

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.



CAMPERDOWN DULWICH HILL ENMORE
NEWTOWN PETERSHAM STANMORE

LEWISHAM MARRICKVILLE
ST PETERS SYDENHAM & TEMPE

Our May Meeting

Saturday 24 May

**The Brick Mile – Sydney Park Brickworks
tour with Ron Ringer**

Meet outside St Peters Station – 9.45 for 10 am

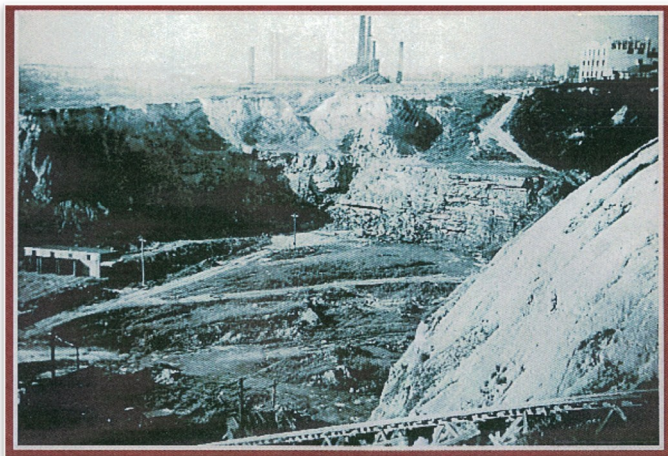
Bookings Richard 0413 335 897 or

<marrickvilleheritagesociety@outlook.com>

The daily commute to and from work along the Princes Highway takes the traveller past those imposing brick chimneys at St Peters. The vestigial structures along with the adjacent kilns and decrepit machinery of a bygone industrial past: a past that literally and figuratively shaped many of Sydney's south-eastern suburbs.

From St Peters to where IKEA stands today, this industrial conurbation was alive with industry, brickmaking, quarrying, blasting and a vibrant working class. Find out more on this walking tour with **Ron Ringer**, author of *The Brickmasters: 1788-2008*.

Formerly a high school teacher in the UK and Sydney, Ron established Syntax in 1991. As an author he has written about architecture and design, social welfare, education textbooks, engineering history, the built environment, church history, and not-for-profit organisations including outreach and care centres for homeless people.



Bedford Brick Works from Mitchell Road, c 1938
(Photo: Bill Wheatley)

Annual General Meeting

Saturday 28 June 10.15 for 10.30 am

St Peters Anglican Church Cooks River

187 Princes Highway, St Peters

On site parking available; 422 bus runs past

It's that time of year again. At the AGM, the committee delivers its reports 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 office bearers and a new committee 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.

Owing to the IWC use of the Society's usual meeting places we are fortunate that St Peters Church History Group and members Laurel and Bob Horton have agreed to host.

Time to renew membership

Membership renewal date is 1 June each year

If you receive your newsletter by post, and your renewal is due, a notice will be enclosed; if by email, a renewal notice is attached. Where fees for 2024-25 remain unpaid, we will request two years payment. Other members may also wish to pay for two years.

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 Richard on 0413 335 897 or via the MHS email at bottom of back page.

Stuart Grigg, Treasurer

Our Last Meeting: Saturday 26 April

A pioneer lady cyclist in 19th century Marrickville: a talk by Marc Rerceretnam

Were you aware that the oldest known *lady* (that is, woman) cyclist in the world was an Australian? Her name was Maybanke Wolstenholme (later Anderson). And did you know that she was a resident of Marrickville during a crucial part of her adult life?

These and other interesting facts were laid out in **Marc Rerceretnam's** talk to the Marrickville Heritage Society on 26 April at The Pavilion, Marrickville Library. The talk raised many issues and intriguing sidelights on the social history of Marrickville, the rest of the Inner West, and the role of women in sport.

A celebrated figure in Australian women's history, Maybanke Wolstenholme was British-born as Maybanke Selfe in 1845, but moved with her father and his family to Australia in 1855. Maybanke seems to have got interested in cycling as a form of recreation through her brother, Norman Selfe, but she took the sport up with gusto and gained a little, if passing, notoriety. We know that she was active as a cyclist in the middle of the 1860s. Maybanke later became noted as one of the Australian colony's leading women in public life at the turn of the 20th century.

