

# MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.

DULWICH HILL ENMORE LEWISHAM  
ST PETERS SYDENHAM TEMPE

MARRICKVILLE PETERSHAM STANMORE  
& PARTS OF CAMPERDOWN & NEWTOWN



## Our March Meeting: Saturday 25 March Port Hacking, Hacking River & Bate Bay cruise

Tour booked out, but there is a waiting list. If you need to cancel, let Lorraine know before day of cruise on 0416 224 472, 9550 6608 or <lbeach@iprimus.com.au>.

Meet 10.15 for 10.30 am departure at Tonkin Street wharf, Gunnamatta Bay, Cronulla: 200 metres from Cronulla station — turn left, walk down the hill, go under railway line (via tunnel), left for about 50m; the wharf is over to the right. Car parking near station. Cruise incl. commentary, morning tea and light lunch. Bar on board. Return c. 1.30 pm. Cost \$40: pay on day.

## Our April Meeting

**Saturday 22 April 10.15 for 10.30 am**  
**Your 200 year old Royal Botanic Garden,**  
**Sydney with Noel Elliot**  
**Herb Greedy Hall, 79 Petersham Rd Marrickville**

Noel Elliot is a young octogenarian who has a great love for gardens. He lived at Jannali for 52 years on a 900 square metre block, mostly garden, which some have described as a miniature botanic garden. Noel has visited over 30 botanic gardens in Australia and many of the great gardens of Europe and Britain.



Noel has recently retired as a walking guide in the Royal Botanic Garden and is a very active member of Sutherland Shire Historical Society. Noel's illustrated talk celebrates 200 years of growth at Sydney's Royal Botanic Garden. This is your garden: you own it, so why not enjoy it! (photo © State Library of NSW)

*Montrose*, 321 Marrickville Rd, Marrickville on corner of Livingstone Road. To the left behind the tree is 323 Marrickville Road, a photo of which can be seen on p. 3 (photo: © realestate.com)

## Heritage Watch

### 321 and 323 Marrickville Road Marrickville

It has been brought to the attention of the Society by several sources that the large properties at 321 and 323 Marrickville Road are on the market, with the opening advertising campaign proclaiming them a 'developer's dream'. There was extensive discussion in the advertising about the zoning and potential floor space ratios, but no mention of the fact that *Montrose* at 321 Marrickville Road is heritage listed. It was built in 1912 for Henry Holland, who was a tuckpointer by trade, and it is a wonderfully intact Federation corner villa with tuckpointed brick work, a complex slate tile roof, wide verandahs and intricate lead light windows. *Montrose* has been in the same family for generations, with at least three generations of doctors operating rooms therefrom. It is sad that this personal connection with Marrickville's more elegant past will be lost with the sale of the property.

323 Marrickville Road, while not as grand as *Montrose*, is a largely intact Federation villa, contributing to the landmark ensemble of houses, churches and public buildings that have persisted around the intersection of Marrickville and Livingstone Roads. With the recent commencement of demolition works for the new library and residential development on the old Marrickville Hospital site, this intersection is evolving into a major civic precinct for the Marrickville community, and protecting it from disruption by exploitative development should be a Council priority.

The Society has requested that Council apply an Interim Heritage Order on 323 Marrickville Road so that its heritage values can be assessed, especially its evident long term association with the adjacent *Montrose*, with a view to extending the heritage listing of *Montrose* to cover both houses.

Scott MacArthur





## Our 25 February Meeting – Cooks River: an ‘unnatural’ history with Ian Tyrrell

The subject of Emeritus Professor Ian Tyrrell’s talk was very close to home for most of his audience. His exposition of the major phases in the catchment’s history was well illustrated with photos which showed how the natural vegetation along the banks of Cooks River and its tributaries was altered and mostly removed to be replaced in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century by tea tree hatching and mud embankments, and in the late 1930s concrete canalisation. Sheet iron piling replaced riverbanks between Marrickville and Hurlstone Park in the 1950s. Mangroves had disappeared down from the Tempe Dam built by convict labour using locally quarried stone. The dam was the earliest significant human intervention in the river’s natural flow; it quickly caused problems of pollution and flooding.

Ian subtitled his talk ‘An “unnatural” history’ because as an environmental historian he was emphasising the manner and the reasons for the considerable alteration of the river’s course over a long period of time. He acknowledged that almost all rivers are unnatural now but certainly Cooks River was systematically altered more than most. By the 1980s, around when people began to care about ecological sustainability it was dubbed the ‘river that died of shame’. It had been a convenient sewer for human and industrial waste: its noxious smells notorious; its wetlands filled in for factories, warehouses, railyards and Kingsford Smith Airport, the creation of which meant the large Botany section of the catchment was lost forever; riverscapes turned into channels.

