

# MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.

DULWICH HILL ENMORE LEWISHAM  
ST PETERS SYDENHAM TEMPE

MARRICKVILLE PETERSHAM STANMORE  
& PARTS OF CAMPERDOWN & NEWTOWN



**Congratulations to Marrickville Council  
on its 150th Anniversary**

**Save the GreenWay**

## MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY

Invites members to the launch of

*Marrickville: a past worth preserving*

A collection of local history essays

Saturday 26 November 10.30 am

Herb Greedy Hall, 79 Petersham Road Marrickville

RSVP essential (for catering purposes)

Diane 9588 4930 or <diane.mccarthy@optusnet.com.au>

by Friday 18 November

**Our Next Meeting** will be devoted to the launch of *Marrickville: a past worth preserving*. Our special guests will be the Authors of the essays and Maria Walsh, CEO of RAHS. Light lunch to follow the launch. The book is \$35 a copy. See page 3 for postal details.

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**Wednesday 7 December 6.30 pm** Marrickville Library together with MHS will host some authors discussing their essay/s from *Marrickville: a past worth preserving*. Coordinator, History Services, Clinton Johnston will introduce authors. Refreshments provided.

\* \* \* \*

The book will be on sale on our stall at the **Dulwich Hill Fair** on **Sunday 4 December** from 10 am.

## Special Council Meeting for 150th

MHS committee and life members were invited to attend a Special Council Meeting (chaired by new Mayor Morris Hanna) at Old Marrickville Town Hall, 96 Illawarra Road Marrickville on Tuesday 18 October in recognition of the Sesquicentenary of the proclamation of Marrickville Council (5 November 1861).

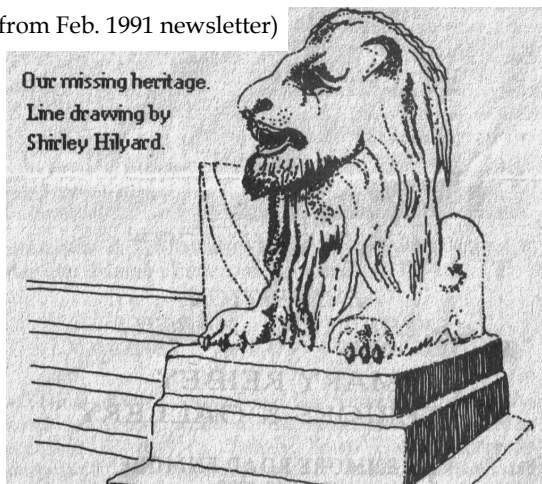
Whilst the proceedings lacked the colour of the 140th anniversary meeting when Councillors donned period dress, they formally acknowledged Council's 150th anniversary and the rich history of Marrickville LGA. The Business Paper included a brief history of Marrickville Council. Motions included: 1) that Council lodge a submission to the Expert Panel's Discussion Paper on Constitutional Recognition for Local Government; and 2) commending the Greek Atlas League for 'the restoration works on the former Marrickville Town Hall' (see story inside).

A masterstroke on the part of Council to choose the beautifully restored Old Marrickville Town Hall for its Sesquicentennial Council Meeting.

**Richard Blair**

## Our Stolen Heritage Lions: story inside

(from Feb. 1991 newsletter)



## How to Join the Society

Send a cheque or money order made out to Marrickville Heritage Society (address below) with your name/s, address, phone/s and email. Ring Diane 9588 4930 for a brochure and direct deposit details. Concession \$12, individual or joint concession \$20, household or organisation \$28.

## Our Last Meeting

### Freda Backes: Lebanese settlement in Australia

It is a valid criticism of many Australian history or heritage or organisations that focus is too much on the history of the dominant Anglo-Celtic majority while neglecting the history of other communities. With Marrickville being such a major cosmopolitan area it is only right that MHS should challenge this perceived bias and give focus to some of these diverse communities.

At our last meeting on Saturday 22 October **Freda Backes** from the **Australian Lebanese Historical Society** (ALHS) gave a fascinating illustrated talk on the history of the Lebanese in this country. Australian-born, Freda had little interest in her cultural heritage until many of the older members of her community began to die. Seeing a tragic loss of heritage she and several others formed the ALHS with the aim of preserving the knowledge of Lebanese people in this country. Since formation, the ALHS has undertaken many oral histories of senior members in their ranks and the group has published several works. With Lebanon not gaining independence until 1943, many early migrants to Australia were officially known as *Syrians* or *Ottomans* or as being from Mount Lebanon.

