

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.

DULWICH HILL ENMORE LEWISHAM
ST PETERS SYDENHAM TEMPE

MARRICKVILLE PETERSHAM STANMORE
& PARTS OF CAMPERDOWN & NEWTOWN



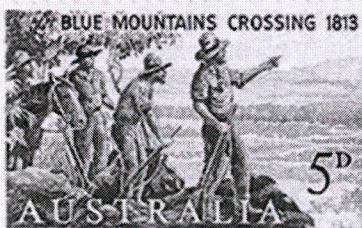
OUR NEXT MEETING

'Crossing the Blue Mountains?: not just Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth' – Talk by Christine Yeats

**Saturday 26 October 10.15 for 10.30 am
Herb Greedy Hall 79 Petersham Rd Marrickville**

Until 1813 the 'Blue Mountains' to the west of the fledgling colony of New South Wales formed what seemed an impenetrable barrier to the westward expansion of the settlement. Several unsuccessful attempts to find a crossing were made in the early years of the colony. In 1805 Governor King wrote to Lord Camden: 'As far as respects the extension of Agriculture beyond the first range of Mountains, that is an Idea that must be given up, as the Rocks to the West of that Range wear the most barren and forbidding Aspect, which Men, Animals, Birds and Vegetation have ever been Strangers to ...'

However, further attempts culminated in the successful crossing in 1813 by a party of seven men – Gregory Blaxland, William Lawson and William Charles Wentworth, a local guide and three convicts. Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth are remembered as the 'heroic three' who conquered the mountains. Little mention has been made of the other four men. We now know that the local guide was James Byrne and that one of the convicts was named Samuel Fairs. Whilst Byrne received a reward, his contribution to the 1813 crossing was largely forgotten. Fairs, too, disappeared into history until an annotation on a letter to the Colonial Secretary was recently uncovered.



1963 stamp which commemorated the crossing but – like everywhere else – failed to acknowledge the other four members of the Blue Mountains party

Christine Yeats will discuss the background to this 1813 crossing, the place of the 'heroic three' in the history of Blue Mountains exploration and the contribution of the 'local guide and three servants'. Christine, a librarian, archivist and historian, is 'committed to promoting the study of Australian history and supporting local history research projects'. She is the Senior Vice President of RAHS.

An Overdue Fee Reminder slip will accompany newsletters where fees are as yet unpaid. Should you have a query or require direct debit details ring Diane on 9588 4930 or email MHS (foot of back page).

Marrickville Festival: Sunday 20 October

HERITAGE WATCH

There is nothing new about Voluntary Planning Agreements (VPA): an agreement between a council and a developer where the developer gives something in return for council consent. But they're becoming the flavour of the month in Marrickville. A proposal before Council seeks 'to amend the Local Environment Plan to change the zoning, floor space ratio and increase building height limits from 8-storeys to 16-storeys' apropos a projected 16-storey block of units next to Marrickville Station. Of course, everyone knows the developer's ploy: apply for 16 storeys, and have it refused, with the expectation that say, 10-12 storeys will be approved. A sweetener by way of a VPA would not harm such a ludicrous proposal!

Meanwhile, Council has approved a VPA be attached to the development at 362-372 New Canterbury Road and 3-5 Herbert Street Dulwich Hill (DA reported in April 2004 newsletter with MHS objecting), as part of the development consent, to incorporate a new and larger branch library. The VPA is claimed to be worth \$2.5 million in public benefit. No doubt such a library in Dulwich Hill is needed, especially as Council has decided that the current library – the oldest in the LGA having operated on this site since 1947 – will be retained and adapted by Council for reuse.

* * *

Little seems exempt from redevelopment, although heritage listings help. The owners of *Valdama* (1913), 396 Marrickville Road, one in a row of Californian bungalows, have gained approval for 'internal alterations' for conversion into a child care centre. May these be sympathetic to the building's integrity. Elsewhere, a DA for the 1880s mansion *Mandalong*, 27 George Street Marrickville – owned by the Salvation Army for about 80 years from the 1920s – seeks to redevelop this, and an adjoining site, by 'demolishing existing improvements' (council-speak for 'demolish'). The Society has lodged an objection. How this once grand street has been so bastardised!

