

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.

DULWICH HILL ENMORE LEWISHAM
ST PETERS SYDENHAM TEMPE

MARRICKVILLE PETERSHAM STANMORE
& PARTS OF CAMPERDOWN & NEWTOWN



OUR NEXT MEETING

**Addison Road Army Camp walking tour
with Sue Castrique and Graham Chalcraft
Saturday 24 May 10.15 for 10.30 am**

Meet inside main gates near carpark of Addison Road Community Centre, 142 Addison Road. No bookings.

The Addison Road Community Centre is a rare open space in Marrickville with a rich environmental and social history. On the edge of the Gumbramorra Swamp it had a freshwater creek running through it, part of what may have made it attractive as a market garden in the late 19th century. In 1913 the land was resumed by the Commonwealth government for an army depot. It became a major enlistment, transit and training depot in Marrickville, and the centre for local sport and social life. In 1975 the army left and it became a multicultural community centre, one of the first in Australia.



Main building at Addison Road Centre built for the Army Medical Corps in 1917 (photo: Sue Castrique)

Sue Castrique is a writer and editor whilst Graham Chalcraft is best known for his environmental public art and has been involved in several interpretive heritage projects in Sydney. Both are tenants at Addison Road Community Centre.

20th anniversary Marrickville Medal: 14 May 6-8 pm
More details on back page

Welcome to New Members

Julie & Noel Bishop, Camperdown; Shirley Germain, Dulwich Hill; Hilary Bretag, Enmore; Rod Aanenson, Louise Dyer, Robyn Marjoram (rejoined) all of Marrickville; Annette Robinson, Newtown; Margaret Newman, Stanmore; Ben Arnfield, Annandale; John & Lynne Sawyer, Belimbla Park; Peter Salisbury, Croydon; Judy Finlason, Undercliffe; Lorraine Hamilton, Wentworth Falls.

Southern Areas Heritage Study (Marrickville)

Marrickville Council is undertaking a Heritage Study focusing on the Marrickville LGA *below the railway line extending from St Peters to Dulwich Hill*. Hence, virtually all of St Peters, Sydenham and Tempe; and those parts of Marrickville and Dulwich Hill south of this (the Bankstown) railway line.

Council has invited MHS members to nominate any potential Heritage Items or Heritage Conservation Areas which it believes are worth investigating as part of this study. Council's letter stated: 'We believe your membership is sufficiently broad to offer a spectrum of views on heritage value, and your membership is also well qualified in expertise and local knowledge.'

This is a rare opportunity for members to have input into such a study which is expected to be finalised by the end of the year. You may submit in writing to the Society (address below) or email the Society but we must receive feedback by **Tuesday 10 June** as the data needs to be collated before we submit it to council. Data sent directly to Council will not be considered. Enquiries Scott 0416 152 501 or by email to MHS on <heritagesociety@optusnet.com.au>.

Beaman Park footbridge over Cooks River

Tenders close 21 May for the new footbridge to be located upstream from the current wooden structure soon to be demolished. As advocated in the October 2013 MHS newsletter the Society believes **some of the inscribed Dorman Long steel struts in the old bridge should be retained and either incorporated in to the new bridge or preserved in some form**. Dorman Long Co. Ltd was the engineering firm that built the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

MHS annual fees due on 1 June

Members should find with their May newsletter a yellow renewal slip to return *intact* with a cheque or money order made out to Marrickville Heritage Society, unless you're: a) paying by cash; b) paying by direct deposit (see below); or c) paid up (in which case no slip should have been issued).

