

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.

CAMPERDOWN DULWICH HILL ENMORE
NEWTOWN PETERSHAM STANMORE



LEWISHAM MARRICKVILLE ST PETERS
SYDENHAM & TEMPE

Our May meeting

Saturday 27 May 10.00 for 10.30 am

**St Peters Church Cooks River – morning tea, the church, the museum and the graveyard
Hosted by Laurel and Bob Horton**

187 Princes Highway, St Peters (opposite McDonalds). Parking on site; approach from the south. Bus (#422) from Newtown and St Peters stations and 700 metres from Sydenham station; stops at the church and across the highway.

Bookings appreciated (for morning tea catering):
Lorraine 0416 224 472 lbeach@iprimus.com.au
Cost: Free. Optional 'morning tea' donation, all proceeds to the St Peters Cooks River.

Join our first morning tea in over three years, and a talk with local historians and MHS life members **Laurel and Bob Horton**, whose St Peters Cooks River History Group is based here.



The 15 stained glass windows of St Peters Church tell stories
(photo: Laurel Horton)

St Peters Church, the church which gave its name to a suburb, was built in 1838. Its NSW State Heritage Inventory listing states:

St Peters is probably the first and real attempt at archaeological Gothic in Australia [and] compares favourably with English pioneer work built during the previous decade. The graveyard includes a number of fine neo-classical monuments. Important architectural quality together with its historic connections make this a site of outstanding importance.

Laurel and Bob continue to research, record, publish and share the histories of the church, its clergy, its

parishioners, the heroes and, sometimes, the villains of its parish. Hear the history of the church; discover its connection with the film 'Unbroken'; see the latest restoration work; view the clamp kiln bricks, wooden pillars, Lyon & Cottier stained glass windows and 1880 Brindley & Foster organ. Wander around the museum in the tower room, and explore the Victorian graveyard.

Note: State Library tour coordinators were unable to organise the visit we previously scheduled for this date.

Our Annual General Meeting

Saturday 24 June 10 for 10.30 am

**The Pavilion, Marrickville Library
Corner Marrickville & Livingstone Roads**

It's that time of year again. At the AGM, the committee delivers its report on the Society's activities for the past year, and its financial statement of income and expenditure, assets and liabilities. All committee positions are then declared vacant and election of a new committee and office bearers takes place.

Nominations for all positions are invited, in advance and on the day. If you are interested in joining the committee and want to find out more, please get in touch – email addresses for MHS and four committee members, with phone numbers, are on the back page.

TIME TO RENEW MEMBERSHIP

Membership renewal date is 1 June each year. If you received your newsletter by post, and your renewal is due, a notice will be enclosed; if by email, a renewal notice is attached.

MHS Bank Account details:

Commonwealth Bank of Australia (CBA)
Account name: Marrickville Heritage Society
BSB 062-199 Account No. 1081 8000

Important – add Reference: Last name and initials

You can also pay by cheque or money order, in favour of Marrickville Heritage Society, by post to PO Box 415 Marrickville 1475; or by cash at a meeting. If you need assistance with renewal, or to check if your fees are due, contact Stuart: email stuartgrigg2@gmail.com or phone 0414 620 519.

Stuart Grigg – Treasurer

Our visit to the Lucy Osburn Nightingale Museum, Sydney Hospital Saturday 25 March

There's much to thank Elinor Wrobel OAM for in her 89 years. She was a collector, curator, activist and conservationist, and the driving force behind establishing this extraordinary little museum in 2001. The day of our visit was barely two weeks after Elinor Wrobel had died, and the museum's team of volunteers were sad but determined to go on with her vision. Elinor had trained as a nurse at Sydney Hospital, and so had our guides Josephine and Jennifer. They were all graduates of the Lucy Osburn School of Nursing.

The first matron of Sydney Infirmary was Bathsheba Ghost (see MHS journal *Heritage* 15). She died in August 1866. In July that year, Colonial Secretary Henry Parkes wrote to Florence Nightingale asking for her help in providing trained nurses for the Sydney Infirmary, later to become Sydney Hospital. Lucy Osburn arrived in Sydney on 5 March 1868 with her team of five nurses and a week later she was supervising the nursing of Prince Alfred, the Duke of Edinburgh, Queen Victoria's second son, who had been shot in an assassination attempt at Clontarf in Sydney.

