

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC.

CAMPERDOWN DULWICH HILL ENMORE
NEWTOWN PETERSHAM STANMORE



LEWISHAM MARRICKVILLE ST PETERS
SYDENHAM & TEMPE

Our July meeting

Saturday 26 July 9.45 for 10.00 am

Louisa Lawson walk

with Michelle Tucker and Sue Castrique

Meet: Louisa Lawson Reserve, Roach Street, Marrickville (near Illawarra Road, Warren Road)

Walk duration: About 90 minutes

Cost: Free

Bookings: Lorraine – email lbeach@iprimus.com.au or phone 0416 224 472

Louisa Lawson Reserve is close to the 423 bus route. The walk will end in Carrington Road near Tempe Station.

Join **Michelle Scott Tucker**, Louisa's biographer, and **Sue Castrique**, writer and historian on a guided walk to the site of the cottage.

Louisa Lawson (1848-1920) was a farmer, poet, feminist, publisher of *The Dawn* and a tireless campaigner for the rights of women. Today she is best known for being Henry Lawson's mother, but she was also so much more. Louisa lived for many years in Marrickville, in an old stone cottage on Renwick Street. Here she was close to town and family, but her half acre block was located on Gumbramorra Swamp.



Louisa Lawson's original cottage, Renwick Street, Marrickville
(Source: Sue Castrique)

Michelle Scott Tucker is the author of *Elizabeth Macarthur: A Life at the Edge of the World* (Text Publishing 2018). Michelle was a 2024 Visiting Scholar at the State Library of NSW, and her

biography of Louisa Lawson will be published with Text Publishing in 2027.

Sue Castrique wrote *On the Margins of the Good Swamp*, which was awarded the Nature Writing Prize in 2019. Her book, *Gumbramorra: a history of water in Marrickville* is due to be published in 2026.

Our August meeting

Saturday 23 August 10.15 for 10.30 am

The Changeable Symbols of Australia with Richard White

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

The symbols of a nation never stand still – they are constantly changing, despite the desire to think of them as immovable.

Even during the four years of editing and updating a new edition of *Symbols of Australia: imagining a nation* (2021, original edition 2010) it was hard to keep up, as well-established national symbols shifted on their foundations.



Necklace from National Museum of Australia, ACT

This illustrated talk surveys a range of Australia's national symbols, from the formal to the popular, the commercial and the humorous, examining their origins, their many and varied meanings, and how they have changed over time.

Richard White taught Australian history and the history of travel and tourism at the University of Sydney from 1989 to 2013. His publications include *Inventing Australia*, *The Oxford Book of Australian*

His current research interests include the history of 'history tourism' in Australia and the history of the 'cooe' (subject of a talk Richard gave to MHS in 2005) but he has to admit he spends more time in the garden than at a desk. The 2021 edition of *Symbols of Australia* was co-edited with Melissa Harper.

Our Last Meeting

Saturday 24 May

The Brick Mile: Sydney Park Brickworks tour with Ron Ringer

Meeting outside St Peters Station on a clear sunny late autumn day our tour guide **Ron Ringer** (author of *The Brickmasters 1788-2008*) handed out extensive information sheets about brick making to group members to take home. The brick industry has long gone from St Peters but, as Ron explained, the chimneys, kilns, and other traces remain as part of Sydney Park, across Princes Highway from the railway station.

During our tour of the site he described the 19th century growing need for bricks, the variety of chimney and kiln designs and brick making processes used, and generally drew an evocative picture of the brickworks operations and life in the nearby suburbs.

It was said if you needed a job you could probably get one at the brickworks, although no doubt, due to the noise, heat and air pollution, brick making was physically demanding work. Most arduous of all was extracting the bricks when they were ready. The temperature inside the kilns was 150 degrees Fahrenheit. Workers were protected only by wet sheepskin, leather shorts and boots.

Much-needed refreshment from one of the several nearby pubs was popular after work.

The clay required was supplied from a number of nearby brick pits, later filled in, covered and landscaped. We were shown clinker bricks, which are over-baked and as a result irregular, colourful, and aesthetically pleasing.

Ron described two types of kiln – intermittent (to make superior quality face bricks) and continuous kilns (to make common bricks, used in all kinds of constructions), and gave an overview of the ten stages of brick making. He showed us a booklet with vivid colour photos of features of the site and its surrounds, both past and present.

Today, some of the industrial structures have been fenced off and are clearly falling into disrepair. A glimpse into some of the kilns showed that supportive struts have been installed. A project to stabilise the kilns is scheduled to start in the near future which will help preserve this heritage.