Richard Blair

How to join Marrickville Heritage Society

If you value Marrickville's heritage and history why not join MHS? Send a cheque or money order made out to Marrickville Heritage Society (address below) with your name/s, address, phone/s, or pay by direct debit. Membership renewable June 2014 and includes our next journal. Ring Diane 9588 4930 for enquiries, a brochure or direct debit details; or email address at foot of back page. Fees: Concession \$12, individual/joint concession \$20, household/organisation \$28.

Members' correspondence and a thank you

Maureen Diehl is our honorary member who, from 1984 to 1999 lived with her American husband on the island of Terceira, and became Honorary Supervisor for War Graves in the Azores. Among the allied servicemen interred is Warrant Officer Neville Ryan, RAAF, son of Neville and Amy Ryan of Marrickville (see August 1993 newsletter). Maureen now lives in Florida, USA, and keeps in touch. Recently she wrote:

In the June issue I read your article on the fire that all but destroyed the Holy Trinity hall and how saddened you are at the loss of the old building, especially as it appears to have been a criminal act. I empathise with your sentiments. Old buildings and the memories attached to them, are so much a part of our lives.

I remember that just after the end of the Second World War, in the street where we lived, the houses left after the bombing during the 'London Blitz' were so badly damaged, they were eventually demolished. Before the bulldozers moved in, I went into our old house (even though the entrance was boarded up) for one last look, and to embrace the memories of the past. Along with the mice, who now occupied the place, I went from room to room, gathering small items that my parents had left behind when they moved.

One unexpected treasure retrieved was a box hidden away in an old wardrobe, containing old love letters my parents had exchanged during their courtship days from 1922 to 1930. Their relationship had been passionate but dominated by the social and economic pressures of the Great Depression of that era. They broke off their engagement twice, but eventually married. The letters are a treasure trove of social and historical information.

* * *

Joan Francis:

My grandfather's half-sister, Eva Mudie, was a music and English teacher at Five Dock Public School in the 1910s-1930s. When I broke my arm shortly after starting school at Five Dock, she taught me at home and I became quite fond of her. She told how Peter Dodds McCormick had allowed the school to use his tune of *Advance Australia Fair* as the tune for the school song. Auntie Eva was not happy with this — seems she fancied herself as a composer and thought her tune should be chosen instead. She described Peter as 'dour' — her photos show that she was not.

When I wrote my book on St Alban's Church, Five Dock in 1984, I included the fact that Peter was the second teacher at the old school church of St Alban's. I unsuccessfully tried to persuade the Council to name a reserve after him. The Drummoyne Historical Society wasn't interested, until a member thought some recognition of Peter's life in Five Dock should be recorded. Finally, in August, the Council of the City of Canada Bay placed a plaque in front of the church, acknowledging that McCormick had taught at the old school church. Of course, it was the president of the historical society and the mayor who discovered this!

Auntie Eva is probably resting peacefully in her grave now — it's only 80 years since the school song was recorded in its anniversary booklet — and almost 150 years since McCormick taught at the old school.

Motto: — never give up!

Maureen Brian (Kincoppal-Rose Bay):

On 25 May the Society paid a visit to Kincoppal-Rose Bay School of the Sacred Heart where we visited the chapel and school. Our hosts were **Maureen Brian**, Sacristan, and **Patricia Horsley**, Chapel historian. As a token of our appreciation we sent them a copy of our Marrickville book and in reply, Maureen wrote:

Thank you (Diane) and the Committee so very much for your kind words and for your most generous gift of *Marrickville: a past worth preserving*. Our Principal, Mrs Hilary Johnston-Croke has been on study leave and when she returns I will pass on to her your book and accompanying letter.

