



MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Postal Address PO Box 415 Marrickville 2204

Bicentennial Heritage Concert

St. Brigid's Church, Marrickville

Celebrating the musical heritage of Marrickville and St Brigid's
Mr James Dibble returns to Marrickville to Narrate the Performance

The Crivici String Ensemble
The Brass Consort of Newington College, Stanmore
Orchestra of Bells from Danebank School, Hurstville
St Brigid's Choir
St Brigid's Tongan Choir

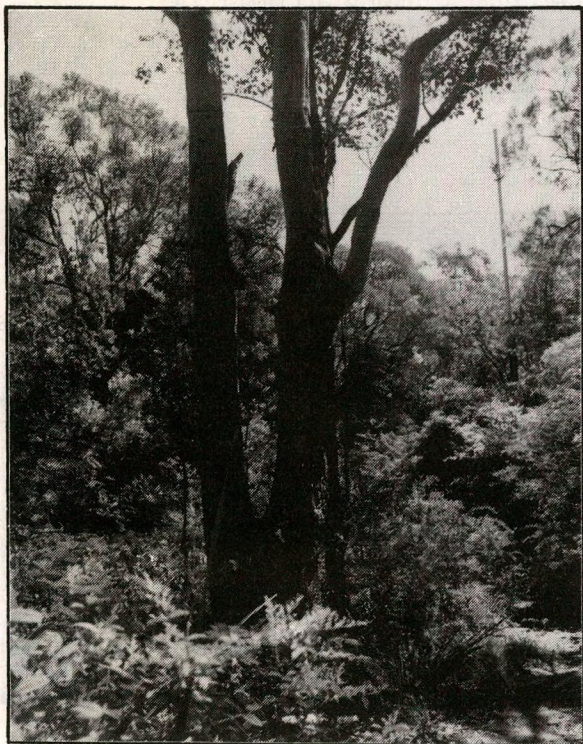
Family \$8; Single \$6; Concession \$4.

Tickets available at the door or phone 569.9928

Cooks River Festival

The Cooks River Festival has been rescheduled for May 1, 11am to 5pm at Steel Park.

Wolli Creek - Bush Park or Car Park?



The Wolli Creek Valley is the last significant remnant of the natural bushland that stood between Port Jackson and the Georges River. It rises in Beverly Hills and flows east to meet the Cooks River near Tempe Station.

However, unlike the much-maligned Cooks River and its other tributaries, Wolli Creek retains its natural running course, vegetation and fauna. The Valley thus plays an invaluable role in the water cycle of south Sydney and the ecology of Botany Bay.

The Valley contains an array of natural environments in a compact strip of land five kilometres in length. Mangrove stands, heaths, dry sclerophyll forests, extensive wetlands, impressive cliff lines and lookouts, even a pocket of rare Sydney rainforest can be found here.

Over 150 species of birds have been recorded as inhabiting the Valleys' bush and wetlands. Some of these are migratory species that travel from Japan and Siberia and which are protected by the Japan-Australia Migratory Birds Agreement.

There are remnants of Aboriginal occupation (Wolli means 'camping place' in the local dialect) and of pioneer settlement and industry, of convict brickmaker Reuben Hannam and of wool scouring, limeburning and Chinese market gardeners.

The surrounding municipalities have little open space for residents. All fall within the lowest quarter on the list of open-space-to-residents ratios compiled by the Department of Environment and Planning (Marrickville is the third worst in Sydney).

However, the Department of Main Roads wishes to construct a \$370 million freeway (or tollway) through the valley; it is also proposed that a new 'fast-train' track to Melbourne be constructed above and beside the freeway; - this is the attitude of the businessman to our living environment.

Gavin Gatenby of the Wolli Creek Preservation Society is confident that the newly-elected State Government will declare the valley a State Park. He will discuss the past and future of the Valley at a talk at 7.15pm Friday May 6 at Petersham Town Hall Activities Room and at a walking tour on Saturday May 26.

Heritage Study

Marrickville Council has released the long-awaited report on heritage buildings, landscapes, industrial sites, shops and bridges in our area. The report describes and illustrates 400 items and makes recommendations.

It is available for \$25 from the Council Administrative Centre.

Update on Brockleigh

While court action is still pending regarding the illegal demolition of Brockleigh on 13th and 15th June 1987 (the case is not listed for hearing until May 1988), a development application has been received by Marrickville Council for the erection of a "place of public worship" on the site. Following advertisement of this proposal, Council received 2 petitions and many letters expressing opposition to the development, and resolved to refer the application to the Heritage Council.