Sluiceways and a new bridge at Tempe were built in 1897. Erosion and run-off from an increasingly urbanised catchment resulted in siltation, an ongoing problem requiring continual dredging which began in 1886. It was interesting to learn of the similarities between the canalisation of the Cooks River and that of the Los Angeles River. Both were attempts to control flooding and siltation. The 1930s Depression meant cheap labour was available for river remediation works. The concreting upstream of the Canterbury Sugar Mill seen today was laid by men working on ‘susso’. They and other workers such as those that laid the rail tracks and dug the many brickpits of the area laboured under harsh conditions; their contribution should be acknowledged.

The river was a valued recreational resource in the decades before and after WWI. At Mackey Park 120 row boats were available for hire until at least the 1920s. Swimming was also popular; Marrickville Beach, artificially created by the council near Warren Park, was a failed attempt to recreate that past time. Today, recreation includes cycling, walking paths, picnic areas and sports ovals; the infrastructure of these can cope with flooding, an ongoing problem. Sewerage pollution has been partially controlled but pollution by plastics and other refuse is a continual eyesore and hazard to marine life and birds such as pelicans.

Certainly the river has been ‘loved to death’. Unfortunately there were good intentions. The Cooks River Improvement League (the forerunner of today’s Cooks River Valley Association) was in favour of the canalisation of the lower river and its diversion to Kyeemagh. ‘Meddling’ by humans continues and the river is today a ‘work in progress’. Indisputably the complete restoration of Cooks River is impossible but remediation works such as at Cup and Saucer wetland have a positive outcome.

Ian’s own website explores this further: <[iantyrrell.wordpress.com/cooks-river](http://iantyrrell.wordpress.com/cooks-river)>. He is seeking a publisher for his epic book on the river. For a comprehensive history of the interventions along the river see Dr Lesley Muir’s entry in: <[dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/from\\_a\\_fine\\_stream\\_to\\_an\\_industrial\\_watercourse#ref=93536](http://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/from_a_fine_stream_to_an_industrial_watercourse#ref=93536)>.

Jan Garaty

**Note:** Despite rain, MHS had a record turnout for a Saturday meeting with over 100 people. We were pleased to be joined by many members of the Mudcrabs, the Cooks River Valley Association and Wolli Creek Preservation Society.

## Croquet Club Offended: Members called ‘Old Ladies’ (reproduced from the Sydney Sun 30 August 1938, p. 12)

The Marrickville Women’s Croquet Club resents a remark said to have been made by an alderman that it was composed of ‘old ladies’. Members are also annoyed at the local council’s refusal to make further land at Livingstone Park available for another court. ‘An alderman made a remark about “old ladies” when our application was under consideration,’ said Mrs G Porter, honorary secretary, today. ‘Besides being ridiculous, we think the comment is in bad taste. I am not a young lady, but I am not yet an old lady,’ Mrs Porter continued. ‘We have members aged 30. Does that mean they are in the sere and yellow?’ She added that there appeared to be strange ideas about croquet. Players did not doddle about aimlessly, hitting the ball or missing it. Croquet called for great skill, was highly scientific and was splendid exercise to keep fit. We have 30 members,’ said Mrs Porter, ‘and on a popular day there is too much sitting out. We have applications for membership, but unless we get another court we will find it hard to accommodate them.’

Council will be asked to reconsider its request.

\* \* \* \*

**Note** Marrickville Croquet Club in Marrickville (once Livingstone) Park formed in 1926. A second court was never built; membership was later extended to men.

**Anyone for croquet?** Marrickville Croquet Club invites MHS members for some croquet on **Sunday 21 May**. Bookings Mary 0407 487 157. More details (including times) in May-June newsletter.



Dredging on Cooks River likely to be in the 1920s and near dam below the Canterbury Sugarworks; building right of centre probably Canterbury House which was demolished in 1928 (© Robert Hutchinson postcards)

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## More Heritage Watch

### *Ferndale* 119 Addison Road Marrickville

Under threat of demolition is the weatherboard cottage *Ferndale* at 119 Addison Road, even though it may be one of the earliest houses in the LGA. Sands Directories suggest that it was built prior to 1880, whereas the demolition application to Council erroneously states that it was built in 1910.