Her absence has been in one way fortunate for me, for it has provided me with the opportunity to gain so much knowledge of Marrickville's wonderfully diverse and exciting history. I am most impressed with the book's breadth and depth of research, its range of content and stories of colourful personalities. It is a most valuable addition to the ever-evolving history of Sydney, and it will occupy an important place in the Kincoppal-Rose Bay library.

Patricia and I really enjoyed the visit of your dedicated heritage group. We appreciated your friendliness, your interest in our chapel and school, and the stimulating conversation we all shared. I only hope the remainder of your day was not too rushed because of our reluctance to see you leave. I wish you and the heritage society best wishes in the important work you do and in all your future undertakings.

* * *

David Blair:

One day in early May 1960, having attended an aunt's funeral, I went back to [Sydney] university to attend the remaining lectures, still wearing my good suit. Planning to stay back for a while to study, I had my evening meal at the Union Refectory, where I met up with fellow-student Harvey Cohen. He told me that he and a colleague were planning to climb up the arch of the Harbour Bridge that night. Would I like to join them? Well, why not?

This, of course, was illegal back then, and one had to cross one of the two railway tracks to get to the arch. There was a stairway up from there, but just above head height the way was blocked by many strands of barbed wire. But out to the side, the barbed wire had been swept aside by the many who had gone before us over many weeks or years. Any reasonably fit person could manoeuvre past the blockage by swinging around the side post. So up we went, right to the top. While up there, I also explored down to the lower chord of the arch — there was a stairway to it going down a diagonal girder. Finally, we followed our tracks back and out.

As John Cleese would say, now for the hard bit. What to say when I got home? Cavorting around on the day of Auntie Nell's funeral! There might be no need to say anything. But I was very conscious of the fact that my good suit had not only got very dirty, but, in the process of negotiating the barbed wire, my suit had got torn. By the time I got home, Mum was already in bed, which was a help. But, wearing my damaged suit, I told Dad what had happened. He paused. His reply was brief and to the point: 'Don't tell your mother!'

Spring Trivia Answers



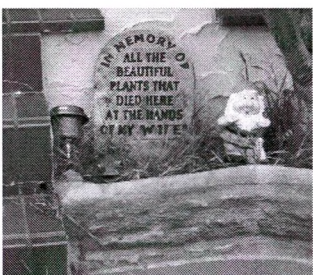
No one (bar Peter Cousins who took most of these photographs) seemed to know that: the feline letterbox is at 141 Simmons Street Enmore; the semis *Kyogle* and *Casino* are at 56- 58 Kingston Road Camperdown; or that the 1864



memorial stands in Camperdown Cemetery in the grounds of St Stephen's Anglican Church, Newtown. It is part of the Andrews family memorial.



According to Chrys Meader's *Beyond the boundary stone: a history of Camperdown Cemetery* (1997, p. 25), this memorial: 'is believed to be unique in Australia. It is an altar monument with a beautifully carved canopy, which is reminiscent of those set in medieval churches . . . The monument was carved in 1864 by John Roote Andrews. It has both his initials and his mason's mark. 'J.R.A.' is carved at the centre of the south side of the canopy and the date is carved in the corresponding position on the north side.'



I was originally going to include in the STQ this tablet (at left) that once stood in the front garden of a Macaulay Road Stanmore house, but is no longer there. Maybe one day it will be reinstated. It reads: 'In memory of all the beautiful plants that

died here at the hands of my wife!' (Photos - *Kyogle/Casino*: Richard Blair; all others by Peter Cousins).

Richard Blair

Mayor Jo Haylen and Leslie Haylen MP

The newly-elected mayor of Marrickville is **Clr Jo Haylen** (ALP) and the new deputy mayor is **Clr Rosana Tyler** (Liberal), making this the first time two women have simultaneously occupied these positions. Clr Tyler is the first Liberal to hold office on Marrickville Council. Possibly Council's youngest ever mayor, Clr Haylen is its second female mayor – **Clr Fiona Byrne** (Greens, 2010-11) was the first.