The training of 'Nightingale nurses' began. Sydney Hospital's Lucy Osburn School of Nursing trained thousands of nurses until the mid-1980s, when in-hospital training ceased.

The museum has a collection of medical equipment, records, surgical implements and specimens that portrays the history of nursing and medicine in Australia from the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788. There are original furnished rooms, uniforms, artefacts, photos, books and records throughout. One room – somewhat unexpected, unforgettable, and probably not for the faint hearted – contains many hundreds of the oldest morbid anatomy specimens in Australia, dating back to the 1890s. It is an important medical teaching resource that, in 2008, Elinor Wrobel had to fight to retain against an Area Health Service intent on destroying the specimens, closing the museum and turning it into office space for health officials.

The place is a treat, and evidence abounds of the hospital's past international reputation as a training hospital for doctors and nurses, and its legacy of 'firsts' in nursing and medicine.

The Nightingale Wing building is beautiful. A narrow winding staircase leading from the first floor museum to the floor above cannot be used, but you can see the wooden stairs, worn down by thousands of student nurses' footsteps over many decades. Our guide, Jennifer, was one of the nurses who had lived

up there when she was training. The Matron's office is preserved intact, including the chair made for Lucy Osburn.



Some of our group, on best behaviour in the Matron's office
(photo: Lorraine Beach)

We also learned about Rose Creal, who was Matron from 1899 until 1921. Prior to World War I, she was a member of the Australian Army Nursing Service Reserve, and from 1914 she headed up selection of nurses for active service overseas. In 1916 she too enlisted, and assumed duty as matron of the 14th Australian General Hospital at Abbassia, Egypt, where casualties from the Australian Light Horse were treated. Rose Creal was awarded the Royal Red Cross (First Class) in 1919. She returned to Australia in 1920, resumed her role as Matron of Sydney Hospital, and died of appendicitis in 1921.

Sydney Hospital established the Rose Creal Medal in her honour, the highest award made to graduates of the Lucy Osburn School of Nursing. As it happened, a member of our group, Marilyn Jolly, had been awarded the Rose Creal Medal in 1982. Our guides were impressed, and she got to sit in Lucy's chair.

The hospital that started as a collection of tents at Sydney Cove in January 1788 has never closed its doors in the 235 years since. Its Eye Hospital division was at Millers Point in 1882, then Woolloomooloo in 1922, and moved to the Macquarie Street site in 1996. It is now named Sydney and Sydney Eye Hospital.

There are many stories, and many people who are proud of and passionate about Sydney Hospital's history. The museum is a gem, and we thank Cyndee King and her volunteers, our guides Jennifer and Josephine, for enabling our visit.

Lorraine Beach

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An insight into Sister Lucy Osburn

Lucy Osburn, was well-educated and had travelled widely with her father, an Egyptologist and wine and spirits merchant. She was 'mistress of several languages', and 'loved entomology, dogs and reading'. Following our visit to the Lucy Osburn Nightingale Museum, **Richard Blair** retrieved this article from his archives.

(Excerpts from DG Bowd, *Lucy Osburn c. 1836–1891: Founder of the Nightingale System of Nursing at Sydney Hospital*, 1968, p 16, p 18).

Although she was absorbed in her work, Lucy Osburn must have suffered greatly from loneliness. She arose at five thirty in the morning and did a round of the wards at six o'clock. She did another round in the mid morning and again in the mid afternoon and one about ten at night before she retired. The hospital had about 227 beds, so each round would take some time. The long hours that she worked did not prevent her detractors from claiming that she 'did no nursing'.

The [hospital] committee showed scant consideration for Lucy Osburn's feelings. When she came to the Infirmary the yards and outbuildings were infested with rats. They were so prevalent that they attacked the bodies in the 'dead house'. Miss Osburn obtained an English Terrier which she trained to kill the rats. It was so effective that the nurses never saw any rats for a considerable time in their quarters, which were near the mortuary.

The terrier would faithfully wait for her till she had completed her final round of the wards at night. It would joyously and lovingly welcome her at the quarters. Probably the terrier gave her the only real affection that she had during her sixteen and two thirds years at Sydney Infirmary.

