

# MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.

DULWICH HILL ENMORE LEWISHAM  
ST PETERS SYDENHAM TEMPE

MARRICKVILLE PETERSHAM STANMORE  
& PARTS OF CAMPERDOWN & NEWTOWN



## OUR NEXT MEETING

### Annual General Meeting

**Saturday 23 June 10.15 for 10.30 am**

**Herb Greedy Hall 79 Petersham Rd Marrickville**

The president invites all members to our 28th Annual General Meeting. Reports on the progress of the Society over the past year will be presented and all executive committee positions will be declared vacant. Nominations for president, two vice presidents, treasurer, secretary, assistant secretary and up to six committee positions may be made in advance in writing or on the day. Committee meetings are held on the first Monday evening of each month (except January). For more information about the committee or meeting requirements ring Diane on 9588 4930.

Members are reminded that they must have paid their 2012-13 membership fees to stand for office, to nominate or second a candidate, or to vote at the AGM. Fees can be paid on the day. Stay afterwards and mingle with fellow members over a light lunch.

### Welcome to New Members

Ken Cullen, Camperdown; Andrew Burns & Sylvia Balog, Sr Lia van Haren, all of Marrickville; Monica Oppen, Stanmore; Tempe High School, Tempe; Patricia Macrae, Bronte; Richard Pearce, Potts Point; Loretta Beattie, Sydney.

## MHS annual fees due on 1 June

Members should find included with their June newsletter a green renewal slip to return intact with a cheque or money order made out to Marrickville Heritage Society, PO Box 415 Marrickville NSW 1475, unless you're: a) paying by cash at the AGM; b) paying by direct deposit (details below); or c) fully paid up, in which case no slip should have been issued.

For renewal by direct deposit to MHS bank account:

**Bank name:** Sydney Credit Union (BSB 802 084)

**Account name:** Marrickville Heritage Society

**Account Number:** 85663

**Reference:** 'Fees' + [your surname/s and initials]

Fees are unchanged: concession \$12, individual or joint concession \$20, household or organisation \$28. A purple slip may also be enclosed for those who wish to take advantage of a special offer (a \$5 discount) on purchasing *Marrickville: a place worth preserving* in conjunction with their fee renewal. If you have any queries ring treasurer Diane on 9588 4930.

**Vale Norman McVicker and Vivien York: inside**

**Vale: Lesley Anne Muir OAM, MA, PhD, FRAHS**



This photo of **Dr Lesley Muir** dates from a Cooks River walk Lesley conducted in April 2003. This was just one of numerous historical walking tours Lesley led, including some for Marrickville Heritage Society.

When I became newsletter editor in 1994, one cold wet July Saturday I needed, at short notice, a scribe for Clive Lucas's 'Greenway in the City' walk. Shirley Hilyard suggested I ask Lesley. She obliged and wrote: [Clive's] 'spellbound audience can now identify the John Verge additions, the James Barnet Royal visit renovation, and the Varney Parkes portico and spire, as well as the two fake chimneys and the piece of genuine Georgian handrail in the Hyde Park Barracks. We can now visualise the plan of Greenway's Sydney and his contribution to its landscape with a far greater understanding. If there had been no Commissioner Bigge, what would Sydney have looked like?'

Such were Lesley's insights, such was her grasp of history, and such was the calibre of her writing as also seen in the numerous publications she wrote. As a speaker she was equally adept in bringing history alive and was often provocative. She used the electronic media well. Her first of several talks to MHS in August 1992 was 'Canterbury Tales', together with her beloved husband Brian Madden. Lesley spoke everywhere and gave workshops. Such was her devotion she ventured out to West Wyalong as recently as late March to talk to a family history group, despite her advanced illness. She co-organised a RAHS trip to Norfolk Island early in 2011 attended by several MHS members. Lesley and Brian joined MHS in 1990.

I have barely scraped the surface of her enormous accomplishments and range of affiliations – she served on untold committees, often as president or vice president. Her recently bestowed RAHS Fellowship (see March newsletter) was her crowning achievement. Lesley died on 19 May aged 67. Her work as an historian and promoter of local history was surely far from finished. We send our condolences to Brian and their families.

**Richard Blair**

## Marrickville Medal 2012

One of the most rewarding experiences in the cause of heritage conservation is seeing the restoration of a local historic building. When this is done well it is particularly noteworthy as occurred in the presentation of this year's Medal to what is one of the municipality's most important public buildings.