On an historic note, Clr Haylen has pedigree as her father's great uncle was **Leslie Haylen** (1898-1977), federal Labor MP for Parkes (1943-63). Parkes included parts of Marrickville LGA. His ADB entry reveals that he preferred foreign affairs and economics to: 'parish-pump politics [which] bored him and he described formal occasions in his electorate as "fetes [sic] worse than death"'. Leslie Haylen was also a journalist (including news editor with *The Australian Women's Weekly*), a playwright (his anti-war play, *Two Minutes' Silence*, was staged in Sydney in 1930 and ran for half a year), and author of several novels about Australian life. His political memoir was titled *Twenty Years' Hard Labor* (1969). When he died (at Lewisham), 'former colleagues recalled his wit, repartee and irreverence'.

OUR LAST MEETING

Our meeting on Saturday 28 September was held in the venerable confines of the Macleay Museum at the University of Sydney. Our intrepid group climbed the fireproof concrete stairs to the top floor of the museum that was purpose built in 1882 by Alexander Macleay to safely house his natural history collection. The museum later became the repository for a wide range of ethnographic displays, convict relics and photographic records that make it a perfect home for the current exhibition, 'Touring the past: tourism and history in Australia'. We were hosted by **Dr Jude Philp**, the museum's senior curator; our speaker was **Associate Professor Richard White**, who is an authority on the development of tourism in Australia.

Richard took us back to nineteenth century Australia, where tourists sought natural wonders in our landscapes, flora and fauna, and historical tourism was 'elsewhere' – seemingly restricted to cultural excursions to the Northern Hemisphere: 'the European Grand Tour'. It was not until the 1890s that people in Australia began to seek out the past as a tourist experience. This growing interest seems to have developed as a combination of factors: the healing passage of time from the worst horrors of the immediate past, a developing nationalism and the appreciative experiences of international visitors. When Mark Twain visited Australia in 1895 he said that 'Australian history is almost always picturesque: indeed, it is so curious and strange, that it is itself the chiefest novelty the country has to offer.'

Richard used the example of the evolution of Port Arthur as a tourist site to illustrate how the allure of 'dark tourism' was an early and powerful driver in the development of a tourism industry. When the Port Arthur prison closed in 1877, the Tasmanian government wanted to rename the area Carnarvon, but instead the buildings were purchased and preserved by early entrepreneurs offering a macabre experience to the thrill-seeking tourist. A similar obsessive interest in bushrangers drove numerous enterprises that romanticised and sanitised criminals as anti-establishment mavericks. Museums would go to desperate lengths to indulge these dark obsessions – the exhibition includes a fake convict ball and chain relic, the armour worn by Mick Jagger in the 1970 Ned Kelly movie, and a telegram requesting Ned Kelly's armour for display the day after his capture!

On a lighter note, Richard told us of the scatological origin of the Dog Sits on the Tucker Box myth, and we finished with a discussion of how well an MHS souvenir teaspoon would sit in the museum's select collection. The exhibition (ends 14 February 2014) and the Macleay Museum, in the beautiful grounds of the University of Sydney, are well worth a visit.

Scott MacArthur

It is possible the former **Coptic Church, Sydenham**, approved by Council for demolition, may be retained if the Coptic Church is genuine in its declaration. Council has (again) sought Expressions of Interest.

Expressions of Interest for new **Winged Victory** due by 6 November. See council website or ring 9335 2280.

Calendar of MHS Events

Saturday 26 October

Christine Yeats: *Crossing the Blue Mountains?*

Not just Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth

Details on front page

Saturday 23 November

Ross Berry: The works of John Verge

Saturday 30 November

Annual Christmas Pot Luck Dinner

The annual Royal Australian Historical Society conference is on 2-3 November at Katoomba. The theme is: 'The Great Divide: getting there from here'. To attend, ring 9247 8001 or check <www.rahs.org.au> to register or for information. Some MHS committee members are going.

Ken Searle's exhibition *Walking into the landscape* represents explorations into the country of the old Gumbramorra Swamp, following the movement of water through Marrickville, St Peters, Sydenham and Tempe into the Alexandra Canal and Cooks River.