The first Lebanese came to Australia in the 1880s and Redfern soon became the centre of the Lebanese community in NSW. Many opened clothing shops or found work as hawkers selling fabric and began to sell their wares around greater Sydney and into rural areas. Many were successful, such as Freda's great-uncle Stanton Melick, an ancestor of our current State Governor Professor Marie Bashir.

Members happily recalled their memories of Lebanese friends and storekeepers and it was gratifying to see such a large turnout for this talk. Many thanks to our speaker for such an interesting lecture, to **Diane McCarthy** for inviting Freda, assisted by **Paul Convy**; also thanks to **Stephanie Clifford-Smith** for making a the very fitting dish of Middle Eastern eggplant dip (baba ghanoush) which enhanced the flavour of the meeting in more ways than one.

**Silas Clifford-Smith**

*Eat Streets: A culinary adventure through 150 years of Marrickville Council*, which coincides with Council's Sesquicentenary, combines local history and reminiscence with food history and recipes from each decade, though they are not necessarily historically authentic. The book features almost 50 recipes, many sourced from the local community, as well as hundreds of beautiful food-and-festival related photographs, and historical menus, stories and images. It also reflects Marrickville's rich multicultural food heritage and the enormous contribution other cultures have made to our national diet.

With text by Elizabeth Heath and foreword by former mayor Fiona Byrne, this attractively illustrated publication is available from local libraries for \$20 (LGA residents) and \$25 (non residents).



*Silas Clifford-Smith, Pamela Stewart, Richard Blair, Ian Phillips, Diane McCarthy, Lorraine Beach and Rosemary Wood at Old Marrickville Town Hall meeting 18 October*  
(photo: Lisa Marschall)

## Old Marrickville Town Hall and stolen lions

Marrickville's first Town Hall at 96 Illawarra Road (listed on the State Heritage Register) is arguably the most significant former civic building in the Marrickville LGA. When built in 1879 this part of Marrickville was the town centre with the main local public school nearby. It was the fourth oldest town hall in Sydney and became Council headquarters for over 40 years. In 1922 when the new town hall opened in Marrickville Road, the old town hall was sold to the Education Department and absorbed into Marrickville Public School. It was part of that school until 1985. Many current residents of Marrickville attended and recall it with affection.

An integral feature of the site were the two lions which graced the steps of the old town hall for over 100 years. They were stolen in October 1990. Their theft became a cause célèbre attracting newspaper articles and letters to the editor, whilst official letters of complaint were sent to the Department of Housing (owner), the Premier of NSW and the Heritage Council. They have never been located (see front page sketch).

The Department of Housing sold much of the curtilage for housing, but in late 1994 the building was leased to the Jessie Street National Women's Library for a peppercorn rent. After initial fanfare and a launch by local federal member Jeannette McHugh, the Women's Library made tentative efforts to restore the building, but due to insufficient funds, the project was abandoned and the library looked elsewhere.

After years of neglect, the Department of Housing carried out urgent remedial works in 2005-06 and in 2006 the property was sold for \$20,000 to Atlas Hall Pty Ltd as Trustee for the Greek Atlas League of NSW. Assisted by a grant, the GAL has handsomely conserved the old town hall and established a cultural and community centre, which will store the archives and artefacts of the GAL. It has been stated that the building will be available 'to the broader community', with access to a meeting area and library. It is unclear whether 'broader' refers to 'the broader Greek' community' or to 'the entire' community. Hopefully the latter such that everyone can appreciate the restoration.

Having attended the recent sesquicentenary meeting there, I applaud the excellent conservation work that has breathed new life into this fine local civic building.

**Richard Blair**

## Anniversaries

The Society congratulates:

**Sydney Hospital's 200th:** On 30 October 1811 Gov. Lachlan Macquarie laid the foundation stone for what was originally the Rum Hospital in Macquarie Street.