The area used for brick making was very large and extended beyond the boundaries of Sydney Park, south of Campbell Street where operations such as car repairs, fast food service and the IKEA store are now found. Information boards along the path of the tour record prior uses of the land.

On the way through Sydney Park we observed its modified landscape, and a number of sculptures and artworks. There were views to the airport, a container park, a vegetated 'hill' of rubbish and an expressway flyover scene reminiscent of a Jeffrey Smart painting.

Ron is an affable, flamboyant and well informed guide, who provided a very enjoyable tour.

Mark Marusic & Stephanie Allen



Brick kiln in Sydney Park (Photo: Mark Marusic)

Editor's note

A presentation on the park redevelopment and conservation of the brick making industrial site was given to MHS last year (reported in July-August 2024 newsletter).

For more discussion on brick making in the colonial era and the Marrickville district in particular see Rod Aanensen's article 'Building Blocks of Empire' on the MHS website (<https://marrickvilleheritage.org.au/2021/07/07/building-blocks-of-empire>).

A mid-week outing Thursday 12 June Garden Island Tour

After a few cancellations due to 'Security', 14 patient souls finally arrived and were processed at the security gates of **Garden Island Naval Base**. We were greeted warmly, transferred to a bus and taken to the tourist centre (The Boatshed). On the way there we were told that we were the last group in the foreseeable future to be taken on such a tour as the security level for the naval base had been recently raised from low to the higher one of preparing for possible war.

At the tourist centre, we were warmly welcomed by members of the Naval Historical Society (website www.navyhistory.au) who showed us a video of the history of the base, followed by an exploration of the historical buildings on the base.

The base was, as the name suggests, originally an island where a garden supplying vegetables for ships and sailors was set up. The first cottage there was built in 1795, reflecting the concerns of Sydney's early naval governors. After Governor Bligh, who was replaced by the 'army' governor Macquarie, the 'naval' garden was discontinued, and the area became part of the Botanic Gardens. In 1856, the island was handed back to the navy in whose hands it has remained through much land reclamation and building construction. By 1942 the island had been linked to the mainland, and the area of the base had increased from 6 to 26 hectares.

In the period up to Federation, the southern hill of the original island was levelled to provide filling for land reclamation. On this new land, many stately Victorian era buildings were constructed, some of which we were able to explore later in our visit. The naval base was used to repair and maintain sailing ships and, later, steamships.



Garden Island 1877 (Source: <https://www.visitsydneyaustralia.com.au/garden-isld.html>)

After Federation it became the national centre for whatever naval ships the colonies had owned, and in 1911 the Royal Australian Navy was formed with Garden Island becoming its base. Only a few years later the troopships were fitted out there for the AIF's role in World War I.

In World War II, the RAN based at Garden Island performed a similar role, including dealing with the three Japanese midget subs that entered Sydney Harbour in 1942. At about the same time, the Captain Cook Graving Dock, a dry dock for repairs, was constructed and is still in use today.



Modern Garden Island (https://dictionaryofsydney.org/natural_feature/garden_island)

After the video presentation, we were divided into a couple of small groups and taken for a tour around the naval base, exploring the stately historical buildings as well as the large ships then docked at the base.

My group's guide was Gordon, an NHS volunteer who, he proudly admitted, had been associated with the base for 55 years, firstly as an apprentice, later as a civilian worker, and finally as a tour guide. Gordon had a wealth of stories and knew every inch of the island, so we had a very entertaining hour rambling around the base.

The most pervasive feeling I had, shared I think by others, was that we had moved into a very different and fascinating world on that morning tour. It is to be hoped that the security levels can eventually be lowered so that others can have such a privilege.

Tim McMullen

Two MHS air crash articles

In *Heritage* 16 (2022), **Ken Swinbourne** contributed an article titled 'An air tragedy in Petersham 1945' and **Richard Blair** contributed his article 'Lewisham Hospital 1946 plane crash'. Both articles have been reproduced with permission from the authors in the June 2025 issue of *Aviation Heritage*.

MHS Annual General Meeting Saturday 28 June St Peters Church Cooks River

As an incorporated society we have an obligation to hold an annual general meeting to deliver reports on the year's activities and elect a new committee. The AGM is generally a 'business only' affair conducted in a community venue accessed through Council. This year no facility was available to us, reason unknown. Into the breach stepped **Laurel and Bob Horton** and our AGM was held in the serene setting of St Peters Church Cooks River.

