

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.

DULWICH HILL ENMORE LEWISHAM
ST PETERS SYDENHAM TEMPE

MARRICKVILLE PETERSHAM STANMORE
& PARTS OF CAMPERDOWN & NEWTOWN



Calendar of 2014 Events

Saturday 22 February
Alexander Brodie & Frances Maria Spark of
Tempe House: talk by Robert Brodie Spark

Saturday 22 March
MHS 30th Anniversary celebration

Saturday 26 April
History of flooding in Marrickville Valley
and Cooks River

Saturday 24 May
(former) Addison Road Army Camp tour

Saturday 28 June
Annual General Meeting

Editor's favourite quote of the year:
'We will never have no questions' - John Chappell

Winged Victory update: see inside

From the National Trust (NSW):

NSW Planning Legislation

'The NSW Planning Bills will be brought back for consideration in February 2014 following a number of amendments in the Legislative Council. The Trust lobbied successfully with the State Government to amend the draft planning bills to give heritage protection a higher profile through a specific NSW Heritage Policy. The objects of the Act now refer to "heritage", appeal rights are retained, code assessment was no longer mandatory for State Heritage listings and local heritage and Heritage Conservation Areas.

'The Trust had deep concerns that local government could utilise code assessment for development affecting local heritage and Heritage Conservation Areas and notes that an amendment has removed "Code Assessment" from the legislation.'

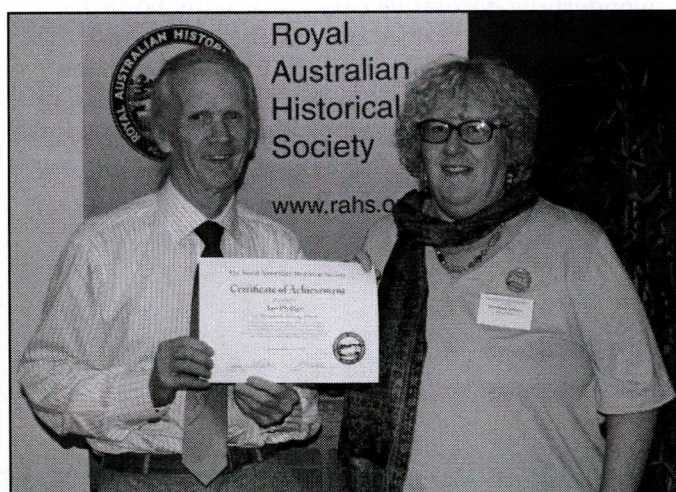
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The Society commends the **Better Planning Network** for its dedicated campaigning and for keeping the Society and all other affiliated organisations informed.

Ian Phillips honoured by RAHS

At the annual RAHS conference on 2-3 November at Katoomba (report inside) a Certificate of Achievement was presented to **Ian Phillips**:

For his achievements as a valuable member of the Society. Ian's many contributions include his technical capabilities, the Society's oral history project and delivery of the monthly newsletters. He has an active role in promoting heritage values in the community and his generosity and selflessness with the elderly of the Society and the community is well-noted.



*Ian Phillips receives his Certificate of Achievement from
RAHS President, Anne-Maree Whitaker (© RAHS)*

Welcome to new MHS members

Brian Malligan, Dulwich Hill; Tony Ainsworth (Marrickville Festival raffle winner), Marie Dustmann, Heather & Jack Smallbone, Greg Strachan & Beth Stoodley, all of Marrickville; Dan Lunney (rejoined), Stanmore; Mary Barthelmy, Tempe; Mr E Royston, Earlwood; Pamela Valentine, Liverpool.

How to join Marrickville Heritage Society

Marrickville Heritage Society promotes and monitors our built and environmental heritage, and records our local history. Joining is easy. Send a cheque/money order made out to Marrickville Heritage Society (address below) with your name/s, address, phone/s, or pay by direct debit. Join now and there's no need to renew until June 2015. Membership includes our forthcoming journal. Ring Diane 9588 4930 for enquiries, a brochure or direct debit details; or email address at foot of back page. Fees (not increased since 2003): Concession \$12, individual/joint concession \$20, household/organisation \$28.

MHS President Geoff Ostling and the executive
committee wish members and their families a
Merry Christmas and a safe & Happy New Year.