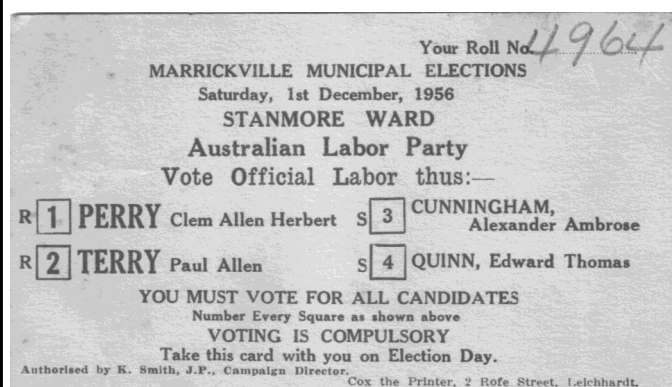
**Roseby Memorial (Marrickville Uniting) Church** which celebrated its **140th** anniversary on 16 October with multicultural entertainment, music on the Jackson pipe organ (1880) and guest speaker, Rev Dr Brian Brown, Moderator of the Uniting Church NSW/ACT.

**David Stratton and Margaret Pomeranz** for sharing their passion for movies for the past **25 years** in the *Movie Show* on SBS and *At the Movies* on ABC1. The first *Movie Show* was screened on 30 October 1986.

**Marrickville Greens: 20 years** on Marrickville Council, celebrated at Petersham Town Hall on 22 September.

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## Some memorabilia from the 1950s



*This ALP How to Vote card dates from Marrickville Municipal elections on 1 December 1956. For the record, it seems voters decided not to follow the card as according to Cashman & Meader 'Marrickville: Rural outpost to inner city' (1990, p. 211) neither Clem Perry nor Paul Terry were elected, whilst Alexander Cunningham and Edward Quinn were. Cunningham was a councillor 1948-62 and 1965-71; Quinn 1953-59. Perry persevered and served as a Marrickville councillor 1971-82, whilst Terry was never elected in Marrickville. (Card sent by Luke Atkins: it had belonged to Luke's late father, Jack Atkins, former President, Waverley Historical Society and former secretary of Sydney Mechanics School of Arts)*



*MHS member John Chappell, who grew up in Petersham, was awarded this Merit Certificate in 1958 in the Short Story section of Marrickville's Festival of Australian Youth & Culture. Mayor of Marrickville was William Kendrick. John is an author in our forthcoming book of essays.*

## Letters from members

Dear Editor (*Inner West Courier*)

'I was sad to hear that the 127-year-old **Coptic Orthodox St Mary & St Mina Church in Sydenham** is to be demolished. Apparently the Federal government granted the church to Marrickville Council in 1996 for community use, but no community groups have been able to secure funding to repair the building. It would be a real waste to lose this building. Why not lease it to artists as working studios? This has been done with the Lennox Street studios in Newtown, formerly a Catholic school. Lennox Street is a successful & thriving community of over 30 artists and they regularly hold open days where the public can buy art and meet the artists. The Coptic church, situated in an open park area, close to public transport, would be an ideal spot for this.'

**Robynne Hayward**

**Note:** DA to demolish this Church now before Council. MHS will lodge a submission.

\* \* \* \*

**Mick Timmings** grew up in Marrickville and recently sent a letter enclosing a copy of his 1934 class photo at St Brigids School Marrickville. Whilst his school memories are anything but fond, a thirst for learning was instilled. Mick's final paragraph is quite inspiring:

Dear Editor (MHS)

'So many fond memories are mine of Marrickville, and the society is doing so much to keep alive so much of the past for the present generation to have. There are a few members of my class that I can still remember. I remember the teacher Miss Kaneen and Sister Bernadette and I used to get the cane quite frequently, and the strap continually at the Brothers at de la Salle College, part of the same school as St Brigids. I can say I learned to read and write and from then on I have taught myself by reading. I hated school from the first day till the last day of the damn place, however since then I have had an unquenchable appetite to learn things.

My dear wife of 62 years marriage also came from Dulwich Hill and attended St Brigids. We will be celebrating our 63rd wedding anniversary on the 6th November this year. Mate, do you know how a person can always remember a wedding anniversary? Just miss one. You will be surprised how many people I have come across from Marrickville that live in Ulladulla. It's quite amazing.

I use my computer continually, I use Skype to talk to and see my daughter in Tasmania and I continually use U-tube and of course, good old Google to learn about things.' Yours,

**Mick Timmings**

## *Marrickville: a past worth preserving postal charges*

Book is \$35. Post, packaging and handling for Sydney is \$10, NSW country and ACT \$11; Vic. & Qld \$13; SA \$13.50; Tasmania \$14.50; WA \$15. Charge for more than one copy, ring treasurer Diane (02) 9588 4930 or preferably email <diane.mccarthy@optusnet.com.au>. Cheques etc to Marrickville Heritage Society.



