

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.

DULWICH HILL ENMORE LEWISHAM
ST PETERS SYDENHAM TEMPE

MARRICKVILLE PETERSHAM STANMORE
& PARTS OF CAMPERDOWN & NEWTOWN



OUR NEXT MEETING

**Wed 30 March 9.30 for 9.45 am departure
Admiralty House & Beyond by coach**

Note: Date was changed to accommodate variation of plans of Governor General. Full details were in the February newsletter. Tour is fully booked.

Meet opp Petersham Town Hall. BYO lunch. Cost \$40 incl. afternoon tea. Prepayment essential. Advise Silas 9569 3417 if cancelling as there's a waiting list.



Admiralty House and grounds (photo: Silas Clifford-Smith)

The **National Trust Heritage Festival** is **2-17 April**, with its theme, *Amazing Stories*. See NT website <www.nationaltrust.com.au> for all official events including gold coin entry to all National Trust properties Sunday 17 April from 9 am. Monday 18 April is UNESCO World Heritage Day, 'designated to raise awareness of the need to protect cultural diversity'.

Marrickville Council's annual **Marrickville Medal** award ceremony is at **Marrickville Town Hall** on **Wednesday 6 April from 6 pm**. Guest speaker is local author and activist Nadia Wheatly. Entries from the inaugural Marrickville Urban Photography Competition will be exhibited and the competition winners announced. Bookings Kate 9335 2114.

See back page for other local festival events including the MHS talk on 16 April (more details in April newsletter) and other Marrickville Council activities.

Dennis Grosvenor's documentary *State of Siege* records 'the unwanted, unnecessary changes that have been foisted on Ku-ring-gai in the name of "development", encouraged by the political donations of developers.' Since the 1970s Green Bans, 'there has been a constant battle between the forces of conservation and development. With few exceptions, when it comes to the economy and the profit motive, the environment has generally come a poor second.'

State of Siege has had screenings at Roseville Cinema in recent weeks, but it is hoped this acclaimed doco can soon be screened in the Inner West.

**26 March is the NSW State Election
and Earth Hour 2011 is at 8.30 pm**

HERITAGE WATCH

St Clements Anglican Church has lodged a DA with Council: *To remove the existing pews from the church, reconstruct part of the original timber floor and install a small mobile kitchenette in the southern transept of the church including the removal of the existing baptism foundation which is to be relocated.*

The Society has lodged a submission asking Council to refuse the DA, but acknowledging the changing nature of churches with Liturgical change and declining traditional congregations — even though ironically, the Chinese congregation at St Clements (who mostly favour pew retention) is going against the trend and increasing!

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Almost while we weren't looking, the 1927 **Newtown Railway Station platform building** was demolished in late February. The brick platform building was altered around 1975 when the roof was replaced and the chimneys removed. Fortunately the original plan to build a hideous ski-ramp style structure at the King Street entrance was canned and it was decided to retain the 1892 (modified 1927) King Street booking office building. The fate of the two-storey 1900 tramway depot office and the large 1899 tramshed remains unclear. Some plans are displayed on the site. The long overdue station refurbishment is due for completion by the end of 2012.

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The Society has lodged its **submission on Council's draft MLEP/DCP**, which is available on request. Among other points, we advocated further controls for medium and high density development so as not to impair the overall heritage qualities of the area; recommended Council establish general guidelines to be observed by proponents for all development within the LGA; and expressed serious concerns about the proposed significant reduction in Heritage Conservation Areas, which potentially put many historic and period buildings at risk of demolition or unsympathetic redevelopment. This could be offset somewhat by a Heritage Study Review.

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. Membership includes monthly newsletter and a copy of our latest journal. Concession \$12, individual or joint concession \$20, household or organisation \$28. Joining now will take your membership until the end of May 2012.