Reports on the past year's activities were delivered: President's report and Heritage Watch, **Scott MacArthur**; Treasurer's report, prepared by **Stuart Grigg**, overseen by **Gabby Richards**, delivered by Scott MacArthur; Publications report, **Mary Barthelemy**; and Website and Facebook report, **Rod Aanensen**. The President's finale for the year was to award Life Membership to committee member **Rod Aanensen** (see below).

Returning Officer **Bill Tarrant** thanked outgoing office bearers and committee members. He remarked on the countless tasks carried out by all throughout the year, including maintaining membership registers and financial records, organising outings, events and guest speakers, writing and circulating the newsletter, dealing with a multitude of enquiries by email and through the website and meeting all the regulatory requirements for an incorporated society and MHS's own constitution. Bill declared all positions vacant and announced nominations received for the new committee. All nominees were elected and the new committee members are below.

President	Scott MacArthur
Vice President	Lorraine Beach
Vice President	Ian Tyrrell
Treasurer	Stuart Grigg
Secretary	Iain Carolin
Assistant Secretary	Caite Adamek
Committee Members	Rod Aanensen Mary Barthelemy Richard Blair Lyndal Gowland John McGrath Elda Riberio

Our thanks to members who attended the AGM, and to an even greater number who sent their apologies for the meeting.

We are sincerely grateful to Laurel and Bob Horton. Laurel arranged our access to the church, a delight to visit at any time, and provided us with a superb morning tea complete with homemade sandwiches, slices, muffins and other goodies. While an essential

business meeting for the Society, it was a congenial, informational and enjoyable event.

Lorraine Beach



MHS Executive Committee 2025-26. Left to right: Iain Carolin, John McGrath, Rod Aanensen, Mary Barthelemy, Ian Tyrrell, Caite Adamek, Scott MacArthur, Lorraine Beach, Richard Blair. Lyndal Gowland, Stuart Grigg and Elda Ribeiro were also elected but were not able to be present. (Photo: Bill Tarrant)

Life Membership for Rod Aanensen

At the AGM on 28 June the committee announced the award of Life membership to committee member **Rod Aanensen**. The citation of his award reads:

In appreciation and recognition of his outstanding work for the Society over several years. Rod established the Society's website and monitors our Facebook page, attending to multiple enquiries and contributing numerous well-researched articles. His vigilance of developments impacting heritage and liaison with local contacts are invaluable to the Society.



Rod Aanensen with his Life Membership award, presented by President Scott MacArthur (Photo: Lorraine Beach)

Rod joined the Society in 2014 and has been a committee member continuously, including a term as a vice president, since 2015. As well as managing our electronic media, he writes in depth articles, creates and leads walks, researches endlessly and enthusiastically answers and assists with all manner of queries received via the website. Rod is also one of our heritage 'watchdogs' keeping an eye on

developments potentially impacting local built heritage. There's more to the list of Rod's accomplishments but we'll just say he has our sincere thanks and congratulations for this well-deserved award.

Lorraine Beach

President's report and Heritage Watch

This was the thirteenth time I have been President, and I would like to thank all the members of the current Committee who have worked so hard to keep the Society active and involved in a challenging time for heritage in our community. We welcome new Committee member **Caite Adamek**, who will step in as Assistant Secretary as she learns the ropes.

Special thanks go to the newsletter editorial team led by **Mary** and **Sean Barthelemy** who have produced a series of excellent newsletters, culminating in our bumper 12-page Christmas issue last year. They were assisted by **Lorraine Beach**, with oversight and proofreading by **Richard Blair** and **Hillary Goldsmith**.

The past year has been busy for the Society, and it is pleasing that our membership numbers remain stable and the Society is in good financial health. **Rod Aanensen** continues to shepherd our 'online' presence, through Facebook and our website, with growing numbers of new visitors and engagements. Members and visitors alike are contributing items and commentary, and the cross-links that are generated are a new source of historical information about our area.

One of the Society's strengths is that it provides a wide range of activities, and this last year we enjoyed an enormous range of historical, social and personal stories.

Our guest speakers included Max Rosin-Mesler (Sydney Park brick kilns), Peter Hobbins (Mascot's Miracle) and Marc Rerceretnam (Maybanke Anderson and 19th century women cyclists). My personal favourite was Rachel Franks' background authoring stories from her biography 'An Uncommon Hangman: the life and deaths of Robert "Nosey Bob" Howard', the NSW Sheriff and state executioner from 1876 to 1904, who hanged 62 people.

