

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.



CAMPERDOWN DULWICH HILL ENMORE
NEWTOWN PETERSHAM STANMORE

LEWISHAM MARRICKVILLE ST PETERS
SYDENHAM & TEMPE

Our Next Meeting

Saturday 22 February 10.15 for 10.30 am
The life and deaths of Robert 'Nosey Bob' Howard with Rachel Franks
The Pavilion, Marrickville Library,
Cnr Marrickville & Livingstone Roads

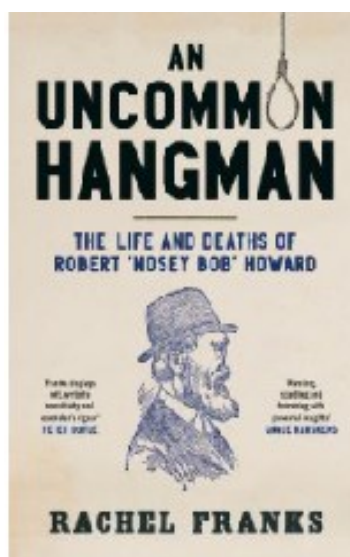
Join **Rachel Franks** for an excursion into our dark past and the death penalty in Australia. Learn about Robert 'Nosey Bob' Howard, the longest-serving executioner for New South Wales, and the man who hanged some of the worst criminals who ever stood on the scaffold at Darlinghurst Gaol.

Hear, too, about some of the early efforts to abolish capital punishment, including the work done by journalists, politicians and everyday people who wanted a more civilised justice system.

Dr Rachel Franks holds PhDs in Australian crime fiction (Central Queensland University) and in true crime texts (University of Sydney).

An award-winning writer, she is the author of *An uncommon hangman: the life and deaths of Robert 'Nosey Bob' Howard* (UNSW Press, 2022).

Books will be available for purchase on the day at a special price of \$30 (cash or bank transfer).



Our Last Meeting

Saturday 23 November 2024
Mascot's miracle: the 1971 airliner collision that nearly took 240 lives – talk by Peter Hobbins

Members at our meeting on Saturday 23 November were given a detailed illustrated talk by **Peter Hobbins** on the miracle near miss of two aeroplanes at Kingsford Smith (colloquially Mascot or Sydney) Airport in 1971.

The world was shocked in March 1977 when two Boeing 747 airliners collided on a runway at Los

Rodeos airport in the Canary Islands, killing 583 people. In Australia, aviation experts said the crash would never have happened if both pilots had studied official reports of a similar near miss in Sydney. Decades later, aviation safety author Macarthur Job declared the Mascot collision was 'one of the nearest approaches to calamity ever seen in Australian skies.'

A major expansion following World War II and emergence of new international jetliners caused the Australian Government to expand the runway into Botany Bay in 1968. This addition necessitated an underpass for the 6-lane General Holmes Drive, creating a distinct hump in the runway's 2,700 metre surface. Because of the increase in larger aircraft a new control tower was also constructed on the reclaimed land, along with a new fire station.

In 1971, Mascot Airport handled 79,097 domestic airline flights and 16,058 international flights. One overseas airline that offered a weekly service from Vancouver to Mascot airport was CP Air (formerly Canadian Pacific Airlines). This service was a distinctive orange topped DC8 CF-CPQ (new 'stretched' DC8-63 series) approved to fly into Australia from March 1970, the largest commercial aircraft to fly into Australia to that time. On 29 January 1971, a CF-CPQ touched down at Mascot at 9.34 pm, carrying 136 passengers and 11 crew. Within minutes 'it touched off a major safety incident, reshaping the legal industrial and procedural basis of airline travel in Australia'.

While the Canadian liner was landing, Lindsay Hill in the control tower advised CF-CPQ to 'take taxiway right – call on 121.7'. He intended the aircraft to vacate the runway and taxi west to the



Peter Hobbins
(photo: Hillary Goldsmith)

newly opened international terminal, also switching radio to come under controller Robert Davidson's guidance. The crew claimed to hear the direction as 'backtrack if you like - change to 121.7'. They later attested that this confusion was due to mishearing Hill's Australian accent.

In the dark and drizzly conditions, four men in the control tower peered past the hump on Runway 16, some 1,200 metres away and saw CF-CPQ turning right as instructed. The Canadians then did a full U-turn. At 9.35 pm Hill cleared the TAA VH-TJA Boeing 727, fuelled for a flight to Perth, for take-off from the northern end of Runway 16, carrying 84 passengers and 8 crew.

