

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.

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Annual General Meeting postponed again

It's now been two years since our last AGM, and hopes were high for our plans to conduct a COVID-safe meeting at Marrickville Town Hall on 26 June 2021. Regrettably another lockdown was upon us and we had to cancel.

The committee remains in office until the AGM is held and a new committee elected. We are mindful of our obligations as an incorporated association and our Public Officer keeps us abreast of changing regulatory requirements. It is our preference to hold an 'in person' AGM but, due to ongoing uncertainties of doing so, we will expedite exploring the option of an online meeting.

We will keep you informed, and we repeat previous advices that our financial reports are complete, audited and available for review by members.

Most importantly, thank you to all who have contacted us expressing support; your patience and continuing loyalty to the Society is much appreciated by the committee throughout what is proving a marathon of challenges for our communities.

Inner West Council awards

Volunteers' contributions to local history were recognised in Council's 2021 awards, held at Leichhardt Town Hall on 19 May, for **Citizen of the Year** and **Amy Large Volunteer Awards**. The former is for 'outstanding contributions from individuals' and the latter for 'the many unsung heroes who help make the Inner West a better place and a more caring and inclusive community'.

Citizen of the Year, Chrys Meader, needs no introduction to MHS members. Chrys was present, as secretary, at the meeting held in 1984 to form Marrickville Heritage Society. Historian, author, archivist, librarian, speaker, educator and occasional walking tour leader, she is a Life Member of the Society and our doyen of local history.



Chrys Meader
(photo Inner West Council)

Chrys's enduring contribution to the history community was summed up perfectly by her nominator for the award: 'She is an unrivalled, passionate expert with encyclopedic knowledge at her immediate disposal. It is however her humanity, generosity of spirit, glee and enthusiasm, integrity of purpose and commitment to people and the power of

history to inspire and educate when it is researched, distilled and delivered uniquely by her, that are Chrys's real standout qualities and are her real work'. Bravo, Chrys.

There were many worthy nominations for the **Amy Large Volunteer Awards** and if we had space in this newsletter we'd gladly celebrate the achievements of all. Council have stated that from 2021 onwards all nominees for the volunteers awards will be celebrated equally, so the recipients this year were all those nominated in the categories for Young Volunteers, Adult Volunteers, Senior Volunteers and Volunteer Teams. Their work and accomplishments are remarkable. The list of recipients, and their stories, is inspiring reading, and can be found on council's website.

Two of the groups who received a team award have direct connections to Marrickville Heritage Society.

Member **Megan Hicks** reported on the event: 'It was a good night for local history. As members of MHS would know, five years ago Local History Librarian **Aleem Aleemullah** approached **Richard Blair** about forming a small team of volunteers to document the local history collection at Inner West Council Library and History Services. This year Aleem nominated the team for an Amy Large Volunteer Award and the current crew were happy to accept it on behalf of several MHS members who have participated in the project since 2016'.



Left to right: Paula Gard, Vilma Bell, Aleem Aleemullah, Megan Hicks, Mary Oakenfull. The current MHS crew and the man who started it all at Marrickville Town Hall, in the place where they currently do their volunteer work – nicknamed 'the dungeon' by Megan Hicks.
(photo: Astred Hicks)

Editor's note: The startup era of this volunteer group included Richard Blair, Diane McCarthy, Monica Oppen, Benjamin Summers, Jamie de Paulo and Tony Deguara.

Megan continues: 'The interesting line-up of other groups who also won a Volunteer Team or Group award shows just how widespread volunteer work is in the community. For example, there were the Gunnawirra Mums, a support network for mothers and children; elders Uncle Derek Wilson, Auntie Tracey Bostock and Auntie Joanne Selfe, who do workshops with community, attend cultural events and develop programming to strengthen community; Michael and Chrissy Banning, who volunteer at the Bill Crews Foundation's breakfasts; the three Moonlight Weeders, who kept 2019 National Tree Day saplings alive during the drought; the Newtown Neighbourhood Centre Volunteer Counsellors, who provide a free counselling service to inner west residents; and the Addison Road Community Organisation Volunteers.

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'And finally there were MHS members **Roberta Flint** and **Charles Britton**, who revitalised the Marrickville Croquet Club'.

Mary Oakenfull, MHS secretary, nominated Roberta and Charles, inspired by their enthusiasm and energetic work. They took on the historic club, established in 1926 but with just two playing members by 2012, and breathed new life into it.



Roberta Flint and Charles Britton (photo: Roberta Flint)

The origins of croquet are not entirely clear. There are indications that it was played as early as the 14th century; some believe its forerunner was 'paille-maille', a game played in France and introduced to England, where it was called 'Pall Mall', in the 1600s; yet others say that paille-maille became golf, and that croquet originated from a game called 'crokey' played in Ireland and introduced to England in about 1850. Interestingly, the word 'croquet' is ascribed to a northern French dialect word for 'crook', producing yet another theory that this led to the Irish name of 'crokey'. The earliest records of croquet being played in Australia appear to be from Tasmania in 1860.



