

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Our Next Meeting

Saturday, February 28, 1987, at 10.30am in the Amenities Room, Petersham Town Hall, Mr John Bennett, President of the Royal Australian Historical Society, will speak on the work of that Society.

The President and members of the Executive wish all members of the Society a merry Christmas and a prosperous and happy New Year. We look forward to your continuing support in the Society's activities in 1987.

Heritage Watch

In response to the unfortunate demolition of Rose's Emporium, (see Update page 3), the Executive decided on November 10th to establish a new committee to be known as Heritage Watch, whose prime responsibility will be the safeguarding of classified buildings and natural features (such as trees) within the municipality by:-

- 1) Direct means: - attending Council meetings and checking the Council's business paper on a regular basis - liaison with all Aldermen, with the various resident groups and with individuals when requested on specific local issues, - obtaining urgent conservation orders from the Heritage Council (or Minister) when required, and - active protest if considered necessary by the Executive of the Society.
- 2) Indirect means:- producing educational leaflets and preparing static displays in appropriate locations, and - information exchange on a regular basis with resident groups.

It is also proposed to compile a 'call-out register' of members of the Society to take part in any active protest considered necessary by the Executive. Members interested in including their name and phone number should contact Bruce Welch at 569-9928.

Our Last Meeting...



The December meeting was held, owing to a failure of communication over the key of the Town Hall, in Petersham Park. Luckily it was a beautiful day, and about forty people gathered in the band rotunda to hear Mrs Betty Viazim talk about her fifty years of making hats for the theatre. She showed us examples from *Nicholas Nickleby*, *My Fair Lady*, *Swan Lake* and many other productions, all made "extra strong" for energetic use. She demonstrated the correct posture and stitching method of the professional milliner, the mechanics of keeping the hat on the head while executing a ballet, and why brims go up on the left and down on the right (to allow the sword to be flourished over the left shoulder, and no exceptions for left-handed swordsmen!).

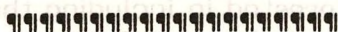
Mrs Viazim pointed out that theatrical millinery is a dying art, and that modern synthetic materials did not allow the quality of workmanship once demanded. In an attempt to preserve the techniques, she said that the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA) had commissioned from her an entire collection of period hats, to be exhibited in a teaching museum bearing her name. With reference to her work for recent Australian films and television series (*Careful He Might Hear You*, *We of the Never Never*, and *Belinda*, among others), and a showing of miniatures to be sold under the label "Petits Chapeaux", she concluded her entertaining and lively talk.

It was time then for the Christmas Picnic, which began with cheese and wine and ended with coffee and Christmas cake, and a visit from Santa Claus.

The egg-and-spoon races were won by Anne Cherry and Shirley Hilyard and the sack race by John Russell. Our thanks to Anne Carolan and the Social Committee for organising the picnic, to Commander Leslie Brooks, a long-time resident of Livingstone Road Marrickville, and to Miss Florence Jones, who drove Santa to the picnic.

As usual the food was delicious and the company was first class. Merry Christmas to everyone and a happy New Year!

- Laurel Thomas



FIRST REAL TEST FOR THE HERITAGE ACT

The sudden demolition of Rose's Emporium at Petersham in late August presents the NSW Government with its first real challenge to the Heritage Act. It appears to have been an act of defiance, and the Government has to decide what its response will be.

These fine Italianate retail premises had stood for many years as a landmark at the corner of Railway Street and Parramatta Road. The building was also a rare and intact reminder of the high quality retail premises built in the late 19th Century period of economic growth.

The building was classified by the Trust in 1984 and it was the subject of a Conservation Order made under Section 130 of the Heritage Act.

Officers of the Trust and the Heritage Council were alerted to its demolition early on the morning of August 24. Written proof of the Conservation Order was provided to police officers on the site. The demolition was halted, then allowed to proceed once the Trust and Heritage Council representatives departed.

This action raises many questions about the effectiveness of the police in upholding the Heritage Act, the involvement of local government which had issued a Demolition Order for a building protected by the Heritage Act, and the actions of the company which suddenly commenced demolition at 4 am on a Sunday morning.