Our Last Meeting: 23 November

The works of John Verge:

An illustrated talk with Ross Berry

Everyone has a signature of some kind: it is a unique identifier. Architects generally leave their signature style not only in the bricks and mortar, the timber and stone of their buildings but in the sketches, floor plans and elevations that comprise the plans of their body of work. These are particularly important when the buildings change ownership and function or fall into disrepair. **John Verge** (1782-1861, born in England, migrating to Sydney in 1828), was a significant colonial architect who brought a sophisticated level of design to Australia in an extraordinarily productive period of practice between 1830 and 1837. He left behind few plans for us to study and to use for restoration. They were mostly lost when the Macleay River flooded his estate at Austral Eden in 1864.

Ross Berry is passionately committed to tracking down and documenting the works of John Verge, some of which have been altered to function as schools, hospitals, hotels, a pickle factory, and, even a barn. Ross took us on a fascinating journey through the porticos and into the drawing rooms, up magnificent soaring staircases into bedrooms and down to cellars of houses built for wealthy and influential members of colonial society: Alexander Macleay's Elizabeth Bay House, the Macarthur family's Camden Park, Alexander Brodie Spark's Tempe House, Aberglasslyn and Denham Court among them. James Busby, another colonial notable, commissioned not only Rockwall in Potts Point, but also the first prefabricated (timber) house from Verge, each piece numbered precisely in Roman numerals to ensure its construction exactly as planned. This building is now the Treaty House in Waitangi, New Zealand.

Ross used his extensive photographic collection to identify the signature elements of Verge's architectural style – simplicity, symmetry and balance. We saw the facade of elegant Elizabeth Bay House, with its symmetrical windows either side of the columned portico; these elements are also evident on a smaller scale in the exquisite jewel, Rose Bay Cottage, Salisbury Road, Rose Bay (restored in the 1990s); the super deluxe (Ross's term) façade of Aberglasslyn near Maitland, now restored after it had been used for various purposes, and ending up as a barn in a complete state of dilapidation. Many of Verge's dwellings had fallen into disrepair: Lyndhurst in Glebe, for example, was used as a school and a pickle factory; Rockwall as a hotel and a hospital.

There is no better example of Ross's dedication in documenting the history and restoration of Verge's works than at Camden Park, built for the Macarthur family in 1832, and which is still owned by the family and furnished much as it was originally. The interior demonstrates, again, the driving principles of Verge's architectural style in the magnificent cantilevered staircase, French doors symmetrically placed opposite the central fireplace, with matching arched recesses either side of the fireplace and matching doorways to create a serene sense of balance and order. Deep Pompeian red walls, panelled doors with exquisite carved rosettes at the architrave corners are all signature elements. Verge created six-panelled doors for deluxe dwellings and eight-panelled doors for super deluxe residences. Also,

panelling, detailed cornices and elegant flowing staircases, superbly engineered to function perfectly with apparently no visible means of support.

As a Verge enthusiast Ross has persisted in following the trail of ownership and restoration. He has managed to track down new and previous owners, although is still to get a response to some emails. He believes Denham Court is now owned by a Socceroo, and wonders if perhaps learning more about soccer would be helpful in gaining entrée to view the interior!

He ended his presentation with a pictorial record of the changes to Tempe House where he is Honorary Historian: from an early picture of the Brodie Spark family to the derelict condition of the house in 2005; then tracked its restoration as part of the Discovery Point redevelopment until 2011, when he recorded the visit of the NSW Governor to the opening, together with members of the Brodie Spark family.

Ross's enthusiasm and patient documentation of John Verge's beautiful creations made us want to go and see them for ourselves. Thank you, Ross.

Vilma Bell

Second architectural forum

Marrickville Library & History Services are commended for hosting the **second architectural forum** at Petersham Town Hall on Saturday 9 November. Four architects – **Otto Cserhalmi, Melonie Bayl-Smith, Greg Patch and Megan Jones** – spoke on aspects of heritage conservation in architecture.

Trades Hall tour

Colin Hesse is to be commended for donating to the Society a prize he won at a slow auction, namely a tour of the **Trades Hall** with **Neil Towart and Bill Pirie**. This was attended by several members on Thursday 28 November. It was rather like a step back in time with painted signage on walls showing locations of various trades in the building, an obsolete lift, old photographs, union memorabilia and the wonderfully decorative banners proudly borne by unionists in their rallies and marches. We saw one such banner for the Pastrycooks Employees Union which is depicted below in this photo. Transmission of radio station 2KY first took place in 1925 from this fine building.



