

# MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.

CAMPERDOWN DULWICH HILL ENMORE  
NEWTOWN PETERSHAM STANMORE

LEWISHAM MARRICKVILLE  
ST PETERS SYDENHAM & TEMPE



## Our September Meeting

Royal Botanic Garden, Sydney and the  
Sydney Conservatorium of Music

Saturday 22 September 9.45 for 10 am sharp start

Meet in the centre of the Gardens at the Palm Grove Centre and shop/cafe. Cost \$12 pp – pay on day. Bookings for both tours essential to Iain: ring on 0400 473 252 or email <cariaa07@hotmail.com> after 6 pm weekdays or anytime weekends. Please advise if you have to cancel.

As a follow up to Noel Elliot's talk to the Society in April 2017 on the 200-year history of the Royal Botanic Garden there will be a 90-minute guided walk of the 30-hectare Gardens with an emphasis on the history and heritage as well as some of the more unusual flora.



*Conservatorium of Music, 1916*  
(courtesy State Library of NSW Collection)

The Gardens tour will be followed by a free tour of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music **starting around noon (meet at the Con café near the front entrance)**. Commissioned in 1815 as the stables for the proposed Government House, the oldest Conservatorium building was designed by convict architect Francis Greenway. It became a conservatorium of music in 1916. This one hour tour will be led by MHS President **Scott MacArthur**, who was heritage architect for the renovation of the Con in 1999. Archaeological remains from the colonial era were discovered and these are now preserved in situ along with numerous artefacts.

## Sydenham to Bankstown Metro Corridor rezoning

In a surprising about-face, the state government has changed its mind on forcing increased residential density in the Metro corridor under zonings determined by the Department of Planning. Control for planning around the Metro in our LGA will be returned to Inner West Council, but the state government may still insist on specific population densities being achieved in the corridor. This is a great victory for all of the community groups and Inner West Councillors that worked hard to stop the high density rezonings that have already emboldened developers throughout the Inner West, even though the Metro will not be finished until 2024! The fate of one of the most contentious redevelopment proposals for the East

## Our October Meeting

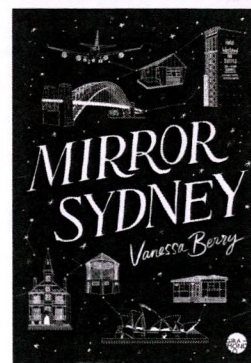
Vanessa Berry – *Mirror Sydney*

Saturday 27 October 10.15 for 10.30 am

Herb Greedy Hall, 79 Petersham Road, Marrickville

Join Vanessa Berry to discover some of Sydney's hidden and secret histories. We will celebrate the city's overlooked and forgotten details and places, suburban landmarks, ghost signs, mysterious infrastructure and the rumours and myths that surround them.

Vanessa Berry is a writer and artist who works with history, memory and archives. Her *Mirror Sydney: an atlas of reflections* (Giramondo, 2017) is a collection of essays and hand-drawn maps that investigate the city's marginal places and undercurrents. The book is, in part, based on the popular blog *Mirror Sydney*, which she has been writing since 2012.



## Historic photos sought

**Ralf Kempken** is a Melbourne artist who is seeking historical images for consideration in his public artwork for the new Marrickville Library building. On Ralf's behalf, **Amie Zar**, Inner West Council's Community History & Heritage Coordinator, is after quality original photos or high resolution scans of:

- 1) the former Marrickville Hospital site taken either before or during its time as a hospital; and
- 2) Marrickville district brickyards between the 1870s and the early 1900s; in particular of school children aged 8 to 14 working at these brickyards.

Email Amie <Amie.Zar@innerwest.nsw.gov.au> with attached scans or if you need access to a scanner, Amie can arrange this via History Services. Contact Amie 9392 5817 or email her for further info or to organise drop-off of material. The deadline is 2 October.

\* \* \* \*

Carrington Road industrial precinct is still unclear. The developer, Mirvac, has stated that it intends to proceed with its high density residential proposal for the site. However, it has extended the timeline for the community consultation and redesign program that it entered into following the outraged reaction to its initial mega-high rise scheme from Council, residents and parliamentarians. With planning controls now back with Council, the Society will be lobbying for stronger heritage protection for the site (including the former General Motors factory) and the surrounding South Marrickville area.

**Scott MacArthur**



## Our August Meeting: 25 August

Thank you, **Dr Paul Irish**. You shook us. *Hidden in Plain View* is an important book, a powerful story. We learnt, once again, about how little we know about the real history of Aboriginal people; in particular, the enduring Aboriginal history of Sydney.