Local residents and neighbours have collated evidence from many sources to confirm that the first sale of the property at 119 Addison Road is recorded in 1878, with *Ferndale* referenced as 'a tenement on this land'. The 1878 sale was from Edward Rofe to Joshua Jeremiah Farr. Farr became a long term alderman of Marrickville Council and was Mayor of Marrickville (1894-95). He owned the property until his death in 1902. According to Sands Directories, from 1878 to 1881 the property was tenanted to George Butterfield. Butterfield was a surveyor and amateur astronomer, who rose to prominence in Australian scientific circles as the assembler of Australia's first known planispheres in 1870 and 1877. A description of this was published in the *Sydney Mail* newspaper, where 'Butterfield's Planisphere' was described as 'an indispensable tool for amateur astronomers' (see article on Butterfield next column).



*Ferndale* 119 Addison Road Marrickville  
(© Brad Inwood Architects)

From 1885 to 1893, Sands Directory lists a string of residents at *Ferndale* including: Edmund Ebsworth, wool broker (1885); Charles Chapman, engineer at Chapman and Co (1886); Samuel Ritchie, painter (1887); John Palmer, bailiff (1888); and James Mayhew, bailiff (1889-93).

In addition, archaeologist Tony Lowe (of Casey & Lowe Heritage Consultants) has identified the property has several features that suggest that it predates all of the early twentieth century houses that surround it, including that it has a sandstock brick chimney (possibly dating from the 1850s or earlier) and that the house is atypically set back from the street on a large allotment with two street frontages.

The Society believes that the history and heritage significance of this property requires further investigation, and have requested that Council apply an Interim Heritage Order to protect the house from demolition while this assessment occurs.

Scott MacArthur

### George Butterfield of Marrickville: creator of Australia's earliest-known planispheres

Planispheres have a long history. Wikipedia describes a planisphere as 'a circular star chart attached at its centre to an opaque circular overlay that has a clear elliptical window or hole so that only a portion of the sky map will be visible in the window or hole area at any given time.' Australia's earliest planispheres were made by a Sydney amateur astronomer named **George Butterfield** (1841-1910) in 1870 and 1877 (although a similar but more crudely-made 'nocturnal dial' was created by Philip Parker King - son of former Governor of NSW Philip Gidley King - in 1852).

Born in England, Butterfield at age 12 came to Australia where he developed an early interest in astronomy. An elaborate description appeared in the *Sydney Mail* when he created his first planisphere - considered an indispensable reference tool for the amateur astronomer - which was exhibited in September 1870 at the Intercolonial Exhibition in Sydney where it attracted considerable attention. The Government Astronomer Henry Russell considered it 'sufficiently accurate for ordinary purposes,' a view endorsed by eminent amateur astronomer John Tebbutt, who commended Butterfield 'for his contribution towards the means of acquiring a knowledge of the Southern Heavens.' This was at a most opportune time as Australian public interest in astronomy began to experience its first awakening.

Without the instruments to make a serious contribution to observational astronomy, his various attempts to gain employment in this field were unsuccessful. He directed his astronomical efforts towards popularising the science which he did by giving talks and making numerous contributions to Sydney newspapers. His occupations included being a tutor and a master at Newington College, printing, draftsman and surveyor. He continued living in the Marrickville area and died on 24 January 1910 leaving a widow, four sons and a daughter.

(Largely extracted from Wayne Orchiston's article 'Australia's Earliest Planispheres' in *The Journal of the British Astronomical Association* 113 (Nov 2003), pp. 329-332; thanks also to Carley Bryce and Ben McAlpine.)

Richard Blair



323 Marrickville Road, Marrickville (© realestate.com):  
report on this and adjoining property on front page

MHS newsletters for 2017 due in February,  
March, May, July, September & November

5 George Street Marrickville also at risk: see back page



## Calendar of MHS events

**Saturday 25 March**

**Port Hacking, Hacking River & Bate Bay cruise**

Details on front page

**Saturday 22 April**

**Noel Elliot: History of Royal Botanic Garden**

Details on front page

**Sunday 21 May**

**Anyone for croquet?**

Details on page 2

**Saturday 27 May**

**Sydney Bus Museum, Leichhardt**

**Saturday 24 June**

**Annual General Meeting**

## National Trust Heritage Festival 18 April-21 May: Marrickville Library & History Services events

### Talks / lectures

From Cook to Connex - the story of St Peters, Tempe & Sydenham: Bob & Laurel Horton

