

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.

DULWICH HILL ENMORE LEWISHAM
ST PETERS SYDENHAM TEMPE

MARRICKVILLE PETERSHAM STANMORE
& PARTS OF CAMPERDOWN & NEWTOWN



OUR NEXT MEETING

Coach tour to Emu Plains and Penrith
Saturday 26 May 8.45 for 9 am departure

Meet opposite Petersham Town Hall. BYO lunch. Cost \$40 (includes coach, morning Devonshire tea, entries and tours). Prepayment & bookings essential. Rosemary 9560 4023. Expected return to Petersham 5-5.30pm. Please advise if you have to cancel.

At Emu Plains we visit **Arms of Australia Inn**, first licenced in 1841, now a local history museum full of artefacts from 1791 onwards. Nepean District Historical Society hosts our exclusive viewing. **Lewers Gallery & Cottage**, studio and home of artists, the late Gerald and Margo Lewers — leaders in the development of modernism in Australia — it is renowned for its architecture, art and beautiful garden.



*Arms of
Australia Inn
Museum,
Emu Plains*

Guided tour of **Penrith's Museum of Fire**, one of the world's largest and most comprehensive fire collections including fire fighting vehicles, equipment and memorabilia. At **Muru Mittigar Aboriginal Cultural Centre's** interpretive museum we will spend time with an elder of the local Darug people and view local traditional artefacts associated with dance, music, ceremonies, hunting and fishing.



Geoff Ostling proudly holds his 2012 Special Achievement Award certificate with inaugural award winner, Lu Bell (2006). Marrickville Medal was won by the Greek Atlas League (original Marrickville Town Hall). Full report of Medal winners in June newsletter. (photo: Richard Blair)

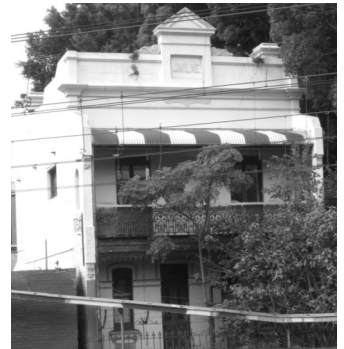
6 June 2012 is your last chance to see the Transit of Venus until 2117!

Demolition Watch

The die was cast when the Joint Review Planning Panel decided in August 2011 to demolish

Duncraggan, aka the **J Milne house, Newtown**, on the advice of the RTA who claimed that the Crescent Lane house was 'a danger to the lines'.

Never mind that the house had stood cheek by jowl with the railway lines since the 1920s when new lines were added. **Duncraggan** along with the bulk of the two TJ Andrews buildings (facades on Enmore Road remain) were demolished in April 2012.



Two consolations: one, that there's another J Milne house, **Tonburn** (at left) at 21 Trafalgar Street Enmore which also faces the railway, though is a street width away. In the 1920s it was No. 11. Some history of the houses appeared in the April and June 2011 newsletters. The second consolation is the evocative Kassmusic clip on [YouTube](#) which was made in the middle of last year.

(story & photos by Richard Blair)

Not long ago it was reported in the press that: 'The current [financial] crisis has been attributed to "an excess of speculation, an undue extension of credit and the facility with which banks have been discounting mere accommodation paper".'

Words from the Reserve Bank governor? No. A letter to the editor of *The Sydney Morning Herald* (20 August 2008) from Patrick Farrell, Albury, citing from a despatch by Governor George Gipps, reported in *The Sydney Gazette* 1 February 1842, about the financial crisis of the early 1840s.

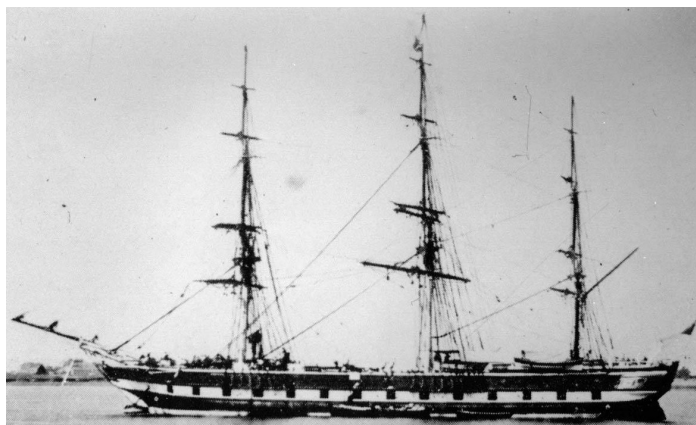
Did you know that the name **Gallipoli** comes from the Greek, Καλλιπολις or *kallipolis*, and means 'beautiful city'? Its Turkish name is **Gelibolu**. (Source: Wikipedia). The heel of Italy also has a seaside town called Gallipoli.

