

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.

DULWICH HILL ENMORE LEWISHAM
ST PETERS SYDENHAM TEMPE

MARRICKVILLE PETERSHAM STANMORE
& PARTS OF CAMPERDOWN & NEWTOWN



OUR NEXT MEETING

Saturday 25 February 10.15 for 10.30 am
Members' Show & Tell
Herb Greedy Hall 79 Petersham Rd Marrickville

Show & Tell is a chance for members and friends to share a treasure, give some insight into what it is, how it was acquired and why it is valued. The items do not have to have a 'Marrickville connection'.

Past S & T meetings have been very popular and yielded items of enormous interest. Prizes to be awarded. Our MC is Diane McCarthy. Come early and partake of morning tea and a chat.

OUR MARCH MEETING

Saturday 24 March 10.30 am
Mechanical Music Museum at Fairground Follies
22 Burrows Road St Peters (about halfway
between Campbell Street & Canal Road)

Cost \$22 (incl. morning tea); children under 12: \$8. The two hour tour showcases some of the rarest and most fascinating mechanical musical instruments in the world including self-playing violins and the mighty Taj Mahal (an organ); also, a ride on their 100-year-old carousel.

For a further idea of what to expect, check out the website at <www.fairgroundfollies.com>.

Bookings <heritagesociety@optusnet.com.au> or ring Richard 9557 3823 (who can advise on access). Prepayment required to MHS. Can pay at February meeting. More details in March newsletter.

Marrickville Medal nominations

The Marrickville Medal for Conservation has been awarded annually since 1995. It celebrates built conservation works that contribute to the understanding and preservation of Marrickville's rich cultural and architectural heritage. Nominations close 2 March.

Nominations can also be made for the Heritage Promotions Special Achievement Award. Eligible individuals will have made an outstanding contribution toward maintaining, promoting and investigating Marrickville's heritage. This award is not linked to building works.

For further information on both awards check Marrickville Council's website.

The **Marrickville Local Environment Plan (MLEP)** was gazetted by the NSW Government on 12 December 2011. This Plan repeals the former Marrickville Local Environment Plan 2001. **Marrickville Development Control Plan (MDCP)** 2011, which supplements the MLEP, commenced on 15 December 2011.

Save the GreenWay

Heritage Volunteer Award 2011 to MHS

Nominated by Marrickville Council, Marrickville Heritage Society was one of 24 recipients of the NSW Government Heritage Volunteer Awards presented at a ceremony in Parramatta on 9 December 2011. The certificate, which was received by the Society's president, Dr Sonia Laverty, was 'In recognition of an outstanding contribution to heritage conservation in New South Wales'. Awards were presented by Gabrielle Kibble, Chair of the Heritage Council of NSW, who was also the keynote speaker.

Ms Kibble said the awards recognise 'the outstanding work being conducted by individuals and groups in conserving and promoting heritage conservation and awareness throughout the community. The projects that you are undertaking stretch across the heritage sector - from built to cultural, natural, Aboriginal and maritime heritage - and incorporate a diverse range of activities including conservation, research, education, management and promotion of heritage in NSW.'

'Despite the many difficulties that may arise . . . communities often have an inherent passion for their heritage and the dedicated and hard working volunteers contribute countless hours and tireless effort to ensure that this heritage is managed, conserved and promoted to the broader community.'

Among the other recipients was Mari Metzke 'for the instrumental role she has played in providing advice and guidance to countless history projects and for her detailed research into the history of Hornsby'.

Representing MHS below were: Richard Blair, Ian Phillips, Sonia Laverty, Robert Hutchinson and Rosemary Wood.



More signage revealed in King St Newtown



As a result of a fire and demolition of a former laundry at 402 King Street Newtown this signage has been revealed depicting a garage offering 'cars for hire', 'overhauls & repairs a speciality'; advertising Waratah Motor Spirit (Neptune Oil Co., Ltd.) with a waratah depicted, and Perdriau Tyres over whose brand name some galah has mindlessly graffitied (photo: Ian Phillips)

Summer Trivia Answer

As at end of 2011, **Audley Street Petersham** is the local street with the most MHS memberships. Excluding one member who has not renewed fees, there are seven memberships embracing ten members (otherwise it would have been eight/eleven).

