

# MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.



CAMPERDOWN DULWICH HILL ENMORE  
NEWTOWN PETERSHAM STANMORE

LEWISHAM MARRICKVILLE  
ST PETERS SYDENHAM & TEMPE

## Our February Meeting

**Japanese submarines in Sydney Harbour during World War II – Mervyn Rosen**  
Saturday 22 February 10.15 for 10.30 am  
Herb Greedy Hall, 79 Petersham Rd, Marrickville

Former industrial engineer **Mervyn Rosen** is an active volunteer and guide at the Maritime Museum. Mervyn presented the story of the *Krait* and Operation Jaywick to Society members last April, and will tell us about the midget submarine attack on Sydney in May 1942.

Every country tried to have a secret weapon that would give them an edge and help to win the war. Germany had the V1 and V2 rockets and jet planes. Britain had RADAR, the Spitfire and Winston Churchill. The USA had the ultimate secret weapon – the atomic bomb. Australia had brave and courageous men and women. Japan had submarines that could launch planes and carry midget submarines that provided both stealth and surprise. No other Navy had this capability.



Japanese midget submarines recovered from Sydney Harbour  
Photo: navy.gov.au (SLV Pictures Collection H98.104-898)

What happened in Sydney Harbour is a good example of how people react when the unexpected happens and defences are inadequate. If you thought the Americans at Pearl Harbour misinterpreted and ignored warnings and were slow to react, wait until you see how we handled the Japanese midget submarine attack on Sydney Harbour.

## Our newsletter Editor

I am taking a sabbatical for the next few MHS newsletters. I will continue to run the seasonal trivia questions and answers, but am leaving production of the newsletter in the capable hands of Lorraine Beach and Rod Aanensen. I will resume editorial duties later in the year.

**Richard Blair**

## President's address to Planning enquiry

After the Department of Planning & Environment's Sydenham-Bankstown Urban Renewal Corridor Strategy was 'shelved' in July 2018, a NSW Upper House committee was established to enquire into the planned conversion of the Sydenham to Bankstown line from heavy rail to metro. On 7 November 2019, MHS President **Scott MacArthur** addressed the committee:

'On behalf of the Marrickville Heritage Society, I would like to thank the Committee for acknowledging our submission by inviting me to appear here today. The Society was spurred to make a submission over two main concerns.

'Firstly, that the letter and spirit of current planning laws and processes, particularly in relation to the management of heritage assets, were not followed in the development of the Sydenham to Bankstown Urban Renewal Corridor Strategy. This led to inaccurate and widely unpopular rezoning proposals that were strongly and thoroughly critiqued by the community, particularly in the suburbs of the former Marrickville Council LGA that are rich in heritage items and character areas. The response was so negative that the proposals were eventually withdrawn.

'Our second concern was that the strong urban resilience of our area was ignored by the Department of Planning. Urban resilience enables communities to successfully adapt to change, through established social and community networks. Marrickville and Dulwich Hill have demonstrated their resilience over the past century as they have thrived through waves of immigration, industrialisation, de-industrialisation and gentrification. Established personal, occupational and neighbourhood networks stabilised our diverse communities through these changes. The proposed replacement of low density residential precincts with over 35,000 dwellings in 20 years without supporting social, community and environmental infrastructure would disrupt and overwhelm these networks. The Sydenham to Bankstown Urban Renewal Corridor Strategy would provide the future residents of our area with a harsh, mean and poor existence.

'Our intention with our submission was to draw attention to the failings of the Urban Renewal Corridor Strategy, so that better solutions can be found for future 'residential uplift' zones around Sydney's many new transport infrastructure projects.'

*The committee was also addressed by Graham Quint of the National Trust. The transcript includes questions and answers and can be found at [parliament.nsw.gov.au](http://parliament.nsw.gov.au) then Committees, then Inquiries, then enter 'Sydenham to Bankstown' in the search box. Choose Corrected Transcript PC6 07/11/2019. Scott's address commences on p.32.*

## **Our Last Meeting: Saturday 23 November Discover Marrickville's secret past**

Marrickville Golf Course has been the subject of some controversy recently, and after a community survey and dealings with the State Government regarding Crown Land categorisations, the Inner West Council is about to resume deliberations on a plan of management for the site.

