

# MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.

CAMPERDOWN DULWICH HILL ENMORE  
NEWTOWN PETERSHAM STANMORE



LEWISHAM MARRICKVILLE ST PETERS  
SYDENHAM & TEMPE

## Our July meeting

**Saturday 22 July 9.45 for 10.00 am**

**Going with the flow: a walk down Johnstons Creek, with Megan Hicks**

**Where:** We start at Stanmore Library in Stanmore Reserve, near the Douglas Street (northern) exit from Stanmore Station. Street parking; T2 train line (or rail bus if there is trackwork); 412 bus route (Campsie to Martin Place). Wear sturdy shoes and outdoor clothes suited to the weather.

**Cost:** Free

**Booking:** Numbers are limited, so please book with Lorraine 0416 224 472 lbeach@iprimus.com.au

Johnstons Creek was once a pretty little stream bordering 'Annandale', the colonial farm of Major George Johnston. Today it is a concrete drain, some of it running underground, some of it an open canal.

Come with urban wanderer **Megan Hicks** as she ambles from the creek's source in Stanmore, through Camperdown, Annandale and Forest Lodge, to its mouth in Rozelle Bay.



Johnstons Creek bridge on Parramatta Road, Annandale. The bridge has the creek's name on it, discernible beneath the graffiti. (photo: Megan Hicks)

This is a walk for people who like to physically experience a sense of place. Along the way we will share stories about places we pass (sharks, murders and sewers), discover little-known urban nooks (some lovely, some grotty), listen to hidden water flowing beneath our feet, count the bridges we cross, and notice the topography.

It is a long walk (over 3 km) but fairly slow; there will be a comfort stop half way. We also cross three bus routes and a light rail route that can take people back towards the city if they've had enough. We finish at Tramsheds at Forest Lodge where there are amenities and plenty of food, coffee and ice cream outlets. Buses and light rail are there too.

Megan Hicks was for 20 years the curator of health and medicine, and gallery producer, at Sydney's Powerhouse Museum. She is a researcher, prolific author of publications both academic and non-academic, and an independent museums and heritage advisor. Megan is also an MHS member with a particular interest in the urban environment, both built and social. Her knowledge and style will ensure we have a lively and informative morning.

## Our August meeting

**Saturday 26 August 10 for 10.30 am**

**George Foster and his blueprints, a talk with Ron Ringer**

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

A presenter to MHS on two previous occasions, **Ron Ringer's** talk is about blueprints and the curious story of George Foster & Sons, late of 1-29 Princes Highway, St Peters. Ron is an independent consulting historian; the author of numerous publications including educational textbooks and commissioned histories; and he enjoys writing reviews for the online music platform, classikON. He has been a guest speaker at events hosted by U3A, Rotary and other pro bono organisations. Ron also works in the field of academic editing, and recently completed a two-year placement at Vilnius Technical University in Lithuania.

The building that once housed the engineering firm of George Fosters on Princes Highway has now been repurposed as apartment dwellings. Standing immediately opposite the former Bedford Brickworks, in its heyday Fosters employed scores of skilled tradesmen in its foundry and also draughtsmen and women in its offices above. From 1898 until the 1970s, Fosters built and repaired much of the engineering equipment used in the brickyards along the so-called 'Golden Mile' that stretched as far as Tempe and the current location of IKEA. Foster also



George Foster & Sons building, Princes Highway, St Peters c. 1914 (photo: State Library of NSW)

served many other engineering projects throughout Sydney.

But how did the process of manufacture commence? Of course, it started in the office above the foundry with the preparation of blueprints. Everyone knows that the housebuilder works according to plans, which are usually prepared by the architect. A more accurate term for a plan is the word, blueprint. House plans are just one example of working drawings prepared by architects, mechanical engineers, electrical engineers, aviation engineers and many other professionals.

Blueprinting is the standard method used to copy large architectural and construction drawings. A blueprint used to consist of white lines on a blue background. A more recent process uses blue lines on a white background.

Ron Ringer will deliver an illustrated presentation and a hands-on examination of actual blueprints that date from the early 20th century.

## MHS Annual General Meeting Saturday 24 June

A good roll up of members for what is generally a rather humdrum business meeting made for lively discussion, questions and welcome suggestions from members regarding the Society's activities.