The 2012 Marrickville Medal went to the **Greek Atlas Cultural and Community Centre** for their restoration of the former **Marrickville Town Hall** (1879) at 98 Illawarra Road Marrickville (photo above: Wendy Kimpton). The judges noted: 'its conservation was handled by the heritage consultant James Phillips (of Weir Phillips) and overseen by Kay Kotis. The project had to follow the rigorous processes required for a place of State significance. Fabric that was not original was removed, and the upper level hall and much of the exterior were excellently restored.'\*

**Highly Commended** was **33-33A Woodland Street Marrickville** (photo below: Brigid Arnott) about which the judges said: 'Courtney Gibson and her architect David Boyle initiated this unusual project, replacing a demolished old house with what is, in effect, a pair of semis, which pleasingly fit the character and scale of this street. The building re-used old materials found on the site and nearby. The interior is spatially a model of good design, and the detailing is exceptional.'



Also **Highly Commended** was **2D Gladstone Street Newtown**. Judges: 'This house is a dramatic, innovative example of infill, which has introduced an imaginative modern design into a dull and unforgiving streetscape.'



(Photo: Jon Jacka)

The difficult site has a very unusual shape, yet the planning of the house fits the site and is satisfyingly novel. It is also surprising, and oddly appropriate, that the owners, architect Jon Jacka and Gaby Carney, and their building, have welcomed some informal street art.'

The judges also gave **three Commendations** in no order of preference to: a) **28 Moncur St Marrickville** – also **winner of the People's Choice Award**: 'a humble house conserved attractively by architect Julie Mackenzie and Julius Demburger'; b) **54 Victoria St Lewisham**: 'A very bold treatment, by architect David Melocco and Jennifer Beattie, of an early brick bungalow situated in an eclectic streetscape'; c) **74 Premier St Marrickville** – part of **Ferncourt Public School**, formerly *Prosna* (c. 1889) which became a school in 1922. The work completed in this ongoing restoration program includes: 'excellent restoration of joinery, marble chimneypieces, paintwork, staircase, and the installation of appropriate light fittings.'

There were 12 other entries. Judges were architects **Catherine Macarthur, Bob Irving** and **Sam Crawford**. The **Special Achievement Award** went to MHS member **Geoff Ostling** 'for consistently promoting and campaigning for Marrickville's heritage over the past 30 years' (photo in May newsletter).

The **Marrickville Urban Photography Prize** was won by **Rita Orsini** for 'Mill House at Night' which depicted the Waratah Mills in Davis Street Dulwich Hill. Highly Commended were **Francis Johns** ('Pumphouse') and **Annette Blattman** ('Gingerbread house'). Commended were **Renata Popovic** ('Art Deco takes a new direction') and **Michael Magee** ('Sunset over Henson Park'). The judge was Dr Charles Pickett, Curator of Architecture and Design, Powerhouse Museum.

Mayor **Morris Hanna** opened the proceedings, **Esther Carroll** gave the Acknowledgment of Country and we were honoured to have **Maria Walsh**, CEO Royal Australian Historical Society as the guest speaker. **Kate Napier** and **Judy Clark** from Council were MCs. **Bob Irving** and **Catherine Macarthur** described the entries. Full credit to **Council's Heritage Promotions Committee** for organising this successful Marrickville Medal and the award ceremonies. Thanks to **Bob Irving, Kate Napier** and **Rachael Brown** for assistance with this report.

**Richard Blair**

\* Pity the two stolen lions were not replaced! – Editor



## Vale: Norman John McVicker OAM

It is difficult to sum up in this space the life and achievements of **Norman McVicker** (late of Budgee Budgee, via Mudgee; formerly of Kurnell and Tempe) who died on 21 May aged 92. His SMH death notice proudly proclaimed Norman as a: '5th Generation descendant of First Fleeter Edward Whitton. Founder and Director of The Pocket Playhouse, Sydenham.'



Norman joined MHS in 1989 and often contributed to the newsletter. His writing career dates back to the 1930s when he had some radio plays broadcast on 2UW. He later wrote plays for the 'Pocket' and from 1983 wrote weekly articles for the *Mudgee Guardian*. Though in 2008 he finished his 1000th column, he continued writing and kept ahead such that 'you'll still be able to read my column after I'm gone'. Many of Norman's stories appeared in his self-published 2009 book *Tales from along the wallaby track*. In 1989 he took a busload of MHS members to 12 sites 'along the wallaby track' in Mudgee and in 2001 he regaled another busload of members with yarns over dinner.

After over five years of war service, he worked for some 30 years with Qantas. In 1947 he founded St Peters Community Players which evolved into the Pocket Playhouse, 'a unique Little Theatre, [which] operated, without subsidy, until 1973 when it closed after 89 seasons'. Geoff Ostling's article in *Heritage 6* (1990) documents this theatre's history. In 1999, with MHS, Norman organised a plaque in front of the site of the theatre in Terry Street, Tempe and a ceremony brought back many of the old 'Pocket' people.