Yet, as a young woman in the 1860s, cycling was on her mind, and she was the earliest recorded woman's competitor, taking part in a race in Collingwood, Melbourne, in 1867. As was pointed out by Marc, women rode a type of bike in the 1860s (a velocipede) that would not interfere too much with long dresses and skirts. This type (known as a 'boneshaker' for its difficulties in steering) was paradoxically easier to handle on the uneven conditions of the cycling paths in 19th century Sydney, especially when riding through grass fields and along dirt tracks and in other uneven conditions that predominated in outer suburban areas.

Marc pointed out that almost everything appearing in the press about cycling in the 19th century and after seemed to centre on cycling groups in what is now the Inner West of Sydney. Why was there this apparent geographic concentration? Bicycles were not cheap in those days, and the Marrickville area sported a well-to-do middle-class community in the late 19th century (though it later became quite working class). Cycling on the then fringes of suburbia would have been attractive to and functional for middle-class women (and men) because of the proximity to rural roads and open fields. Riding would have been a much more



Maybanke Anderson
(formerly Wolstenholme, c 1890)

From the *Dictionary of Sydney* by Mitchell & Co from the collections of the State Library of New South Wales [SPF P1/A] (Mitchell Library)

pleasant experience than it was to become as motorised traffic developed in the 20th century.

Maybanke lived with her husband Edmund Wolstenholme in Balmain after her marriage in 1867 and moved to Marrickville in the late 1870s. The couple erected a large and handsome dwelling at the corner of Frazer Street and Wardell Road. When the couple separated in 1884, Maybanke turned her house into a school, which she maintained with an excellent city-wide reputation until the late 1890s.

Meanwhile, she lived in various locations around Sydney. Though not divorced until new divorce legislation was enacted in New South Wales in 1892, in 1899 she remarried, to a professor of philosophy at the University of Sydney, Francis Anderson. The Frazer Street house is now part of a larger Salvation Army Home, with the name 'Maybanke Aged Care Centre.' (For many years it was known as Booth House.)

The significance of Maybanke's achievement in sport was the early date of her competition. Most other evidence of early women cyclists, at least in Australia, is for the 1890s and after, Mark explained. Women's cycling was a controversial thing; in 1867, when Maybanke was an active cyclist taking part in competitions, woman riders, including Maybanke, appeared at a Melbourne cycling event and strong objection was taken to

them for usurping a male prerogative. The women riders were, in effect, subject to sledging. It is perhaps for this reason that the prizes in the women's cycling contests were higher than for male cyclists, to draw in female contestants. It may be that the crowds that paid to watch these events were more eager to see women, because for a woman to uncover any slight part of her legs in public was considered unacceptable according to Victorian morality. Male observers may have enjoyed the furtive pleasure of seeing Maybanke's ankles exposed during a race. The action of women taking part in public cycling races made them the subject of ridicule and moral objection as male spectators sought to reinforce the hierarchy of their male prerogatives.

The adoption of new types on bicycles made women's cycling less common for a couple of decades after 1870, especially because of the introduction of the penny-farthing. These high-front-wheel and awkward-to-mount-and-ride bikes were incompatible with the type of generously respectable dresses that women were expected to wear in public. Later, in the 1890s and early 20th century, women started to pursue cycling in larger numbers with the introduction of the safety bicycle (after 1887). By that time, Maybanke was a social reformer with many other tasks to monopolise her attention.

Cycling was far from inconsistent with Maybanke's later advocacy of women's rights.



Marc Rercerethnam

later became a strong advocate of the women's suffrage campaigns of the 1890s and other reform movements for women and children.

In some ways, it could be concluded that women's cycling was, in part, a form of proto-feminism, in the sense of women's self-activity as a measure of their wanting to do what men were allowed to do. This idea fits Maybanke's feminist life story as she

For other interesting details, Marc's book, *Sydney's Cycling Communities: Pioneers and Unsung Heroes of its Cycling Past, 1820s to 2020s* (Yesteryear Books, 2025, ISBN 978 0645236415) is available from Barnes and Noble. It can also be bought for \$30 at Ashfield Cycles, 353 Liverpool Rd, Ashfield (9797 9913) or the Resistance Book Shop, 4/22-36 Mountain St, Ultimo (8070 9341) or through Booktopia.

Ian Tyrrell

Editor's note: Marc also has a YouTube recording of a lecture given in June 2024 on sexism in cycling: <www.youtube.com/watch?v=m5RK4aYjxw>.

The Inner West Council recently unveiled a plaque in honour of accomplished cyclist **Margaret McLachlan** on the Sporting Walk of Honour in Marrickville Park.