The members of the committee, who went to the comfort of their homes and families each night, ordered her to get rid of the dog. The rats soon came back. The Board was prepared to accept a mortuary infested with rats but not a pet at the Nightingale Wing. This hurtful and unreasonable decision caused Lucy Osburn to write: 'I don't suppose if they were to try they could picture to themselves what solitude is.'

Ironically, more than 100 years later, in the 1980s, Nightingale Wing was the realm of 'Ginger Meggs', a regal Persian cat, who divided his time between nursing administration and the pharmacy, often curled up on the desk of the Matron's secretary or the pharmacist, in their 'inbox'. No committee or board would have dreamed of ordering the Matron to 'get rid of the cat'.

Lucy Osburn went to Jerusalem in 1857, aged 21, as companion and governess to a cousin's children, and 'learned nursing', returning determined to



Marrickville Medal for Conservation 2023

The Inner West Council's Built Environment Awards are two separate programs: the **Marrickville Medal for Conservation** and the **Inner West Urban Photography Competition**.

The Marrickville Medal has been awarded annually since 1995, and is a celebration of outstanding built conservation works that contribute to preservation and understanding of the Inner West's architectural and cultural heritage.

The Urban Photography competition has three categories – General, High School and Primary School. Entries must feature or comment (at least in part) on heritage built fabric, and broadly fit into this year's theme: 'Sharing stories of our built environment'.

Entries for both programs are open until Friday, 30 June 2023. Information and entry forms, which can be completed online, are available on Council's website.

Presentation of the awards will be in October 2023, venue and date to be announced.

become a nurse. Her father, appalled, disowned her. When Lucy enrolled to train at St Thomas's Hospital, London in 1866, Florence Nightingale asked her about her claim to have 'learned nursing'. She avoided the issue, stating that her 'best loved occupation was breaking-in Arab horses on the Syrian plains'.



Lucy Osburn and 21 of her nursing staff outside Nightingale Wing, Sydney Hospital, 1870
(*The Australian Women's Weekly*, 16 June 1976, p 68.
Source: Trove)

Our last meeting: Saturday 22 April

Playground 'rockets' reflect the Space Race with Sue Jackson-Stepowski

Take us to the Moon!

In the late 1950s the world watched as the struggle for dominance by the USSR and USA in the new era of space exploration unfolded. During the era of the Space Race; there were many Russian 'firsts' including the first man and first woman launched into space aboard their rockets. The Americans, however, claimed the greatest accolade by landing two astronauts on the moon in 1969.

The period from 1957 to 1969, those years of the Cold War known as the Space Race era, influenced all facets of life. **Sue Jackson-Stepowski**, a Heritage Advisor and MHS member, gave an illustrated address on one such impact with the appearance in municipal parks of playground rockets inspired by Cold War propaganda.

In the early 1960s, Dick West, who had a welding and metal fabricating business at Blackheath in the NSW Blue Mountains, was one of the first manufacturers of the climbing frame 'rockets' after he had acquired plans from the USA. The first playground rocket in Australia, 30 feet high (about 9.14 metres), was installed in the Soldiers Memorial Park at Blackheath where it remained until its removal in 1996.



Rocket in Blackheath Soldiers Memorial Park c. 1962
(photo: Rotary Club of Blackheath)

Dick West went on to make about 36 additional playground rockets. A rare pipe fabricated example can fittingly be found in Moree in northern NSW. Moree was home to a Satellite Earth Station until its closure in 1988.

For several decades the playground rockets could be found in parks right across Australia, encouraging children to be active by gaining physical strength and co-ordination and to perhaps spark an interest in the sciences.

In the late 1990s, due to safety concerns, many of the metal playground rockets were removed and refurbished, or new rockets made from plastic were introduced and installed.



Member **Megan Hicks** took this photo of the Enmore Park playground rocket, 23 June 2015. She posted it on Instagram with the caption, 'Rocket scientist at work. He's making safety modifications, not dismantling the rocket, I'm relieved to report'.

A survey in 2015 found many playground rockets in public parks, although only a few were of heritage significance. The rockets at Enmore Park and Johnson Park, Dulwich Hill, are the only two remaining in the Marrickville area.