OUR LAST MEETING

Claude and Isobel Crowe and Berrima Bridge Nurseries: talk by Megan Martin

At our meeting on Saturday 26 February (following a minute's silence for the NZ earthquake victims), **Megan Martin** (Head of the Caroline Simpson Library & Research Collection at Historic Houses Trust) gave a fascinating illustrated talk on the horticultural lives of Claude (1914-99) and Isobel (1913-2009) Crowe. Two years ago the Caroline Simpson Library & Research Collection staff gained access to the Crowe archive. Megan enabled us to see wonderful classic pictures of their catalogues, invoices and letters, and told amusing stories of their colourful lives.

Isobel studied agriculture, then horticulture, at Sydney Technical College and became one of the first women to qualify in that field from STC. In 1937 Claude managed the garden planning section of Anderson Seeds (now the site of Wedderburn Scales) on Parramatta Road, Summer Hill. Their work during World War II was inventive — from seed banks to the vegetable seeds committee and camouflaging — but that's another story.

Then for over 50 years they owned Berrima Bridge Nurseries where their reputation as plant people flourished and they became well known throughout the Southern Highlands. Claude wouldn't sell plants if he thought them inappropriate! Although the Crowes' story is recent history, their lives need to be documented. Perhaps a book?

Pamela Stewart



Visitors at the Red Cross Chelsea Flower Show in the Sydney Domain, September 1946, Warwick Studios (Caroline Simpson Library and Research Collection: Claude Crowe papers CCC/P/3)

FROM THE (SMH) ARCHIVES

'When Billy Graham was last here, Father Linus, parish priest at St Brigid's, Marrickville, lent the Rev Ken Child, rector at St Clement's C of E, Marrickville, his church bus to help get parishioners to the Showground crusade. Yesterday, and on Tuesday, Mr Child reciprocated, driving some of Father Linus's flock in his church's bus to and from Randwick Racecourse to see the Pope.'

(from Column Eight, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Thursday 3 December 1970)

Sign on a door at Goulburn Art Gallery: we've yet to meet someone who's entered through a closed door!



THE RESURRECTION OF NAPIER

With the appalling Christchurch earthquake of 22 February and its never-ending aftershocks — in the wake of severe flooding and cyclones in Queensland and elsewhere — comes the realisation of how relatively helpless we are in times of extreme natural disaster. And we know full well that buildings, roads and other infrastructure can be replaced, but not human life. The future of Christchurch remains bleak. Will residents want to rebuild and continue to live and work in such an unstable environment?



However, Napier on the east coast of New Zealand's North Island experienced a massive earthquake registering 7.8 on the Richter Scale on 3 February 1931, devastating central Napier and causing extensive damage to the environs and nearby Hastings.*

It resulted in over 250 deaths. Its epicentre was 15-20 kilometres north of Napier. This photo reveals the damage to Napier was possibly worse than in Christchurch last month. Both quakes occurred on a Tuesday in February.

Most of Napier's residents left for almost two years during reconstruction which was well-planned and far-sighted. A moratorium was imposed on new building during the decision-making process. Streets were widened, street corners splayed, power and telephone lines buried (a rarity at the time) and some design restrictions introduced, mainly relating to height and design of verandahs. New buildings were constructed from reinforced concrete, the material which had proved itself in the earthquake.

The main architecture used was the Art Deco style, a name derived from the 1925 Industrial Art expo in Paris (*Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs Industriels et Modernes*). This modern design, emerging in Europe and the US, featured a simple, low-relief approach to decoration, using mainly geometric shapes. Although Napier embraced this radical new approach, by the 1970s the Art Deco buildings were mostly run down. It was a visit to Napier in 1981 by OECD** planners and architects that precipitated a revival of interest in the City to



conserve the Art Deco architecture. This revival has continued such that Napier is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a marvel of a city.

Richard Blair (Sources: Napier City Council *Art Deco Napier: a design guide* 1996 & R McGregor *The Art Deco City: Napier New Zealand* 1998; photo: R Blair)

* The city of Hastings also features Art Deco architecture

** Organisation for Economic Cooperation & Development



Cardigan Street Stanmore looking south c. 1930 (City of Sydney Archives: SRC4158. Originally part of CRS44/256)

History of 11-13 Cardigan Street Stanmore

The 1925-26 Assessment books at Sydney City Council show that a two storey brick structure with an iron roof, two roomed, used as a factory was constructed in 1925. Cardigan Street was then part of the Camperdown Ward of the City of Sydney. It is now part of the Marrickville Council area (boundaries were moved about 1968). The building was owned by Bessie Ridley and occupied by Harry Ridley. It was valued at £179 in 1926. It seems the Ridley family owned the building until 1986, when Ted Meredith bought it from the estate of Bessie Ridley.