New member Yvonne Johnson, a proud 99-year-old, enjoying a MHS newsletter at her home on the NSW Central Coast. Her late sister, Joy Lewis, passed away recently, aged 105. (Photo: Brett Johnson, Yvonne's son)

Garden Island guided tour: Thursday 12 June (Rescheduled)

Meet: 9.45 am at the security gate at the end of Cowper Wharf Road, Woolloomooloo

Cost: NHSA fee is \$30 per person

Bookings: Richard 0413 335 897 or marrickville-heritagesociety@outlook.com

Getting there: Uber, taxi, 311 bus, or 12-15 minute walk from Kings Cross Station. Parking in area is limited.

Join a guide from the Naval Historical Society of Australia (NHSA) for a walking tour of Garden Island. The group will be shown a 15 minute video of early Garden Island and then the walking tour will commence, completing around 12:30 pm.

For security reasons this tour has been postponed twice by the Naval Historical Society of Australia. They apologise for the inconvenience.

If you need to cancel, please let Richard know.

New Blue Plaques and their location

In March 2025 the NSW Government released the latest selection for the award of a Blue Plaque: 'The new plaques will be placed at sites connected with the individuals or moments in history. The installation of each plaque brings added interest to the heritage of an area, encouraging locals to explore their backyards and inviting visitors to learn more about the history of these communities.

Sometimes these 'wins' are mixed. Member and webmaster, **Rod Aanensen**, whose story about the **Golding Sisters** (Annie, Kate and Belle) can be found on the MHS website, promoted their nomination. The plaque will be placed at the sisters' birthplace, Tambaroora (a town near Hill End that has ceased to exist), rather than in the IWC area. Some of them lived at Marrickville for a time and for several decades they all lived in Annandale, which is where Rod feels the plaque should be.

The Society has written to local MP Jo Haylen requesting that consideration be given to installing two identical plaques, the second being near the Annandale location. This would be seen and appreciated by a far larger number of people than at the isolated spot near Hill End.

Member **Sue Castrique** nominated **Louisa Lawson** and, her nomination was accepted but similarly, the plaque will be placed in Gulgong, rather than

Marrickville, where she lived during her later years in Renwick Street off Carrington Road.

This is not to suggest that those named were the only ones who put forward nominations for these individuals, though they may have been.

It is worth mentioning that locals in the area where they spent the greater part of their lives and associated with their 'claim to fame' will remain unaware of the association. In this respect, societies such as Marrickville Heritage Society make a significant contribution to the wider community.

Also on the Blue Plaques list are **Sarah 'Fanny' Durack** who lived at Stanmore for much of her adult life (the Fanny Durack Aquatic Centre at Petersham is named in her honour), and her fellow 1912 Olympian **Mina Wylie** and **Sister Kaliniki**, who, after profession as Australia's first Greek Orthodox nun in 1971, spent her life at St Basil's Home in Dulwich Hill.

Another successful nomination is the selection of the **Koori Knockout** (see below post). The First Koori Knockout, the largest annual Indigenous sporting carnival in Australia, took place at Camdenville Park, St Peters, in 1971. (The park is being upgraded by the IWC – budget \$6.5 million. Completion was expected by April 2025.)

Mary Barthelemy



Ron Hoenig MP is at **Camdenville Park**.

9 April at 08:00 · Saint Peters, Sydney

State MP Ron Hoenig proudly publicised the award on Facebook

Great news! Camdenville Park in St Peters has been selected for a NSW Blue Plaque to commemorate the very first **Koori Knockout**—the largest annual First Nations sporting event in Australia.

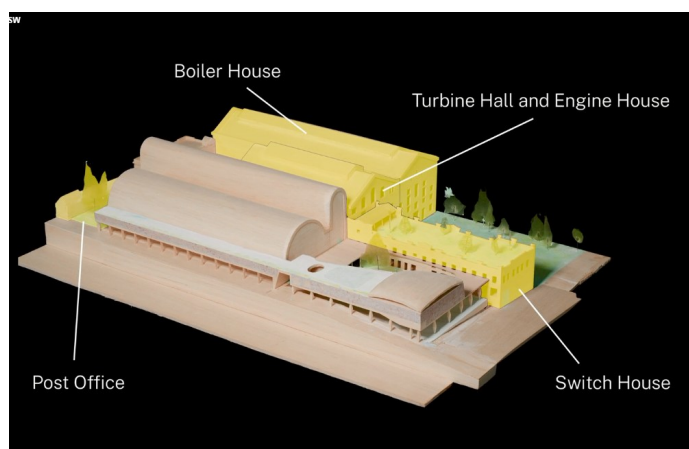
Founded in 1971 by Aboriginal players shut out of other competitions, the Knockout has grown into a powerful celebration of community, culture and connection.