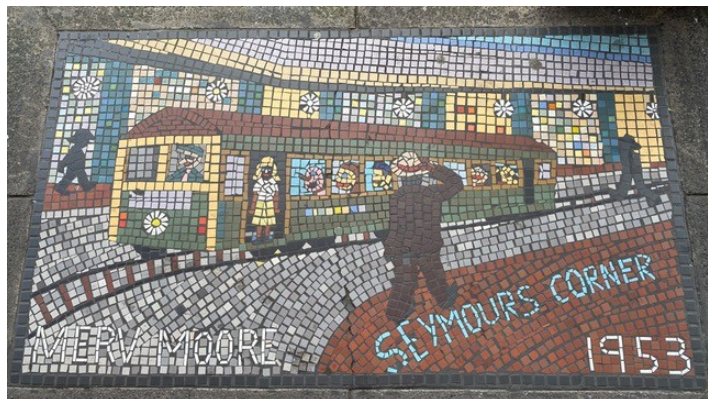
Many thanks to Sue for sharing the history and significance of these playground rockets.

Iain Carolin

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Marrickville's footpath mosaics

Late last year our Facebook page carried photos of the amazing tiled mosaics that lie along Marrickville Road and parts of Despointes and Malakoff Streets. The photos highlighted the poor condition of the mosaics, first laid down in 1994, and we sought support for their restoration and preservation.



Seymours Corner, near Westpac Bank, 241-243 Marrickville Road (photo: Rod Aanensen)

A member of the public drew the state of the mosaics to the attention of Inner West Council Mayor Darcy Byrne, who asked for the Society to contact him.

The mosaics were originally part of a Marrickville Council initiative to bring attention to, and revitalise, Marrickville's shopping strip. Tenders were called for themes to be represented in the mosaics. The community was consulted, and leaflets in 6 languages invited people to participate. Schools, community groups and individuals were all involved. It became a community project.



Water is Life—Save our Rivers, near Commonwealth Bank of Australia, 267 Marrickville Road (photo: Rod Aanensen)

When 54 mosaics were unveiled in September 1994 there was a street party, with a highwire artist from Circus Oz on a wire over Marrickville Road.

Of the original 54 mosaics, 46 remain and others have been added to bring the total to around 75. The mosaics reflect the nature of our community at that time and while they may not yet be considered historical or heritage, they still speak to our memories, concerns, dreams and aspirations.

With the support of Mayor Byrne and Councillor Mat Howard, a motion was put to Council, and unanimously passed, for a report to be prepared on the cost of restoring and repairing the mosaics to allow funding allocation in the next Council budget.

Rod Aanensen

Guardian Dogs of Newtown's Arts and Entertainment Precinct

The three 'Guardian Dogs', installed in 2005 to indicate the 'gateways' to Newtown's Arts Precinct, were the subject of our 2022 Winter Trivia question, with the answer in the subsequent July-August 2022 newsletter. Committee member **Elda Ribeiro** gave the correct answer, so it's apt that Elda noticed the recent disappearance of one of the dogs.

Newtown's Bedford Square (which many knew as 'Newtown Square') has been renamed Pride Square, and the new bollard and sign are in the spot where the dog once stood. Elda contacted Council: 'the dog was one of three that told a story and stood at the "gates" of the artistic and entertainment precinct and it would be a shame to lose one'.

Council responded, advising they have spoken with the artist, Richard Byrnes, and are currently scoping new locations for the dog, 'aiming to place the statue in a position that triangulates with her two friends not too far from her previous location'.

Elda's contact at Council has promised to provide more updates, and we will do likewise.

City Historian moving on

Dr Lisa Murray, who has been the City Historian at City of Sydney Council for the past 22 years, is moving on this month to pursue her career as a freelance public historian. In a recent letter to the Society, Lisa wrote:

It has been a privilege to champion history at the City, providing leadership, specialist historical advice and research, and making history accessible to the community. Some project highlights for me have included producing the 'Our City: 175 years in 175 objects' exhibition and catalogue; the Grand Organ music commission; 'Letters of Complaint' performances from the archive; the Sydney Culture Walks app; the Barani website; the Barani Barrabugu booklet; and my contribution to shaping and implementing the City's Naming Policy.

Lisa, a member of MHS, wrote the book *Sydney cemeteries* (2016) and spoke to the Society on this topic in October 2016. We wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

On 4 April, Minister for the Arts Tony Burke announced that the Federal Budget will provide funding for Trove to the National Library of Australia – \$33 million over four years and \$9.2 million annually in indexed ongoing funding for Trove from July 2027.