The 727 accelerated and lifted its nose to depart. At that instant the captain noticed an obstacle on Runway 16. The two aircraft were now approximately 1,400 metres apart with CF-CPQ barely moving but 727 accelerating through 180 kilometres per hour directly towards the Canadian airliner.

These were the critical seconds. The Canadians had switched radio frequencies and not heard that 727 was taking off. Suddenly they saw the lights of the CF-CPQ accelerating towards them and the pilot veered the lumbering CF-CPQ to the right of the runway's centreline. Approximately six seconds later, as the 727 screeched overhead at 9.36 pm, CF-CPQ shuddered.

Through the windscreen, the CF-CPQ air crew saw the lights of another aircraft coming into land before them, the controller asked if CF-CPQ was on the taxiway. 'Negative sir, we're on the runway, we were cleared to backtrack on the runway'.

The landing TAA DC9 was urgently instructed to go around, avoiding a potential second collision while 727 took a taxiway to the left arriving at the international terminal.

Just ten minutes later an East-West Airliner Fokker 727 was permitted to take off on Runway 16. The captain of the Fokker later reported seeing hundreds of items of debris in his lights, claiming 'it was only sheer luck which enabled him to avoid wreckage which covered the runway'.

Whilst those accidents were averted, the TAA 727 did collide with the DC8 CF-CPQ, 'shearing off the DC8's tailfin and gouging an 18-metre path through the underside of the TAA 727, severely damaging air conditioning, hydraulic and electrical systems.'

The close call at Mascot 'led to a tightening of airways procedures, including a requirement for pilots to notify the tower when their aircraft was clear of the run'.

At the end of his talk, Peter commented, 'There were more aeroplane accidents on the ground than in the air.' This certainly was a 'near-miracle' at Mascot, and we thank Peter for sharing details of this miracle with Society members.

Heather Smallbone



Memorabilia (photo: Hillary Goldsmith)

Editor's Note Peter Hobbins jointly won Bayside Council's 2023 Ron Rathbone Local History Competition with his essay on this event. It can be accessed online. The author of the newsletter account acknowledges Peter's article in the preparation of her report.

Pot Luck Christmas Dinner 2024

For the second year running **Joanne and John McGrath** hosted our annual event in Marrickville on Saturday 7 December. Our hosts set up a table indoors along with an outdoor table, but expected rain did not eventuate.

It was pleasing to see some new faces join our regular stalwarts who have rarely missed pot lucks in recent years. One lucky door prize (bottle of port and other treats) was awarded to John's sister Anne McGrath, but the judges were satisfied that no nepotism took place. The second lucky door prize went to Peter Mayes (Christmas cake).



*Scott MacArthur, Peter Mayes, Lorraine Beach
(photographer: unknown)*



Anne McGrath, Lyndal Gowland,
Scott MacArthur (photo: Lorraine Beach)

Thanks to John and Joanne for again proving to be super hosts and to all our attendees who ensured we had a varied and extensive variety of fare making this another most convivial occasion.

Richard Blair

A new School of Arts in Newtown

An article was published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (25 November 2024) about a proposed renovation of the 5 Eliza Street building in Newtown. A trust headed by Greg Khoury, director of Century Venues, is looking to double the building's existing floor plan with two theatres, three studios for artists, a café and a theatre bar. Its new main theatre will have 200 seats.

Founded as the Newtown School of Arts in 1858 with wool merchant Thomas Holt (later, to own *The Warren* in Marrickville), the first President, 'a driving force and founding member', it aimed to bring 'the rich man's greatest luxuries within the reach of the poorest.'

It was inspired by a wider School of Arts Movement, prevalent in the 19th and early 20th centuries, which aimed to create community-run educational hubs, providing public access to books, lectures, classes, as well as providing entertainment and recreational activities.

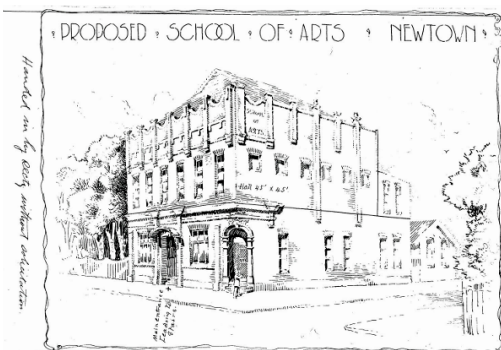


Image courtesy
Seliza.com.au

Since the founding of the Newtown School of Arts, it has been used to host homecomings from war, as a hospital during the 1918–1920 Spanish flu, for plays, dances, and other events. After the Second World War, however, the School of Arts fell into relative disuse, as much of its function was superseded by public libraries and schools. The present heritage building dates from 1916.