The demolition was clearly no ordinary operation, as its proponents seek to say. No normal demolition operation starts in the pre-dawn hours on a Sunday. Nor does it involve the unsafe practices used in this case which included collapsing the building in the street, thereby damaging a sub-station and disrupting public transport routes. In the Trust's opinion it was the clear intention of all involved to circumvent the protection of the building provided by the Heritage Act.

The NSW Minister for Heritage, Mr Bob Carr, has some powerful punitive provisions at his disposal. Apart from imposing a hefty fine and/or jail sentence, he may also alienate the site to development for up to ten years.

If the Heritage Act is to remain an effective deterrent, the Minister must visit all involved in this conspiracy with the full power of the penalties at his disposal. To do less would be to open the floodgates to those who wish to compromise conservation in order to maximise the development dollar.

Demolition charge

Six people are to face prosecutions for allegedly breaching the NSW Heritage Act following the demolition of Rose's Emporium, Petersham, on August 24. In the Land and Environment Court yesterday Judge Stein ordered that Harry Lebnan of Wentworthville, Ian Wright of Epping, Bill and Pamela Caralis of Sorento, Queensland, and Benjamin and Edith Singer of Epping be served notice to appear in court on December 18.

The demolition of Rose's Emporium, which began at 4am on Sunday, 24th August, has resulted in a number of protests from heritage groups. The site of this building, classified by the National Trust and supposedly protected by a Section 130 Conservation Order, is now nothing more than a pile of unsightly rubble. On the left, we reproduce part of the Editorial from the most recent National Trust Magazine. The paragraph above appeared on page 11 of The Sydney Morning Herald, on 2nd December, 1986. It will be interesting to see what happens at the Land Environment Court on December 18. Further information will appear in the next edition of this newsletter.

St. Brigid's Marrickville Parish Centenary

Members of the Heritage Society were present at the Centenary Mass and dedication of St Brigid's church by Archbishop Clancy on Saturday, 18th October.

The parish priest Father Terence C.P. and the musical director Mrs Connie Cloran both received Papal Blessings in recognition of their contributions to the life of the parish. Special music was composed for the centenary by Mrs Cloran. Members of the Society will have the opportunity to inspect St Brigid's at the conclusion of our Heritage Week concert on Friday, 3rd April, 1987. It is worth putting the date in your diary now!

A Letter from Glasgow

William Barr of Glasgow is attempting to trace any relatives of the Barr family who may still be living in Sydney. He writes that his father, John Barr lived in Marrickville as a child. The family, William, Ann and John, had arrived in Australia on the "Newzealic", a White Star liner in 1912. Accommodation was difficult and the family moved a number of times. They lived in Alice Street, Newtown, and at one time Ann had a shop in Petersham Road, Marrickville. William was a carpenter and worked for Waygood Otis lifts.

John was a good student, winning a book prize from Newtown North Public School, and attended scripture classes at the Marrickville Presbyterian Sabbath School. He also attended Marrickville West Public School and won a bursary to Sydney Boys' High School in 1916. This gave him an allowance of £10 per quarter and a book allowance of £1.10.0. However, the family decided to return to Scotland in 1916, partly because the climate was too hot and partly because of homesickness. They embarked in New Zealand on the "Caledonia", which was the last passenger ship to sail for the United Kingdom during World War I. They had to wait 10 days while it was being painted grey.

Some relatives of the Barrs remained behind in Sydney. If anyone can help William Barr please write to him direct to 8 Stuarton Park, East Kilbride, Glasgow G74 4LA.

Heritage No. 3

The third edition of the Society's Journal will be distributed to all members early in 1987. It will include articles on St Peters, Fowler's Pottery, the Egyptian Room at Petersham and a description of the effects of the Great War on Marrickville, which should be useful to local students attempting the new syllabus in Modern History for the Higher School Certificate. Further copies "Heritage No 3" will be available from Marrickville Libraries at a cost of \$4.

New Members

Tam McGowan and Joyce Fairburn.

How to Join The Society

It's only \$7 for individuals, \$10 for households and institutions, \$2 for pensioners and students. You will receive copies of our Newsletter and our journal "Heritage". Your membership is good for twelve months from the date of joining. Contact Chrys Meader c/- Marrickville Library (560.9333 ext. 282).
