

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.

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& PARTS OF CAMPERDOWN & NEWTOWN

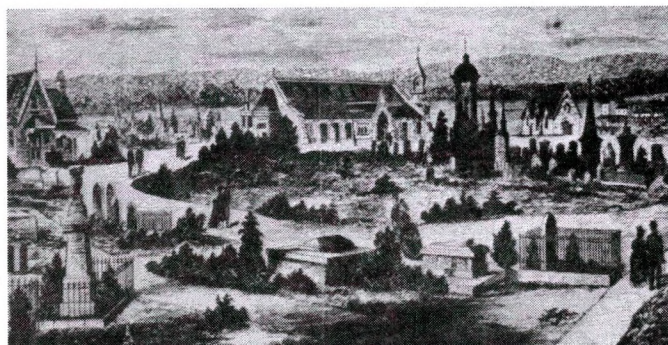


OUR NEXT MEETING

**Coach tour to Rookwood Necropolis,
Gallipoli Mosque & Auburn Botanic Gardens
Saturday 23 March 9 for 9.15 am departure**

Meet opposite Petersham Town Hall. BYO lunch, hat and walking shoes. Strict dress code at mosque (no shorts or short-sleeved tops; women to wear a head scarf). Cost \$40. Prepayment & bookings essential. Pamela 9569 0820. Please advise if cancelling.

At Rookwood Necropolis our guide, Eric Sinfield (from the Friends of Rookwood), joins the coach to provide an overview of the largest Victorian cemetery in the world, established in 1867. We will see the War Graves, the Serpentine, the 'secret garden', various heritage buildings and some of the interesting and notable memorials en route; also, we'll see the 'Lewisham Stones' which in 1920 came from the old Petersham Cemetery. Eric will discuss some of the many and varied cultures and religions represented.



This evocative illustration from the 'Illustrated Sydney News 1874' depicts couples strolling in what would seem to be not the most romantic of settings; some of these buildings are no longer there

The beautiful **Auburn Gallipoli Mosque** is a place of worship which fulfils a community role for Muslims and is a symbol of the important relationship between Australia and Turkey. Our guide will discuss the Islamic religion and describe the building which is about to be placed on the National Heritage Register.

Before returning home, a visit to the **Auburn Botanic Gardens** (established 1977) with its scented garden, Japanese Garden, native and rainforest garden, aviary and fauna display. We'll provide afternoon tea treats.

The Society recommends the judges of the Land & Environment Court — who ruled in June 2011 in favour of Waugh Hotel Consultancy closing the esteemed Henson Park Hotel and transferring its license to 252 Illawarra Road Marrickville — go take a look at 'The Ritz'. Though said to be a temporary hotel until the new one is ready, it's a shocker!

Earth Hour Saturday 23 March 8.30 pm

Winged Victory monument update

Following a preliminary assessment, on 24 April 2009 the 1919 Winged Victory memorial in front of Marrickville Town Hall was taken down by Council as it was deemed structurally unsound due to corrosion. The MHS newsletter of February/March 2009 set out a brief history of the memorial; members are reminded of two articles that appeared in *Heritage* 2 (1985, reprinted 1992) and *Heritage* 5 (1989).

In April 2010 the Society was advised that Council had engaged conservation specialists to conduct non-destructive testing. In September 2010 the Society was advised that the report indicated: 'the sculpture comprises the original materials used by Gilbert Doble, along with materials introduced during repairs, in particular the major restoration works that were undertaken by Dr Alex Kolozsy in 1988'. The report questioned 'the structural adequacy of the statue'. Council decided to have a bronze replica cast of the statue via an 'expressions of interest' program. MHS supported this decision on the basis that the bronze replacement be an exact representation of the statue.

The 19 July 2011 Council meeting resolved to reject 'all tenders on the grounds that the tenderers are not willing to accept the terms of agreement contained within the tender.' Later quotes were submitted, but were considered way in excess of Council's budget.

Much of the information in Council's reports is confidential and is not available to the community or to MHS. However the Society is a valued stakeholder and in early February 2013 a Council employee met with the Society to seek its views as to suitable options on moving forward, given the statue's significance to both the community and the Society, which, as is well known, long ago adopted the Winged Victory image as its logo. The Society's preferred option is to decommission the existing statue and create a new one, similar to the original Doble monument.

A Council spokesperson has advised the Society that the Council meeting of 19 February 2013 'resolved to adopt the recommendations in the confidential report' (see report on Council's website). As a key stakeholder, MHS would be involved in any decommissioning process. It is understood the inscription names at the base of the monument will be restored. The project will now be handled by Council's Recreation and Culture Section, which has expertise and experience in the areas of art and sculpture.