Grave News: The Briton Family

John Briton was born at Barrhead near Glasgow, Scotland in 1840. John and his sister Janet arrived in Auckland, New Zealand from London in 1862 on board the *Royal Charlie*. John's occupation was listed as 'Joiner' and Janet's as 'Servant'. It was reported in The Daily Southern Cross on 1 August 1862 that the *Royal Charlie* had had a tedious passage of 140 days and had experienced very heavy weather and a succession of heavy gales. One infant died during the voyage, however, it was also reported that 'no sickness of any moment occurred to the other passengers.'

John married Agnes White, a dressmaker, in St Andrews Presbyterian Church, Auckland on 30 March 1864. Their residential address was listed as Queen Street Auckland. Agnes was born in Mullangary, Scotland.

From 1870 to 1891 the government of New Zealand was encouraging immigration. The Immigration and Public Works Act 1870 envisaged two kinds of immigrants, those recruited by the New Zealand Agent-General and those nominated by people already living in New Zealand. Those in the latter category were known as Colonial Nominated Immigrants.



In September 1874, the *Cospatrick* set sail from London bound for Auckland. On board were 429 passengers and 44 crew. Among the passengers were eight members of Agnes Briton's family including brothers, sisters, her mother and two small children. They were listed as Colonial Nominated Immigrants – most likely nominated by John and Agnes.

Tragically, on the night of 17 November 1874, the *Cospatrick*, a wooden 3-masted full-rigged sailing ship, was in the south Atlantic, several hundred kilometres south-west of Cape Town, when disaster struck. Henry McDonald, the second mate, ended his watch at midnight. He walked around the deck and found 'all well'. Half an hour later he was woken by the cry 'Fire!' On deck he found smoke and flames pouring from the fore hatch and passengers rushing about in a state of panic. The crew were fighting to extinguish the blaze but the fire had hold.

One overloaded lifeboat capsized on entering the water and those in it perished. When the *Cospatrick* finally sank, 40 hours after the fire had been discovered, two lifeboats were left floating on the empty sea, with 62 survivors – passengers and crew – aboard. They were without food or water. These two boats were separated during a gale. Only one was ever

seen again. Ten days after the fire, it was found by a passing British ship.

Only five people were alive. Two died soon after being rescued. Of the 473 aboard when the *Cospatrick* caught fire, only three survived. A court of inquiry in England found that the fire probably started when one of the crew or a passenger pilfering cargo set fire to straw or some similar material with a match or candle. The fire gained a rapid hold because of the flammable goods stored in the hold – coal, turpentine, palm oil, a large quantity of spirits and other oils.

At the time, there was much confusion about whether or not the White family members had actually sailed on the *Cospatrick*. The passenger list did not list them as White, but as Whyte. Notification had been given that the Whites had not sailed. This information was found to be a terrible mistake and it was subsequently revealed that the Whites had indeed perished.

In 1891, John and Agnes left New Zealand and came to Australia. By then they had ten children. John had been working for the New Zealand Government as a railway construction contractor and continued this work in New South Wales. Prior to his retirement he was working on the Lismore–Tweed railway extension. He was one of the founders of the Petersham Bowling Club and was several times president. John was also a prominent member of the Petersham Presbyterian Church and also connected with the Prince Alfred Lodge, Petersham.

The Briton family home, an Italianate mansion at 18 Shaw Street Petersham, was built by John Briton in 1897 at a cost of about £8,000. It is still standing. Originally it was called *Paritana* but after John's death his daughters renamed it *Te Whare*. From the late 1930s it has been known as *Tretharway*. It was on the market in 2010 for over 3.6 million dollars.

John died in 1913 and was buried in the Presbyterian section 1D, grave 2380 in Rookwood. Agnes survived John by less than a year and was also buried in the family plot. One daughter, Helen May, and John and Agnes' eldest son James and his wife Edith Margaret were also buried in this plot.

Jane Stott (Vice President, Friends of Rookwood)

Author's note: Thanks must go to Mr Peter Briton for bringing this story to my attention and for providing the wonderful family photographs.



Family photo taken at 374 George Street Sydney in 1900.
Agnes and John Briton in the centre front.



References

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Editor's note: Thanks to **Jane Stott** and the **Friends of Rookwood** for permission to use this article; thanks also to MHS member **George Gibbons** for sending article to the editor. *Te Whare* in the Maori language means 'the home'. *Trethaway* is where MHS held its tenth anniversary celebration in 1994.

The case against closure of city reading room, State Records of NSW, The Rocks on 30 June

The closure of the Sydney Records Centre (city reading room) in The Rocks from 30 June 2012 will restrict public access to primary source material that is important to all historians in investigating and writing Australian history. The SRC is an essential part of the responsibilities of State Records of NSW providing access to microform and digitised copies of important historical records, originals of which are held at the Western Sydney Records Centre at Kingswood.