The clubhouse at Marrickville Croquet Club (photo: Charles Britton)

Whatever its origins, the genteel, social sport of croquet is enjoying a local resurgence, with the court at Marrickville Croquet Club now being used most days. The clubhouse and grounds have been spruced up by members and are maintained with input from council staff. The ongoing use, and thus preservation, of this historic clubhouse in a beautiful and tranquil setting is hopefully assured.

So, well done to Roberta and Charles, and thank you and well done to all the dedicated volunteers in so many areas of our community. All are unsung heroes.

Lorraine Beach

Built Environment Awards 2021

In the May-June newsletter we wrote about the winner of the Marrickville Medal for Conservation as well as other commendations awarded. The newsletter was released the day after the awards night, so time did not permit mention of the **Urban Photography Competition**, which has been part of these proceedings since it was pioneered by the former Marrickville Council in 2011.

Open for all to enter, the competition specifies that images must 'in some way reference or comment on heritage attributes of our built environment'. It's a great way to encourage a creative, divergent involvement with local history.

The winners this year were: High School – **Evan Black** for *new x old*; Open – **Andrew Miers** for *Two lovely ladies*. Highly commended was **Will Jones** for *Grandstand*. Commended were: **Ian Gilmour** for *Health Clinic and Tour*; **Joh Russell** for *Stanmore Station*; **Rosina Schinella** for *Stolen*; and **Hayden Walsh** for *Patyegarang*.



A family combination – Evan Black, with his winning image *new x old* in the background, and Rosina Schinella, Evan's mother, commended for her entry *Stolen* (photo: Scott MacArthur)

What's become of our 'Sister Cities'?

Who knew Marrickville had seven 'sister cities'? According to Sister Cities International's register Marrickville has a 'sister city' association with Keelung (Taiwan), Kos (Greece), Funchal (Portugal), Larnaca (Cyprus), Safita (Syria), Bethlehem (Palestine) and Zonnebeke (Belgium). The first was 1989, the most recent 2008. On the register, Ashfield and Leichhardt each have one 'sister city' from China and Italy respectively.

Established under the former Marrickville Council, the 'sister cities' connections were administered by a council subcommittee, but what has become of these relationships since the council merger?

Presumably we established these bonds because each of the cities had a community representation in our local area. Our local heritage is not just about buildings, it is cultural heritage too, and over the years we've enjoyed being educated and entertained by guest speakers whose ancestors came here from China, Greece and Lebanon. It would be great to connect with all our 'sister' cities communities; there are histories to learn and stories to be heard and recorded. One of our members is making enquiries within Council, so perhaps when meetings resume we can welcome some more guest speakers with stories of their pioneering forebears.

Ferncourt Public School – past connections sought

In 2022, Ferncourt Public School, in Premier Street in Marrickville's locality known as The Warren, will celebrate 100 years as a school. Many will know that Ferncourt has a much longer history.



Ferncourt is the Administration Building for Ferncourt Public School
(photo courtesy NSW Department of Education)

In 1883, Polish born artist and teacher Gracius Joseph Broinowski bought land from the Thomas Holt estate and built his home *Prosna* from 1886-89. From about 1890 the house was known as *Jesmont* until sold in 1914 to become *Ferncourt*. In 1922, the property was purchased by the Education Department and opened as Ferncourt Infants School.

To commemorate its centenary, a past parent, historian and MHS member **Rebecca Jones**, is writing a history of the school and the site. Rebecca is eager to hear from former pupils and teachers about their memories of Ferncourt, and the older the better!

To receive a questionnaire and share your story of your time at Ferncourt, please contact Rebecca by email at <ferncourtpublic100@gmail.com>.

The pub test on pub names

In the newsletter of December 1995-January 1996 was a short item titled 'Pub Name Changes' citing, among others, the changed pub name of the Carrington (originally the Lord Carrington, 1886) Hotel near Petersham Station to the curiously-named White Cockatoo which seemed to relate to nothing, except some whim of the owner in the early 1990s.

An equally puzzling name change occurred when, about 20 years or so ago, the 1879 Enmore Hotel became known as the Sly Fox. A more recent unappealing, though perhaps more marketable, name change is that of the Newington (1858) in Stanmore Road which became the Public House.

Other pub name changes make *some* sense. The Shakespeare, Newtown, became Cooper's Arms – reflective of the name of the licensee, but at least the name had a certain flavour. The Grose Farm in Camperdown had obvious historic roots, but the name change (The Alfred) did have context, being just over the road from Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. The Huntsbury in Petersham pays homage to Hunter Street and New Canterbury Road, on whose corner it

stands. However, the discarded original 1888 name, The Masonic, was obliterated, along with its associated history.

Two pub name changes in Enmore Road are in keeping with the Aussie fashion of abbreviation: the Victoria Hotel opposite Enmore Park became Vic on the Park; and the Duke of Edinburgh (named not after the late Prince Philip but after the duke who survived the 1868 assassination attempt at Clontarf to have the aforementioned hospital named after him) is now The Duke. In Marrickville, the Henson Park Hotel became The Henson.