In a statement on its website, The National Library of Australia said: 'The certainty of this funding decision will allow the National Library to continue to provide this essential service, enrich it with new content, and stabilise and secure the platform, in line with the Trove Strategy.'

Update on two MHS 'housekeeping' issues

1. Honorary financial records reviewer

We are delighted to be able to report that member **Gabby Richards** has stepped up to take over as the honorary overseer of our annual financial statement. We are most grateful to Gabby for stepping up, and also to **Graeme Napier**, who patiently and graciously performed this role for the Society for more than 20 years.

2. Storage problems

Unfortunately, we can't report the same success after our plea for help with MHS storage issues, so that's one the committee still has to grapple with. If you think you can assist or have ideas to discuss, please email MHS (address bottom of back page), or ring Iain Carolin on 0400 473 252.

Correction: Norma Lawson and Jean Moncur

Robin Lawson, the daughter of Keith and Norma Lawson, who both died last year, has advised that, contrary to what was indicated in both their obituaries (July-August 2022 and March-April 2023 newsletters), Norma was *not* the daughter of Jean Moncur.

Robin stated that 'Norma's mother was Constance Moncur (nee Petersen), not Jean Moncur. My grandfather Eric Moncur and Jean may have had a common grandfather. Eric Moncur's family came from Findo Gask in Scotland in the 1850s. Market gardens in Marrickville were owned by the Moncur family and my grandfather and his brothers did work in the gardens until resumed for housing.'

Robin went on to write, 'I know Keith enjoyed very much reading about Marrickville where he was born and near where the Lawson plumbing business (in Alexandria) operated.' Keith grew up in Renwick Street and attended Ferncourt Public School.

Richard Blair

Vale Judy Finlason OAM

Member **Sue Castrique** advised us of the death of **Judy Finlason**, aged 92. Judy was the founder of the Addison Road Community Centre and a lifelong champion of many social and environmental groups. Her energy and passion encompassed many causes, including children's rights, human rights, children's services, community arts, heritage and the environment, especially the bushland of the Cooks River and Wolli Creek Valleys. She was a member of MHS.

In 1986, Judith Osborne Finlason was awarded the Order of Australia Medal 'for services to the community, particularly with the Community Activities Centres Network'. She also received the City of Canterbury Bankstown's Jack Munday Environment and Heritage Award in 2022. Judy said then: 'I was very chuffed to receive it, which I did on behalf of all the people who have contributed to Wolli and the other projects I have been involved in. That's where the credit lies. Jack Munday has been a hero of mine for many years, since my old inner city days.'

Peter Stevens, President of Wolli Creek Preservation Society, in informing members of Judy's death on April 22, wrote that Judy was 'one of the all-time great fighters, dating back to the late 70s, for the bushland of Wolli Creek Valley'. And: 'Many members and other walkers in the Valley would remember Judy popping out as they passed to tell them of the latest matters and to recruit them as new members. Her efforts on this front continued into her 90s.'

Judy's interest in history and heritage led her to research and write *'The Place That Jackson Built'* in 1999, the history of 6 stone cottages in Jackson Place, Wolli Creek. Her book was launched by Jack Munday, recognising the work of Judy and the WCPS in saving the cottages from destruction for the M5 motorway.

Judy Finlason was indeed a champion, and we offer our condolences to her loved ones.



Judy Finlason
(photo: Canterbury Bankstown City Council)

Lorraine Beach

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Autumn Trivia answer

New Sydenham Metro Station Artwork

As is no doubt often the case, there were some who knew the answer to this question, but who chose not to respond. **Diane McCarthy** was the only member who correctly identified the location of the artwork as depicted in the last newsletter.

Kass Finlay McAuliffe, Sydenham resident, participant and MHS member takes up the story:

The bronze plaque with its raised text is at the corner of Hogan and Burrows Avenues, Sydenham, in front of the new Sydenham Metro Station entrance, about 80 metres north of the current railway station entrance. The new Chatswood to Sydenham Metro line will have several new stations opening (for instance, Waterloo and Martin Place), but will also repurpose platforms at existing stations, as is the case with Sydenham Station having former platforms 1 and 2 now designated for the new Metro Sydenham Station driverless trains.