Walking tours and excursions included Chau Chuk Museum at Sydney University, Mark Matheson's Norwood walk in Petersham, Ron Ringer's Brickworks tour and our visit to Garden Island. This was particularly special for the stories from the serving sailors who escorted us on what might be the last public tour of the navy base.

Social activities included celebrating the Society's 40th anniversary with lunch at St Peters Cooks

River and our traditional Pot Luck dinner hosted by Joanne and John McGrath.

Our Heritage Watch activities were concentrated on the debate around the state government push to address the housing availability and affordability crisis with densification in the Transport Oriented Development around transport corridors, causing alarm in our area.

Inner West Council has responded with a plan for 'Our Fairer Future'. Council's planners seem to have tried to reduce the density that the state government focussed in narrow corridors, by spreading looser development controls south of Parramatta Road.

However, the plan still raises substantial concerns regarding its impact on our area's heritage, character, and historic built environment.

The plan favours demolition and new construction over adaptive reuse and subdivision patterns that retain existing historic dwellings. The Society hopes that in this heated NIMBY vs YIMBY debate, there could be scope to encourage secondary dwellings and subdivision patterns that allow for increased density without sacrificing historic fabric, and a more equitable spread of new development across the LGA to avoid overburdening historic suburbs like Marrickville and Dulwich Hill.

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 we remain vigilant for threats to the precious heritage of our area.

Scott MacArthur

Mudcrabs celebrate 20 years

On Saturday 15 March 2025 nearly 200 people consisting of past and present Mudcrabs, partners and friends, and elected representatives congregated at Cooks River Bowling Club to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the formation of the Mudcrabs Cooks River Eco Volunteers.

In recognition of this achievement an illustrated book was produced by Alison Gibbs 'tracing the history of this unique grassroots organisation and celebrating the achievements of our 600+ community volunteers'.

The book was officially launched by environmentalist and science writer Bernie Hobbs and all volunteers were given a complimentary copy of the book.

Tributes were paid to the co-founders Chris Bartlett (who sadly died in 2011 of cancer) and Ian Bruce. From the outset Chris would phone volunteers and coordinate with Canterbury Council to provide equipment, disposal and recycling bags. Chris was also involved in initiatives to tidy up the riverbanks

and restore the bushland along the Cooks River Valley. As the band of volunteers grew, others such as Peter Munro used more sophisticated means of coordinating the monthly cleanups and bushcare sessions.

The Mudcrabs is closely affiliated with the Cooks River Valley Association. The Mudcrabs history reveals that in the 20 years until early 2025, there had been '252 river clean-ups, 8,061 bags of rubbish removed and 103 shopping trolleys and bikes retrieved.'



Thumbs down for rubbish from the river!
(Courtesy Cooks River Alliance website)

From the CRVA website: 'They have also removed 2,500 bags of weeds and planted about 12,000 native trees and shrubs at 17 bush restoration sites at Rosedale Reserve, Foord Avenue, Hurlstone Park, Ewen Park, Steel Park, Gough Whitlam Reserve Saltmarsh and Richardson Reserve.'

New volunteers are always welcome.

Celebrating 20 years: The Mudcrabs Cooks River Eco Volunteers 2005–2025 by Alison Gibbs is available at Gleebooks, Dulwich Hill for \$19.95.

Richard Blair

Hotel revival in Tempe

Two institutions in Tempe have survived for many decades and in many formats – the **Tempe Hotel** and the **Riverview Hotel**. Both originated in the 19th century as the village of Tempe grew.



Original 19th century Pultney (Tempe) Hotel run by the Cook family for many years
(Source: St Peters Cooks River History Group)

Mr Cook was the proprietor of both. His new hotel, intentionally or not, was styled more in the fashion of a town hall. It was impressive. Most of the building still stands. The hotel was used often as a meeting place by local clubs (Tempe Hurling Club was one).

The older building is the Tempe, originally known as the Pultney, Hotel (established in 1856). The current building was erected in the late 19th century replacing the much smaller original.

The present Riverview Hotel was established in 1922. It also replaced an earlier 19th century establishment.

A family connection of a very different type has led to a revival of the Tempe Hotel and is now in the process of giving new life to the Riverview. For several years in the late 20th and early 21st century this hotel, then known as The Harp, was very popular, with many Irish patrons as well as locals. In more recent years it was known as The Valve – promising not only music but 'cold beer and hot girls'. From the outside not only the character but the fabric of the building had deteriorated.