Proposed redevelopment (Courtesy Seliza.com.au)

Greg Khoury's model for the revival of the school is Kinselas, a pub in Darlinghurst, but until 1982, a funeral parlour for around 50 years. He says that, at its peak, Kinselas was a 'hybrid of theatre and visual arts supported by income from dining', and that his aim is similarly to create 'a place for artists and performers to create and take more risks, to increase audiences and help reinvigorate Sydney's night time economy.'

If the proposal is approved, the trust controlling the building will need to raise a further \$2 million, matching funds from the previous NSW government, an amount it is one-third of the way towards achieving.

The late Chrys Meader wrote a history of the institution: *A history of The Newtown School of Arts: a local mosaic from 19th century to 21st century* — available online at 5eliza.com.au/the-history.

Sean Barthelemy

Vale: Lynette (Lyn) Spry (1944-2023)

The Society only recently learnt of the death of Lyn Spry, formerly of Toowoomba and Dulwich Hill, who died on 18 December 2023 aged 79. Lyn was a businesswoman who ran her own small recruitment business in the city. She moved from the eastern suburbs to Dulwich Hill in the late 1990s where she renovated a house in Constitution Road and took an interest in local heritage matters. She joined MHS in 2000.

Caroll Phillips

Vale: Joy Lewis (1919–2024)

One would be hard-pressed to find anyone with a more appropriate first name than Joy Kingsbury Lewis who died on 28 November 2024 aged 105. Joy was like all good fairy godmothers – she spread joy. Her magic wand was her generous, outgoing, loving personality, always looking for ways to bring joy into others' lives.



*Publicity photo for A Kiss for Cinderella,
Minerva Theatre, Kings Cross, 1948
(Joy Lewis Collection)*

Joy's mother was Valerie Kingsbury, whose father, Joseph Kingsbury, was a well known Newtown draper, and the name 'Kingsbury' appears on the façade of a King Street Newtown building where he had his store. His good friend Marcus Clark honed his own retailing skills working for Kingsbury, who was also a stalwart of the Church of Christ and a founder of the Enmore Tabernacle in Metropolitan Road, Enmore.

Joseph's wife was Harriet Whately (whose father Charles was another prominent King Street Newtown retailer, after whom Whateley (sic) Street and Lane are named. Both Kingsbury and Whately were mayors of Newtown).

Valerie was a professional elocutionist. One of eight children, her younger sister Edna Kingsbury, aged 9, tragically drowned in 1906 with another young girl in the private swimming pool of Marcus Clark at *Sefton*, Dulwich Hill. Valerie married William (known as Evan) Lewis in 1911, and they were active members of the Marrickville Church of Christ in Illawarra Road. Evan Lewis was a manual arts teacher at, among others, Ashfield Boys' High

and Lakemba Primary. Joy had an older brother Victor who was killed in World War II and a younger sister Yvonne, now 99, who continues to live on the Central Coast.

Joy grew up in Randall Street, Marrickville. She attended Marrickville West Public School and St George Girls High School.

After leaving school, she became one of the top students at the Metropolitan Secretarial College. In a newspaper report (*Daily News*, 4 April 1940, p 2) she was described as 'Sydney's fastest speed typist' and as being the only woman in Australia holding a diploma of speech therapy. The article stated, 'at a pinch she can type copperplate copy at nearly 100 words per minute'; at 21, she was timed in a competition at typing 85 words per minute for half an hour. Joy's proficiency as a typist was recognised in the various stenographical positions she held, both with the advertising agency J Walter Thompson and with the Commonwealth Court Reporting Branch where she was held in high regard by colleagues and judges. She was also competent in shorthand.

Work as a speech therapist was postponed for a decade when World War II intervened and the proposed primary school program was scrapped.

Her love of music was nurtured at home and church. Joy took private piano lessons at the Conservatorium and was organist for many years at Marrickville Church of Christ. Her love of classical music was profound: her scrapbook from the 1930s and 1940s includes programs by famous international visitors such as Yehudi Menuhin who she adored. An accomplished pianist, printed programs reveal she accompanied former Metropolitan College student Joan Sutherland on at least two occasions at recitals. This was long before Sutherland became a world famous opera singer.