Proud to see this local site recognised for the legacy it helped spark. ❤️



Powerhouse Museum, Ultimo renovation

On the 27th of March 2025, a \$300 million proposal to refurbish the Ultimo Powerhouse Museum was approved by the NSW government. The plan will create four exhibition spaces on par with modern museums overseas, while conserving the four heritage-listed power station buildings, as well as the later Wran building's distinct curved roof.



Still from the video promoting the new development
<https://powerhouseultimo.nsw.com/>

It will also establish two new spaces open to the public, one courtyard within the museum, and a landscaped square at the south-eastern corner of the museum's grounds, which will allow for a new entrance to the museum facing Central Station. The architects behind the plan are Durbach Block Jagers Architects, Tyrrell Studio and Youssofzay + Hart, working with Akira Isogawa, Yerrabingin, Finding Infinity and Arup.



Satellite image of the Ultimo Powerhouse Museum
<https://powerhouseultimo.nsw.com/>

The Powerhouse Museum began as the Ultimo Power Station, commissioned in 1899. It powered Sydney's tram networks until 1963, and was unused for 15 years until the state government decided to use it as the new site for The Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences. It was renamed the Powerhouse Museum in the process. The museum operated in the nearby tram sheds before finally moving to the former power station in 1988.

Since 2015, the NSW government has repeatedly announced and doubled back on plans to close the Ultimo Powerhouse Museum. The 2015 plan to

move the museum to Parramatta was abandoned in 2017, then only a year later in 2018, it was announced that the Ultimo site was to be closed, renovated, and turned into a fashion museum and theatre. The government of the day gave up on this idea in 2020 in favour of a modified version of the original Parramatta plan, where the museum's collection would be split across the Ultimo and new Parramatta locations. The Parramatta site is set to open some time in 2026. The new complex is called Powerhouse Parramatta. It is located in the heart of the city near the Parramatta River.

In February 2024 the Powerhouse Museum, Ultimo was closed. Construction on the revitalised site, which has already begun, is estimated to be completed in 2027.

Sean Barthelemy

Vale: Maurice Milliner 28.11.1940 – 10.3.2025

Maurice (Maurie) Milliner passed on 10 March 2025, aged 84, from a melanoma cancer. Originally from Brisbane, Maurice moved to Sydney when he was accepted by Qantas as a flight attendant in 1965. He met Wayne, a Marrickville boy, in 1973 and they bought their house in Illawarra Road, Marrickville in 1978.

Upon retiring from Qantas in 1993, Maurice built and ran his garden centre, Sydenham Green, at Sydenham. Due to the opening of the third runway at Sydney airport, Sydenham Green, like other businesses at Sydenham, was forced to close. Maurice then went to the garden section of Bunnings in Mascot. Maurice gave his permission to Marrickville Council



to adopt the name 'Sydenham Green' for the park which was created in the wake of the mass demolition of houses in Sydenham in the mid-1990s. In 2002, Maurice and Wayne retired and moved to their beach house at Yorkeys Knob, Cairns, which they named *Marrick-villa*.

Both were heavily involved in the community and Maurice first, then Wayne, was voted and crowned King of the Knob for their work within the community. Maurice was President of the Yorkeys Knob Residents Association for 16 years and instigated the annual Yorkeys Knob Christmas Carols in the Park. He was very much a hero within our little community and will be greatly missed.

Wayne le Clos

Page 5

Shirley Patricia Anderson (1928–1997) air traffic controller

Dr Peter Hobbins' fascinating MHS talk on near-misses at our airports reminded me of someone I met years ago. **Shirley Anderson** was Australia's second female air traffic controller. She had links with Marrickville.

Born **Norma Patricia Turnbull** at Englewood Private Hospital, Enfield, Shirley was adopted as a baby by **James Ferris Anderson**, a clerk in the Postmaster-General's Department, and his wife **Ivy Coral**. James was then 53 years old and in ill health. Confined to a wheelchair, he died in 1940; his widow survived him by 37 years. The household at *Robilla* 172 Wollongong Road, Arncliffe was emotionally cold.



Shirley Anderson (date unknown)
Courtesy Lyn Collingwood

Shirley was educated at Erskineville Opportunity School and Marrickville Girls' Intermediate High. She gained her Intermediate Certificate in 1943 with A passes in English and French and Bs in Maths, History, Latin and Botany. Her mother wanted her to enter the workforce straight away but was persuaded to allow her a year's extra training.

