

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY

Covering Dulwich Hill, Enmore, Lewisham,
Sydenham, Tempe and parts of Newtown,

Marrickville, Petersham, St Peters, Stanmore,
Camperdown and Hurlstone Park.



OUR NEXT MEETING A Tour of Grave Importance

SATURDAY APRIL 27, 9AM START-3PM FINISH
MEET AT PETERSHAM TOWN HALL

Waverley Cemetery has perhaps one of the best locations of any cemetery in Australia perched on the cliff tops overlooking the Pacific Ocean. It's a pity the inhabitants can no longer appreciate it. However, members of the Society will be able to take in the view and locate some significant gravestones on our next excursion. The family vault of George and Robert Johnson, the graves of Thomas Rowley, Fanny Durack and many other early pioneers of this municipality are to be found at Waverley.

We will depart Petersham Town Hall travelling by bus to Waverley Cemetery. After approximately two hours to tour the cemetery we will depart for St Mary's Waverley arriving at 12.30pm for a picnic lunch in the grounds. At 1.30pm we will have a tour of the newly restored church followed by an organ recital by Society member David Pitt-Owen. We will return to Petersham Town Hall at approximately 3pm. Please bring a picnic lunch. Tea and coffee will be provided. Cost \$8 per person. Children free. Bookings to Shirley on 569 1768 or Paula on 569 9928.

MEMBERS' EVENING Dinner at Parliament House, Sydney

TUESDAY MAY 7, 6.30PM
MEET AT THE STEPS OF PARLIAMENT HOUSE,
MACQUARIE STREET, SYDNEY

At the invitation of our local member Dr Andrew Retshauge the Society will be dining at Parliament House, Sydney. The evening will include a four-course buffet meal plus drinks and coffee in the magnificent dining room overlooking The Domain and a tour of the restored vestibules and chambers of the house. Cost is \$25 per person inclusive and numbers are strictly limited. If you have not already booked please phone Geoff on 568-3029.

Rubble Rousers

A public meeting will be held at St Peters Town Hall, Unwins Bridge Road, Sydenham on Wednesday April 10 at 7.30pm to discuss the stockpiles of rubble in the area. All local residents are urged to attend.

Recycled Paper

Observant members may have noticed that our last two newsletters have been printed on recycled paper. It costs the Society only a few dollars more each issue which we hope you will agree is worth the expense.



OUR NEW JOURNAL - HERITAGE 6

Heritage 6 is out now. There are 11 articles covering a diverse range of local history subjects including natural, architectural, aviation and theatrical history. Some of the articles in this issue include: Return of the Native; Birds in the Marrickville Garden; Marrickville's Bridges - An Illustrated Tour; Look Mum, It's a Flying Machine! Mascot Before the Jets and Jumbos; The Pocket Playhouse 1957-1973. The Journal also includes a wealth of historical photos, many culled from original sources. Above, front cover photographs show Len Carolan with one of his early planes and Dibble's Waterhole, a haven for bird life. Members will receive a copy of *Heritage 6* with the newsletter. Additional copies may be purchased at Society meetings.

COMING EVENTS WEEKEND TRIP TO HILL END

Places for our weekend trip on April 20-21 by bus to historic Hill End are filling fast. The town is a remarkably unchanged relic of the gold rush. Hill End Historic Site, now managed by the National Parks & Wildlife Service, is an integral part of a living community. We will be staying at The Royal Hotel, the last of the town's 27 pubs. Cost of the weekend is approximately \$100 per person. For further information contact Geoff on 568 3029.

OUR LAST MEETING Colour Makes All the Difference

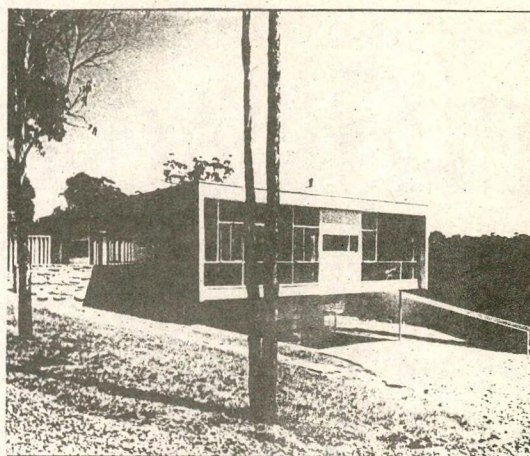
What a difference an authentic colour scheme makes to a house! Our guest speaker Michael McCowage, an expert in traditional colour schemes and period detailing, showed us some dramatic 'before' and 'after' photographs of houses that had been restored to their original period. Michael explained that the fashionable colours of today will quickly date but a traditional colour scheme will always look right and will add considerable value to a house.