Then there was her love of the theatre. Joy completely immersed herself in studies at the Whitehall Academy of Dramatic Art (on a scholarship) from 1945 and then went straight into the company as an actress in minor roles and doing admin and stage managing work until 1949.

As well as shows at the Minerva in Kings Cross, she spent many months each year on tour to Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth. (Papers relating to Joy's Whitehall Productions years are held by the Mitchell Library.) After leaving Whitehall Productions, Joy returned to freelance secretarial assignments before becoming a visiting speech therapist in primary schools.

In the 1960s Joy joined Norman McVicker's Pocket Playhouse in Sydenham. There she acted in *The Barretts of Wimpole Street* in 1966, after McVicker urged her to 'come out of retirement'. She was also a hard worker behind the scenes spending countless hours with McVicker typing up his handwritten scripts. They remained close friends. When actor/director Charlie Little started his long running theatre talks, Joy was an avid attendee and theatregoer. Living in Woy Woy was no barrier to Joy venturing to Newtown, then Summer Hill, each fortnight, to attend Charlie's sessions.

In 1954, Joy relocated to Beverly Hills with her parents. There she made lasting friendships with migrant families who found themselves fortunate enough to settle in Cahill Street, including the Leong family from Hong Kong, and the Philippides, a Jewish family from Egypt. Her friendships were recorded in thousands of photographs in her possession.



Leo McKern (Rumpole of the Bailey) with Joy Lewis in London in the 1980s
(Joy Lewis Collection)

After retirement, she moved into a newly opened retirement village in Woy Woy. She decided the village should have a regular magazine, so she set one up and compiled it for some years, demonstrating her editing and writing skills in addition to her typing prowess.

Joy's support for a huge list of charities led the family to wonder whether she would remain solvent!

Joy was a prolific letter writer, attested to by her letter files stretching back to the 1930s, and an ardent archivist. She sent letters to family and friends, politicians and public figures. She wrote to Joern Utzon at the time the Opera House opened, eloquently asking him to reconsider his decision

never to return to Sydney (unsuccessful). No doubt the many thousands of pages of words she typed was possible because her creative eloquence was matched by her champion speed typing skills. She could type almost as fast as she could think.

Her letters of condolence to family, friends and acquaintances are deeply moving. She could sometimes be acerbic; she was never bland or insipid.

She enjoyed overseas travel. Her capacity for making friends and nurturing friendships was extraordinary and she made friends wherever she went. She loved the natural world, flowers, plants, scenery, the Swiss Alps. Her ability to find the comic or humorous in everyday life was one of Joy's most astonishing gifts.

Recently, Joy was finding it hard to put a name to a face in an old photo and she said: 'I hope I don't lose all my marbles before I drop off the perch' – a classic mixed metaphor. She knew she was having fun with language; her sense of humour never left her.

Some time ago, Brett began asking Joy to recite poems and play extracts for his phone's camera. One of her party pieces was Portia's courtroom plea from *The Merchant of Venice*. This was typically expressive of Joy's view of life: the idea of mercy trumping justice. Brett found a superbly delivered version of the speech from Boxing Day 2018 to screen at the funeral in December.

Joy joined Marrickville Heritage Society in 1988. She was a proud member of the Society and continued to read the newsletter with interest until very recently.

Vale to a remarkable lady.

Brett Johnson (nephew of Joy) and Richard Blair

Vale: John Butcher (1943–2025)

John Butcher died on 26 January 2025 aged 81 years. John was a strong advocate for Cooks River and President of the Cooks River Valley Association (CRVA) for 7 years (2012 – 2018). He especially loved Cooks River, and worked tirelessly to help rehabilitate the river and build understanding, connection and respect within the community for the local environment and Aboriginal care of Country.

Many great initiatives were undertaken by the CRVA under John's leadership, including the annual Candles on the River, the container deposit scheme campaign, the Non-Swimming Carnival, the Steel Park Life Savers Postcard campaign, CRVA water testing program to name just a few.

To get a fuller appreciation of the breadth of John's influence, read the CRVA Annual Reports from 2012 to 2018 on the CRVA website.

For years, John advocated for the concept of a Pemulwuy Trail – a walking trail along Cooks River, acknowledging Pemulwuy as a leader of the resistance movement against the English invasion 1788. John is attributed as the originator of the CRVA slogan – 'We are all Cooks River People caring for country'.