Our Last Meeting

Lord Sydney's life and times with Andrew Tink

Miserable weather didn't stop around 60 MHS members from attending the first talk for the year presented by ex-state MP, Andrew Tink, on Saturday 23 February. Andrew, with his dry wit, shared stories about the early life of Lord Sydney, throwing in an occasional reference to his own time as an MP.

Thomas Townshend Junior entered the British Parliament in 1754 aged 21 at a time when democracy was more a word than an ideal. His father 'owned' the seat and was able to provide 'Tommy' with a seat in the House of Commons that eventually saw him become Paymaster of the Forces. During a volatile period of history which saw Britain have seven prime ministers in ten years, Tommy lost his position and this drove him to align himself with the opposition. After the war he was appointed Home Secretary and became acquainted with Arthur Phillip, who was a spy with the Secret Service that Tommy ran.

King George III wanted to help those who fought on his behalf during this war, but the United States wanted them out. Land north of the US was offered as a place of sanctuary for these refugees. Thanks to Tommy's efforts the boundary was drawn through the Great Lakes, much further south than the Americans had wanted it. Grateful for providing a safe haven for his loyalists, George III offered Tommy a peerage. At first Tommy wanted to take the name 'Lord Sidney' but family opposition to his using a family name had him consider 'Sydenham' (near where he lived). He later settled on the compromise of 'Sydney'. In honour of his efforts in setting Canada's border, Sydney in Nova Scotia was named after Lord Sydney.

The next task for the Home Secretary was to find a solution to the convict problem as America no longer wanted to take convicts. Lord Sydney believed that a sentence of 7 or 14 years transportation should be just that, and recommended that Botany Bay should be the newest colony, and that Captain Arthur Phillip should be its first Governor. As the settlement on Sydney Cove grew, the name 'Sydney' took hold in preference to the original choice of name, 'Albion'.

In conclusion, Andrew shared a remarkable story about a convict woman, Susannah Holmes, with an infant son. As they were boarding her on the First Fleet it became a 'problem' that the infant should not be sentenced to transportation too. A 700-mile round trip from Plymouth to London by a sympathetic turn-key to ask Lord Sydney what should be done, resulted in the baby's father, Henry Kable (who was doing time in Norwich gaol) joining the ship with his family. As 'celebrities' the hat was passed around to furnish them with provisions. On arrival in the new colony Kable and Holmes were married in one of the colony's first weddings. The provisions went missing, but as Lord Sydney had insisted on a civil court system being established for transported convicts, Henry Kable successfully sued the captain of the ship responsible for 'losing his luggage' in the first civil case for the colony. Henry and Susannah went on to have ten more children and led long, productive lives, with Kable receiving land grants at Petersham Hill.

Many thanks to Andrew for this most enlightening talk.

Deborah Lang

(photo:
R Blair)



Recently revealed signage on McEvoy St Alexandria, near Fountain St, mining engineers, Knox Schlapp Pty Ltd - delisted from the ASX in 1954. Shame about the pesky graffiti!

Where's the lady?

June Cameron and Ken Turner have been delivering newsletters around Marrickville for about 20 years. Their run includes state MP Carmel Tebbutt's office. When Ken delivered the February newsletter, one of the staff asked him, 'Where's the lady?' Ken replied that June was fine, but that he was deputising. The enquirer was perplexed, then rephrased the question: 'No, not June, I mean, the woman on the statue over there.' It was then the penny dropped for Ken who realised she was referring to the Winged Victory, who, we trust, will be reinstated to her rightful position before too long (see front page story).

Autumn Trivia Question

Where is this building in Marrickville LGA and what was its original purpose? (Repainted since pic taken.) Richard 9557 3823 or email (see bottom back page).



Editor's postscript on the Kables: A couple of days after Andrew Tink's talk I was visiting my friend, Ruth Holmes, and to my surprise I spotted on her bookshelf the book, *Damned rascals?: a chronicle of Henry and Susannah Kable 1764-1846* by Paul Kable & June Whittaker (Sutton, NSW, Kable Pictorial, 2007). Even more surprising was the revelation that Ruth is a direct descendant of Kable and Holmes, via their eldest daughter, Diana Kable (1788-1854), who was born in Sydney in the first year of settlement and married William Gaudry. Ruth's surname Holmes is not connected with that of Susannah. For further information about Kable and Holmes, see website: <www.fellowshipfirstfleeters.org.au/henry_kable.htm>.

Andrew's book on Lord Sydney is at bookshops for \$39.95. His third book - to be launched shortly - is *Air Disaster: Canberra - the plane crash that destroyed a government* (New South Publishing, 2013; \$45).