By way of comparison, at the end of 2001, Cavendish Street Stanmore had six memberships with seven members; Audley Street Petersham had five memberships with ten members.

At the end of 1991, Stanmore Road had the most memberships (seven, with 11 members, though three of these memberships belonged to people associated with Newington College). Metropolitan Road Enmore had five memberships (eight members), Illawarra Road (five/seven) and Cavendish Street (five/six).

Incidentally, eight memberships (12 members) are in Station Street, but spread over four different suburbs (Mortdale, Newtown, Petersham and Tempe)!

All bets are on for the end of 2021!

Richard Blair

Our annual pot luck Christmas dinner was held on 3 December for the first time outside the Marrickville LGA - in Earlwood, at the town house of **Nancy MacAlpine**. Congratulations to **Christine Cole** who won the lucky door prize of **Robert Hutchinson's** Christmas cake (thanks, Robert). We thank **Lorraine Beach** for her smooth coordination and **Nancy** for providing her modern, cosy space. It is to the credit of regular attendees who all invariably pitch in to help make these annual evenings such a success. See you next December!

Correction 1: From Spring Trivia Answer in October 2011 newsletter, the Dispensary Hall is at 82 Enmore Road, Newtown (corner Reiby St) not 80 Enmore Rd.

Correction 2: Pie Tin Café (originally a Marcus Clark building) is on the corner of Brown St and Brown Lane Newtown, not Buckland Ln as in last newsletter.

Save Sydenham's Coptic Church!

It looks like Council is determined to pursue its goal of demolishing the 1904 **Coptic (formerly Methodist) Church** in Railway Road Sydenham. Whilst no community group has so far emerged with the funds to purchase the property, what's to say this won't happen in the future. It seems futile to demolish one of the few heritage buildings left in Sydenham in order for the site to become further parkland, especially given the grossly underused Sydenham Green across the road. This is apart from the ethical issue whereby the federal government of the 1990s gave this building to Council for community use. Or, was it intended all along for this church building to be eventually demolished to enable the eventual widening of Railway Road to carry yet more trucks than the huge volume it already accommodates?

Councillors, the Society urges you to preserve this significant building. I strongly commend the video clip made by local resident and filmmaker Kass Finlay McAuliffe. URL (free download) is:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AnEvJJ1XBhw&feature=related>

St Clements Church Marrickville has lodged a further DA to remove 14 pews. Whilst this DA is less radical than the one lodged in late 2010 (later withdrawn), the Society opposes this DA on the grounds that permanent removal of 14 pews will significantly alter the church interior and that the church has expressed no plans to retain the pews. However the church is commended for its proposal to repair damaged flooring and supports.

New Marrickville Library: Still time to express your views on the three proposed designs for the new library. It is hoped that as many of the existing heritage buildings as possible can be retained. Feedback can be given by visiting any of the four council libraries or council's administration centre at Fisher Street, Petersham; by post to PO Box 14, Petersham 2049; by phone to council's Community Engagement Coordinator on 9335 2096; by email <comengage@marrickville.nsw.gov.au>; or go online <www.yoursaymarrickville.com.au/newlibrarysite>.

The Society congratulates MHS member **Joy Berville** for being named **Canterbury Citizen of the Year** by Canterbury City Council. The *Cooks River Valley Times* (2/2/12) described Joy as having 'long been an active member of the community'. She is a dedicated member of the Cooks River Valley Association, Canterbury Aboriginal Advisory Group, Friends of Ewen Park, coordinator of The Mudcrabs revegetation site at Rosedale Reserve in Croydon Park, and has been a volunteer recorder teacher at Canterbury Public School for the past eight years. Joy has also conducted numerous NAIDOC Week workshops, Indigenous walks for schools, and interpretive tours of Cooks River.'

Member **Mary Harte** has advised that Alexander Ambrose Cunningham, cited on the ALP How to Vote card (November 2011 newsletter) was her father. He served on Marrickville Council as an alderman (councillor) 1948-62 and 1965-71.