So the presentation by MHS member **Gabby Richards** was most timely. Her engaging talk revealed that this is not the first time there has been dispute over the golf course.

The strip of land running along the eastern side of Cooks River from Dulwich Hill to Marrickville was originally part of a 1799 land grant. Property consolidation, murder, subdivision, inheritance, property trading, death and insolvency saw a succession of owners, some of them notable names in 19th century Sydney. Eventually that riparian strip, by now appropriately named Riverside, was bought by the Crown in 1911 – with Marrickville Council contributing a share of the price – and turned into an extensive park. There were refreshment rooms and picnickers and swings and cricketers and scout rallies and brass bands and horses on agistment and sheep mowing the grass.

1938 saw the beginning of discussions – and arguments – about leasing the park to a golf club and in due course a 9-hole golf links was built. But there was more trouble ahead in the 1940s-60s. Battles fought within Council and a public referendum on the contentious issue of allowing sport on public lands on Sundays. Debate over adding more holes to the course by expanding further into the park. Disruptions when Council altered the course of the river near Wardell Road, and later opened a garbage tip to raise the level of the park. And ructions over attempts to rescind the golf club's lease and reinstate the land as a public recreation reserve. This whole troubled story has resumed in present times.

So much to tell. So well told. So many interesting details about the people involved. We wish Gabby well with her future research.

**Megan Hicks**

## **RIP Brian Powyer**

**Brian Leslie Powyer**, President of the National Trust (NSW) since 2017, died suddenly on 12 November 2019, aged 71. A member of the National Trust for more than 30 years, and on its NSW Board from 2014, Brian was a relentless advocate for the heritage of Parramatta and its districts. MP Julia Finn, in her tribute to Brian Powyer in the NSW Parliament, spoke of his contributions to the community, to education and in particular of his commitment to heritage, describing him as 'one of its greatest champions'.

**Lorraine Beach**

## **Vale Peter Arnett**

**Peter John Arnett** died on 5 November 2019, aged 81.

Described by fellow MHS Life Member **Chrys Meader** as 'the father of MHS', Peter Arnett was Marrickville Council's Chief Town Planner in the early 1980s when the local history society (Marrickville Historical Society) called it a day.

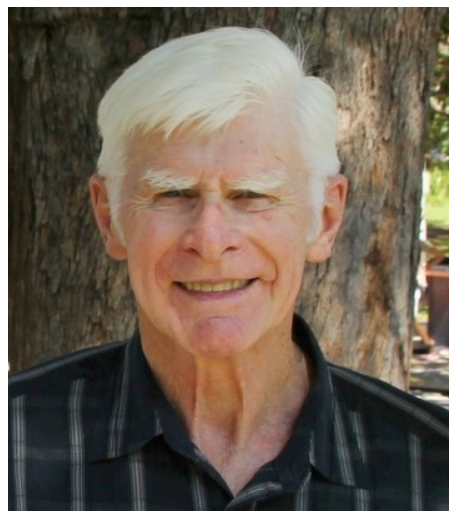
In 1998, in awarding life membership to Peter, MHS Patron, the late **Eve Sharpe** said, in part: 'Peter realised that their going left a big gap in the cultural activities of Marrickville. After organising a most successful Heritage Week in 1983 he began to give serious thought to another such Society so with Chrys Meader acting as his secretary he sent out invitations to a large number of local citizens to meet in the town hall. Now this meeting was very well attended. He put forward his ideas and a few options to discuss, then threw the meeting open and it was a very successful occasion. After a vote was taken it was decided there was enough local interest to form another Society.'

On 28 April 1984, Marrickville Heritage Society was created.

**Richard Cashman**, also a Life Member, knew Peter well as he was manager of Town Planning at Marrickville Council when Richard was a Council alderman from 1980 to 1982.

'During the 1980s Peter was an instrumental figure in the development of Council's heritage policy. At a time when a number of aldermen and officers on the Council were not sympathetic to heritage, Peter managed to slip through (almost surreptitiously) a funding proposal to initiate a heritage study, which was undertaken by Fox and Associates. This was an important step in creating greater awareness of the importance of heritage and Council developing heritage policy. Peter was a man of great integrity and dignity who operated in a Council environment which was difficult and occasionally turbulent.'

We honour Peter Arnett's legacy, and we offer our condolences to his family.