Fees (unchanged since 2003) are: concession \$12, individual or joint concession \$20, household or organisation \$28. Members may pay for more than one year and donations are appreciated. Any queries ring treasurer Diane 9588 4930. For renewal by direct deposit to MHS bank account:

Bank name: Sydney Credit Union (BSB 802 084)

Account name: Marrickville Heritage Society

Account Number: 85663

Reference: 'Fees' + [your surname/s and initials]

OUR LAST MEETING: 26 April

History of flooding in Marrickville Valley and Cooks River with Bob Baker and Liz Story

Coming prepared in their dazzling orange State Emergency Service (SES) uniforms, **Bob Baker** and **Liz Story** took us on a fascinating tour of the sometimes soggy history of the Marrickville Valley. Bob began with an outline of the history of Cooks River flooding. While the concreted and steel-piled banks of today's watercourse might suggest a river tamed, this was once far from the case. The river valley was waterlogged: a site of natural mudflats, swamps and creeks. And, though no inundation rivalled the 425 mm that fell between 25 and 27 May 1889, the river has a continuous history of minor and major flooding. Consequently, the valley today is the product of ongoing engineering interventions.

Bob showed how the interventions of humans through the Cooks River Dam, built between 1839 and 1841, exacerbated the flood potential while failing to supply the town of Sydney with the quantity of fresh water desired. Flooding that resulted was particularly noticeable in the area of the Gumbramorra Swamp, around the present day industrial area bounded by Victoria Road, the main southern line railway, and Sydenham and Addison Roads. Here the residential Tramvale Estate had been opened in the 1880s, but the area had to be turned over to industrial use, and drained with a series of channels, both above and below ground. These were Central, Western and Eastern channels. The work to improve the drainage of the low-lying parts of Marrickville continued from 1898 to 1970. Several drains, partly above ground but also underground, follow the lines of the old creeks. Sydenham Road follows the creek called Wardell Creek, that drained into the swamp area.

Bob explained how retention basins were set up, especially the Sydenham Pit and Pump House (now heritage listed) next to the southern railway line. Camdenville Basin served the same flood retention purpose. We also heard how the Marrickville Oval Retarding Basin has been created with levees to direct excess water away from Sydenham Road in the event of a really heavy inundation.

The exact size and nature of the main swamp area cannot be precisely ascertained from existing maps. It shifted from time to time with the wet and dry seasons. Bad floods occurred in many years in the 19th century. The floods of 1885, 1887, 1889 (the very bad one), May 1890, 1893 and June 1897 were mentioned, but recent floods in the 2010-12 period will be in the memory of many residents. In the May 2012 flood, 100 ml of rain fell in six hours leading to water one metre above road level at Riverside Crescent, adjacent to the golf course.

Flooding could be considered in terms of the 2-year events, the 20-year events and the 100-year events. The area could still flood as badly as in the 1880s. The SES has developed flood plans and **Liz Story** (who replaced Denise Tolhurst, who was unable to attend) outlined what residents should do in terms of preparation, including clearing blocked drains and gutters, and gave out valuable information.

Diane Collins & Ian Tyrrell

DA for 380-382 Illawarra Road Marrickville

The Society has written to Marrickville Council to reject a development application: 'to demolish the existing improvements, consolidate the land and erect a 6-storey mixed use development containing 5 ground floor shops and 31 dwellings, over 2 levels of basement car park with 43 spaces, associated landscaping and to strata subdivide the development.'

It involves the demolition of two largely intact Victorian villas, and the construction of an out-of-scale new building that looms over the remaining Victorian villas on the adjacent blocks along Church Street. Council has the power to impose an Interim Heritage Order on the two villas while their heritage status is confirmed, and this should urgently proceed.

The potential heritage values of the Victorian villas, and impacts on adjoining period properties, are not considered in the Statement of Environmental Effects, despite Council's policy of considering heritage values in consideration of all Development Applications. As noted on Council's website:

Property owners and applicants should be aware that Council considers heritage issues, where relevant, in all development applications and any heritage issues should be addressed in the Statement of Environmental Effects (required with all development applications).

These intact Victorian villas are in the southern section of Illawarra Road that still retains its period character. There is strong community concern regarding the extent of demolition of period buildings in this precinct, and the intensity of new development that has already occurred, and is proposed.

The Society will be recommending this section of Illawarra Road as a Heritage Conservation Area in our submission to Council for the proposed (Marrickville) Southern Areas Heritage Study (see page 1 coverage). It would be premature for Council to confirm the demolition of these villas while an assessment of their significance is underway as part of the Heritage Study.