Growing up a shy, retiring child, Shirley had little company with people her own age outside school. Her cousins were all older and high achievers. It is likely they were also an influence on her desire to do something different.

Her guardian aunt, **Lillian Margaret Jane Knight** (1880–1949), was the mother of **Edward Sydney** – who won a bursary to Sydney University from Canterbury Boys High and became an actuary – and **Marcia Rosalie** – a 'Queen of the Harbor' [sic]

personality candidate who married medical practitioner **Ronald Paull Lockley**. The Knight family lived at 69 Abergeldie Street, Dulwich Hill.

On the other side of the family, **Rodney George, Geoffrey** and **Donald Edmund**, the sons of Uncle **George Lockhart Anderson**, were each successively dux of Campsie Public School and top students at Canterbury Boys High. Rodney enrolled in Medicine but switched to Arts, gained an MA and became a secondary school teacher. Don became a leading cardiologist and was involved in the early days of the National Heart Foundation, instrumental in changing the rehabilitation of patients following a heart attack.

Following the example of her cousin Marcia, who became a public service stenographer after completing school, Shirley enrolled in the Metropolitan Secretarial College – a classmate was **Joan Sutherland** – where she became proficient in typing and shorthand.

Her first job, as a 15-year-old junior stenographer, appealed to her romantic nature: the letterhead of W R Carpenter's shipping company featured palm trees waving over an unspoiled beach. She then worked as secretary to public relations pioneer **Asher Joel**, and to **Ron Beck** whose Radio Features production company employed 'a lot of actor types'. She credited Joel and Beck – and aviator Arthur Butler – with encouraging her to be ambitious.

In 1947 Shirley put up her age by four years to respond to an ad by Connellan Airways who were looking for ground hostesses in their push to enter the Northern Territory tourist market. A round trip in light aircraft from Cairns to Brunette Downs fuelled her fascination with planes and flying.

On her return to Sydney, while working for top executives at British Commonwealth Pacific Airlines and Butler Air Transport, she qualified as a pilot (she was flying solo at age 21). In 1955 she took off for Canada where she joined the Royal Canadian Air Force Auxiliary. Her next employers back in Australia were Butler Air Transport, the Royal Aero Club of NSW, Pepsi Cola, and Vickers-Armstrong Aircraft.



Photo on Shirley's Flight
Crew Licence, 1958

In 1961 Shirley switched from secretarial work to employment as Air Traffic Controller Grade 1 with the Department of Civil Aviation, joining **Olga Tarling** in an all-male bastion. For eight years they were the only female air traffic controllers in Australia. They learned the rules regarding

controlled air space. The first three: anticipate / never act on assumption / always resist the temptation to submit to pilot pressure.



Australia's first female air traffic controllers
Shirley Anderson (right) and Olga Tarling, July 1985
(Photo courtesy Lyn Collingwood)

Shirley retired in 1985 as Air Traffic Controller Class 5A and supervisor of the ATC Simulator. She decided to try other careers, 'even if one still didn't know what one wanted to be when one grew up'. She completed a BA in Literature (University of New England) and was admitted to Mensa.

She tried TAFE teaching, volunteer opera guiding, light opera chorus singing, being a film extra and writing TV drama. She continued her involvement with aviation, supervising traffic control trainees at Sydney Airport and attending functions organised by the Royal Aero Club of NSW and the Australian Women Pilots Association.

She was a keen traveller and never married. Shirley Anderson was drafting her autobiography when she died of breast cancer on 28 February 1997 at Newcastle. Her memorial service was held in Sydney's St James Church.

Lyn Collingwood

Note from Lyn: This is an extended version of a brief bio note on Shirley that first appeared in the 1990 edition of *An Australian Woman's Diary*.

Autumn Trivia Answer

This photo, taken in the 1980s by **Lyn Collingwood** when she resided in the Marrickville area, is – as is



clearer in this complete photo – the remnant wall of John Vicars & Co Woollen Mills before the site was redeveloped as Marrickville Metro. Members may recall the article 'Marrickville Tweeds and Moreton Bay Figs' in **John Vicars'** journal article in *Heritage 13* (2010).

The photo was among several Lyn took, others showing derelict buildings and how overgrown the site was pending redevelopment. The retention of this wall and other elements of the site was commendable. Also retained was the old Mill House (one of the oldest houses in the district), which is an item of local heritage significance.