The Society wrote to the previous Minister for Planning and Environment asking that he intervene and take control of all development on the site under Section 101 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.

The Society has also written to Marrickville Council seeking clarification of their decision to not prosecute those responsible for the destruction of two palm trees which stood on the Brockleigh site. They apparently feel that the palms are outside the provisions of Council's Tree Preservation Order as they were less than 300mm in girth, and they have obtained advice that palms are not trees!

Bruce Welch

A Visit to Eryldene

In 1913, Waterhouse commissioned William Hardy Wilson to design Eryldene in the 'early colonial style'. Legend has it that Wilson was shown the brass door-knocker which still adorns the front door and was asked to design a house around it. The result was Eryldene, now regarded as the finest unaltered example of Hardy Wilson's architecture.

The famous camellia and azalia garden around the house is designed as a series of outdoor 'rooms' furnished with trees and flowering shrubs. On arrival, we were ushered onto the tennis court - the equivalent of an open air ballroom - where we were served tea from the Chinese pavilion, also designed by Hardy Wilson after his visit to China in the early 1920s. The vermilion and gold columns, the elaborate brackets (shaped like elephants) which support the eaves and the navy-blue wooden shutters have recently been restored to their original brilliant colours. Stylised bats and peaches, symbols for happiness and long life, are stencilled on the shutters in gold-leaf.

It was William Hardy Wilson who first alerted Australians to our heritage of colonial architecture. He has links with our Municipality because he attended Newington College at Stanmore in the last years of the nineteenth century and according to a speech Wilson made in 1905, it was the Headmaster of Newington, Dr Mouton, who convinced him to study architecture. In 1923 Hardy Wilson returned to Stanmore and designed the elegant semi-circular war memorial for his old school. It can still be seen near the chapel in the grounds of Newington.

Our thanks to Bruce Welch who drove the bus and to Verona Rothwell.

- Geoff Ostling

Pioneers and Residents Picnic Day

Visitors from interstate and country areas as well as from many parts of Sydney attended our Bicentennial Pioneers and Residents picnic on Sunday, 6th March. The picnic was held at Richardson's Lookout, near the site of Thomas Holt's mansion, The Warren, which overlooks the meandering Cooks River; it was here that the first rabbits were introduced to Australia - in order to provide a source of food and sport. Visitors reminisced on Marrickville as it was; there were two cousins who had never met before.

Several visitors brought old photographs of the mansion when it belonged to the French Carmelite nuns and later when it was used in training 7th Field Artillery Brigade during the First World War.

Although the weather looked doubtful and there were a number of early showers, we were all grateful when the sun came out and the speeches and other entertainments were able to proceed. The Master of Ceremonies was John Germain, OA, who led us in the singing of the national anthem. Mr Germain appeared by arrangement with the Australian Opera.

Among the guests were descendants of the Bloodworth family and of Richardsons, Holts, Meeks and Donneys; also Shirley Smith (popularly known as Mum Shirl) who spoke about Aboriginal aspirations in the Bicentennial year. Other speakers described the lives of the first English pioneers of the district and



the Bicentennial birthday cake was cut by our oldest member, 98-year-old Amy Needham, mother of Verona Rothwell.

Everyone had a most enjoyable time; we gained many new members and there have been a number of letters and thanks to the Social Committee who put so much time and effort into the picnic.

A one-hour video was recorded of the event and we hope to show this in the near future. - Geoff Ostling

CHELSEA HOUSE

ANTIQUE CENTRE

50 SHOPS ON TWO LEVELS

SYDNEYS NEWEST AND BIGGEST ANTIQUE CENTRE

ONLY MINUTES FROM THE CITY

160 Parramatta Rd.

Camperdown

(Cnr. Mallet St.)

516 2737

OPEN 7 DAYS

10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

NEW MEMBERS

Mrs Ferres; Ms G. Grace; Rosie and Don Memarry; Mrs Rachelle Alexander; Melissa Fletcher; Richard Holt; Tom Pavlakis; Kenneth Williams.

HOW TO SUBSCRIBE TO THE SOCIETY

It's only \$7 for individuals, \$10 for households and institutions, and \$2 for students and pensioners. You will receive copies of our Newsletter (either posted or delivered to your door) and our Journal Heritage. Your subscription is good for twelve months from the date of joining. Write to PO Box 415, Marrickville 2204.