Pastry workers at a Labour Day event in Sydney, undated (F Smith, Photographer, 43 New Canterbury Road Petersham – from Robert Hutchinson Collection)

RAHS annual conference: 2-3 November

Although the conference title, *The Great Divide: Getting there from here*, seemed to be a reference to the 200th anniversary of the Blue Mountains crossing, its meaning remained elusive. Was **Associate Professor Carol Liston's** paper, *Local history and Family History: Mirror Images or the Great Divide*, a clue? The theme of the conference – held at Katoomba – which did emerge was the impact of Australian involvement in world war at the local level, a theme which keynote speaker, **Associate Professor John McQuilton**, in his stimulating Lesley Muir Address, explored in informative detail. Using examples from North Eastern Victoria, he explained how women were key players in the anti-conscription movement of WWI, their authority based on the fact they had loved ones at the front. He also touched on the plight of those of German ancestry and the arbitrary ways in which they were treated. His acknowledgment that local and regional historians are generally very conscious of the need to recognise the importance of place, and that historical processes do not happen in a vacuum, gave many in his audience a sense of their own place in the wider history-writing community.

One interesting paper explored the criteria for judging the significance of local parks, so often dominated by a war memorial. To Professor McQuilton, war memorials, so ubiquitous in the local landscape, are symbols of division and celebrate differences between places, in their design, their location, arrangement of names, as well as who is named and who isn't. His revelation that local newspapers were ignored by the war censors, meaning they could publish soldiers' letters and detailed accounts of conditions on the front, should encourage local historians in their research. As part of the WWI commemorations, Trove (NLA) is digitising every Australian newspaper for the period 1914–1918. A website to connect local projects commemorating the major anniversaries of Australian involvement in WWI will be launched in 2014 (www.worldwaroneline.com.au).

The host area's history was explored in **Dr Siobhan Lavelle's** fascinating talk about her attempts (largely unsuccessful) to preserve the significant stretches of convict-built stonework, substantial remnants of Cox's original road, which she had uncovered in her own home territory of Linden and Woodford. **Joan Edwards**, in her insights into the impact of WWII on the Blue Mountains area, revealed the installation of RAAF aircraft spotters at the Wentworth Falls Golf Club and the whereabouts of certain Yanks were not exactly closely held secrets among the locals.

Prior to the conference dinner, attendees could choose between a tour of the historic Carrington Hotel, Katoomba's restored industrial precinct or its main street with the obligatory stop for Paragon chocolates. The organisers and presenters are congratulated. We were assured our attendance – which included several MHS members – just a fortnight after the disastrous bushfires, was very much appreciated.

Jan Garaty

Doble's Winged Victory headed for AWM



As foreshadowed in the last MHS newsletter, Marrickville Councillors voted at its 19 November meeting to transfer ownership of the Winged Victory to the Australian War Memorial 'to ensure its future preservation, care and display'. Gilbert Doble's 1919 Winged Victory, restored in 1988 by Dr Alex Kolozsy, has been in council storage since 2009. The meeting was addressed by four speakers. Former Marrickville Historian **Chrys Meader** remains opposed to the relocation and raised valid concerns as to whether the AWM may find the statue too difficult to restore, that the entire statue will not be on display, and what accountability there will be once ownership is transferred. As a result, an amendment was moved and passed that the AWM keep Council informed about the preservation and appropriate display.

In supporting the transfer of ownership, MHS President **Geoff Ostling** explained the rationale behind the Society's shift in approach: Given the extent of damage (see photo) and absence of any local suitable place for the statue, the AWM's offer should be embraced. In this inspiring statue by a notable sculptor, we see triumph with the sword held high and sorrow represented by the wreath and bowed head. In Canberra, the statue could be appreciated by a broader audience all year round.

Tim Sullivan, Assistant Director, Branch Head National Collection, AWM, said the statue would be restored and be on display for the life of the gallery (typically 20-25 years) starting from November 2014. It will be preserved in perpetuity.

Nick Fletcher, Concept Leader, First World War Gallery Redevelopment, AWM, said the Winged Victory is significant to the nation; that Marrickville's story will be depicted in Canberra including the impact of Marrickville's response in 1919, which will be conveyed in the associated text.

The above photo of the statue in storage shows some of the damage to the fabric. Restoration begins soon.

Geoff Ostling & Richard Blair

Weight of Evidence: The Newtown Ejectment Case

by local author **Matt Murphy**, Hale & Iremonger (imprint of the GHR Press), 2013, 287 pp, non fiction. The book is available online (c. \$35 incl. postage), in bookshops (\$30); for MHS members and friends who email <weightofevidence@hotmail.com> or ring 0439 401 114, it's \$30 incl. postage; if living locally, \$25, home delivery by pre-arrangement.