Reports were delivered by the President, **Scott MacArthur**, and committee members on the Society's activities and finances for the past year, including commentary regarding heritage watch issues and updates on progress with our social media endeavours.

The Treasurer's financial report was handed out to all present, and explanations were provided by **Gabby Richards**, who was recently appointed by the committee to provide oversight, independent of the committee, of our financial record keeping. The financial report is available to members via post or email on request.

All reports were accepted by the meeting.

## MHS executive committee 2023-24

### President

Scott MacArthur

### Vice Presidents

Mary Barthelemy, Lyndal Gowland

### Treasurer

Stuart Grigg

### Secretary

Lorraine Beach

### Assistant Secretary

Iain Carolin

### Committee members

Rod Aanensen, Richard Blair, John McGrath, Elda Ribeiro, Ian Tyrrell, Nick Yetzotis

The final assignment for the 2022-23 committee was to award life membership to **Graeme Napier**, who retired this year as our honorary auditor. See page 6.

All committee positions were then declared vacant by Returning Officer **Trevor McGuire**. Trevor read out nominations for office bearers and committee members, and called for further nominations from the floor. None were received, and all nominees were elected and confirmed by a show of hands. The office bearers and committee members for 2023-24 are listed in the shaded box above.

Reports on the Society's activities over the past year are below.

## President's report

This was the tenth time I have been President, and I would like to thank all the members of the current Committee who have worked hard to keep the Society on an even keel as we have emerged from the worst of Covid-19. Many thanks to **Mary Oakenfull**, our diligent and resourceful Secretary for 9 years from 2013. Mary is retiring from the committee. **Rebecca Jones** and **Marg Ludlow** (our Secretary for the past year) are also retiring, having brought new insights and energy to our meetings.

A cautious return to gatherings followed Covid shutdowns and for the past year we have again enjoyed a full calendar of talks and outings. Our guest speakers generously gave us their time in preparing and delivering their presentations. They were **Judith Dunn** (Colonial Ladies: Lovely, Lively and Lamentably Loose); **Sue Castrique** (Gumbramorra Swamp and Tram Vale); **Rebecca Jones** (The Many Lives of Ferncourt); **Bill Phippen** (Building the railway under Sydney); and **Sue Jackson-Stepowski** (Playground 'rockets' reflect the Space Race).

There were also many who organised, coordinated or hosted our various events and outings, including our bus trip to Mt Wilson and the Turkish Baths; Pot Luck dinner hosted at the home of **'Tricia Blombery** and **Stuart Grigg**; a visit to the Lucy Osburn-Florence Nightingale Museum at Sydney Hospital; a visit to St Peters Church, Cooks River; and a 'Show and Tell' event, always popular, for which we thank our members for providing unrehearsed entertainment!

A highlight of last year was the well-attended event to launch our magnificent journal, *Heritage 16*, that editor **Richard Blair** and designer **Lorraine Beach** worked tirelessly to produce. Lorraine continues editing and producing our newsletter, now eight pages instead of four, and most members seem to appreciate receiving it by email, in colour. Others still prefer a paper copy and neither is a problem – just let her know your preference. When Lorraine went off around Australia last year, former editor Richard stepped in to bridge the gap for a couple of newsletters. We hope to reinforce the team soon with a new recruit.

As with many community organisations, the past year has been challenging for the Society, but it is pleasing that our membership numbers remain stable, and the Society is in good financial health. Our online presence, through Facebook and our website, continues to attract new visitors under the guidance of **Rod Aanensen**, and we encourage all our members to contribute items and commentary.

The current cost of living crisis has further polarised the debate about heritage and housing affordability across Sydney. At the end of last year, Inner West Council's ill-fated Urban Plan and Heritage Study sought to clear the decks for more intensive development in our area by denying any new heritage protection south of Parramatta Road, while raising permitted building heights and densities. These plans were put on hold when it became clear that existing residents would not tolerate their current urban environment and amenity being sacrificed for a mean and crowded future. But the growing calls for more affordable housing are pushing politicians of all parties to wind back heritage protections, while demonising heritage

supporters as elitist NIMBYs. While Council's heritage staff are seeking to protect Inner West pubs, substations and select precincts of heritage houses (like 7-13 Macarthur Parade in Dulwich Hill), councillors are far from united and supportive of these listings. The growing clamour of developers and YIMBYs to open up our Inner West 'museum' for affordable housing will drive resistance to any new heritage protection measures in the coming years. Now, more than ever, we encourage all our members to be alert to threats to the heritage of our municipality. You are our eyes and ears!