Some occupiers of the site: Harry Ridley (1925-48); Melton Wood Products (1949-at least 1958); Charles Catts Furniture (1970s); KRM Fine Furniture (1986-94); Deborah Beck and Jim Croke (1994-present). Land size: 309.8 square metres; floor area: 483 square metres.

The original plan of the building, approved 31 March 1925, is quite different to what was actually built. Ted Meredith said the builders had managed to get some arched windows from a building that was being pulled down at Central Station, so 16 of these windows were used on the northern side of the building instead of the eight originally planned. It appears that the building was used as a furniture-making factory until 1986. A sign saying 'Jarrah Furniture' is still visible on the exterior northern wall. In 1986 Ted Meredith set up his company KRM Fine Furniture, employing five staff. He used the building for storage and as a showroom for local and imported furniture. Meredith also replaced a spiral staircase with the steel one there today.

When we bought the building, it had no zoning listed, so we were able to convert it into studios and a residence. Since 1994 we have built all the internal walls, installed a kitchen and bathroom and a new ceiling and roof (which was asbestos when we bought it). We had it completely rewired, replaced the plumbing and installed a solar Hot Water Service, and recently, solar panels for electricity.

Deborah Beck (who, along with husband Jim, hosted our fabulous Xmas pot luck annual dinner)

Laurel Horton (of St Peters Cooks River History Group) has written to Marrickville Council on the new sandstone steps and boat ramp at Kendrick Reserve, Tempe:

Now that this project has been completed I would like to suggest that the steps be called The William Kerr Steps. William Kerr was a convict servant of Alexander Brodie Spark of Tempe House. Before a dam was constructed across Cooks River, to allow access to the south, it was 'Willie the Boatman', as he was called, who had to row Spark and his visitors across the river. Steps and a boat ramp to the river seem a suitable memorial to this character in our local history.*

Extract from *Grave Reflections* by Laurel Horton (1996):

KERR, William, Tempe, Cooks River, about 40 yrs, died 9.2.1848.

William Kerr was born in Greenoch and his occupation was a fisherman. He was tried for robbery in Glasgow on 27.9.1826, having had two previous convictions he was sentenced to 14 years transportation and came to Australia on the "Manlius". He was described as a Protestant and able to read and write. His height was 5 feet 2 inches, complexion was ruddy freckled, hair brown and eyes green. He had a scar in the centre of his forehead under the hair. Upon arrival he was assigned to A.B. Spark of "Tempe House". He was known as 'Willie the boatman'. "Tempe House" lay on the opposite side of the river to Sydney and, until the government completed a dam and causeway in 1840, it was Willie's job to row Spark across each day. As well as this there were the many hundreds of visitors who had to be transported at any time of the day or night.

Willie is mentioned in Spark's diary – Spark had just returned after being absent for Christmas, **2nd January 1837**: "Found that Willie, the boatman, (Thomas) Douglas and (Tom) Jackson, had been very outrageous on Christmas Day, forcing their way into the house in their drunkenness and attacking

Mary (Stephens) and Margaret (Skelly). Sent a constable from town to take them into custody." **3rd January, 1837**: "Entered the Police Office in time to hear one of the men discharged for want of evidence, and the other two, Willie and Jackson, sentenced to an inadequate punishment of five days to the cells on bread and water."

8th February 1848: "Alarmed at night by the report that Willie was brought home in a dying state. Mrs S. and I and the servants immediately went to his hut, where we found him indeed very ill with shortness of breathing. We administered all we could to his comfort by warm foot baths, mustard poultice, and medicines and left him at a late hour somewhat relieved, under the charge of the cook and gardener". **9th February 1848**: "Aroused at half past one with a message that Willie was dying, and another almost immediately after, that he was dead. I proceeded to the hut, and there indeed I saw a poor man stiffening in death. It is upwards of twenty years since he first entered into my service as an assigned servant, and I can bear testimony to far more fidelity than is usually met with from men of his class."