Wednesday 19 April 6.30 pm-8 pm

St Peters Library, Unwins Bridge Road, Sydenham

Dulwich Hill Cycling Club days: Dr Marc Rercerethnam

Tuesday 2 May 6.30 pm-8 pm

Dulwich Hill Library, 362 New Canterbury Road

St Peters - Post-industrial playground: Vanessa Berry

Wednesday 10 May 6.30 pm-8 pm

St Peters Library, Unwins Bridge Road, Sydenham

If only buildings could talk: Ron Ringer

Wednesday 17 May 6.30 pm-8 pm

Dulwich Hill Library, 362 New Canterbury Road

### Historical walks

Lewisham with Mark Matheson on Saturday 29 April

9.45 for 10 am: start from Lewisham Railway Station

Marrickville Part I with Aleem Aleemullah on Saturday

6 May 9.45 for 10 am: start from Marrickville Public School, 102 Chapel Street, Marrickville

Marrickville Part II with Aleem Aleemullah on Saturday

13 May 9.45 for 10 am: start from Marrickville Golf Club corner of Wharf and Beauchamp Streets, Marrickville

### Booking required for all events

<[www.marrickville.nsw.gov.au/en/library/events-at-the-library/events-calendar](http://www.marrickville.nsw.gov.au/en/library/events-at-the-library/events-calendar)>; OR

<[history@innerwest.nsw.gov.au](mailto:history@innerwest.nsw.gov.au)> click on: 'Events and activities' to register; OR ring 9335 2173 during Marrickville Library hours.

Further details on these activities on council's website:

<[www.marrickville.nsw.gov.au](http://www.marrickville.nsw.gov.au)>

The 2017 Inner West Built Environment Award winners, including the Marrickville Medal, will be announced at a function at Marrickville Town Hall on Wednesday 3 May 6-8 pm. Members welcome.

Tempe House Open Day: Sunday 8 May 10 am-4 pm

**President** Scott 0416 152 501

**Heritage Watch** Scott 0416 152 501

**Treasurer** Diane 9588 4930

**Newsletter** Richard 9557 3823

## Glenrock 5 George Street Marrickville

A developer has pounced on the highly intact Victorian villa at 5 George Street in Marrickville. Our treasurer Diane McCarthy recalls that: 'we lived in [the adjoining block of units] from 1973 to 1975. The house was a lovely home then. The house was called *Glenrock*, [and] it was rumoured that it could have been called *Glendon* College at one time. Another loss to once lovely George Street Marrickville!'



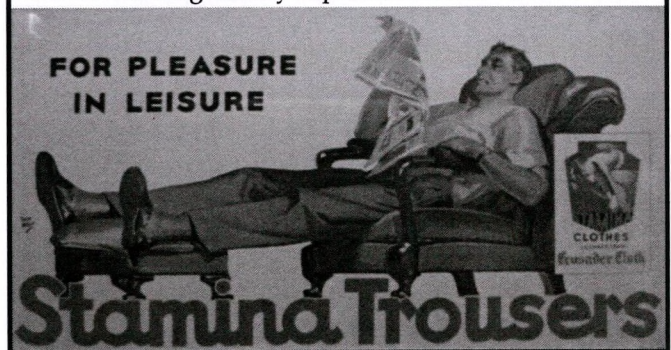
*Glenrock* 5 George Street (photo: © realestate.com)

The house sold for \$3.87 million, with the developer informing the media he planned to bulldoze it for a four storey block of apartments. The Society will advocate for a more sympathetic fate for the house, should a development application be lodged.

**Editor's note:** The name *Glenrock* remains. Sands Directories and Trove verify this house operated as a private school named *Glyndon* College (at times mistakenly called *Lyndon* or *Glendon*) between the late 1890s and at least 1920, and its grounds extended to Wardell Road. It may also, for a time, have been affiliated with Woodcourt Ladies College, a private school in nearby Woodcourt Street, from 1905 to 1935.

## Autumn Trivia Question

Significance of this ad for the suburbs covered by MHS?  
Richard <[heritagesociety@optusnet.com.au](mailto:heritagesociety@optusnet.com.au)> or 9557 3823.



**Rayner Hoff: Life and Art: 9-22 March 2017**

**Monday-Saturday 9 am-5 pm**

**Rayner Hoff Project Space, Building 11,  
National Art School, Forbes Street, Darlinghurst**

Exhibition of the works of **Rayner Hoff** (1894-1937), a talented and charismatic sculptor who established the first School of Sculpture in Australia at the National Art School in 1923. The exhibition, in the artist's former Studio, accompanies the launch of a major new biography, *Rayner Hoff: the life of a sculptor* (NewSouth Publishing, \$49.99) by National Art School lecturer and historian (and MHS member) **Deborah Beck**, who will discuss her book at the MHS meeting on 26 August.