On behalf of the Committee, I thank all of our members for their continuing support of the Society. We look forward to a year of gatherings, meetings and outings that will stimulate and entertain while making sure that our heritage voices are not silenced.

**Scott MacArthur**

## Report on Facebook and the website

**Rod Aanensen** reported that since revitalisation of our Facebook page we have been able to attract new followers, so that now we are just shy of 1,000 Facebook 'members'. Rod thanked those who had posted stories or other items to generate people's interest in the Society and the Marrickville area. He urged members to post items of interest as it is the regular updating of posts that keeps our page in the forefront of people's minds.

Facebook has led to a heritage success this year. Late last year Rod posted a number of photographs of the mosaics that are laid along Marrickville Road and a section of Illawarra Road and Malakoff Street.

The original mosaics were laid in 1994 as part of a council plan to draw attention to Marrickville's shopping strip and encourage community unity. The ideas for the images came from individuals, community groups and organisations.

The photos alerted people to the mosaics' existence and the threat to that existence through neglect. The posts were brought to the attention of Inner West Council Mayor Darcy Byrne who asked the Society to get in touch. We did, and put our case for preservation of the mosaics to two Council meetings. This has led to the Council approving a restoration process to take place, in conjunction with the relaying of the footpaths along Marrickville Road. Rod noted that it is the power of Facebook and the interest it generates which enabled this to happen.

[Note: Rod is now looking for people who participated in the creation of the mosaics in 1994 to learn more about them. So far, he has found four. Do you know anyone?]

The webpage reached a large readership of 11,300 visitors last year, and is on track for the same this year. It generates contact and questions (52 so far this



year, often family history) from far and wide, including from Ireland, as reported in our January-February newsletter, an author in Canada and a historian in Tahiti.

The Canadian author is writing a novel including a character based on her father. He had been born and brought up in Marrickville so she sought information on our suburb to provide background for her character.

The historian from Tahiti is researching a man named Philip Hitoti Henry, who has links to Marrickville. Rod provided her with photos of and information about the house which Philip and members of his family owned and occupied at 442 Marrickville Road. This house still exists, in a very modified form, as part of Columbia Aged Care – Acacia Centre, which is now closed and apparently for sale. Members in the AGM audience revealed that part of the Acacia Centre is a heritage-listed building. We will keep a watchful eye on it for signs of future development.

Offers of historical items are occasionally made through the website feedback form and, although we have no storage, Rod often feels compelled to accept as the items may well be significant and should be preserved. One recent such offer was a WWI soldier's citation, the subject of Rod's article on page 5.

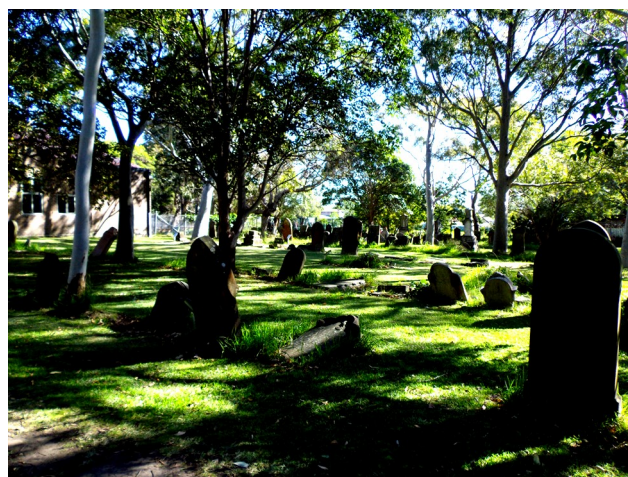
Further audience participation involved discussion about the Inner West Council archives, the lack of an archivist and current difficulties with access to archives for history research. We undertook to arrange for a Council representative to address a future MHS meeting to inform us about this issue.

## **Our visit to St Peters Anglican Church Cooks River Saturday 27 May**

It had been several years since the Society's last group visit to this historic church and for some attending it was their first. **Laurel and Bob Horton**, MHS life members who are the backbone of the **St Peters Cooks River History Group**, welcomed us to the church, filled with the sound of its 1880 Brindley & Foster pipe organ, played by Dai Nettle.