Accordingly, we call on Council to impose an **Interim Heritage Order on these two villas** while their heritage status is confirmed.

Scott MacArthur



382 Illawarra Road Marrickville (photo: Scott MacArthur)

Further to Oct. 2013 newsletter story about Louis and Alice Kennedy, who founded **Glomesh** in Bondi Junction and relocated to St Peters, member **Patricia Macrae** produced a *Wentworth Courier* cutting on how Kennedy grandson Daniel Goldberg rebooted the business, with stock now back on David Jones shelves.

A curious souvenir of World War I with a local connection

In November 1917 a man called Rob sent his sweetheart May a letter. There are some intriguing curiosities about the letter. The letter was written from Palestine during World War I to David Street in Marrickville.

One curious thing is that the letter is not on paper but written on the cuff of a German officer's uniform left behind on the battlefield and put to use as 'a letter card'. The State Library of NSW has this mysterious letter in its collection.

So what do we know of Rob and May? The letter is addressed to Miss M Bailey, 'Tara' in David Street, Marrickville. A check of the Sands Directories shows a Charles Bailey at 'Tara' (then 13 David Street, now 11A) 1917-1921 and the rate books show the owner of 'Tara' being Mrs Elizabeth Bailey. So May's parents are Charles and Elizabeth. They are gone from that address by 1922.

And what of Rob? The letter provides few hints beyond 'Somewhere in Palestine 25th Nov. 1917'. The Light Horse regiments were in Palestine then with the famous charge of the 4th Light Horse Brigade at Beersheba being fought on 31 October 1917. Far from the mud of Europe these Australians were fighting the Turkish forces in the hard terrain of the desert. Rob was most probably a member of a Light Horse regiment. The Australian War Memorial website describes how Turkish and German officers were taken prisoner at the Battle of Beersheba.¹

The 25 November 1917 was a Sunday. Written in the top left hand corner is the note: 'Sending this to the port by a wounded mate'. Did Rob dash off this note on the cuff to take advantage of a safe courier? With no last name Rob is hard to track. A practical yet whimsical way to send a greeting back to Marrickville.

The letter reads:

Dear May

As writing paper is a bit short I am sending you a letter card. It is not one of mine. I picked it up amongst a German officer's kit, left when the Jackos were driven back. There were also some free books but as I am not a linguist they were of no use to me. There are enough souvenirs left along this front to satisfy anyone's curiosity. The Jackos have left much ammunition & of course all their gear.²