Nearby, at the front of the Metro are sculptural representations of various aspects of production in the former mill. John Vicars, a long-time member of the Society, pointed out that the wall, the footpath and several Moreton Bay fig trees beside Victoria Road are also protected.

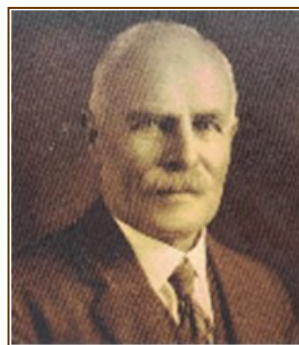
The location was correctly identified (in order of response) by **Andrew Burns, Mark Broderick, Caite Adamek, Andy Bruin, Diane McCarthy, Peter Chessell** and **Ben Summers**. Thanks to Lyn Collingwood for the photos.

Richard Blair

Robert Vicars 1867-1962

John Vicars recently donated a copy of *Robert Vicars 1867-1962* (2024) to Marrickville Library. This is a book of reminiscences by John Vicars about his grandfather. The book is based on archival material gathered by John Vicars with the assistance of Marrickville historian, the late **Chrys Meader**. Together they collected, sorted and in some cases transcribed material relating to John Vicars and Co. Ltd and the broader woollen manufacturing industry.

Their work culminated in the deposit in 2019 at the State Library of New South Wales of 19 boxes of manuscripts and type-scripts and some 400 photos catalogued as 'John Vicars & Co woollen mills records and family papers' (from preface to book by **Rod Lehan**, a cousin of John).



Robert lived for a time with his wife Violet and children in the Mill House. They were married for 62 years and had seven children, including Jack, who was John's father. Robert died aged 94. This is an impressive family history, with a wealth of photos, but it also focuses a great deal on the woollen mill and wool industry with which Robert had a significant role.

Richard Blair

Calendar of MHS Events



Saturday 24 May

**Sydney Park brickworks tour
with Ron Ringer**
Details on page 1

Thursday 12 June (rescheduled)

**Guided tour of Garden Island by the
Naval Historical Society of Australia**
Details on page 3

Saturday 28 June

Annual General Meeting
Details on page 1

Saturday 26 July

**Louisa Lawson walk with Michelle Tucker
and Sue Castrique**

Saturday 23 August

**The changeable symbols of Australia
with Richard White**

Joining Marrickville Heritage Society

If you are 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.

Just download a membership form from our website, pay by direct debit or cash at a meeting.



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.

To access the website use the QR code on the right.



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Rod 0431 487 375

Publications to purchase

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Annual Built Environment Awards & Urban Photography competition

The annual Built Environment Awards is this year inspired by the 2025 Australia Heritage Festival theme, 'Unearthed'. Members are encouraged to submit an entry. For the last 30 years the medal for conservation has been awarded to successful examples of positive heritage outcomes within the Inner West Local Government Area (and, prior to 2017, the Marrickville LGA).

Projects completed in the past three years located in the Inner West are eligible and can be residential, commercial or public spaces. The awards provide an opportunity to celebrate the amalgamation of contemporary design and the rich heritage of the Inner West.

The annual Urban Photography competition will be held concurrently with the same theme. Entries now open for both and **close 13 July**. The awards presentation will be 18 October. For further information and to submit your entry:

www.innerwest.nsw.gov.au/explore/whats-on/annual-events/built-environment-awards

MHS stocktake of publications

Recently we had our annual stocktake. Due to the high quantity of some stock the committee has decided to reduce some prices as below:

- All heritage journals will now be \$5 except for *Heritage 16* for \$10 and *Heritage 11* for \$2 as we have a large number in stock. *Heritage 3* and *Heritage 8* (pink cover) are sold out. The contents of journals are on the website under Publications.

- *Marrickville – A past worth preserving: A collection of local history essays* is reduced to \$10. The content list is under Publications on the website.

- Pictorial histories of Marrickville and Canterbury/Bankstown reduced to \$20 (from \$25).

- Prices of some other stock also reduced.

These publications are for sale at most meetings. If you wish to purchase a copy of any of the above or arrange for a pickup, please email or phone me: cariaa07@hotmail.com or 0400 473 252.

Iain Carolin

Highlighting history of suburban Sydney

Members will be familiar with the St Peters Cooks River History Group conducted by Laurel and Bob Horton. One of their latest ventures has been creating videos of Sydney suburbs.

These are accessible on YouTube via:

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

See also: stpeterscooksriverhistory.wordpress.com