Watters Gallery, 109 Riley St, East Sydney 9331 2556
Tuesday & Saturday 10-5 / Wednesday-Friday 10-7
Ends Saturday 19 October.

Nostalgists should visit the (1964) **Beatles in Australia** exhibition at Powerhouse Museum. Runs till 16/2/14.

Not trivia this, but why was **Ixion Lane Tempe** (near Tempe Public School) so called? Surely not because, as a character in Greek mythology, Ixion was said to be the first human to shed kindred blood!

* * *

Louis & Alice Kennedy fled their native Hungary for Israel in the late 1940s before migrating in 1957 with their two children to Australia. They opened their first factory in Bondi Junction in 1958 and founded **Glomesh**, the brand name for their range of metal mesh products. In 1963 they relocated to **44-56 May Street St Peters** with the business name Camel Plastics and remained there until moving to Leichhardt in the late 1970s. A local artist is after photos or memorabilia related to the St Peters site. MHS contact details below.

Dorman Long Co & Cooks River footbridge

Canterbury and Marrickville Councils have joint plans to build a new footbridge over Cooks River upstream from its current location near Beaman Park, Earlwood and the clubhouse of Marrickville Golf Links. The timber has aged, but perhaps some steel components on the existing bridge — which were manufactured by Dorman Long Co Ltd, the engineering firm that built the Sydney Harbour Bridge — can be somehow reused. The firm's name is embossed on the metal in several places (depicted below) along with the initials 'M.BRO', which stands for Middlesbrough, the Yorkshire town where Dorman Long was originally based.



End of the Cooks River Motor Boat Club

This club, which was founded in 1919, is no more. Former Marrickville Council alderman and long term Tempe resident, Ken Holt, was actively involved in running the club many years ago. He knows the club history and the active role the club played in the community for many years. He says, long after his involvement, the club went downhill with gradual loss of members and club finances becoming mysteriously depleted without anyone ever being charged with an offence. To add insult to injury, the clubhouse, which long stood in Holbeach Avenue Tempe, near Cooks River, was recently demolished.

The Society would like to know what became of the World War II Honour Board which used to hang in the clubhouse. A photo of it exists and a transcript of the board is in the MHS publication, *The War memorials of St Peters Municipality* (2002, p. 67).

This report (*Sydney Morning Herald* (1 November 1926, p. 15) gives the results of a long boat race:

'The longest motor boat race of the season so far was the 17 miles reliability race of the Cooks River Club from Tempe to Kurnell and back, which was held on Saturday afternoon. Seven boats competed. Results: 1. Dawn (W Burton); 2. Elkin (M Johnston); 3. Nereus (J Orlovich).'

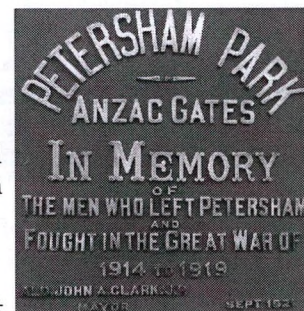
Founded so long ago, the club has run its course!

Plaques plucked

Dentists legally remove plaque, but as recently reported in the press there has been 'a spate of memorial plaque thefts across Australia as the price of bronze rises along with gold and copper'. A local example is the inscribed bronze plaque that

was attached to the **Petersham Park Anzac Gates**. (Those on the May coach trip to Vacluse House will recall pausing in Brighton Street in front of these gates as Geoff Ostling told of William Charles Wentworth's one time estate.) This attractive WWI plaque had stood on this site since 1921, when it was affixed to the imposing gates and pillars, which had been part of the original Petersham Town Hall.

Also stolen was the plaque at the former electricity substation, 134 Lennox Street Newtown. Council's Heritage & Urban Design Advisor says the early 20th century substation represents the period when private companies supplied electricity infrastructure to households. It is: 'evocative of the development and expansion of electricity infrastructure in the area in 1935 . . . [and] is of aesthetic significance as a representative early 20th century electricity substation with Inter War Art Deco and Inter War Free Classical style detailing.' (© Marrickville Council)



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