

MARRICKVILLE

HERITAGE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



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OUR NEXT MEETING History in Folk Song

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 24, 10.30AM
THE ROTUNDA, PETERSHAM PARK.
WEATHER PERMITTING

Celebrate Christmas with the Society. The setting for this meeting will be the historic band rotunda at Petersham Park. Singer, composer, and satirist, John Dengate will present a humorous look at Australia's history in folk song to be followed by our annual picnic.

John is Australia's leading authority on the writings of 'Banjo' Patterson and is a frequent contributor to the FM radio program *Songs and Stories of Australia*. He is the author of two song books, *My Shout* and *My Shout Again* and has been made a life member of The Bush Music Club of Australia for 'services to Australian culture'.

Before his retirement two years ago, John was a teacher at Marrickville West Public School for 15 years. His musical plays, *Marrickville Story* and *Donahoe*, based on the life of the bushranger, were produced in the early '80s. This will be a fun morning for all the family and John will have copies of his books, records, songs and postcards for sale.

Enjoy our Christmas Picnic

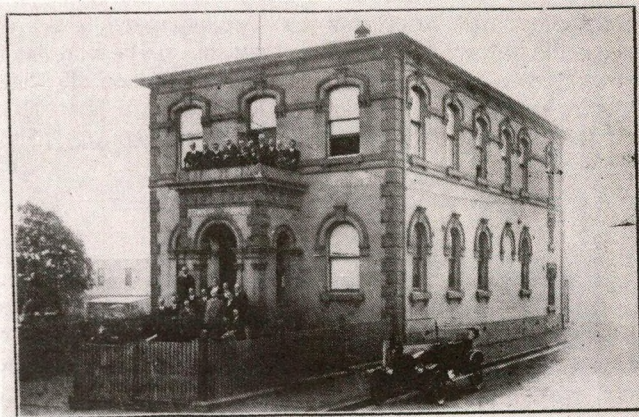
Our Christmas picnic will follow the meeting at approximately 1pm. Bring your lunch and the Society will provide soft drinks, entertainment, Christmas cake, games and a visit from 'the best Santa in the world'. We look forward to seeing members old and new.

NOTE: If the weather is unsuitable the meeting will revert to the Amenities Room, Petersham Town Hall. A sign will be posted at the Rotunda.

Silver Street Update

In our June newsletter we reported the fight by residents of Silver Street, Marrickville against plans to develop the street for a multi-storey car park. Marrickville Council has informed us that 102-128 Silver Street has been proposed for future car parking.

It writes: "Council engaged consultants Ove Arup to carry out a car parking study of the municipality, particularly in regard to future car parking needs of business areas in the municipality. A number of sites were considered by the consultants (including this site) and aldermen of council are currently inspecting these sites prior to determining what sites should be reserved for future public car parking requirements."



The old Marrickville Town Hall, seen here early this century, is falling further and further into disrepair. Now the lions which graced the entrance have disappeared. See report back page.

"Pot Luck" Dinner

TUESDAY DECEMBER 18, 7PM
MERRYDALE, PETERSHAM

Our members' Christmas Party this year will be held at *Merrydale*, the home of David and Robyn Pitt-Owen in Petersham. The restoration of this grand old Victorian home was featured in *Heritage 5* and this evening will give members a chance to see the work first hand.

Drinks will be served at 7pm and dinner at 8 pm. A non-alcoholic punch and a leg of ham will be provided by the executive. Members are asked to bring a plate or two bottles. Please advise Geoff on 568 3029 if you plan to come and what you plan to bring.

Evening on the Harbour

SUNDAY DECEMBER 30, 6PM
CRUISING SYDNEY HARBOUR

For the past three years organiser Anne Carolan has ensured superb weather for this popular event. Join us for a delightful evening harbour cruise on the yacht *Silver Spray*. The cost is \$20 per head and the cruise suits all ages. The yacht leaves Man-O-War steps on the east side of the Opera House at 6pm and returns at 10pm. Bring your own refreshments for the twilight picnic on Clark Island. Numbers are limited. Bookings to Anne on 406-4862.

New Marrickville History

Richard Cashman's long-awaited book on the *History of Marrickville* will be launched by Fred Daly at the Mayoral Christmas Party on Friday December 7 from 5.30pm-7.30pm at the Petersham Town Hall. The Mayor, Barry Jones, has kindly extended an invitation to 50 Society members to attend the launch. If you would like to attend, please contact Judith on 560 1751.

OUR LAST MEETING Cultural Landscapes

The practical problems of reconciling heritage conservation with the rights and needs of residents and users of historic areas were highlighted by conservation architect Geoff Ashley of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, in a very well illustrated talk at our last meeting on October 27.

Although most people think of national parks as "just bush", he explained that recognising and preserving the impact of human culture on the landscape is an integral part of the work carried out by the service. Geoff showed slides of some of the cultural sites administered by the NPWS. These range in scope from small Aboriginal stone arrangements to a living village, the historical gold-mining township of Hill End. Geoff showed us a wide range of structures, including old sheep stations, maritime installations, and stockman's huts, along with their surrounding environments.

