



# MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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July 1986

## OUR NEXT MEETING

Saturday July 26, 10.30 a.m. in the Amenities Room, ground floor, Petersham Town Hall.  
(Note the new venue)

The Town Clerk/General Manager, Mr Bruce Gardner, will speak to us on the administrative history of Marrickville Municipality.

## FUTURE PROGRAMME (to be confirmed)

Saturday August 23 Outing - details to be announced.

Friday September 19 Quarterly Evening Meeting, 7.30p.m. in the Amenities Room, Petersham Town Hall - a panel discussion on house renovation.

Saturday September 27 Talk on Federation Architecture, Richard Apperley, School of Architecture, University of N.S.W.

Saturday October 25 Visit to St Stephens Church, Newtown and other locations (to be announced).

Saturday November 22 Mrs Betty Viazim, local costumier and milliner will talk about her long and interesting career. Christmas Picnic.

## OUR LAST MEETING: A VISIT TO DENNIS CONDON'S

About thirty Society members spent a very pleasant morning at the Newtown home of Dennis Condon on Saturday June 28. Dennis has the largest private collection of reproducing (player) pianos rolls in the southern hemisphere! The perforated rolls capture the character of individual performances, the sounds are then reproduced on the pneumatically operated pianos. Player pianos flourished as parlour entertainment in the homes of the well-to-do for the first three decades of this century.

The makers of the "Ampico", the American Piano Company, and the Aeolian Company, who produced the "Duo Art", were competing manufacturers of player pianos in the United States. Dennis has examples of both companies' wares. Leading pianists of the day were contracted to record rolls; Paderewski, one of the most celebrated, recorded for the Aeolian company. We heard his Minuet on a modern Japanese grand piano performed by Dennis's "push-up", a robot device which actually plays the keyboard from the "programme" on the piano roll.

We were delighted by George Gershwin's own 1919 rendition of *Swanee* and by a contrasting performance of the same song, from the same year, by Muriel Pollack and Herbert Clare. We also had an opportunity to compare three versions of a charming piece, *The Juggleress*, on rolls recorded for the Ampico, Duo Art and Welte-Mignon machines. The Welte-Mignon, a German player piano, does not feature a keyboard and has the appearance of a rather hefty Edwardian sideboard. Dennis acquired it in a dilapidated condition in 1977 and restored it to its present splendid, fully functioning state.

Other performers we were privileged to hear included Percy Grainger, the young Vladimir Horowitz and American ragtime pianist Eubie Blake. Our thanks to Dennis for a highly enjoyable experience. Thanks too to Robert Thompson, Greg Robertson and Bob Erwin who provided the delicious morning tea.



Theatre Party to see  
"On The Wallaby"

The Social Sub-Committee has arranged a theatre party to see "On The Wallaby" at the New Theatre, 542 King St, Newtown at 5.30 p.m. on Sunday July 27, 1986. "On The Wallaby", Nick Enright's rollicking Australian musical set in the Depression of the 1930s, has been described in the press as "vivacious, tuneful, good fun". Tickets are \$6.00 each (if a party of 20 or more attends). **HURRY!!** Book now with Anne Carolan (406-4862) or Shirley Hilyard (569-1768).

Some mistakes appeared in the June issue of the Newsletter; the Editor would like to make the following corrections.

\* Gregory Robertson's name was omitted from the list of office bearers elected at the Annual General Meeting. Gregory was elected to the position of Editor of the Society's journal HERITAGE.

\* The Editor of HERITAGE does not serve on the Executive as stated, the Society's constitution does not allow for it.

\* Anne Carolan is serving on the Social and the Heritage Week Sub-committees, but not on the Publications Sub-committee.

\* Shirley Hilyard's name was omitted from the list of members of the Social Sub-committee. Chrys Meader has joined this Sub-committee since publication of the June Newsletter.

## ALTERATIONS TO MARRICKVILLE TOWN HALL

The Marrickville Heritage Society has sent a letter to the Town Clerk/General Manager of Marrickville Council protesting about alterations the Council is making to Marrickville Town Hall. The renovations which affect the stairway and foyer area involve the removal of railing featuring the decorative motif which appears throughout the building. The letter notes that the Town Hall was listed in the Marrickville Heritage Study as a structure of architectural/historical significance and asks that the Council not proceed with renovations that diminish the integrity of the Town Hall's 1920s interior. Members who wish to add their individual protests to that of the Society should write to the Town Clerk/General Manager, Marrickville Municipal Council.

## NEW MEMBERS

Louise Marcroft, Mrs Marcroft, Greg Brunner, Vicki Parish, R. Chevey.

**HOW TO JOIN OUR SOCIETY:** It's only \$7 for individuals, \$10 for households and institutions, \$2 for students and pensioners. You will receive copies of the monthly Newsletter and HERITAGE, the Society's annual journal. You don't have to wait for the A.G.M. or the beginning of the financial year. The Society's "rolling membership" means that you are a financial member of the Society for a full twelve months from whenever you join. Post subscriptions and subscription renewals to Chrys Meader at Marrickville Library, Marrickville Town Hall, 2204. Phone enquiries: 560-9333 Ext 282.

The Society meets on the fourth Saturday morning of each month in the Amenities Room, Petersham Town Hall, unless otherwise notified. Details of our meetings and excursions appear in the monthly Newsletter.