Peter Arnett at the Society's 30th anniversary celebration, Petersham Park, 22 March 2014 (photo: Scott MacArthur)



## Heritage Watch

**315-321 Illawarra Road** comprises two pairs of Federation era single storey semi-detached houses that are currently used as a small shop, a residence and a doctor's surgery. They retain many of their original character features, with decorative terracotta ridge tiles, slate roofs and gable barge boards intact, but sadly the tuck-pointed brickwork has been painted and rendered over. The doctor's surgery has been used as medical rooms continuously from 1917, initially as Dr Francis Murphy's dental surgery, then as a doctor's surgeries, right up to the present day.

It is proposed to demolish the existing houses and replace them with a five storey mixed use building, with a medical centre and shops under 38 serviced apartments, and underground carparking. The Society is concerned that the proposal is over-scaled and out of character for this narrow section of Illawarra Road, where the existing building stock is simple late Victorian and Edwardian retail shopfronts, no more than three-storeys tall. The new building will also loom over the single storey Federation and Inter-war era dwellings in Central Avenue. The cladding of the highly prominent facade and end walls of the taller residential tower is monolithic dark grey metal sheeting. This is the same colour cladding that has been used in other new developments along Illawarra and Marrickville Roads, to the great detriment of the varied and eclectic streetscape character of the precinct.

There are many vacant retail tenancies in new 'shop top' developments in Marrickville and we are concerned that heritage and character buildings in our commercial precincts are being sacrificed on the basis of a flawed business model. The Society has lodged a submission as outlined above in respect of this DA.

*Additional historic research provided by Rod Aanensen.*



Impression of the proposed development from DA documents, Inner West Council website

## Marrickville Church of Christ: update

The application to demolish the Marrickville Church of Christ in Illawarra Road (see Heritage Watch report Nov-Dec 2019 newsletter) for ground floor shops and 55 boarding-style rooms has been referred to the Land and Environment Court. Council has consistently objected to the proposal on planning and heritage grounds, clearly advising that the century old church and adjoining Queen Anne style villa should be retained in any redevelopment of the site. The developer is now

hoping that the Court can be convinced that new low cost housing can only be constructed in Marrickville at the expense of local heritage and neighbourhood amenity. The Court hearing is scheduled for June 2020.

**Scott MacArthur**

## Society's website: 'local knowledge' resource

Our website established by **Rod Aanensen** in 2019 creates interest in local heritage issues, encourages contact and inevitably generates questions, to which we do our best to give helpful replies. We know our members, individually and collectively, are an amazing resource of local knowledge, and we want to find a way to harness your knowledge and be able to share it with our growing audience. One way might be to establish a 'local heritage knowledge bank' with a list of folk who would be willing to help, and maybe a little about your particular area of local information. Please talk to Rod, or anyone on committee, if you'd like to be involved at any level.

Responding to a recent website request, Rod created a presentation for a group of UNSW students conducting fieldwork in our area. Rod focussed on physical geography, its effect on settlement, early agricultural and associated industry development, the progression to manufacturing and industrialisation, and changing populations.

Visit the website at <marrickvilleheritage.org.au>

**Lorraine Beach**

## The origin of 'wharf' - a correction

If you attended that terrific talk Gabby Richards gave on 23 November, you may recall my explanation that 'wharf' came from 'ware house at river front'. It has been pointed out to me that my observation was wrong. 'Wharf' comes from old English and Germanic 'hwearf', meaning 'heap' or 'embankment' and also 'to turn'. I shall ensure that my River Thames boat captain is flogged with a cat o' nine tails for his error. Following that, I shall demand he walks the plank.

We wonder how often, and with how many travellers, said riverboat captain has shared this gem and thus proliferated the error.

Evidently there are several words in common use mistakenly attributed to acronyms; notwithstanding its fanciful and somewhat exotic explanation, 'posh' is not what it seems either, but that is another story.

**Keith Sutton**

## Would you like to join the Society?

It's easy. Address on front page, contact phone numbers and email on back page. Send a cheque to Marrickville Heritage Society with your contact details; pay by direct debit (phone Treasurer Diane for account details) or email us.

Annual fees are: Concession \$12, Individual or Joint Concession \$20, Household or Organisation \$28. Join now and you will be a paid up member till June 2021.

