

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.

CAMPERDOWN DULWICH HILL ENMORE
NEWTOWN PETERSHAM STANMORE

LEWISHAM MARRICKVILLE
ST PETERS SYDENHAM & TEMPE



Heritage Watch

Otaki developments

Shortly after the advertising period closed on the DA for the demolition and redevelopment of this beautiful late Victorian/Federation villa (see July-August newsletter), the developer applied for the demolition and new apartments to be approved as Exempt and Complying Development (bypassing Council). Under panicked urging by the Society and Councillor **Colin Hesse**, Council has applied an Interim Heritage Order on the property, temporarily halting the Complying Development process. Council has six months (from 5 August) to assess whether *Otaki* should be heritage listed to protect it. We can assist by providing as much historical background as possible.

Do you know *Otaki*—were you a patient of Dr Shortland? MHS member **Carole Allen** recalls: 'Dr and Mrs Shortland were friends of my family. As a 9 or 10 year-old, I read my first National Geographic magazine in their family sitting room. It was a distraction during my long wait, away from the home surgery in *Otaki*'s front room, as the doctor stitched or set another broken limb for my tearaway brother'. Carole is still a Nat Geo subscriber after 70 years.



When committee member **Rod Aanensen** and Carole visited the house in August they noticed it had been vandalised, with all of the decorative brackets under the windows neatly broken off! The Society has informed Council of this attack.

Carole Allen at the front door of *Otaki* (photo Rod Aanensen)

If anyone has stories about this house, please contact us. *Otaki* is like so many of our character houses — unprotected and vulnerable. We must be vigilant.

South Marrickville heritage still under threat!

The **South Marrickville Heritage Review**, conducted by Marrickville Council in 2015-16, identified dozens of properties for listing as new heritage items. Objections by several owners brought further investigation and assessment by Council staff and specialist heritage consultants.

Their final recommendation, supported by extensive research and specialist advice, was for 30 properties to be heritage listed. Of these properties, seven owners were vehemently opposed to listing. The Administrator of the newly amalgamated Inner West Council stepped in to

overrule Council staff and refused to list the contested properties. Since then, some of these orphaned heritage properties have suffered at the hands of their owners and developers.

The former factory building at 30 Carrington Road, Marrickville has been absorbed into the Mirvac development miasma and its fate is unknowable. 149 Unwins Bridge Road, Tempe, a former quarryman's stone villa, has been illegally rendered and painted, largely destroying its heritage values. A former corner shop at 51 Frederick Street, St Peters was demolished under Exempt and Complying Development provisions, with Council not acting quickly enough to impose an Interim Heritage Order on the property that could potentially have saved it.

The Church of Christ at 389 Illawarra Road has, we trust, been saved from demolition, being heritage listed by Council, but we understand there are still planning procedures, and possible court challenges, that could derail the final listing.

Again, the Society calls on Inner West Council to re-examine all of the remaining items that were excluded by the Administrator from heritage protection. Given the escalating development pressure in this part of the former Marrickville LGA, it may also be timely for Council to revisit all of the properties that were rejected early in the review process, or identified for further evaluation, to ensure that no other heritage gems are under threat.

Scott MacArthur

MHS remains in a holding pattern

NSW Fair Trading has provided relief for organisations: 'Associations may conduct their 2020 AGM when COVID-19 restrictions are lifted or present 2020 financial information to members at the 2021 AGM'. We remain prepared; our financials for 2019-20 were completed at the end of May, and although not a requirement, they have been audited in line with our usual practice. Incumbent committee members have agreed to stay in office until we can hold our AGM. Should any members have concerns, or wish to review financial records, please let us know and it will be arranged.



Are you our mystery member?

In May 2020 someone paid \$60 into MHS's account. The only clue we have is it came from Teachers Credit Union. Was it you?

Please contact Treasurer, Diane, <diane.mccarthy@optusnet.com.au> or phone 9588 4930.

Heritage in the making: prestigious architecture awards for local projects

Marrickville Library, officially opened on 31 August 2019 and an admired landmark on Marrickville Road, attained four awards at the **2020 Australian Institute of Architects NSW Architecture Awards**. Designed by architects BVN, who were selected by the former Marrickville Council after an invited design competition in 2011-12, the project was built under an agreement between Inner West Council and Mirvac. The new library and pavilion presented special challenges for the design team to respect and incorporate the heritage listed components of the old Marrickville Hospital site (1899-1990).