Dr Irish illuminated an extraordinary part of the hidden history of the Aboriginal people of coastal Sydney. Through his collaboration with the Aborigines of La Perouse, together with his ten years of extensive research, Dr Irish has exposed the myths that have worked to marginalise Aborigines to this day. They did not die out within decades of colonization, contrary to this well-accepted myth. In fact, Aboriginal people are visible in accounts of early colonial Sydney. Unfortunately, within the intervening years they were largely ignored, only to re-emerge early in the 20th century.

This perpetuated belief that Aboriginal people lost their culture and died out is false and unfounded. Indeed, their intelligence, strength, connection to land, community, culture and commitment to self-determination were not only evident in the intervening years, but continue to exist as markers of Aboriginal identity today in institutions such as the civil rights movement.

*Hidden in Plain View* shows that, between the devastating impact of white settlement and increased government intervention in the twentieth century, Aboriginal people maintained a strong bond with the coast and its resources. They determinedly sought to live on their own terms. La Perouse was a traditional hub for coastal Aborigines. Ms Biddy Gillies was just one Aborigine who owned and operated commercial fishing, hunting and boating businesses popular with all Sydneysiders.

Dr Irish makes it clear that Sydney's history is a shared history in the light of Aboriginal experiences during colonial times. He reminded us that as citizens we either call out injustice or we collude in continued dispossession of Aboriginal people.

**Lyndal Gowland**

**Note:** In one of our largest roll-ups for years more than 70 attended, over 20 being non members. Paul sold all copies of his book but MHS is getting more to onsell.

## Spring Trivia Question

I created a popular Australian cartoon character and lived in the area covered by the former Marrickville LGA. What was my creation and who am I? Richard 9557 3823 or <heritagesociety@optusnet.com.au>.

From our Treasurer are further queries re direct deposit payments from unidentified members:

Deposit 22 May UBL: membership fees \$20  
Deposit 6 July IMB Bank: membership fees \$28

If you've not received a receipt and think one of these payments may be yours, ring Diane on 9588 4930.

The Society will have stalls at the **Dulwich Hill Fair** on Sunday 16 September and the **Marrickville Festival** on Sunday 21 October. Ring Iain 0400 473 252 for further info or if you can help on the stalls.

## Our July Outing: The Oaks and Thirlmere

First stop on our outing of 21 July was the Wollondilly Heritage Centre and Museum, home to our hosts, the Oaks Historical Society (of which MHS is a member). After a delicious Devonshire Tea and an informative talk we explored the centre's buildings. Included in the museum are extensive photographic records, stories of the early pioneers and how they shaped life in the local area, as well as specialised collections relating to the farming community, the coal mining industry and indigenous history of the local Gundungurra people.

Of particular interest was the story of the lost valley. The rich farming lands of the Burragorang Valley were lost forever when Warragamba Dam was built in the 1950s. The residents were forced to leave their homes, farms and businesses without compensation, and the entire town was bulldozed and flooded. One peculiar item was the Priest's bed: a beautiful piece of furniture that had a small wardrobe for vestments and a desk on one side with a pull-down bed on the other. Travelling priests would use such beds when visiting remote communities as accommodation was sparse.

There was a poignant tie-in for those who went with MHS to La Perouse in May. Some local Indigenous people, the Gundungurra, dispossessed of their traditional lands, were relocated to La Perouse Reserve.

Our next stop was the NSW Rail Museum in the historic town of Thirlmere. This is a significant rail heritage collection, including over 100 rolling stock items, associated with the history of railways in NSW. Among the many highlights was the luxurious Governor-General's carriage, nicknamed the Palace on Wheels, with exquisite pressed metal ceilings, light fittings and beautifully furnished lounge, dining room and bedroom. This was in stark comparison to the Prison Van used as a rolling gaol cell from 1867 until the 1950s. There was a spooky and dismal re-creation of the interior complete with the voices of two prisoners arguing and boasting about their crimes. Amazingly, escapee extraordinaire Darcy Dugan managed to escape through a similar carriage roof armed only with a bread knife!

The colourful Rail Pay bus is one of the oddest items in the collection. It was used for transporting employees' wages all over the state by rail — in a carriage that looked like a road bus of the 1930s. Many of carriages are accessible and we were able to relive the 'joys' of travelling on Sydney's Red Rattlers.

Many thanks to Judy and Lorraine for organising this most enjoyable day out.