We enjoyed morning tea then Laurel and Bob treated us to an expert talk about the church, its people, and its history. Their presentation was both enlightening and entertaining, and after fielding the inevitable barrage of questions from members, they invited us to explore the church, its beautiful stained glass windows, the compact museum behind the altar and the wonderful 19th century graveyard. Our members spent as long as they wished there, with Laurel and Bob on hand, attentively providing more insights and answers.

One of Sydney's oldest, the church is listed on the NSW State Heritage Register. Its construction began



The tranquil setting of St Peters Anglican Church Cooks River  
(photos: Iain Carolin)

in 1838 to architect Thomas Bird's design, using sun dried bricks, local ironbark columns, and stained glass windows imported from Sheffield, England.

There is a long list of reasons for this church's heritage significance: influential early 1800s 'locals' Alexander Brodie Spark and Robert Campbell are largely credited with it being established; some of its remaining original fabric is the only surviving built form in Australia designed by architect Thomas Bird; later works and additions were designed by prominent architects Edmund Blacket, George Allen Mansfield, Professor Leslie Wilkinson and Morton Herman; construction and later repairs were funded by the church's congregation and donations from local brickmakers; it is one of the earliest churches constructed using free labour; and finally, its graveyard, which contains graves, remnant grave stones and monuments of prominent Sydney people.

The church that gave its name to the suburb of St Peters sits on a six lane highway, in a major industrial area, under the flight path a stone's throw from the airport and just 9 kms from Sydney's CBD. Yet it is a peaceful, picturesque and idyllic place and, as someone said on the day: 'It's so lovely and quiet, we could be somewhere out in the bush'. Our thanks to Laurel and Bob Horton for hosting a top day out.

**Lorraine Beach**

Page 4



## Historic signage eyesore

This is in the category of historic signage now the worse for wear. Our October-November 2014 newsletter included an article about the 18 historic signs installed and unveiled by Marrickville Council. In the July-August 2020 newsletter I wrote a piece titled 'Neglected local historic signs' focusing on those outside Marrickville post office and in Enmore Road commemorating nearby *Enmore House*.

Another of these signs, pictured below, is in Trafalgar Street, Petersham opposite the new Petersham RSL Club. It relates to Petersham Railway Station which is behind the sign. The images were taken by me on the dates indicated.



Historic sign Petersham Railway Station 30 June 2023  
(photo: Richard Blair)



Historic sign Petersham Railway Station 2 October 2014  
(photo: Richard Blair)

The June 2023 photos show the sign *after* multiple layers of posters had been removed, but it is still virtually impossible to read.

Perhaps the Inner West Council doesn't feel it's their responsibility, given the 2014 signs were installed by the now-extinct Marrickville Council, but it certainly remains an eyesore. It is recommended that this sign be either removed or restored.

It is suggested that an audit of all such signs in the former Marrickville LGA should be carried out with some urgency.

**Richard Blair**

## A World War I certificate returns 'home'

In April, we were contacted through the website by Carmen and Allan Williams of the vintage store in Bellingen called 'A Chair in There'. They had discovered a 'Municipality of Marrickville Great War Service Appreciation' certificate, included amongst posters purchased in an auction lot. Carmen and Allan felt this item belonged back in Marrickville and asked if we would like to have it. I also felt it belonged here, replied that we would be delighted to have it, and the certificate was duly received.

The recipient's name had been written in ink and has faded severely, but investigation was undertaken and, with the help of **Amie Zar**, Community History and Heritage Co-ordinator at Inner West Council (IWC), we found him.

**Leslie Larkin** was just 19 and a labourer when he enlisted in April 1916. He had attended Marrickville Public School (appearing on their honour roll) and lived at home with his parents in Garners Avenue, Marrickville. Leslie's brother **John**, aged 26 and married to Muriel, lived just down the road, and had enlisted one month earlier. Both brothers returned to Australia, Leslie in 1918 and John in 1919.