Non-Swimming Carnival at Cooks River

We didn't realize there were so many people who wanted to swim in Cooks River. On the fine Sunday morning of 24 February, at Steel Park, Marrickville they arrived in their cossies, sporting snorkels, face masks, floaties, beach towels and rubber duckies, eager to share the spirit of the Cooks River Valley Association's inaugural 'non swimming carnival'.

Nell Bryson-Smith was there with her inflatable duck. She goes to Dulwich Hill Public School and the CRVA has been following her sad story. She first expressed a desire to swim when she won a prawn dress-up competition at the 2010 Cooks River Eco-fest but she soon learned the river was unsafe for human 'prawns'. Last year she showed some journalists down to the river at Ewen Park where she plays soccer and would like to take a cooling dip after a hard game. But still no go. And finally on Sunday the Steel Park beach was apparently closed due to suspected sewage contamination. Of course, people used to swim in the river and there was a lifesaving club with headquarters in Steel Park in the 1930s.



Nell Bryson-Smith and some of the crowd with their backs to Cooks River because they can't swim in it (photo: Ken Searle)

John Slattery, now in his 80s, recalls visiting the beach as a kid and seeing the clubhouse from his verandah. He joined us for the 'Carnival' and was snaffled by the Channel 7 crew for an interview. Fanny Durack put in an appearance and graciously agreed to read some of the memories we have been collecting from people who have bathed in the river or played in its waters. She recalled her swimming demonstration just upstream from the day's proceedings at a 1916 WWI fundraiser event advertised as a 'Venetian carnival'.

The crowd of about 50 heard an update on the Association's campaign to clean up the river and make it safe for swimming. There was much enthusiasm and the sound of grown adults shouting in unison, 'no more poo, no more poo' took some of us right back to our student days.

We had such a good time. I haven't done so much non-swimming for years. We handed out lots of campaign postcards which we hope will soon find their way to Premier Barry O'Farrell's desk to let him know we want the sewage out of the river and the swimmers in. We might do it all again next year.

Gayle Adams (Cooks River Valley Association and MHS member)

Editor Some of the Cooks River stories collected by Gayle will be reproduced in future MHS newsletters. **June Cameron** has advised that her brother-in-law was one of Steel Park River Patrol and was in the 1932 photo which appeared in the February newsletter.

Vale Barclay Wright



The definitive book on the history of piano roll production in Australia is yet to be written, but when it is, writ large will be the name of **Barclay Robert Wright**, who died in Queensland, after a short illness, on Monday 25 February aged 78. Barclay lived for most of his life in Sydney.

Barclay wrote: 'I gave up a teaching career at 22 to prevent this interesting craft from sliding into oblivion. I had learned to play the piano and pipe organ and during my teenage years I developed a passion for pianolas and corresponded with Len Luscombe at the Anglo-American Player Roll Company as I was dissatisfied with the range of rolls available and felt that the pianola should be able to give back the music of the age in which it found itself. Len Luscombe died in 1957 and Horton acquired Luscombe's company, brought the machinery to Sydney and employed me as a recording artist.'

Luscombe (in Melbourne) and George Horton (in Sydney) had pioneered piano roll manufacture in Australia from the 1910s and Horton established the Mastertouch Piano Roll Company in Chippendale. At its peak Mastertouch produced about 20,000 rolls a week with 150 staff. By Barclay's time, much of the machinery was in disrepair and with the advent of television, roll sales had slumped. Barclay introduced a range of innovations and bought the Mastertouch rights off Horton in 1961. By 1963 production was back in full swing.

In 1961 operations moved from Waterloo to Canterbury, and in 1975 to a former church in Petersham. His dream had long been to set up a working museum and with a Commonwealth heritage grant this seemed possible. In 2000 Mastertouch relocated to the former Stanmore Fire Station in Stanmore Road. The future looked bright - building modifications were made and a theatrette was built using old theatre seats. Unfortunately, the demand for piano rolls and gift boxes (which had long kept the business afloat) was no longer there and in 2005 Mastertouch had no option but to close. Fortunately many of broad range of instruments, recording and piano roll production equipment and other archival material went to the Powerhouse Museum as the Mastertouch Collection.



Barclay's dedicated staff remained for many years along with a loyal band of volunteers who shared his love of piano roll music. His life had revolved around Mastertouch and his efforts gave countless hours of listening pleasure to many

people. He ensured that a dying trade continued for a further 50 years, even though his ultimate dream of a working museum remained unfulfilled. Barclay gave talks, hosted tours, soirees and silent film screenings with piano accompaniment. His article 'Rhapsodies in wrapping paper' appeared in *Heritage* 10 (1998) and he produced the booklet 'The Mastertouch Story' in 2004. He joined MHS in 1985. We salute you Barclay for your extraordinary contribution and dedication to this important facet of our musical heritage.