An inquest at Newtown returned death by natural causes.

* An Aboriginal interpretative site also to be examined

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Wednesday 30 March
Admiralty House & beyond
 Details on front page

Saturday 16 April*
Robert Hutchinson's Reading photographs

* meeting a week earlier than usual due to Easter

Set in Stone launch

Members are invited to the launch of *Set in Stone: The Cell Block Theatre* by **Deborah Beck** at 6 pm on **Wednesday 13 April** at the Cell Block Theatre, National Art School, Forbes Street Darlinghurst. The associated exhibition will be opened and MHS member **Nigel Butterley** will perform a John Cage piece.

Set in Stone is the fascinating story of how a derelict wing of Darlinghurst Gaol, home to Sydney's most notorious female criminals, became the Cell Block Theatre, the hub of Australia's avant-garde theatre, music and dance scene in the 1960s and 1970s.

The exhibition draws on the NAS collection and extensive archival material to tell the story of its lively history, including the 1955 visit of Katharine Hepburn. A place of creative freedom and ingenuity, this extraordinary venue saw early performances from artists such as John Bell, Peter Sculthorpe, Jim Sharman, David Malouf, Yvonne Kenny and Nick Cave.

MHS member **Deborah Beck** is an accomplished artist who has exhibited extensively throughout Australia and in 2009 completed a Master of Arts (History) at Sydney University. A long time art teacher, she is a lecturer and archivist at the NAS. Her book *Hope in Hell: A History of Darlinghurst Gaol and the National Art School* was published in 2005. *Set in Stone* (UNSW Press) will retail for \$49.95. The exhibition *Set in Stone: the National Art School and the Cell Block Theatre* will run at the NAS Gallery from 14 April to 28 May.



Robert Helpmann, Bill Crisp and Katharine Hepburn in the women's cell block on 7 July 1955 when KH announced it would be turned into a theatre
 (Photo courtesy NAS archives)

Museum of Sydney
Cnr Bridge & Phillip Streets Sydney
From Little Things Big Things Grow:
Fighting for Indigenous Rights 1920-1970
 Until 8 May daily 9.30 am-5 pm

Exhibition tells of the discrimination, segregation and struggle of Indigenous people to gain the same rights as other Australians.

AUTUMN TRIVIA QUESTION

On which building and where in the Marrickville LGA is this ("AD May.31.1881.")? Richard 9557 3823 or email <heritagesociety@optusnet.com.au>.



Local National Trust Heritage Festival

Saturday 16 April 10.30 am Herb Greedy Hall
Marrickville Heritage Society
Reading photographs: Every picture tells a story

Robert Hutchinson uses his extensive postcard collection to demonstrate how you should look into a photograph, and not just at it.

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Saturday 2 April 2 pm

Every Window Tells a Story

St Peters Church 187 Princes Highway St Peters
 (opp. McDonald's)

People from many backgrounds are commemorated in the stained glass windows of St Peters Church, Cooks River. Hear their stories and understand the significance of the pictures and symbols.

Saturday 16 April 2 pm

Cooks River Ebb and Flow

Walk (starting from carpark on western side of Tempe Railway Station) along the river and learn about mansions and middens, people and plans, and the highs and lows of the Cooks River story.

St Peters Cooks River History Group. Both events free, but bookings essential for walk 9558 7504.

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16 & 17 April (10 am-3 pm) Tempe House Open Days Brodie Spark Drive, Wolli Creek. Free.

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Marrickville Council 4-17 April: Exhibition of c. 300 World War II photos. **Monday 28 March, 6-8 pm:** Marrickville Library & History Services talk on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family History; and **Wednesday 13 April, 10 am-1 pm:** House History Workshop.

All events at Marrickville Library. Talk and workshop bookings are essential 9335 2162.

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