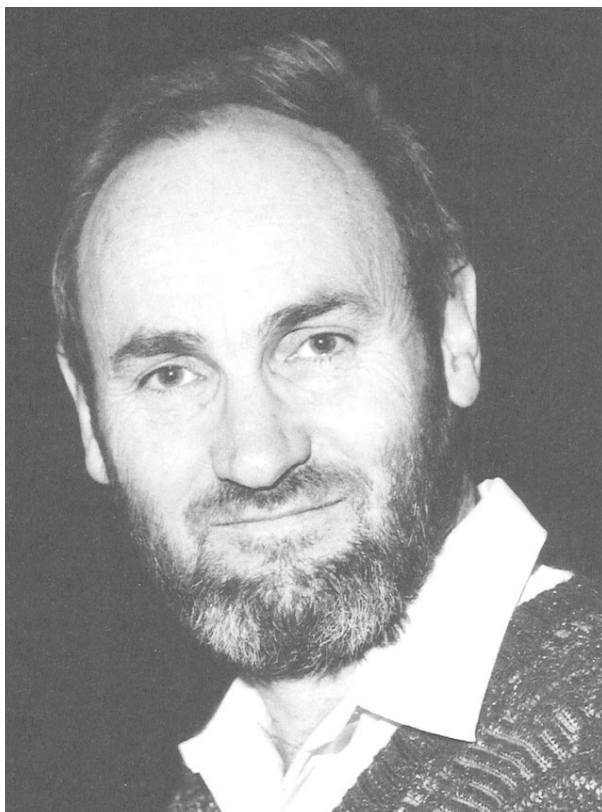
These sorts of citations were presented to those who served by many local governments before, during and after the war. Some early certificates were designed as a spur to further recruitment. As the war went on and casualties mounted, certificates to those who enlisted continued and honour certificates were also presented to those who returned or to the families of those who did not. The Mitchell Library holds one from the Borough of Wangaratta; IWC holds an unused one, which was displayed by the former Marrickville Council on special occasions; and the Australian War Memorial has a vast collection of the numerous kinds of certificates produced.





## Vale: Dr John O Ward (1940–2023)

It was sad to hear of the death of Dr John O Ward on 29 April 2023 in Canberra. John was a lecturer and researcher in Medieval History at the University of Sydney for 36 years, retiring in 2003. He was a founding member of the Medieval and Early Modern Centre (MEMC), and the Director of MEMC John Gagné said about John: 'A prolific and imaginative historian, John authored, edited, and co-edited several books and dozens of articles on the reception of classical rhetoric in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. He was one of the world's foremost historians of the rhetorical tradition, alive to its transformations and continuities across Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and Renaissance. A voluble, witty and much beloved teacher, John was renowned for his engaging classroom analysis of historical sources.'



Dr John O Ward.

(Photographer unknown, courtesy of History Matters, blogsite of the Discipline of History, University of Sydney)

John became a MHS member in 2017, in the wake of conducting a walk for our members around Summer Hill and Ashfield. A long-time resident of Summer Hill he had a strong interest in heritage conservation and when on Ashfield Council (1977-91) was one of the few councillors who advocated strongly in favour of the built heritage. He was Mayor of Ashfield (1991-95). A founding member of Ashfield & District Historical Society in 1973 he was its president for some years. Other societies he belonged to include the Haberfield Association (he supported the creation of a Haberfield Conservation Area), the

Australian Railway Historical Society (where he was an active member and a great lover of steam trains) and the Book Collectors' Society of Australia (where one of his talks was 'Why I am *not* a book collector, though I have rooms full of academic books, and a total of well over 17,000 books!'). Unlike many collectors, he actually *read* his books. He was a Life Member of both the A&DHS and the HA.



John Ward in 1974 in celebratory attire at an Ashfield & District Historical Society function (photo courtesy of Ashfield & District Historical Society)

At his funeral, John's wife Gail explained how they met. In the 1950s at Sydney University there was little in the way of food outlets, and one had to queue for a considerable time to buy a sandwich. Gail noticed this handsome fellow – a total stranger – near the head of the queue and asked him if he would buy her a sandwich and a drink. He said he'd be happy to but only on condition that she would share her lunch with him. They married two years later.

John was known for his generosity and made hefty donations to his various organisations. He travelled extensively, embraced left wing politics, opera, and dressing up in medieval attire, was a keen cyclist, an ardent conversationalist and had a great understanding of human nature. Our condolences to Gail, their three children and extended family members.

**Richard Blair**

## Another Lucy Osburn snippet

In the wake of our MHS visit to the Lucy Osburn-Nightingale Museum in March, we learned that, during a Sydney Hospital-trained nurse's recent visit to England, she 'just had to make the trip to Harlow Hill Cemetery, Harrogate [North Yorkshire] to find Lucy Osburn's grave'. She found it, in need of a clean and with its cross lying on the ground. She arranged a quote from a stonemason and Sydney Hospital Nurses Alumni will pay for its restoration.