(photographers unknown)

Richard Blair

Calendar of MHS Events

Saturday 23 March

**Rookwood Necropolis, Gallipoli Mosque
and Auburn Botanic Gardens**

Details on front page

Saturday 27 April

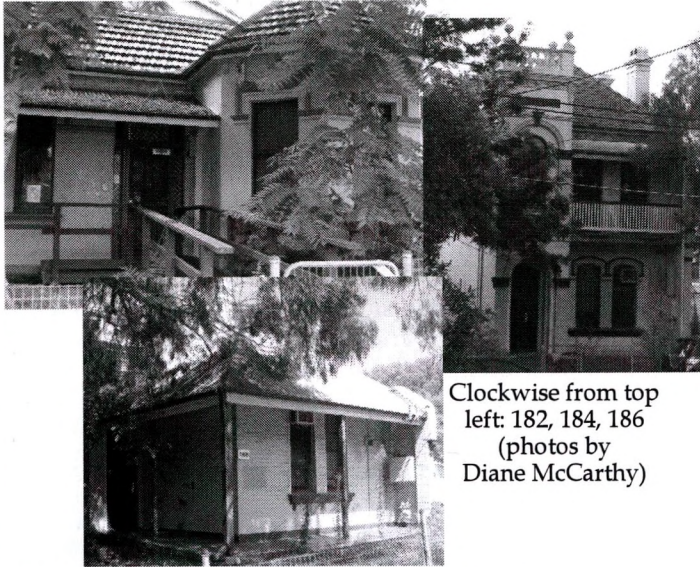
**Clinton Johnson on the Marrickville
History Collection and Archives**

Health and Wellbeing Expo

Marrickville Town Hall

Thursday 4 April 9.30 am-12.30 pm

182-186 Livingstone Road Marrickville



Clockwise from top
left: 182, 184, 186
(photos by
Diane McCarthy)

With focus on the redevelopment of the old Marrickville Hospital site (library, community centre, open space, affordable housing) the Society is very concerned about the future of three adjoining free-standing Victorian houses, 182-186 Livingstone Road Marrickville. They are Heritage Items in the Marrickville LEP 2011 and are in Precinct C of the master plan for the hospital site. For many years they had a variety of welfare, ancillary medical and other community uses and were bought by Council from the State Government in 2006. All seem to be in good condition, despite their recent lack of use.

They are likely to be subject of forthcoming DAs. The Society will be lodging submissions and anyone who wishes to retain the houses and the heritage integrity of this precinct are urged to do likewise.

Tap into your Creativity!

Enjoy yourself and relax as you find your own
expression in clay or paint

Learn how to:

- create pots on the wheel
- sculpt & make pieces by hand
- glaze and decorate
- paint or draw in different mediums

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

Inspection of old Marrickville Hospital site

On Tuesday 5 February at the invitation of Sandy Bailey, Project Director Major Projects and William Blunt, Executive Manager Major Projects from Marrickville Council, a site visit to the former Marrickville Hospital was attended by several MHS members. Plans are well under way to build a new library on the site incorporating the old buildings. We were given a tour of the entire site, which has undergone major works. This was in the form of removal of asbestos and other hazardous materials, superfluous internal additions and the demolition of some redundant buildings.

Plans for the new Marrickville Library would see the main hospital block ground floor house offices (fronting Lilydale Street) for library staff; upstairs would be the library and a café, accessible by a lift as well as stairs. We were impressed by plans to retain many key heritage features. We had the feeling on immediately walking into the large hall upstairs with its wonderful high ceiling, how great to just sit there and enjoy it; the inclusion of verandah space with the views would only add to the enjoyment.

The garden area will be retained on the Marrickville Road frontage along with extension and restoration of Hospital Lane. New library buildings will be erected on the site. Council has yet to determine the fate of three former houses along Livingstone Road (see separate report) now owned by Council. We thank William and Sandy for their informative site tour.

Mary Oakenfull & Diane McCarthy



*Sandy Bailey, Ross Phillips, Keith Sutton, Richard Blair,
Mary Oakenfull, Graeme Napier, Michelle Phillips
(obscured), Diane McCarthy and Ian Phillips
at old Marrickville Hospital (photo: William Blunt)*

Caroline McLeod, Arts and Cultural Development Coordinator, Marrickville Council wants images or information about **McNeilly Park**, especially relating to the Girl Guide building, Amenities Block and the Greg Piers Memorial Swimming Pool. Ring Caroline 9335 2280 or email <acdo@marrickville.nsw.gov.au>.

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