Detail – revamped façade of the Tempe Hotel
(Courtesy Tempe Hotel website)

The Kospetas family and their company, Universal Hotels, is responsible for the revival. They undertook a multimillion dollar renovation of the Tempe Hotel. While retaining and upgrading the facade the interior has been renewed. The hotel offers accommodation as well as restaurant-quality meals. Jim Kospetas, the head of the family, grew up in nearby Enmore. (*Public* 'Universal secures family ties in Tempe' April 2021).

Universal has expanded its investment in the area and acquired the Riverview as well. Again, a respect for the original building is evident. The renovations are not yet complete but already they have lifted the appearance of the suburb – especially as it is so close to the Cooks River and the Tempe Bridge.

Harry's Café de Wheels next door with its 1960s architecture complements it well – especially at night when both are lit up. Similarly to the Tempe, it is believed the Riverview will offer accommodation and dining. Solar panels fixed to the roof at the rear indicate the building is being modernised for the 21st century.



The new Riverview, early July 2025
(Photo: Sean Barthelemy)

Several sporting groups use the fields at Tempe Reserve around the corner. However, the multi-storey apartments in Wolli Creek across the river, with thousands of residents, and further development along the highway at Arncliffe may ensure the investment in the suburb has been a wise one.

Often there is cause for regret at the loss of heritage buildings and the character, history and representation of the community that goes with them. In these two cases there is something to celebrate – worth a glass or a middy or two!

Mary Barthelemy

2025 Citizen of the Year, past Citizens of the Year and council yearbooks

Each January on Australia Day there is the usual fanfare for our local Citizen of the Year, presented to someone adjudged as performing significant works towards the betterment of our community or, at least, for a section of our community.

The 2025 Inner West Council Citizen of the Year is **Professor Richard Scolyer AO**. The award was 'in recognition of the impact Professor Scolyer's work has made on the lives of Inner West people and the hope and inspiration he has given to our whole community while facing adversity himself'.

Richard is an Inner West resident and was co-Australian of the Year in 2024.

It is not known when these awards began, but presumably they were a local spin-off of the Australian of the Year awards which, according to Wikipedia, began in 1960. In the Inner West LGA, and before that the Marrickville LGA, the awards have also been given to the Young Citizen of the Year and the Senior Citizen of the Year.



Professor Richard Scolyer
(Courtesy of Inner West Council)

I recently contacted the Inner West Council seeking information about a possible Citizen of the Year in the 1980s. No such information was available; in fact, it appears that **no record exists for any winners prior to 2017** which was the first year for the awards after the amalgamation of Marrickville Council with Ashfield and Leichhardt Councils.

A crying shame!

Similarly, I contacted Inner West Council earlier this year in search of past annual yearbooks and gazettes only to find in Council's archives just a handful of these from the 1970s onwards.

This is astounding given yearbooks were presumably published in their hundreds. How could Marrickville Council fail to keep copies of their own yearbooks?

To partly address this, Marrickville Heritage Society recently donated its dozen or so such publications (one from the mid-1970s) to the Inner West Council archives so that it will now have a somewhat enhanced collection.

Richard Blair



HAPPY BIRTHDAY JEAN!

Congratulations and fond regards to member Jean Piper. Jean celebrated her 100th birthday on 15 June 2025.



Calendar of MHS Events 2025

Saturday 26 July

Louisa Lawson Walk

With Michelle Tucker and Sue Castrique

Details on page 1

Saturday 23 August

The Changeable Symbols of Australia

With Richard White

Details on page 1

Saturday 27 September

TBA

Saturday 25 October

The Squatters' Grab: where it all went wrong

With Wal Walker

Details in next newsletter

Saturday 22 November

Show and Tell - and a lawyer's talk on wills, estates and dispersal of memorabilia

Details in next newsletter

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.

JOIN US

Point your phone's camera at this QR code to access the application form.

Pay by direct debit or cash at a meeting.

To visit our website, use this QR code.



Readers are welcome to attend events. For the talks, you need only turn up on the day.



Winter Trivia Question

On what building in the Marrickville district would one find this (outdoor) mural?

Text/SMS Richard 0413 335 897 or email us at marrickvilleheritagesociety@outlook.com. For those who receive their newsletter by snail mail (printed in black and white), the image is far more impressive in colour. If you'd like to receive this newsletter in colour by email, please just ask.



A tribute to a dear departed lavender in a Marrickville street

Photo: Nick Yetzotis

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

Publication sales

Iain 0400 473 252 | caria07@hotmail.com