Among several other reasons why this centre should remain open in The Rocks are that it:

- 1) allows access to microfilm, microfiche or digitised primary source material when it is not necessary to visit Kingswood to look at the original, uncopied material (copies can be made onto a USB stick);
- 2) provides access to digitised Land and Property Information (LPI) Crown Plans that can be viewed without charge. For comparison, LPI copies cost between \$11.60 and \$13.30 each and cannot be viewed prior to purchase;
- 3) is easily accessed by public transport and is close to Circular Quay;
- 4) is close to other important centres for historical research, including the Mitchell Library, LPI, City of Sydney Council Archives, and Society of Australian Genealogists such that research can be done at several places on the one day using complementary material;
- 5) is located centrally for high school students and undergraduate university students in Sydney studying history using primary sources, but where extensive sources might not be necessary;
- 6) is convenient for visitors to Sydney, including those on cruise ships, who are also carrying out research at the Mitchell Library and other research centres;
- 7) does not need a full day set aside and a car to get there! Kingswood is almost two hours by public transport from the city.

To ensure that the Sydney Record Centre remains open at this or another location in the City of Sydney:

- 1) Write a letter or send an email to your local State MP. If you live in Marrickville it is The Hon Carmel Tebbutt, 244 Illawarra Road, Marrickville NSW 2204; or marrickville@parliament.nsw.gov.au;
- 2) Write to or email the relevant State minister, The Hon Greg Pearce MLC, Minister for Finance and Services, Level 36 Governor Macquarie Tower, 1 Farrer Place, Sydney NSW 2000; office@pearce.minister.nsw.gov.au;
- 3) Keep using the SRC of the State Records of NSW, 2 Globe Street, The Rocks (Monday-Friday 9-5).

Caroline Plim (abridged from submission sent)

Note: The Society has sent submissions to the above MPs

Calendar of Events

Saturday 26 May

Coach tour to Emu Plains & Penrith

Details on front page

Saturday 23 June

Annual General Meeting

Saturday 28 July

'Big Dig' Archaeological Centre



Petersham Tabernacle, Cannon St Petersham (from 'The Bible bashers: the Churches of Christ in the Marrickville area' in Marrickville: a past worth preserving)

***Marrickville: a past worth preserving* review**

The terrific articles in this book were written as part of an essay competition organised by members of Marrickville Heritage Society. Each essay offers an intriguing and informative glimpse into a historic area of Sydney's inner west: its businesses, factories, working class suburbs, founding families, its unique symphony orchestra and horticultural society, life during the Depression, and more. Take a tour of the local cemetery and meet 'Joe the basket maker' and his wife Elizabeth, the 'Fighting Hen of Cooks River'.

Engaging, fascinating and a quality production.

Cassie Mercer *Inside History* (March-April 2012 issue)

To order, ring Diane 9588 4930 or email the Society at <heritagesociety@optusnet.com.au>



Maureen Elsegood and Larry Writer at Bumper talk
(photo: Richard Blair)

Our Last Meeting

The Life and Times of Frank

'Bumper' Farrell with Larry Writer

Why was I so looking forward to Larry Writer's talk on Saturday 21 April? MHS talks are always good value but this one was special to me because *Bumper* Farrell and his family lived at 70 Premier Street Marrickville while my family lived at No. 62. Our houses, both on corners, seemed to be of similar construction, although our old house still stands whilst the Farrell house was later absorbed into Ferncourt School and demolished. My mother regarded *Bumper's* mother as a wonderful woman.

And why does the name of this ordinary man loom so large in our memory banks? In the late 1930s while I was at high school,* my father had an office in William Street, which led up to Bumper's 'patch'. I remember seeing *Bumper* from the tram walking through the Cross, with his two enormous cauliflower ears, a very squashed nose and wearing his dirty old gabardine raincoat, and looking more like a 'crim' than the worst criminal you could imagine.

After the talk I bought Larry's book. I began to read it and finished it at 1.35 am on Monday. I just couldn't put it down! Although in the 1970s my son knew who *Bumper* Farrell was from his talents as a Rugby League forward, I was reading about a famous footballer playing a code in which I had never been interested; and I was reading about a policeman — one of thousands who have done their duty over decades. So what was different about Bumper Farrell?

Larry's widely-researched book gives descriptions of Bumper's physical force when he played Rugby League for the Newtown *Bluebags* and his physical force when dealing with the criminals on his Darlinghurst beat. But he was a man who elicited incredible respect from everyone who crossed his path, whether a rival footballer or a criminal, a thug or the likes of those gangland bosses, Tilly Devine and Kate Leigh. *Bumper* also had to deal with other law enforcers, high ranking officials and sometimes politicians who were also playing the criminal game — and he handled them all. This highly religious man — a practicing Catholic, who had high church officials as friends — was absolutely honest and managed to tread his path between conflicting sets of lawbreakers.

Larry's talk was great and was augmented by the presence of *Bumper's* daughter, Maureen Elsegood, who also fielded questions about her father — a rough and tumble policeman and footballer who somehow earned everyone's respect. But you will have to read the book to discover more about **why** this is so.

Kate Dunbar

* **Note** Kate attended William Street Girls' Junior High School on the corner of Yurong Street (which in the early 1950s became the Child Welfare Dept, but was later absorbed into the Australian Museum). Kate's essay, 'Whatever happened to Emanuel Brace' features in *Marrickville: a past worth preserving*.

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