**Cindy Perry**

## 73 The Boulevard, Dulwich Hill

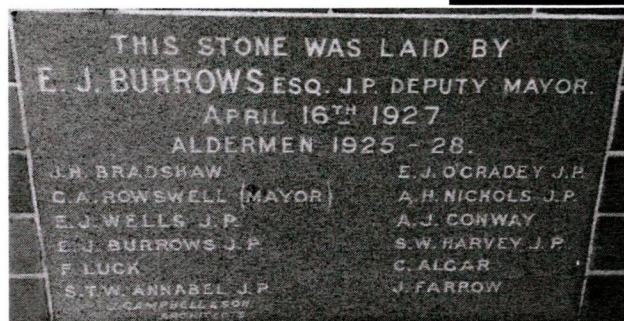
Another developer has been thwarted by the Land and Environment Court, in his continuing efforts to demolish the fine California bungalow at 73 The Boulevard. The developer applied to the Court to overturn the Interim Heritage Order (IHO) imposed by Council that had prevented the house's demolition. It is hoped that Council's heritage assessment of the house that is now proceeding will lead to the house being heritage-listed and protected from demolition at the expiration of the IHO.

**Scott MacArthur**



## St Peters Town Hall golden key

In 1927, the widening of Cooks River Road (now Princes Highway) through the municipality of St Peters necessitated the demolition of the existing council chambers. The council proposed to erect a new town hall on the corner of Unwins Bridge Road and Swain Street, Sydenham. The tender of Mr HA Whittle of £6697/12/- was accepted. The foundation stone was laid on 16 April 1927 and the town hall was ready for occupation by the end of that year. The last council meeting in the old chambers was on 24 October. The new town hall was officially opened on Saturday 3 December 1927. On this occasion a golden key was



presented to the Mayor of St Peters, George A Rowswell. This key is still in the possession of the Rowswell family, who have kindly loaned it to the St Peters Cooks River History Group. The group is establishing a museum in the tower room at St Peters Anglican Church, Cooks River, and the key will be displayed there.

Laurel Horton

## 209 Livingstone Road, Marrickville

The Society and many surrounding neighbours strongly objected to the proposed boarding house on the historic location at the corner of Livingstone Road and Holland Avenue, the site of the former Marrickville Girls Club and later, the State Emergency Services headquarters. In its submission to Council, the Society noted the proposal is in direct contravention to the established heritage character of the surrounding Holland Avenue Heritage Conservation Area, and that the retention of the main street elevation was an appalling example of facadism. Council rejected the application, that was then appealed to the Land and Environment Court. Objectors have now been advised that a revised scheme has been accepted for a boarding house 'being a two storey form in a pitched roof attic.' While this potentially could be a respectful outcome for the heritage building, the applicant would not allow the plans to be shared with the objectors. Ominously, Council has advised the objectors that 'this is a result that most of you will strongly oppose. However, the State Environmental Planning Policy for Affordable Rental Housing overrides many of the local planning controls. The applicant's revised proposal lies within the height limits and FSR controls.\* On the basis that the proposal had no contentions which the Council could oppose in Court, [Council] has entered into an agreement to allow the boarding house to proceed.'

The Society has asked Councillors to advise when (or if) the objectors, including neighbours, will be shown the revised plans for the building that is about to be constructed at the end of their street!

\* FSR is Floor Space Ratio

## Gateshead, Marrickville

The Land and Environment Court has also mediated a much more acceptable outcome for the proposed alterations and additions to *Gateshead* at 400 Marrickville Road. *Gateshead* is a large single storey Federation style house, located prominently on the corner of David Street, and part of the David Street Conservation Area. It was built in 1912 for James Wall to a design by S. H. Buchanan & McKay Architects. It largely retains its original period detailing and form, including a variety of Arts & Craft features drawn from English Vernacular (bay windows, half-timbering) and Art Nouveau features — tapered chimneys, incised floral fretwork and scenery leadlights. The initial proposal required the demolition of the original intact rear single storey wing of the house, replacing it with a stark flat roofed two storey box. The Society and neighbours objected to the proposal, which Council rejected.

The applicant appealed to the Land and Environment Court, and thankfully, a much improved design emerged from the mediation process. The revised approved design now retains most of the rear building, with a second storey fitted within the pitched slate roof. The design is much more sympathetic to the character of the house and the Conservation Area, and Council is to be commended for requiring the applicant and the architect to develop a scheme that provides a generous family home for their client that also respects the heritage values of the place.