-David Hilyard

Historians Confer

Eight society members attended the Annual Conference of the Royal Australian Historical Society with its affiliated societies (of which we are one), held at the YWCA Sydney on October 6-7. Some of those eight were wearing 'other hats' as members of neighbouring societies St George and Canterbury, and the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

We heard some interesting and stimulating papers on the theme 'Heritage Conservation: Local Issues and Action', including the work being done to preserve Newcastle buildings after the earthquake, and the demolition, some needless, that followed. We were thoroughly confused when two speakers, juxtaposed, urged us to preserve and restore and the other to 'keep as is'!

President Geoff Ostling on our behalf received a cheque for \$300 as a cultural grant for publication of Heritage 6. We are indebted to Ken Williams for his continuing liaison with the RAHS. Congratulations to Frances Muller, also a member of Canterbury Historical Society, who received an Achievement Award for her work with that society.

-Shirley Hilyard

Welch Gards Reinforced

Congratulations to our treasurer Paula Gard and Bruce Welch on the birth of their baby daughter Annie Marjory Rebecca. Thanks also to Paula and Bruce for the work they put in updating subscription lists for the changeover from rolling membership.

Spring Roll with Sauce, Mate...

How else to celebrate Australia Day in Marrickville than in one of our excellent ethnic restaurants! Members who would like to express a preference for Italian, Vietnamese, Greek, Thai etc, should phone David on 550 9379 and leave a message.

ETCHINGS

by

TREVOR RIACH
to November 25

Christmas Party
November 30, 6pm
Eastern Artifacts

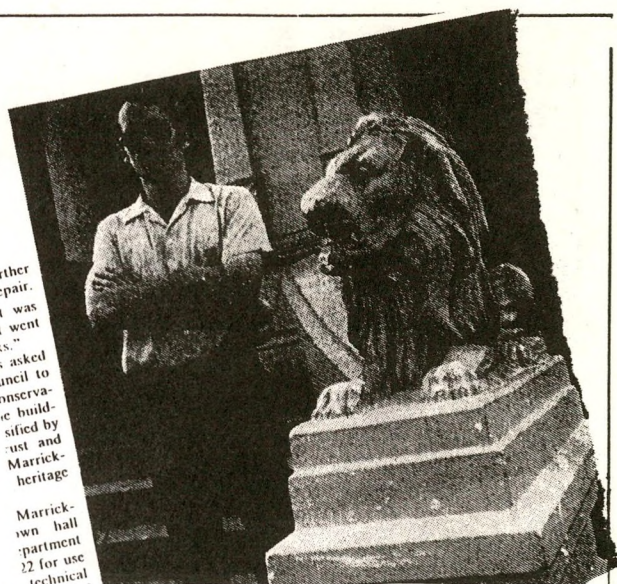
MARY REIBEY
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Bruce Welch is pictured with one of the lions when he complained to the Glebe & Western Weekly about vandalism at the town hall in 1987. We wonder how they were removed!

Have You Seen Our Lions?

Two historic lion statues have been stolen from the entrance to the old Marrickville town hall building and the Society has launched an appeal for their return. "We are outraged by the theft of the lions. They have graced the steps of the town hall building for more than 100 years," says president Geoff Ostling. "There are few clues to the disappearance. We are appealing to everyone to be on the look out for them. They may turn up in an antique shop or even in a neighbour's garden. If you see them please contact Marrickville police."

The society has been concerned for a number of years about the deterioration of the historic town hall building, which was vacated by the Department of Education about four years ago. It is one of the oldest town halls in Sydney. It is protected by a Permanent Conservation Order under the Heritage Act and it is classified by the National Trust. It is also listed on Marrickville Council's Local Environment Plan No 50 as a heritage building.

"Despite its historic significance the building is falling further and further into disrepair. It is demolition by neglect. We have appealed to the Premier and the State Government Department of Housing, which now owns the building, to restore it before it is too late," says Geoff. The theft of the lions is the latest in a series of attacks by vandals. In 1987 extensive damage was caused by a fire in the rear of the building.

The Department of Housing plans to erect pensioner housing units on the land surrounding the town hall site but the future use of the old town hall is undecided. A conservation study by architects Orwell & Peter Phillips in 1989 recommended the restoration and preservation of the building, especially its 19th century elements.

Marrickville's first town hall was built in Illawarra Road in 1879 and is the oldest civic building in the Marrickville Municipality and the fourth oldest town hall (including Sydney Town Hall) in Sydney. The history of the town hall was featured in our December 1989-March 1990 newsletters.

"It is disheartening to watch the slow decay of such a significant building. The lions were a landmark in the area and we can only hope that they will eventually be returned to their rightful place," says Geoff.

How to Subscribe

It's only \$12 for individuals, \$18 for households and institutions and \$6 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 valid for the Society year from July 1 each year. The Heritage Society holds regular meetings on the fourth Saturday of every month. Write to P.O. Box 415 Marrickville. Enquiries to Geoff on 568 3029.