Synopsis: 'In 1799 Nicholas Devine was granted 210 acres near the Sydney CBD. Devine retired to his estate where he was constantly robbed. Bernard Rochford befriended Devine, moving in as 'protector', but after Devine died, Rochford claimed ownership and began selling the land. Many purchasers knew that Rochford was in no legal position to sell. The 30 new landowners included judges, mayors, magistrates and other Sydney luminaries.

'Meanwhile, Devine's family was stirring. In 1848 John Devine hastened to Sydney to lay their claim. And so a legal war began which came before the Privy Council. The defence engaged the entire Sydney bar to prevent Devine from representation. It was billed as Devine v Newtown but also rich v poor, English v Irish, and in particular, Protestant v Catholic with the Church said to be footing Devine's legal bills in return for turning Newtown into a Catholic village.'

In between being a fireman and a teacher, **Matt Murphy** has researched and written *Weight of Evidence*, 'which started life as a university history essay on the issue of convict rights'. Meticulously researched, using original documents, it is the first full account of this 19th century cause célèbre, which had the dubious distinction of being Australia's longest running court case. The book also demonstrates the 'huge role' the Newtown Ejectment Case played 'in the development of what are now the suburbs of Newtown and Erskineville.'

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Members will recall **Robert Parkinson's** 2012 talk or his book *Picture shows in the Marrickville and Newtown districts 1898-2012*, which is an illustrated publication focussing on numerous local picture theatres. Robert is offering his book at the reduced price of \$20. Contact 8068 1762 or <bobpark@optusnet.com.au> for orders and postage. Book also on sale by the Society.

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Newer members may be unfamiliar with the Society's publication *Marrickville A past worth preserving*, a book of 22 local history essays which resulted from an essay competition MHS held. We have reduced the price this month only from \$35 to \$30 plus postage (free delivery within LGA on request). Postal charges or direct deposit data from treasurer 9588 4930 or by email <diane.mccarthy@optusnet.com.au>. Cheques and money orders to Marrickville Heritage Society.

As per last newsletter, **sponsors for Heritage 14** are most welcome. Contact Richard 9557 3823 for details or other related information.

Victoriana!

MHS member and New Theatre Life Member **Lyn Collingwood** is directing this special pre-Christmas event in Newington College's historic Old Chapel, the perfect setting for a Victorian singalong. Song sheets provided for guests to hum, whistle, yodel, warble, croon, cantillate or ululate *Daisy Bell*, *Girl in a Gilded Cage*, *Where Did You Get That Hat?* and lots more music hall favourites. Cabaret-style table seating with snacks included in the ticket price. Suitable for ages 10 up. Parking in the school grounds off Stanmore Road. The Old Chapel is air-conditioned.

Two performances only: Saturday 14 December 7 pm & Sunday 15 December 4 pm

Bookings 1300 347 205 or online <newtheatre.org.au>
Tickets: \$40 full/\$35 concession/special \$100 Sunday family rate (2 adults + 2 children, extra child \$20)

Summer Trivia Question

Where and how in the Marrickville LGA am I memorialised (clues: not indoors, nor in a cemetery, nor columbarium)? Richard 9557 3823 or email address at foot of this page:

- 1) Frederic Wippell
- 2) George Walker, Plumber
- 3) J Hargraves

Annual Christmas Pot Luck Dinner

Just as **Geoff Ostling** hosted the Society's inaugural Pot Luck Dinner in 1989, so he again hosted this year's gathering at Petersham (with **Joe Chapman**) on Saturday 30 November. We were pleased to welcome **Margaret Sinclair**, currently living out of the area and who, since attending the 1989 event, has rarely missed a Pot Luck. **Lu Bell** completes the trio of those who attended both times. Geoff conducted a tour of the revamped Fanny Durack pool and parts of Petersham Park. Lucky Door prizes (donated by **Lorraine Beach**, **Robert Hutchinson** and **Lyn Greenwood**) were won by **Scott MacArthur** and **Iain Carolin**. As usual, members provided the fine repast, whilst Lorraine coordinated the evening and, with her band of helpers, kept the wheels in motion.

If you have a story to share about the recently sold **Marie-Louise hairdressing salon in Enmore** (see July 2013 newsletter) ring Naomi on 0404 362 601 or email her <patchesmgee@gmail.com>.

MHS members whose fees are unpaid are reminded that non-renewal will mean you will forfeit receipt of your complimentary copy of the Society's 30th anniversary journal due out in coming months. The treasurer will be pleased to accept late payment (perhaps renew until 2015!), but if you're not renewing, please ring Diane or email address below.

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