Goodbye

Love from

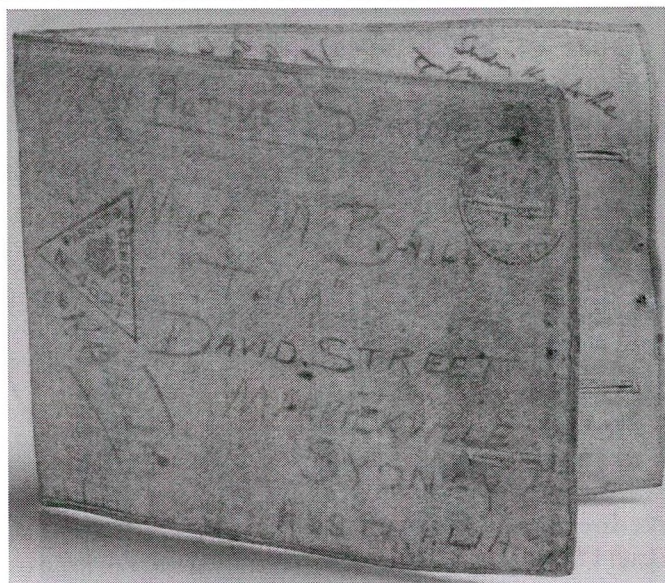
Rob

1. <www.awm.gov.au/units/event_138/>

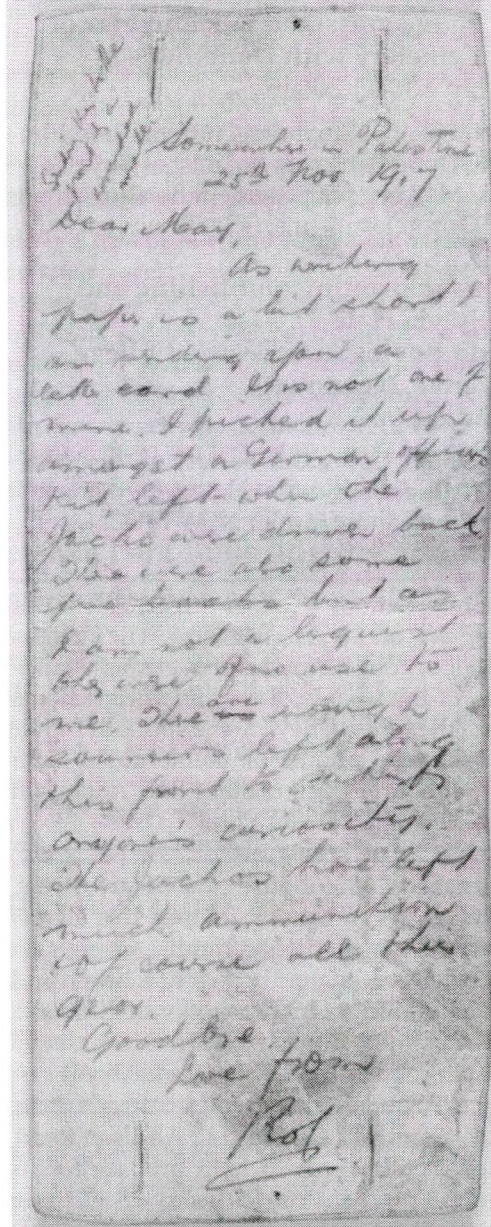
2. 'Jacko' (along with 'Johnno' and 'Johnny Turk') was slang for a Turkish soldier

Marg Ludlow

Editor's notes: This item was on display at the State Library of NSW earlier this year. Since this article arrived, Marg has advised a longer article on Rob's cuff will shortly be in SL magazine. The cuff was bequeathed in 1952 to the library by Sir William Dixon, whose father built 'Abergeldie' in Dulwich Hill and lived there for many years. 'Tara' was built in 1910 for John Kingsbury (draper and friend of Marcus Clark) and his daughter Valerie, elocution teacher, mother of MHS member Joy Lewis, and grandmother of Brett Johnson. RB Hedley (name on front) was the censor.



(Images from collection of State Library of NSW)



Alex-Oonagh Redmond was among several members who sent cards or emails to the Society expressing appreciation of our celebrations on 22 March:

'Thank you for such a lovely 30th anniversary party. So beautifully organised and prepared and what a great venue. Little did I know what was happening in Petersham all those years ago. Thank you all.'

Calendar of Events

Saturday 24 May

Addison Road Army Camp walking tour

Details on front page

Saturday 28 June

Annual General Meeting

Saturday 26 July

Newington College walking tour

Saturday 23 August

Dr Peter Mitchell on Bennelong's remains

20th anniversary Marrickville Medal

Marrickville Town Hall

Wednesday 14 May 6-8 pm

Guest Speaker: Caroline Butler-Bowdon

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Rare remnant native grassland talk and tour of Camperdown Cemetery with Doug Benson

Saturday 17 May 9.30-11.30 am

Cemetery in grounds of St Stephens Church, Church Street, Newtown. Doug Benson is botanist at Royal Botanic Gardens. Morning tea provided. Bookings by 15 May: 9335 2193 or <biosup@marrickville.ncs.gov.au>.

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'Perambulations in printing, publishing and politics' with Sylvia Hale

Senior Common Room, St Andrew's College, 19 Carillon Avenue, Newtown

Saturday 7 June 2-4 pm

All welcome. The Book Collectors' Society of Australia presents Sylvia Hale, co-founder of Hale & Iremonger and Southwood Press, and a former NSW MLC. Enquiries Richard 9557 3823.