Michael has a wealth of information on the various colours and styles that were popular in housing in the 19th and early 20th century culled from his extensive research. The process of researching old colour schemes may involve investigating old photo albums, historic resource centres, interviewing elderly neighbours and residents, and the collection of paint scrapings from the building. Along the way information about such other details as fences and gates, finials, fretwork, verandah columns, tile patterns and garden layout, is often discovered. Thanks to Michael for a fascinating morning and for sharing some of his expertise with us. See footnote below.

Abergeldie Estate Under Threat?

Abergeldie Estate, the 30-acre estate of Sir Hugh Dixon, tobacco merchant and philanthropist, was the last large area in Marrickville Municipality to be subdivided when 153 allotments were sold in 1928. The new housing estate, with its brick bungalows, has remained largely intact, reflecting popular housing styles between the wars. Now, claim local residents, the integrity of the estate is under threat from unsympathetic development applications. The houses built on the Abergeldie estate include a consistent group of Californian bungalows unified in style and colour. In Hugh Avenue, the centre of the old estate, the focus is on a group of larger houses including one in the style of the colonial revival and one in the 'ocean liner' style of the 1930s.

According to *Marrickville Rural Outpost to Inner City*, the estate takes its name from Abergeldie, the home of Sir Hugh Dixon (1841-1926). Shortly after he became head of the family firm, Conqueror Tobacco, Dixon purchased approximately 30 acres at Dulwich Hill, later bounded by New Canterbury Road, Elizabeth Avenue, Abergeldie Street, and Krombit Avenue. The house was described in 1895 as "an extensive structure, the rooms being capacious, airy and with elaborately furnished apartments". Dixon, who was a noted horticulturalist contributing to such journals as *Agricultural Gazette of New South Wales*, laid out the grounds and gardens which contained many exotic and rare plants. The house was demolished soon after his death in 1926 and the land subdivided two years later.



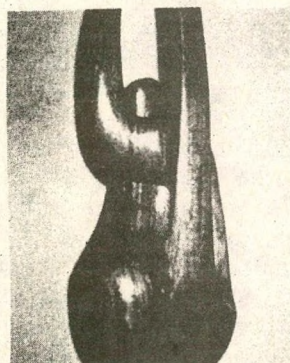
"House With Legs" Becomes a Museum

Mid-century Modern, modernist, post-war International Style are all names that have been applied to Harry Seidler's first commission, the Rose Seidler House in Clissold Road, Wahroonga. An Austrian Jewish refugee, Seidler won a scholarship to the Harvard Graduate School of Design under Walter Gropius, former head of the Bauhaus. He came to Australia in 1948 expressly to design a house for his parents.

The design of Rose Seidler House caused a sensation. Newspaper headlines of the day claimed "House with legs frightens Sydney home seekers" and for years people lined the driveway to stare through the glass walls. Awarded the Sulman Medal for domestic architecture in 1952, the house has stimulated much social comment and debate.

Imbued with modernism, Harry Seidler was determined that form, space, materials used, colour and all fittings would lead to a sculptured whole. He would not permit his mother to have anything in the house not consistent with his philosophy. Her Viennese furniture was sold and new minimalist furniture was bought in New York. Rose did, however, insist on her ornate silver cutlery service and a decorated tea set.

Harry Seidler donated the house and its contents to the Historic Houses Trust in 1988 and together they have carefully restored the controversial 1950s scheme. I accompanied our Newsletter Editor Judith Matheson, in her capacity as Sydney Editor of *Home Beautiful*, to the official opening of the house by the Premier of NSW Nick Greiner on March 23. The house is a significant acquisition for the Historic Houses Trust which has focused on 19th century buildings until now. We heard of the hunt to find 1950s power points and fur fabric for the bedspread in the master bedroom and the real challenge - to find a Crosley Shelvador fridge, Kenwood Chef and Simpson E6 stove for the kitchen. Rose Seidler House is open to the public every Sunday. - Shirley Hilyard



FOUAD WARHANI
SCULPTURE EXHIBITION
April 3-28

MARY REIBEY
INTERIORS & GALLERY

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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.