John Butcher (centre) with Peter Munro and Sue Bishop on a working bee at Cooks River in 2016 (photo: Christian Giles)

John was a lifelong activist and agitator for peace, social justice and the environment. As a Catholic priest in Redfern he supported draft resisters and Indigenous rights campaigns. As a community campaigner he helped to form South Sydney Community Aid, was the inaugural coordinator of the Newtown Neighbourhood Centre, a longtime Greens member, and much more. He was a gardener at the University of Sydney, former president of the Cooks River Valley Association and a proud member of the Mudcrabs.

Though not a member of MHS, John was known to hold the Society in high regard. In 2015 John facilitated a walk for the Society along Cooks River from Illawarra Road to Richardson's Lookout. There, he spoke about the plaque in the ground commemorating 'Sorry Day' events that had been held there and the Gallipoli Centenary Peace Campaign, with which he was closely involved. John advocated for the park to be renamed 'Peace and Reconciliation Park'.

On 8 November 2016 the park was formally launched as Richardson's Lookout – Marrickville Peace Park with the introduction given by John Butcher. John, along with Nadia Wheatley, also collaborated with MHS in a submission to council to take measures to conserve Fatima Island in Cooks River.

Most of the information provided in this tribute comes from members of the CRVA. A celebration of John's life, attended by about 200 people, was held on 5 February at the Rowers on Cooks River. The Society extends its condolences to John's family and friends.

WJ Sanders, Marrickville, silverware experts, and the Australian Open

All the trophies for the winners at the Australian Open Tennis championships are handmade by artisans for WJ Sanders, Fitzroy Street, Marrickville, using Australian silver.

Together with sister company ABC Bullion, WJ Sanders completed the Norman Brookes Challenge Cup and Daphne Akhurst Memorial Cup for the Australian Open 2025 (AO).

Formerly based in the city, WJ Sanders has been 'Australia's foremost goldsmith and silversmith, honing excellence since 1911', but in 2012 Tennis Australia commissioned WJ Sanders to produce these trophies for both the singles and doubles title winners, as well as associated plates and medallions.

The Australian Men's Open Tennis trophy is named as 'The Norman Brookes Trophy', which is a replica of a magnificent silver trophy modelled on the 'Warwick Vase' crafted by an English silversmith in 1906. A silver replica is presented each year to the winner. A native of Melbourne, Sir Norman Brookes (1877–1968) was a champion Australian tennis player winning three grand slams and being part of the Australian Davis Cup winning team six times between 1907 and 1919.

The AO 2025 celebrates the centenary of Daphne Akhurst's inaugural Australian Championships singles victory, a win that heralded her brief but remarkable career of five Australian Open singles (between 1925 and 1930), five doubles titles and four mixed doubles titles.

Daphne Akhurst (1903–1933) was born and raised in Ashfield, and her home club was The Western Suburbs Lawn Tennis Association, Pratten Park, Ashfield. She married Royston Cozens and gave birth to a son, Donald, but died tragically due to complications during her second pregnancy. She was a promising piano player who had qualified as a music teacher.

In 1934, the Daphne Akhurst Memorial Cup for the winner of the Australian Open Women's Final was named in her honour. Thanks to member **Paula Gard** for bringing this to our attention.

Richard Blair

Charlie Chaplin at the Enmore

The November-December 2023 issue of the newsletter featured as its mystery picture the 1920 mission-style Enmore Theatre. (Seen again in the answer in the following issue.)

A dinner I attended featured a talk by Paddy MacDonald about his Charlie Chaplin memorabilia collection – the largest in private hands. I was intrigued by the large item on display featuring Charlie Chaplin and the Enmore Theatre. What was the connection?



Charlie Chaplin and Bill Szarka
(Photo used with kind permission of
Paddy MacDonald: Mary Barthelemy)

The man with Chaplin proved to be Alderman William (Bill) Szarka. He met Chaplin at his studios in Los Angeles on 24 August 1916 (*Sun* 3 March 1918, p 19). This meeting was part of Szarka's official visit to investigate various phases of the movie business abroad on behalf of Australasian Films Ltd (*Sun* 2 July 1916, p 11).

Chaplin films were a regular and popular feature at Enmore Theatre in the 1910s and into the 1920s. The picture suggests the men were equals. In some ways they were. Without the distributors and theatre owners, producers and stars like Chaplin would never have become as famous as they did.