Norman retired in 1980 to Mudgee enabling him to buy a property and grow and sell herbs. He achieved so much in cultural fields that in 2003 he received an OAM for 'Service to the performing arts, particularly theatre, and to the community of Mudgee'; in 2007 he was given a Premier of NSW Service Award for outstanding services to the community; and much more as well. We have lost a truly remarkable man. Our condolences to his family and close friends.

\* \* \* \*

We note the death of **Vivien Olive York** of Tempe who died on 11 May aged 71. Vivien was a MHS member along with husband Bob. Bob's mother, the late Hilda York, had been a long time member. Vivien was proud of her life membership with South Sydney Juniors where she was a dedicated volunteer for many years. Condolences to Bob and Vivien's family.

Richard Blair

## Our Last Meeting

### Coach tour to Emu Plains & Penrith: 26 May

Watkin Tench discovered the Nepean River in 1789 and named the land Emu Island (changed to 'Plains' by Macquarie). Settled years before Penrith, it was the starting point for explorers attempting to cross the Blue Mountains, and in times of food scarcity an important source of corn and wheat, grown by convict farm labour in the rich well-watered soil. Mount Pleasant was one of many properties acquired by ex-con Samuel Terry, 'The Botany Bay Rothschild'. It wasn't until the late 1970s that housing began replacing the district's orchards and dairy farms.

After passing Emu Plains Public School (whose stone buildings date from 1877) our Society adventurers stopped at the Arms of Australia Inn for Devonshire tea and a guided tour. Our hosts were Nepean District Historical Society which operates the shingle-roofed building as a museum after saving it from demolition in 1970. As the original inn (pre-1826) comprised only two rooms most travellers slept outside in the barn or under wagons. In 1841 a new law stipulated the provision of accommodation for 'Ladies and Children' so licensee John Mortimer built an extra four rooms from the same solid sandstone as that of the Lennox Bridge. Travel was uncomfortable (passengers often helped push their coach up mountains) and dangerous (a lit lantern at the inn meant bushrangers were near).

Mortimer ran the hotel until c. 1860 when it became private accommodation. Today some rooms have been recreated in period style while others house artefacts such as marbles and bone toothbrushes which had fallen through the old floorboards. Those who bumped their heads as they exited the building were reminded of the shortness of their forebears. We also saw a slab barn, 1870s-1940s agricultural machinery, a windmill (when the water table was 35 feet higher than its present level there were windmills everywhere) and a plaque commemorating William Ewart Hart, holder of Australia's first commercial pilot's licence (the flats towards Richmond were once dotted with 43 airstrips).

On to the riverfront property of sculptor Gerald and artist Margo Lewers, comprising extensive gardens and an Edwardian house with Modernist additions by Syd Ancher (1962) that had floor-to-ceiling windows. On exhibit was a stunning collection of Aboriginal art. The adjacent Penrith Regional Art Gallery also had an impressive range of Aboriginal artworks. We passed the 1883 three-storey Emu Plains stationmaster's building and lunched on the banks of the Nepean.

Final stop was the Museum of Fire, established in 1986 in the former Penrith Package Power Station, one of four small coal-fired plants hurriedly erected in the early 1950s when blackouts were frequent. The museum collection dates from the 18<sup>th</sup> century and includes 80 vehicles, fire-fighting equipment, hydrants, uniforms and memorabilia, together with displays on fire safety, burns management, how the force operates, and where to go for advice ([fire.nsw.gov.au](http://fire.nsw.gov.au)). Like the Arms of Australia Inn, the Museum of Fire is run by volunteers keen to connect with children. At the former youngsters are encouraged to handle exhibits and churn butter; at the latter to think about fire safety at home and to climb aboard some of the engines.

Thanks to our own volunteers **Lorraine Beach** and **Rosemary Wood** for organising this terrific trip.

Lyn Collingwood

## Calendar of Events

**Saturday 23 June**

**Annual General Meeting**

Details on front page

**Saturday 28 July**

**Big Dig Archaeological Centre, The Rocks**

**Saturday 25 August**

*The history of Chinese settlement in Australia since the 1850s with King Fong*

## Heritage & Environmental Watch in brief

Marrickville Council has chosen **Bligh Voller Nield architects** to oversee the development and implementation of a masterplan for the **Marrickville Hospital site**, albeit at a much reduced cost. In August it will commence the 'early works package', which includes 'the removal of two derelict non-heritage buildings, the removal of hazardous materials, and general cleaning and clearing up'. The DA for this has been lodged. The BVN director says the redevelopment: 'will bring new life to the historic buildings on the site through sensitive adaptation, and act as a catalyst for a reinvigorated Marrickville Road.'