Scott MacArthur



## Calendar of MHS events

**Saturday 22 September**

**Tours: Royal Botanic Garden & Conserv. of Music**  
Details on front page

**Saturday 27 October**

**Mirror Sydney: talk by Vanessa Berry**  
Details on front page

**Saturday 24 November**

**History of bicycle clubs in NSW: Marc Receretnam**

## Archive Corner

Items catalogued at the History Centre recently include:

- original of essay by Robert Parkinson titled 'Marrickville Municipal Symphony Orchestra 1930-1953' accompanied by programs, photos, etc
- letter of dismissal to Mr Clarke from his employer in 1932 stating reason for abrupt ending of employment as 'arranging his work with too much exactitude', and explaining the firm could not afford to keep him on
- receipt dated 24/1/1947 from Newtown Police to Mr FH Terry for £7/10/- found in George Street, St Peters, and handed in
- a large collection of surgical instruments belonging to Dr John Kennedy-Gould whose family served patients in Marrickville for over three generations. They have been beautifully tied together with pink tape like little gifts and tagged by a MHS volunteer.

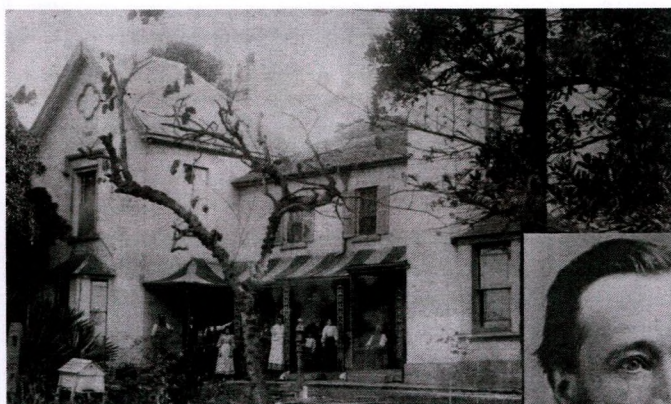
Mary Oakenfull

## Winter Trivia Answer

*Marionette* was an 1850s twin-gabled Gothic mansion built by Samuel Henry Terry (1833-1887, grandson of wealthy merchant Samuel Terry) on Cooks River Road (later Princes Highway). The family of James Smith lived there (1893-98) and this c. 1896-97 photo shows ten members of this family. The house was owned by James's brother, furrier Gilbert Smith (who is pictured below and who also owned *Tivoli*, the nearby mansion that was soon to be demolished). He was still there in 1908 around when *Marionette* was sold and demolished. Part of the site was bought by the Catholic Church which built Sts Peter & Paul Cook's River there in 1912.

Only **Elda Ribeiro** correctly identified *Marionette*. Well done, Elda. My thanks to June Peka for permission to use these photos. June's great grandfather was James Smith.

Richard Blair



*Marionette* (above) and Gilbert Smith, final owner of *Marionette* (courtesy June Peka)



## That elusive time capsule

Extensive enquiries have been made about the time capsule at the Marrickville Hospital site as reported in the last newsletter. However, it's a case of how can something be located when there is no knowledge of it. Whilst the capsule was reported to more than one source at Marrickville Council in 2012, the holders of that information failed to properly record it. Sadly, the building under which the capsule lay was demolished last year and the site has been excavated. The capsule has either gone to landfill or been souvenired. This is a cautionary tale: to adequately record such artefacts.

Richard Blair

## Fire at General Gordon Hotel, Sydenham

At around 1 pm on Monday 30 July fire consumed the General Gordon Hotel, opposite Sydenham Station. It engulfed the second floor of the hotel with the roof and a major wall collapsing. No one was hurt. It took 70 firefighters to contain the fire. A safety fence was erected and the area declared safe.



Top: General Gordon Hotel after the fire (photo: Graham Hunt); below: General Gordon Hotel in the 1930s from Tooth & Co. Collection)

A hotel has stood on the site since 1885, with the current building designed in the Interwar Georgian Revival style in 1932 by Tooth & Co architect Sidney Warden whose other hotels include the Henson (Park), Marrickville and Lansdowne. When the General Gordon opened in December 1932 St Peters Mayor (Ald. Holbeach), who was also the publican, declared beer would be free until closing time at 6 pm. 'The news travelled like wildfire and thirsty individuals scrambled for places in the bar. They stood seven and eight deep while ten barmen served them.' (*Sydney Sun*, 13/12/1932, p. 17)

The hotel has a local heritage listing under LEP 2011. Member **Graham Hunt** has written to the Premier urging: 'the ground floor façade must be preserved to maintain the building as an historical landmark'.

Diane McCarthy

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**Treasurer** Diane 9588 4930  
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