Kass Finlay McAuliffe at Sydenham Metro station
(photographer unknown)

Commissioned by Sydney Metro, the artist behind these A4-sized bronze plaques is Agatha Gothe-Snape. Agatha's invitation to me read 'invitation to participate in co-creation with artist Agatha Snape-Goethe [sic] of a community artwork for use at entrances to the new Sydenham Metro Train Station'. Her assistant contacted 15 Marrickville and Sydenham residents whose names had been relayed by word of mouth to

invite them to participate in a one-hour interview from which notes would be taken for anonymous artwork. While privacy was regarded as important to ensure participants could speak openly, all signed their agreement to the Notes being publicly available as plaques. I was interviewed in February 2021.

Participants came from various cultural backgrounds, but no such list is available online or at the station yet – this might change over time. Agatha showcased the artwork on both sides of the station to participants in late March 2023 followed by an event at nearby Batch Brewing, as one owner was apparently involved but out of town that evening.

Ultimately, these hand-drawn notes resulted in 30 bronze artworks, most cast flat into the pavement on both sides of the new Metro Station, but some curving around new seating. The late Chrys Meader's participation resulted in 4 bronze plaques spread across both entrances. My participation resulted in 2 plaques in front of the Burrows Avenue entrance (photo of one below).



While the plaques on the Sydenham side are on display to the public, the plaques off Sydenham Road in Marrickville will not be available for viewing until the whole Sydenham Metro Station opens in 2024. This is to ensure all other stations on the new Metro train line are complete. All Metro stations will feature new artworks.

Richard Blair

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2023 Calendar of MHS Events

Saturday 27 May

Visit to St Peters Cooks River: morning tea, history talk, walk through the church, its museum and the historic graveyard.

Details front page

Saturday 24 June

MHS Annual General Meeting

Details front page

Saturday 22 July

Going with the flow: a walk down Johnstons Creek

A guided walk with Megan Hicks

Saturday 26 August

1930s vintage blueprints by George Foster

A talk with Ron Ringer

Hidden Wynyard tunnels alight for Vivid

Committee member **Mary Barthelemy** has flagged this event that may be of particular interest to all who enjoyed Bill Phippen's February talk to MHS (see Megan Hicks's report in the March-April 2023 newsletter) about construction of the railway under Sydney, 1916-1932. It will also appeal to those of us who wondered why there was no platform 1 or 2 at Wynyard Station. The tunnels for those platforms were built during the construction that Bill talked to us about, intended to carry trains on the railway to the northern beaches.



Looking north in one of the platform 1 and 2 tunnels in its present-day function as a carpark access (photo: Wikimedia)

Of course, that railway was never built, and the tunnels were never used for trains. Instead, they carried trams to and from the Harbour Bridge from 1932 until 1958, when the Cahill Expressway opened.

The NSW government's vision then was that the motor car and freeways were the way forward. The tram network, over 250 km of tracks which had reached as far north as Narrabeen on the northern beaches, was soon dismantled. The tracks from platforms 1 and 2 were taken up, part of the area became a carpark for the Menzies Hotel, built in 1963, and the stairs and access to the tunnels were walled off.

More than 60 years later, the tunnels will again be accessible to the public. Sydney's annual light festival, 'Vivid', will feature 'Dark Spectrum', a journey into the tunnels, divided into eight areas of light and music, in what promises to be an exciting spectacle, described by the organisers as 'a transportive multi-sensory experience'. It's a ticketed event, bookable via Ticketek.

St Peters Cooks River History Group

Laurel and Bob Horton continue to make a truly remarkable contribution to recording local history. Their venture into the world of video is extraordinary, and the history group now has its own YouTube channel featuring over 50 videos covering a wide area of suburbs. It is simple to access their 'Highlighting History of Suburban Sydney' YouTube channel. Enter 'St Peters Cooks River history' into search. You'll see the option pictured below. Click on it and in you're in!



YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/@stpeterscooksriver1873>

St Peters Cooks River

Highlighting history in suburban Sydney. Preserving and promoting local history.

Webwise

For 75 years Matron Alice Cashin, Royal Red Cross Medal and Bar, twice mentioned in dispatches during WWI, lay in an unmarked grave in Woronora Cemetery. After being crowned 'Queen of Marrickville' and being given a large funeral at St Brigid's Church, she was forgotten. But not anymore. Visit our website at www.marrickvilleheritage.org.au to read her amazing story.

Rod Aanensen

President & Heritage Watch

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