There is an online petition opposing the **cuts to funding for State Records NSW** leading to the decision to close the city reading room in The Rocks on 30 June (see May newsletter) and placing the ongoing preservation of digital archives in jeopardy: <<http://www.gopetition.com/petitions/stop-the-cuts-to-state-records-nsw-funding.html>>. Meanwhile **State Records NSW** has written to the Society advising it is taking steps to minimise the inconvenience resulting from the planned closure. But is this enough?

Another petition asks: 'the Legislative Assembly to call on the Government to immediately **limit the sewage flows into the Cooks River** such that levels of *E. coli* and other indicators of human pathogens are reduced below what is safe for swimming and boating activities'. Petitions available on request.

Whilst work is about to commence on the **light rail extension from Lilyfield to Dulwich Hill** on existing tracks, there continues to be widespread opposition (including the tabling of a petition with over 10,000 signatures from residents) to the state government's refusal to approve the adjacent walk/cycle pathway (the **GreenWay**) from Iron Cove to Cooks River.

A Council report on public display advocates the size of **Marrickville Golf Club** should be reduced from 18 to 9 holes due to alleged underutilisation. Established as a 9-hole course in 1940 the course was extended in 1954 to an 18-hole course occupying 61 acres. However, with strong opposition from around 700 golf club members, local councillors and politicians it seems the proposal may not make the first tee.

### Art exhibition: *Unrecognised until 23 June* **Deborah Beck**

Wilson Street Gallery 2 Danks St Waterloo (9698 8443)  
Tues-Sat 11 am - 5 pm (Sunday by appointment)

Exhibition generated by discovering a box in Summer Hill of mostly unidentified family photographs. The drawings and paintings became a way to preserve and transform the photos within a new framework.

## Stanmore corner shop closure

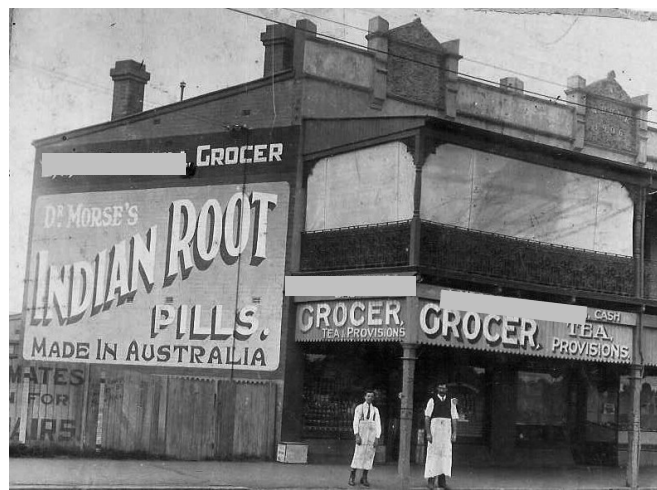


Bill & Helen Amanatiadis recently closed their shop on the corner of Durham and Rosevear Streets Stanmore which they had owned and operated for the past 36 years. Bill and Helen have kindly provided this old photo of the shop taken in 1908 as part of the streetscape of Durham Street.

Thanks to MHS member and local resident Barbara Gibbons for forwarding this shot. Barbara is about to have a break as the local newsletter runner, a job she has willingly done since 1991.

## Winter Trivia Question

Talking of old shops, here is a photo of another shop that once traded in the local area, but which is no longer standing. Where was it, who owned it (name blocked out) and can anyone claim to have bought a bag of sweets there? Richard 9557 3823 or email below.



## Historic Sydenham photos/text sought

**Nicole Trian** (Media and Publications, Marrickville Council) is seeking photos and text for a project about the history of Sydenham Green and its environs:

- The protests against the Third Runway/Aircraft noise - particularly those involving the Coalition of Councils and community groups opposed to the Third Runway
- Stonehaven* 19 Railway Road and its artists
- The early estates - particularly The Grove and The Tivoli.

Ring Nicole on 9335 2197 or email her on: <[comco@marrickville.nsw.gov.au](mailto:comco@marrickville.nsw.gov.au)>.

**PRESIDENT** Sonia 9519 3137  
**TREASURER** Diane 9588 4930  
**HERITAGE WATCH** Lorraine 8565 6511  
**NEWSLETTER** Richard 9557 3823