In turn, of course, without the talents of the actors, musicians, and pioneer film makers, theatre entrepreneurs would never have been as wealthy or accomplished to the extent that they were.

From 1912, Bill Szarka, with his brother George, built up the Enmore Theatre from an open air and then rough-built picture theatre with some vaudeville acts. The mission-style theatre featured in the November 2023 Trivia quiz was built in 1920. The current Art Deco style was created by Hoyts which took over from Bill Szarka in 1927 (George Szarka was killed accidentally in a traffic incident in 1920). The Szarkas opened two other theatres (Leichhardt and Marrickville) and were prominent in the local community.

Today's Enmore Theatre is a magnificent survivor, one of the very few left from the vanished era that ushered in the golden age of the cinema.

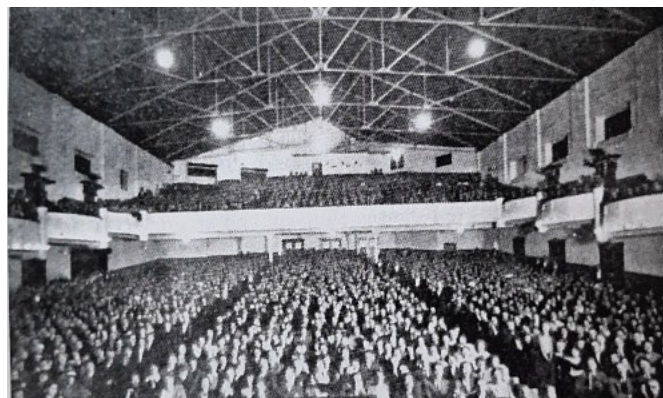
Mary Barthelemy



Above: Original Enmore picture theatre 1912-1920

(Source: ozvta.com/theatres-nsw/2/)

*Below: Audience at opening of rebuilt Enmore theatre,
1 July 1920 (The Picture Magazine, 2 August 1920)*



Website and Facebook report

After a very busy year with a record number of visitors to our **website** we look forward to 2025. I have several story ideas in the pipeline but am always interested to hear ideas for new ones from members. If you know of some place, person or event which you think might become a great story for the website please let me know. Contact details back page.

For more direct storytelling please visit our **Facebook** page and speak directly to our Facebook audience. They are always interested in stories from our area.

Rod Aanensen

To access the website using this QR code



Hover your phone camera over the QR code and tap on the information on the screen to be taken to the website.

Caution: *Don't* take a photo of the QR code!

Summer Trivia Question

Pictured below is one of the former grand homes (past its prime) of the Marrickville area.



What and where was it?

Email Richard c/- the Society at the foot of this page or ring him on 0413 335 897.

Joining Marrickville Heritage Society

If you're enjoying this newsletter, benefit from and care about the character and heritage of our local area, but are not a member, why not consider joining? Take part in as much or as little as you wish; receive the newsletter directly and a Heritage journal whenever one is produced. Readers are welcome to attend events (see calendar). Contact details below.

To join is easy: download a membership form from our website, pay by direct debit, or cash at a meeting.

Access application form using this QR code



Hover your phone camera over the QR code and tap on the information on the screen to be taken to the webpage for the application form.

Caution: *Don't* take a photo of the QR code!

Local YouTube Channel

MHS member Benjamin Summers is a transport and history enthusiast who resides in Sydney. He has a YouTube channel, which he has asked us to promote in the newsletter. Videos cover a range of different subjects, mostly history, transport and engineering. His channel can be found at:

www.youtube.com/@MorrisHillmanProductions

Calendar of MHS Events 2025

Saturday 22 February

Rachel Franks - The life and deaths of Robert 'Nosey Bob' Howard

Details on front page

Thursday 27 March

Guided tour of Garden Island by the Naval Historical Society of Australia

Details and bookings in March-April newsletter

Saturday 26 April

Marc Rercerethnam - The Ladies' Velocipede Races of 1869: an early challenge to male supremacy in colonial Australia

Details in March-April newsletter

Saturday 24 May

Sydney Park brickworks tour with Ron Ringer

Saturday 28 June

Annual General Meeting

President & Heritage Watch

Scott 0416 152 501 | sbtarmac@gmail.com

Treasurer

Stuart 0414 620 519 | stuartgrigg2@gmail.com

Newsletter

Mary 0400 385 362 | maryangela@bigpond.com

Webmaster

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