Marrickville Public School (Chapel Street) celebrates its 150th anniversary on **13 August 2014**. The P&C is producing a small school history and seeks assistance from past pupils of the Infants, Boys and Girls schools associated with the site. They are especially after personal 'oral' histories, photos or memorabilia from your time at the school. Please contact Rod Aanensen at <rodaanensen@exemail.com.au> or 9573 0484.

John Jones owns the c. 1856 house at **47 Hart Street, Tempe**, an early Wesleyan chapel. In 1884 this chapel was superseded by Tempe Park Methodist Church (in Railway Road, Sydenham); later the Coptic Church and now subject to demolition by Marrickville Council. John is willing to pay for an early photo of the chapel front: 9558 1014 or <johnjonespainting@gmail.com>.

Addison Road Community Centre (142 Addison Road, Marrickville) needs volunteers to help prepare for its **Gymkhana Centenary event on Saturday 25 October** when the centre will be transformed into a site for a gymkhana as it happened 100 years ago, focusing on the role horses played during World War I and their significance at the Addison Road Army Depot as a way of community engagement. For further information or to become a volunteer (event management-related tasks; flexible hours/days) contact Rosy at the Centre on 9569 7633 or <environment@arcco.org.au>.

Future of the Winged Victory at AWM

Some misinformation has been purveyed and displeasure expressed about the relocation of Doble's 1919 Winged Victory (WV) memorial to Canberra. Both are understandable as ideally no one wants to see a long-loved statue moved from its established home. But as has been well-documented by MHS, the Australian War Memorial option is not only the most viable, given the condition of the Winged Victory, but will enable access in a world class war museum to a significantly larger audience than in Marrickville.

In a forum organised by Council and with a welcome from Mayor Jo Haylen, MHS members and others learnt from Tim Sullivan, Assistant Director, AWM on 1 May that from late 2014 the upper half of the WV will be on display in an elevated and imaginative fashion for the next 20-25 years in the Reflections Room of the First World War Legacies Galleries. The WV's lower half (the work of Dr Alex Kolozsy) will be retained such that the two halves could be reunited. The new galleries officially open in February 2015.

Meanwhile, Council expects to announce details of the successful tender for the new statue in early June.

The Society mourns the recent deaths of **Neville Wran**, AC, QC, aged 87, and **Barry O'Keefe**, AM, QC, aged 79. The extensive accomplishments of these men are well known, but both achieved much for heritage conservation. During the premiership of Wran (who attended Fort Street High School), the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act (which ensured greater heritage protection and community consultation) and the Coastal Protection Act (both 1979), and the Aboriginal Land Rights Act (1983) were passed; and the Land & Environment Court and the Historic Houses Trust were established, both in 1980. O'Keefe (brother of Johnny; father of Andrew) was President (1991-2006) of the National Trust of Australia (NSW).

On the Open weekend of 5-6 April MHS again took part at **Tempe House** with other community groups. Thanks to Ross Berry for his facilitation, with MHS committee assistance from Deborah (for Green Lines trams video), Diane, Geoff, Iain, Jan and Lorraine.

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On Saturday 5 April a large roll-up at **St Peters Anglican Church Cooks River** commemorated the 175th anniversary of the first burial at St Peters Graveyard. Select gravesites displayed a detailed history. The first burial on 4 March 1839 was of soldier John Benfield and the last, on 10 April 1896, was of Sarah Ann Sargent. Some 2,515 entries are in the burial register. In the church Laurel and Bob Horton, attired in period funereal dress, spoke eloquently about Victorian death and mourning. Guests enjoyed an organ recital and afternoon tea.

Would you believe a house in Yule Street, Dulwich Hill has the house name 'Yule-do Cottage'?

President Geoff 9568 3029

Treasurer Diane 9588 4930

Heritage Watch Scott 0416 152 501

Newsletter Editor Richard 9557 3823