Some pub names remain unchanged: the post-fire rebuilt General Gordon in Sydenham (see last two newsletters), the Gladstone in Dulwich Hill and the Golden Barley in Edgeware Road, Enmore.

I was once asked to suggest a new pub name for the King Street, Newtown, venue that for a century was the Cricketer's Arms. In the 1970s it became a McDonalds outlet but fell victim to eventual poor patronage by the good folk of Newtown such that in the 1990s it closed. I suggested a name – Donnithorne's – which didn't eventuate, although I'm sure some enterprising promoter will adopt that name one day. At least the eventual name chosen – Kelly's – was in keeping with the Irish nature of the hotel, even if it bore no connection with the local area.

In the second MHS journal *Heritage* (1985) local historian Chrys Meader had an article simply titled 'Pubs', about the range, history and character of local pubs. In her preface to the article Chrys wrote: 'Their changing character reveals much about everyday life in the municipality'. So, it could be argued that pub name changing is reflective of this.

I guess I remain somewhat traditional in my thinking. The silver lining is that some pub owners do have a sense of history. So, in King Street, Newtown, the Daniel Webster Hotel (1850s) became the Oxford; then, Zanzibar; but more recently, the name Webster's was adopted, thereby echoing the past.



The Enmore Hotel on the corner of Enmore Road and Cambridge Street. Seeing the pub's name change recently prompted Richard's article. (photo: Lorraine Beach)

And I am delighted to report that Enmore's Sly Fox has failed the ultimate pub test – the new owner has wisely reverted to its original name of Enmore Hotel.

Time now to pop over to my local for Happy Hour.

Richard Blair

Webwise

marrickvilleheritage.org.au

Rod Aanensen continues to field questions and all manner of enquiries from visitors to the webpage, while also, during his walks around the district, keeping a 'heritage watch' eye on developments of which we're otherwise unaware. Your help is always welcome with this task; our contacts are all at the bottom of this page.

The Abbey at Annandale

Following our May-June newsletter report on the Built Environment Awards, and the winning entry, The Abbey, member **Joyce Roy** recalled visiting the house in 2009, three years before commencement of the extensive renovation works which culminated in its award of the Marrickville Medal this year. Following are some of Joyce's recollections from her visit:

My husband and I visited this house in May 2009 on the day it was open for inspection prior to the auction of contents in the afternoon in a small marquee on the site. The numbers attending were huge. I guess many had walked by the house many times and just wanted to look at this very large and interesting house. It was in a rather neglected state, dilapidated and run down; there were several bathrooms in the oddest places throughout the house, and not in good order; many walls were in disrepair and the third floor was closed off to the public. The basement cellar area did not look as though it had been visited for many years.

In 2018 the Historic Houses Association arranged a visit to the Abbey. Joyce recalls they were welcomed by the new owners and their son:

It was a great privilege to see it sympathetically transformed years later. The transformation of the house into a gracious family home was wonderful and an enormous amount of work had been completed to bring the house back to its original condition as much as possible; much sympathetic upgrading and modernising was done. The gardens had been restored and updated and the stable block rooms were now self-contained quarters for the son of the owners.

The Abbey is truly a most extraordinary house, with a rich history and 'a treasure trove of stories, both real and imagined'. Joyce Roy has generously put together for the Society a folder containing notes, background information and copies of photographs acquired during her visits to the Abbey. It is available to members as a research reference on request, and will go into our archives.

The MHS meeting in October 2019 was a talk by Beverley Walsh and Ann Reynolds from the Annandale Urban Research Association (AURA) on the Witches Houses of Annandale. AURA produced a book titled *The Witches' Houses of Annandale*. Beverley Walsh contributed the chapter on The Abbey (pp. 9-18) and resides in another of these houses, Greba.



The Abbey, the 1880s Victorian Gothic mansion awarded the 2021 Marrickville Medal for Conservation on completion of nine years of restoration works (photo: Inner West Council)

Winter Trivia Question



Where in our local government area would you find these images? Contact Richard on 0413 335 897 or by email <marrickvilleheritagesociety@outlook.com>.

National Trust award for local champions

In the September-October 2020 newsletter (view it on our website, Vol 37 No. 2, p. 4) we reported on the work of two local history researchers, **Louisa King** and **Ali Wright** whose terrific work on their **Carrington Road Industrial Heritage** project led to a book, an exhibition and an online walking tour. Louisa and Ali are both MHS members, and Ali is a former member of the MHS executive committee.

Their work has been recognised with the award of a National Trust (NSW) Heritage Award. Their project was entered into the Heritage Events, Exhibitions and Tours category and they were one of two winners in that category.

Ali recently told us: 'We are very thrilled and hope the award brings more awareness to the project and industrial heritage as whole'.

What a well deserved award. Louisa and Ali put in hundreds of hours of work on their research project, and are passionate about their subject. They acknowledged assistance from Council; their work is all accessible to the community through the Library. The book and walking tour are both free, and the research is saved for posterity. Our sincere congratulations to them.

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