Vale Leslie Logan

I never met Les, as he had lived for many years in Doncaster, Melbourne, but I felt as though I knew him because over the last 15 years he had phoned me regularly for a chat or to follow up on some item in the newsletter. Les grew up in Francis Street Enmore and worked mainly as a lift mechanic but was a keen collector from the age of 12. He specialised in old locks, tins and weights as well as books on local, Australian and central Asian history. His long term partner Carol said he had a keen interest in nature, enjoyed bird-watching and had kept and bred birds. She described Les as 'a good, kind and gentle man'. He joined MHS in 1988. Les died on 22 November 2011 aged 74.

Richard Blair

Vale Betty Biffin

Readers of *Marrickville: a past worth preserving* will know Betty's charming essay, 'Memories of my Newtown' – childhood memories in Newtown and St Peters in the late 1930s and early 1940s. The day after that book was launched we delivered a copy to her in hospital in Prairiewood and four days later, on 1 December 2011, Betty passed away aged 80. Betty embraced the call to record local history when the Society launched its essay competition, and determinedly and with great good humour mastered the technology of converting and emailing us photos from her family collection. A member of the Society since 2008, Betty eagerly awaited her newsletter each month and enthusiastically supported our work. Her interest and friendship were valued and appreciated. Betty's story, the legacy she left us, is now a part of our recorded local history, and we hope it will be an ongoing source of pride for her family.

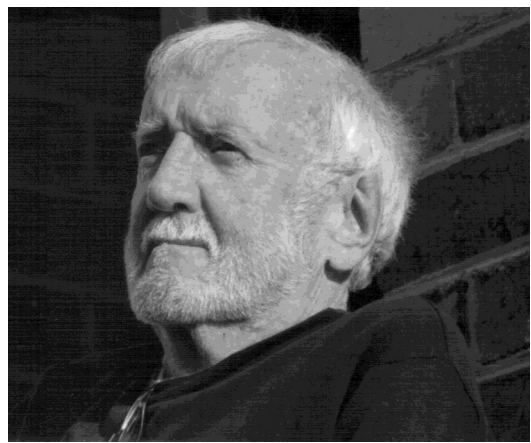
Lorraine Beach

Vale Chris Bartlett

Chris was known to many members for his dedication to conservation work around Cooks River and Wollie Creek. Some years ago Chris was instrumental in founding the Mudcrabs, an eco-volunteer group affiliated with the Cooks River Valley Association. The Muddies – now 480-strong – do regular clean-ups along and revegetation of the banks of Cooks River, with the backing and support of local councils. Chris enjoyed sharing his encyclopaedic botanical knowledge and passing on his skills, having once worked in the Botanic Gardens, Sydney. His work was recognised by Canterbury City Council when he was made 2009 Senior Citizen of the Year. His love

of flora was expressed in the exquisite drawings he created in Australia and New Guinea where he travelled extensively on foot. His life was celebrated at a gathering in Rosedale Reserve, Croydon Park on 5 February (Chris's birthday). He had been a most valued friend of mine since the early 1970s. Late of Earlwood, where he kept a menagerie of cats, Chris died on 23 December 2011 aged 66 from cancer (photo: © The Mudcrabs).

Richard Blair



Les Logan (photo: Carol Page)

Excerpts from 'Memories of my Newtown'

I remember lunch time in the lunch shed [at Camdensville Infants], having to sit up straight, all of us watched constantly for any sign of bad eating manners. Whenever we tots forgot and used two hands to hold our sandwiches, we were gently admonished with the words 'sandwiches are not heavy, we should use one hand for holding sandwiches.'

A sad sight of the area was the plight of the homeless and alcoholic men who frequented and probably slept in the disused brick pits nearby. Many had descended to drinking methylated spirits and sometimes added brown boot polish to their small bottles to improve its appearance. 'Metho' was easily and cheaply available from all corner shops. Most of the men pretended the purchases were for other purposes, but one poor man when handed his bottle, felt it and said 'You wouldn't have a cold one would you mate?'

Between our shop and lane towards King Street there stood four or five small single-storey houses, one of which belonged to the Senior family. Around the corner fronting King Street we had a fruit shop owned by a gentle and amiable Chinese man. Bill Bridge had a tattoo shop and he imported from, I think Germany, what was then a revolutionary little ear-piercing machine which had a trigger-action to send, when fired, a tiny hollow steel cylinder into the ear lobe. By hooking an earring sleeper into the cylinder and pulling the cylinder through the ear, the earring was neatly installed. My mother and I promptly had our ears pierced by Bill without further delay. Before Bill's machine, most people had their piercing done by their grandmother or aunt, using a sewing needle, and holding a cork behind the ear, then having to insert the earring through the ear where the needle had pierced it.