Marrickville Library—a new community gem (photo Lorraine Beach)

The Library's awards are: Public Architecture; Sustainable Architecture – The Milo Dunphy Award; NSW Premier's Prize; and NSW People's Choice Awards for Life in 2020 – for 'We are in this together: Marrickville Library by BVN'. The latter award was introduced in response to the way the COVID-19 pandemic has changed people's relationships with housing, workplaces and the public domain.

The new **Wicks Park Amenities Building**, commissioned by Inner West Council, received a commendation in the category of **Small Project Architecture**. Designed by Sam Crawford Architects, Newtown, the building was 'conceived as a lantern in the park; welcoming, open and light throughout the day, and somewhat of a beacon in the evening'.



Wicks Park Amenities (photo Lorraine Beach)

Sydney Park, at St Peters on the boundaries with Newtown, Alexandria and Erskineville, continues to develop as an important community asset. Landmarked by the iconic heritage listed chimneys and brick kilns of Josiah Gentle's 1893 Bedford Brickworks, the park has transformed the site of the former brick pits, used as a rubbish tip from 1948 until 1976. Sydney Park was established in the early 1990s and adjoining former industrial lands were added to bring its area to just over 41 hectares.

Sydney Park's Water Re-use Project was built by an infrastructure partnership between City of Sydney and the Australian Government, with a multidisciplinary design team led by Turf Design Studio and Environmental Partnership. The project has won numerous awards, and on 4 August was recognised at the Architizer A+ Awards in New York. One of 430 projects shortlisted among over 5,000



A section of Sydney Park Water Re-use Project (photo Lorraine Beach)

The scheme captures and recycles 850 million litres of stormwater annually, reused in the park and sustaining its wetlands and wildlife habitats.

entries from 100 countries, it took out the Jury Award for Architecture + Water for its contribution to the community and the environment.

Lorraine Beach

Farewell to Barbara Forsyth

We are sad to report the death of longtime member **Barbara Forsyth**, who died at her home in Marrickville on 20 August. Barbara joined the Society in 1999.

Barbara was an unconventional, unassuming, independent and dignified woman, interested in and knowledgeable about a wide range of subjects and always ready for a chat. Barbara worked for at least three decades as a 'switchboard operator' at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. Member **Joyce Roy** recalls that her late husband, Professor Paul Roy, who worked at RPAH, would often chat with Barbara; she once told Joyce she was embarrassed that a senior doctor would



Barbara Forsyth (photo Lorraine Beach)

come and talk to her as few ever took much notice of the 'humbler' staff. I once heard him say to Barbara: 'Please, it's just Paul ... call me Paul'. But she would not; Joyce recalls that 'it was always Dr or Professor, and Mrs Roy'. Such was Barbara's unshakeable sense of manners and correctness, and her individuality. She was a

gracious and astute observer of human nature, with a dry wit and a mischievous sense of humour.

Many of us knew Barbara for years; while friendly and sociable, she rarely spoke about herself; we knew little about her life, aside from her avid interest in history and heritage, and books on so many topics – she rarely left a meeting without a book she just had to have. We know she loved her job at RPAH, and this appears reciprocated. Joyce Roy told me that Barbara 'some time ago confessed to being 80', but she was still working. Just a few weeks ago, if you had phoned RPAH, you might have been answered and had your call redirected by Barbara in her customary calm and empathetic manner.

We farewell Barbara; we value our memories of her; and we appreciate the part of her life she chose to share with us. We offer our condolences to all who feel her loss.

Lorraine Beach

A donation that's music to our ears

From time to time the Society is contacted by people wishing to donate items. We don't have room to store most but we do pass them on to other archives after having a good look at them. Recently, members **John Anning** and **Gillian McAllister** offered us a programme from the Stanmore Musical and Dramatic Society.



