would certainly seem that, were the land not earmarked by RailCorp as a potential development site, any such remediation could be conducted without the need to demolish the cottage and remove many of the trees on its site. Whilst we cannot plead for retention of the house on the basis that it has a heritage listing, it would be difficult for the applicant to argue that the Station Master's House is not of local historical and heritage significance.

(The attractive station master's house at 86 Station Street Tempe is now privately owned and has been recommended by Paul Davies Pty Ltd Architects, Heritage Consultants to be considered in the Marrickville LEP as part of Tempe Railway Station Group.)

The DA should be refused, and the applicant be asked to propose the cottage for heritage listing. Its size, location and setting suggest that it would be most suitable for restoration and alternate uses. If the applicant is reluctant to take this step, perhaps Council can propose it as a heritage item under the Draft LEP.

Lorraine Beach

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Saturday 26 February

Megan Martin talk on Claude Crowe

Details on front page

Monday 28 March (in lieu of usual Sat. meeting)

Details on front page

Saturday 16 April*

Robert Hutchinson's Reading photographs

* meeting a week earlier than usual due to Easter

New South Wales Postcard Fair

Sunday 27 February 9 am-3 pm

Petersham Town Hall

Admission free

(Also: 22 May, 28 August, 27 November)

The Sydney Tramway Museum, Loftus will hold a two day festival on the weekend of **26-27 February** from 9 am to mark two important anniversaries in Sydney: 150 years of tramways in Sydney and 50 years since the closure of Sydney's first generation tramway. For details and admission charges, ring David on 0405 431 710 or check the website: <www.sydneytramwaymuseum.com.au/festival>.

Picturing New South Wales:

Photographs by Kerry & Co.

Macleay Museum (Sydney University grounds)

Until 13 March

Weekdays 10 am-4.30 pm; Sundays noon-4 pm

In the early 20th century, Charles Kerry found a new market for his photographs of NSW in the growing pictorial postcard trade. He and his photographers travelled to country towns to create new images. These rarely seen images have been reproduced from the Macleay Museum's glass negative collection.

Indecent Exposure: Annette Kellerman's story

National Portrait Gallery, Canberra

Until 25 April

Coincidental to the recent opening of the revamped Annette Kellerman Aquatic Centre in Enmore Park is an exhibition on one of the early 20th century's most recognisable women, who spent part of her childhood living in Silver Street Marrickville. 'This portrait-through-objects exhibition presents a focussed biography of Annette Kellerman, creating a sense of the colour and audacity of her career with samples from the material culture of her life and exploits: photographs, film, newsreels, movie posters, books and ephemera, and a selection from the wonderful collection of her costumes.'

Rose Cottage bicentenary

Believed to be the oldest surviving freestanding timber slab cottage in Australia, the 200th anniversary of Rose Cottage, Rose Street, Wilberforce will be celebrated on 20 March from 10 am. Donation entry, morning tea and lunch will be available. The Society visited the cottage in 2008. For further details email <president@rosefamilyociety.org.au>.

Material sought for Marrickville Council's 150th anniversary food publication

Marrickville Council is celebrating its sesquicentenary in 2011. One project is a publication that will revolve around food and the Marrickville Council area. There will be 15 chapters, each dealing with a decade of food from the 1860s.

Members are invited to contact the project coordinator, **Elizabeth Heath** with ideas, memories, photographs or ephemera on 9335 2293 or 0447 397 539, or email <ccdo@marrickville.nsw.gov.au>.

Robert Parkinson's latest book *Picture Shows on the Far South Coast of New South Wales* recalls travelling picture showmen and permanent exhibitors in that region. The story from outer Sydney to the Shoalhaven, told by the author in earlier books, is now complete, adding a further dimension to local history and heritage.

Picture Shows on the Far South Coast of New South Wales



Robert Parkinson

Contains 130 pages, b/w and colour illustrations, appendices, bibliography, index and map. Limited edition. Tax Department statement available. Cost is \$20 a copy plus \$4 postage; ask about cost of multiple copies. Send cheque or money order to Robert Parkinson, 29 Golden Grove Street, Newtown 2042. Enquiries: 9519 9963 or email <bobjpark@optusnet.com.au>.

Annual Xmas Pot Luck Dinner

Our annual event on Saturday 4 December was held in the Cardigan Street Stanmore home of **Deborah and Jim Croke** who provided a very spacious venue and were most amiable hosts. As usual, our members came up with a comprehensive array of food and drink. Congratulations to our lucky door prize winners, **Joan Francis** and **'Tricia Blombery**. We thank donors **Robert Hutchinson** (Christmas cake) and **Lorraine Beach** (port) and **Geoff Ostling** (cheese and crackers on a platter). Thanks to all those members who helped make the night a success, especially Lorraine for her ever smooth coordination.

Motoring experts have advised that the MG TF which featured in the last newsletter article, *Demolished for flats* is actually a MG TD.

We understand the **St Clements Church pews** remain under severe risk of removal as the church hierarchy is intent on this course despite opposition to removal by the majority of its parishioners. The church is aware that a DA will need to be lodged with Marrickville Council.

PRESIDENT Sonia 9519 3137

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