## 2023 Calendar of MHS Events

### Saturday 22 July

*Going with the flow: a walk down  
Johnstons Creek  
A guided walk with Megan Hicks  
Details front page*

### Saturday 26 August

*1930s vintage blueprints by George Foster  
A talk with Ron Ringer  
Details front page*

### Saturday 9 September

#### A History Week special event

*How to research the history of your house  
A talk with Gabby Richards—details TBA*

### Saturday 23 September

*Walking tour of Illawarra Road Marrickville  
A guided walk with Rod Aanensen*

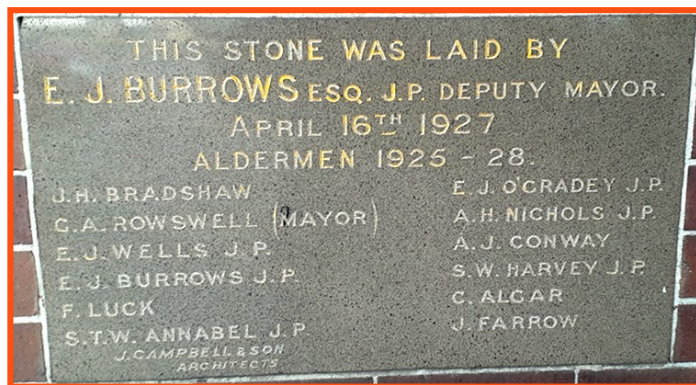
## Day trips by coach on the backburner

Along with pretty much everything else in our lives, the cost of hiring a coach has increased due to hikes in fuel and operators' costs. We've always aimed to deliver outings 'at cost' to members, making neither a profit nor a loss. The biggest cost has always been coach hire, and obviously more passengers equals lower cost per person for the coach. Despite numbers declining in recent years, we still managed to make coach hire viable, but the Mt Wilson trip in September 2022 was, attendance-wise, disappointing with just 19 takers including our intrepid volunteer driver, **Ian Phillips**, who sourced a suitable smaller vehicle and then drove it. This arrangement is not sustainable, and we have shelved plans for future day trips until we can be more optimistic with the number of attendees. If we have enough starters, a coach is affordable. So please give us your opinions, using any of the contacts on this page. Please tell us:

- Would you like day trips by bus to continue
- Is the cost generally too high. Should we always 'bring our own lunch' to reduce costs.
- Is an 'all inclusive' cost preferred, such as morning tea, lunch, entry fees and the like, with no 'extras'
- Are the destinations offered appealing – or not
- Do we need more guaranteed pit stops
- Any other comments or suggestions

**Lorraine Beach**

## Winter Trivia question



Where would you find this memorial stone from nearly a century ago?

Contact Richard 0413 335 897 or Society's email address at bottom of this page.

## Addi Road Food Pantry

The Food Pantry may not be heritage, though it might be one day, but the place it's based in is. Is there anywhere, in Sydney or elsewhere for that matter, quite like the Addison Road Community Organisation in Marrickville? Champions of human rights & food relief, arts & culture and sustainability, today's amazing place has grown from a dilapidated group of raggle-taggle buildings, a former army depot, to an extraordinary model of community achievement.

Right now, when many people are finding it tough and it's the middle of winter, their Food Pantry could use some help. How can we help? By donating: \$s to their bank account; food for people in need via their emergency relief and low cost stores at Marrickville and Camperdown (only unopened non-perishables); or a pair of helping hands (by volunteering). Visit their website <addiroad.org.au> for 'how to' and a great read.

## Marrickville Medal 2023

Entries for Inner West Council's dual program for Built Environment Awards – Marrickville Medal and Urban Photography – will close on 14 July. This year's theme is 'Sharing stories of our built environment'. Awards presentations are scheduled for 7 October 2023 at a venue to be confirmed.

### President & Heritage Watch

Scott 0416 152 501 | sbtarmac@gmail.com

### Treasurer

Stuart 0414 620 519 | stuartgrigg2@gmail.com

### Newsletter

Lorraine 0416 224 472 | lbeach@iprimus.com.au

### Webmaster

Rod 0431 487 375 | mhswab@exemail.com.au