Programme front cover

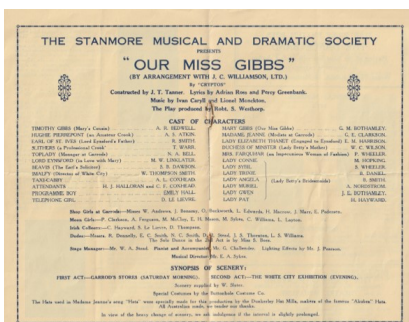
Dated 1932, it was sold for threepence at the society's production of *Our Miss Gibbs* at Petersham Town Hall on Saturday 30 July. Although first staged in 1909, this musical comedy retained its popularity with amateur theatrical societies from the 1920s to the 1950s.

Amateur musical and theatrical societies were hugely popular in Sydney in the 1930s. They were predominately supported by the middle class, both in membership and patronage. They were very social organisations and events

were as much about the participants as the audience. Names such as Clarkson, Wilson, Wheeler, Atkin and Linklater appear in this programme and appeared regularly over the years. This particular production involved nearly 60 people on stage, behind the scenes and in the orchestra pit. It should be noted that in the cast and chorus, there were twice as many women as men. Amusingly, or perhaps confusingly, tickets for this event were sold at 'Hustlers' in Petersham and the 'Rendezvous' in Stanmore.

Generally a show would run for three nights (Thursday to Saturday) and at least one night's takings, usually the first, would be donated to a charity. We don't know which charity was blessed from this production but others the society did donate to include the Newtown-Marrickville Ambulance and the Stanmore-Enmore branch of the Nursing Association.

The Australian rights to *Our Miss Gibbs* were held by JC Williamson Ltd; this production was advertised as 'by arrangement' with the company. James Cassius Williamson was an American actor who achieved success in Australia producing Gilbert and Sullivan musicals. He went on to buy theatres in Sydney and Melbourne and staged various productions throughout Australia, including an acclaimed tour with Sarah Bernhardt. After he died in 1913 his company continued and was responsible for touring Dame Nellie Melba (1924) and Anna Pavlova (1926). The company also produced moving pictures as early as 1915 and distributed DW Griffiths's *Intolerance* in 1917.



Cast of characters and credits for the production, music and scenery

In *Our Miss Gibbs*, Gwen Bothamley took the lead role and, confusingly, her mother (JT Bothamley) played 'Lady Gwen'. Our Miss Gwen lived in Trafalgar Street in Stanmore and had developed her theatrical interest at Fort Street Girls' High

School. However, it does not appear that Gwen moved on to a life on the stage, unlike another local, Noeline Brown.

Noeline Brown, MHS member, got her start with the Marrick Players and the Petersham Musical Society in the 1950s. Noeline was working at the Stanmore and Marrickville Libraries when her 'boss' Frances Charteris (a key figure in the creation of Marrickville & District Historical Society, the predecessor of MHS), encouraged her to join the local drama group.

Other cast members included regular Arthur Bedwell who came in for some good natured ribbing – 'He isn't handsome, he isn't an Adonis but he has a marvellous sense of comedy'.

The society had its own musical director, Ernest Sykes, and an orchestra which included Frederick Hanney, conductor of Marrickville Municipal Symphony Orchestra. At this time Marrickville had many ensembles, from dance bands to orchestras, but they were all feeling the pinch because of the Depression. Special concerts were held in Marrickville Town Hall to raise funds for out of work musicians. No doubt, performing with musical societies was a way to keep busy for those hard pressed.

There are a number of advertisers who appear in the programme to offer support for the society. Many of them were situated on New Canterbury Road, such as Beynon and Hayward and Blamey's Confectioners. Mr EH Maundrell of Shaw Street, Petersham, advertised with the catchphrase 'Maundrell's Milk Makes Merry Mothers'. It appears that some of the advertisers had family links to members of the society. At twelve pages and with seven photographs, the programme was a production in itself.

As it is in fragile condition, we have made a digital copy of the programme and hope to have it available on our website soon. We shall also be providing a copy to Inner West Library and History Services for their collection.

Rod Aanensen

Editor's note: Read more about Noeline Brown in Richard Blair's Winter Trivia answer—July 2005 newsletter, page 4. All newsletters to end June 2019 can be found on our website.

National Trust's Graham Quint retires

After 40 years at the National Trust (NSW) **Graham Quint** has retired. As Director, Conservation, he has been at the forefront of the NT's innumerable campaigns for conservation and heritage protection for many years.