## Calendar of MHS Events

**Saturday 22 February**

**Japanese submarines in Sydney Harbour  
with Mervyn Rosen**

Details on front page

**Saturday 28 March**

**Lewisham Walk with Mark Matheson**

Details in March-April newsletter

**Saturday 25 April**

**By Muscle of Man and Horse, building the  
railway under Sydney 1916-1932**

**with William Phippen**

Details in March-April newsletter

## 'Memberies' from member Dorothy Skinner

MHS member the late Dorothy Skinner spent most of her life in Marrickville, largely in Warren Road. She died in 2016 aged 97. For Christmas 1992, her son gave her a copy of the recently published *Marrickville: from rural outpost to inner city* (Hale & Iremonger). It sparked memories and Dot sent some recollections to the Society. Here are some:

Page 163: Seymours Corner at the intersection of Marrickville and Victoria Roads. How I remember the night of the fire [on 19 November 1940]. I was in the Kings cinema opposite that night and we all had to leave. One of my friends lived above the shop next door to Seymours. The firemen came to tell her and her mother to leave for safety reasons. My friend was in the bath. She was so embarrassed. We all had a good laugh at work next day.

Page 145: Davis Dairy was on the corner of Carrington Road, Ruby Street and Warren Road. I used to take a short cut through the grounds of the dairy to go to the shop on the corner of Schwebel Street and Carrington Road. The cows were grazed on a block in Warren Road, Carrington Road and Renwick Street where the Pye factory used to be.

Page 175: Duly and Hansford in Carrington Road had a lovely swimming hole near the railway line in the late 1920s and early 1930s. It was later filled and built over. It was lovely cooling off on the way home from school until Dad found out. I ate off the mantelpiece for a week.

Davies Coop bought the building where General Motors had been during the Second World War. They made men's singlets and other clothes. I worked there for a time in 1943-44. What excitement when trains filled with American soldiers went past, around the back. All work stopped and we all went out to wave to them.

One amusing thing I remember from my childhood happened around the late 1920s. The front of Grandma's weatherboard cottage on the corner of Warren and Carrington Roads caught fire. The fire brigade was called and a fireman arrived on a pushbike with a fire hose over his shoulder. Dad and my uncles had the fire out by the time he arrived. Thank goodness!

**Richard Blair**

## Demise of a comrade local history society

Late in 2019 we learned that Canterbury & District Historical Society has ceased to be after nearly 60 years. Hearing this news, we think 'what if ...' and wonder who would care about our area's heritage and local history if our Society also ceased to exist.

So thank you, to each and every one of you who are our members. You are the fabric of this Society, and it's your loyal support that keeps it going.

Best wishes to everyone for a happy, healthy and safe year ahead.

**Lorraine Beach**

## Pot Luck Dinner 2019

Another triumph and many thanks to **June Warren**, who again welcomed all to her lovely home on the first Saturday evening of December. June provided a



Jennifer Kent, Robert Hutchinson  
and Jennifer's Lucky Door Prize,  
Christmas pudding and port  
(photo: Scott MacArthur)

wonderful environment for our traditional year end celebration. Though herself away on holiday, our ever-generous evergreen member **Lynne Greenwood** once more contributed bigheartedly to the event—it was 'bubbles by Lynne' for all to enjoy. It was a relaxed, festive and convivial evening, with good food, great company and a most gracious host.

**Lorraine Beach**

## Summer Trivia Answer

The first traffic lights in the former Marrickville LGA 'appeared, not on a major intersection, but on the corner of Salisbury Road and Australia Street, Camperdown, on Monday 30 May 1938. It is not known why this intersection was chosen or whether any fanfare accompanied the event.'

The reason this answer is in quotation marks is that this trivia question is a rerun from when it originally was put to MHS members in March 2002 and answered in May 2002. Shirley Hilyard had ascertained the answer from John Tough of the Roads & Traffic Authority, which is now Roads and Maritime Services. No one was correct then and no one was correct this time, although on each occasion educated guesses were made. Perhaps we should run the question again in 2038!

**Richard Blair**

**President** Scott 0416 152 501

**Heritage Watch** Scott 0416 152 501

**Treasurer** Diane 9588 4930

**Newsletter** Lorraine 0416 224 472 | Rod 0431 487 375