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Saturday 26 November**

**Launch of Marrickville: a past worth preserving**

Details on front page

**Saturday 3 December**

**Annual Christmas Pot Luck Dinner**

Details below

**Saturday 25 February**

**Show & Tell**

Well worth visiting the free multimedia exhibition

**50 Years of Four Corners**

ABC Atrium, Harris Street, Ultimo until 25 November

### Marrickville Library events

The exhibition, *150 Years of Marrickville Council* runs until **27 November**.

**Tuesday 22 November 11 am:** Author **Jim Conway** discusses his recent book *Newtown Then 1929-1939* (see June 2011 newsletter).

**Wednesday 7 December 6.30 pm:** Authors discuss their essays from *Marrickville: a past worth preserving* in conjunction with MHS (see front page).

As reported in the last two newsletters, Marrickville Council is seeking community input relating to the **new Marrickville Library**. Council's website has an online survey that takes only minutes to complete. Further public consultations will be held at: Marrickville Library, Friday 18 November, 10-10.30 am, *Presentation of architects' concept drawings and design ideas*; and at old Marrickville Hospital site on both Sunday 20 November 10-12 noon and Saturday 26 November 12-2 pm, *New Marrickville Library consultation*. RSVP 9335 2222.

MHS overdue fee slips accompany newsletters this month if fees unpaid. Contact treasurer with queries. Contact details in box below.

Vale to **Leslee Isted** who died on 31 October aged 96. Leslee had been a MHS member since 1987 and regularly attended meetings until moving from her house in Excelsior Parade Marrickville to Sydney's southern suburbs about a decade ago. Photo shows Leslee in 1989 taken at Lydham Hall. Our condolences to her family.



We also note the passing on 18 October of former member **Neita Edgton**, 85, of Dulwich Hill. Neita joined MHS in 1985.

## Joint Regional Planning Panels update

At the Council meeting of 18 October a report was presented indicating that since Joint Regional Planning Panels started on 1 July 2009, 14 development applications have been lodged with Council requiring determination by a JRPP. Of these, 12 DAs had been determined (ten approved and two withdrawn) whilst two were pending. One of those withdrawn (former Marrickville RSL) had been resubmitted and later approved whilst the other withdrawal was 366-372 New Canterbury Road/3 Herbert Street Dulwich Hill. The two pending are the Station Masters cottage at 117 Railway Road Sydenham and 43-45 Australia Street Camperdown. All good news for developers!

In a significant change under the new state government's 'commitment to regulatory reform changes to "hand back" certain matters to Councils, the threshold Capital Investment Value (CIV) triggering referral to the JRPP has been increased from \$10 million to \$20 million for "private" developments from 1 October 2011. The previous thresholds for Crown applications (\$5 million) and Council applications (\$5 million) are unaltered. **The impact of the increase to the CIV will be to reduce the number of matters referred to the JRPP, so that more large scale applications submitted to Council will be determined by Council as the consent authority.'**

A good start in terms of returning decision-making on DAs to Councils!

A sunny day greeted the crowds for the **Marrickville Festival** on Sunday 23 October. At the Society's stall we were asked questions about Jarvie Park, site of a dairy in Arthur Street, old Marrickville Town Hall and restoration of the Winged Victory. MHS publications, local walking tours and *Pictorial History of Marrickville* were the most popular sellers and a new member joined. Thanks to our helpers: Diane, Iain, Ian, Lorraine, Nancy, Robert, Rosemary and Sonia.

MHS will also run a stall at the **Dulwich Hill Community Fair** on Sunday 4 December from 10 am.

**Diane McCarthy**

### Annual Pot Luck Christmas Dinner Saturday 3 December 6 for 6.30 pm

Our annual pot luck Xmas dinner will for the first time be held outside the LGA — in Earlwood. Due to limited space you'll need to book early. Ring Lorraine 9550 6608 (after hours) or email <lbeach@iprimus.com.au> to advise what food you will bring and obtain address. BYO drinks.

**PRESIDENT** Sonia 9519 3137  
**TREASURER** Diane 9588 4930  
**HERITAGE WATCH** Robert 9568 3079  
**NEWSLETTER** Richard 9557 3823