Graham Quint (photo YouTube)

Graham is an articulate and energetic advocate for heritage, conscious of the big picture and the need to work with policymakers to reach positive outcomes – balance between the need for development without decimating our past in order to achieve it.

The NT's new Director, Conservation is **David Burdon**, an accomplished architect who 'has played an active role as a technical committee member for over a decade and is current Chair of both the Built Heritage Committee at the National Trust, and the Chair of the National Trust Heritage Awards judging panel.'

Webwise

marrickvilleheritage.org.au

We are looking to add to our site by creating a Heritage Watch feature.

With a development/infrastructure mentality leading plans for the 'COVID recovery', we will need to be vigilant if we are not to see many heritage buildings and sites coming under threat. We hope that by highlighting threats we will increase awareness and encourage a stronger community response.

Rod Aanensen

Spring festivals cancelled

Inner West Council has cancelled the festivals scheduled for spring – Marrickville, Dulwich Hill and Summer Hill. Advising us of the decision, Council's Events Officer, Olivia Wilson-Zarganis, cited the long lead times needed for planning large scale events, the ongoing prohibition on mass gatherings and continuing uncertainty with COVID-19 restrictions.

Future MHS talks on line?

With all MHS activities for the year effectively cancelled due to COVID-19, we're keen to revive our 'Calendar of Events' while continuing our conservative approach by not resuming physical meetings until Public Health authorities advise it is safe to do so.

Meanwhile we want to find a way to reconnect with members and provide some of what our members enjoy about belonging to the Society. Taking our cue from the Royal Australian Historical Society, we are considering hosting a 'webinar' – from 'web' and 'seminar', an online talk – at which we could have our guest speaker as usual, just not in person as usual.

You would need access to the internet via a device with speakers; ideally your device would also have a camera (so we can see you), and a microphone (so we can hear you and you can ask questions after the talk). Those without the technology may be able to arrange for family or friends to provide temporary access on the day, for an hour or so, via a mobile device.

We would like your feedback before proceeding with the idea. Would you be interested in talks delivered in this format? Please let us have your opinion by whatever means you prefer – all our contacts are below.

Lorraine Beach

The joys of op shops

Op shops are a novel way to shop: they cater for those less financial, turn up treasures for collectors, and are a great way to support local charities. In the July-August 2020 MHS newsletter we lamented the closing of the last of the Enmore Road op shops – the one operated for decades by the Cat Protection Society.

But there are still a number of op shops in our local area. One with a long term presence is **St Luke's Op Shop**, recently relocated to 11 Stanmore Road, Enmore, in the grounds of St Luke's Anglican Church. Open Tuesday to Friday 10-3 and Saturdays 10-2.30, they have off street parking. It's run by friendly volunteers, some of whom are MHS members.

Spring Trivia Question



Where in the local area would one find this building, and what is its significance? Contact Richard 0413 335 897 or <marrickvilleheritagesociety@outlook.com>.

Carrington Road Industrial Heritage

This area of Marrickville, a showcase of Australian manufacturing from the 20th century, attracted major companies, including General Motors-Holden's, Davies Coop, Duly & Hansford, Rega Products, Tecnico and Pye.

Carrington Road helped grow Australia's automotive industry, produced munitions, equipment and textiles for the Second World War, then shifted to manufacturing goods for the domestic mass market.

Local researchers (and MHS members) **Louisa King** and **Ali Wright** have spent hundreds of hours over the past few years poring over old records, photographs and advertisements, uncovering the history and piecing together the importance of this industrial hub.

Their project was supported by Inner West Council, and has culminated in a book, an online walking tour and an exhibition at Marrickville Library, launching to coincide with History Week (5-13 September) and on view through to the end of the month. The walking tour is available through the Izi.Travel app (search 'Marrickville') and the e-book through the Inner West Council website: go to 'Library' then follow tabs for 'What's On' and 'History Week'.

We applaud Louisa and Ali for their exceptional work on this project; it's a bonus that their book is online and free.

Inner West Council and History Week

With so much we can't do during our COVID crisis, it's well worth a visit to Council's website to check out a host of options provided by Library and History Services.

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