Betty Biffin

The Society also notes the deaths on 10 November 2011 aged 87 of notable artist **David Boyd** OAM, who for many years lived in Silver Street, St Peters; and of **Betty Spears** OAM on 24 January 2012 aged 85. Betty grew up locally and attended St Brigid's Marrickville. She went on to become prominent in the labour movement including being Deputy President of the Federated Clerks Union (NSW). She is best remembered locally for having the Betty Spears Child Care Centre, Tempe named after her.

Calendar of Events

Saturday 25 February
Members' Show & Tell

Details on front page

Saturday 24 March
Visit to Mechanical Music Museum
Details on front page

Saturday 21 April
Larry Writer talk on Frank Bumper Farrell
(meeting a week earlier than usual)

Blown to Blazes & other works of JB Blair
Presented by Richard & David Blair
Marrickville Library
Monday 27 February 6.30 pm

Blown to Blazes and Other Works of JB Blair is an anthology of 62 short stories and essays by Jim Blair published from the 1930s to the 1950s in *The Bulletin* and elsewhere. Humour abounds amid themes that include science fiction, whimsical schemes for making fame or fortune, sport, politics, reminiscence, human nature, and the adventures of the Noyes family. Six Noyes stories were inspired by the author's family life (Blair > blare > noise > Noyes) from the mid-1940s when they lived in Porter Avenue Marrickville. The book, edited and published by Jim's eldest son, David Blair, includes a biography of Jim, commentary about *The Bulletin* (now defunct) plus over 100 illustrations by acclaimed illustrators such as Unk White, John Frith, Norman Hetherington and Percy Lindsay.

Richard Blair will describe how Jim was invited to abandon his vocation as an Adelaide shipping clerk to establish an uncertain but enthralling career in

Sydney as a journalist with *The Bulletin* and editor of the *Australian Woman's Mirror*, where, among other things, he introduced *The Phantom* comic strip into Australia. **David Blair** will supplement Richard's narrative by reading excerpts from some of Jim's works.

Blown to Blazes and Other Works of JB Blair (Sydney 2007) David Blair (ed.), A4, 321 pages, 101 drawings, 5 photographs; \$30 paperback, \$50 hardback.

(drawing by Unk White)



Morning Tea Pottery Classes

Enrol now for late February
Have fun as you find your own expression
in clay or paint

Learn how to:

- create pots on the wheel
- sculpt to make pieces by hand
- glaze and decorate

Small classes in Jean's garden studio
in Marrickville
Individual tuition also available



Jean Hartman has a Masters of Fine Arts for COFA, NSW Uni & BA in Ceramics from the National Art School.

Jean's garden studio is close to public transport & the post café

For bookings, phone Jean on 9558-8681

Marrickville: a past worth preserving **Letter to the President from Shirley Doolan**

Dear Sonia

Congratulations to the Society for publishing *Marrickville: a past worth preserving*. So many of these interesting stories of the Marrickville area would have been lost without the essay competition. What a success it was!

Special thanks, of course, to Keith Sutton, Richard Blair and Lorraine Beach for all the hard work and long hours that they have put into producing such a wonderfully compiled and interesting book. I feel very honoured to be included as an author.

May I also thank Diane McCarthy for delivering my copy as I was unable to attend the launch.

Yours sincerely
Shirley Doolan

Note: In the essay competition Shirley was awarded a Highly Commended certificate for her essay, 'World sport comes to Marrickville' with focus on Henson Park and the 1938 Empire Games.



To obtain a copy of *Marrickville: a past worth preserving* send a cheque or money order to Marrickville Heritage Society (address front page). Book is \$35 plus post, packaging and handling charge for Sydney is \$10, NSW country & ACT \$11; Vic. & Qld \$13; SA \$13.50; Tas. \$14.50; WA \$15. Otherwise pick up a copy at our next meeting.

PRESIDENT Sonia 9519 3137
TREASURER Diane 9588 4930 (from 22 Feb)
HERITAGE WATCH Lorraine 8565 6511
NEWSLETTER Richard 9557 3823