

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY INC



CAMPERDOWN DULWICH HILL ENMORE
NEWTOWN PETERSHAM STANMORE

LEWISHAM MARRICKVILLE
ST PETERS SYDENHAM & TEMPE

Our November meeting

Saturday 22 November 10.15 for 10.30 am

The Pavilion, Marrickville Library

**Talk on wills and bequests by Emily Lane
plus Show & Tell**

With 15 years of experience at Lane & O'Rourke in Earlwood (including a decade as a practising solicitor), Emily Lane works exclusively in the areas of wills, probate, estate disputes, and elder law, helping clients navigate complex estate matters with care and clarity.

Emily will explore:

- The importance of creating a valid will to protect cherished collections and sentimental items after death
- Important practical considerations when leaving specific gifts in a will
- Helpful insights into the legal realities of passing down memorabilia.

Emily hopes to offer valuable guidance for anyone wanting to ensure their treasured possessions are properly protected and meaningfully passed on.



Emily Lane

Show & Tell

You are invited to bring along a treasure, something unusual, something intriguing that you would like to share with MHS members.

Speakers will be time-limited, depending on how many speakers there are; items don't have to be related to our local area. Prizes will be awarded by acclamation.

Reminder re outstanding fees

Should your annual fees for 2025-26 still need to be paid, expect a reminder with this newsletter which will give bank details for direct transfer. Any queries, ring Stuart 0414 620 519 or email <marrickvilleheritagesociety@outlook.com>.

R.I.P. – Marrickville Medal 1995-2024 and Built Environment Awards

See page 6

End of Year Pot Luck Dinner

Saturday 6 December

For your invitation, see details on page 3

Our September meeting: 27 September

Taronga Zoo: a guided history tour



Taronga's imposing entrance (photo: Caite Adamek)

A song I learnt as a kid (or was it one of my children who sang it?) played in my head as I parked my car and headed to the entrance to meet 14 other MHS members for an historical tour of the zoo on a beautiful sunny day in late September: 'We're going to the zoo, zoo, zoo | You can come too, too, too | We're going to the zoo'.

After meeting our guides, **Susan and Jo**, we split into two groups and headed off. Jo started with the early days of the zoo from the grant of land in 1912. She explained how the zoo opened in 1916 with 844 animals which came from various menageries and other privately owned collections. You may be familiar with stories about Jessie the elephant who came across the harbour on a barge and was ridden into the beautiful elephant enclosure in triumph to the delight of onlookers.

(<https://mosmancollective.com/history/more-than-a-century-ago-hundreds-of-animals-were-moved-across-sydney-harbour-to-their-new-home-at-taronga-zoo/>)

A tramline was already in place as the land had previously been a sheep farm and before that a quarry. The Zoo Friends office was originally the tramstop. The site was steep as it flowed to the

harbour and the natural sandstone gullies; in addition to the remnant landforms from quarrying, it provided some challenges for the zoo layout.

The Rustic Bridge was built for the opening to provide a safe path over a gully and is still in use today. An important design feature from the start was to provide picnic grounds for visitors and many remain today. Billies could be filled with hot water and families could find a place on beautiful lawns to enjoy their tea and sandwiches. For those who could afford it, the best scones in Sydney could be enjoyed in the Federation/Arts & Crafts tea rooms.



Our group and guides (photo: Jim, a passerby)

Jo outlined how the zoo has been big on repurposing areas as animal care models changed. The example she used was the Kangaroo Country walkthrough area near the top of the zoo which had previously been a wetlands area. This triggered recollection of my Year 8 school excursion where I snapped the entire roll of my 1960s Kodak Brownie Starlet camera due to my fascination with the lush landscape of the wetlands.

Interestingly, Jo pointed out that bluestone used in the foundations of the wetlands came in part from Scotland with the rest from Homebush Abattoirs. The zoo is classified as a Botanical Estate because there are plants from all eras of the zoo. And while there were no tree records from when the zoo opened, several trees in existence today can be identified in aerial photos taken in 1930.

The zoo has undergone many transitions. What was considered practical in the past (mock rock enclosures that were easy to keep clean) were considered cruel and not in the animals' best interests during a review by an international expert in animal psychology in the 1960s. These changes have continued as the zoo has identified areas of focus and have led to initiatives such as the Taronga Institute which, in addition to three state of the art

laboratories, provides educational opportunities for tertiary study.

The latest is the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Centre which opened in 2022. Visitors can see reptiles from six different climate zones, and there is a special focus on some of Australia's endangered frogs such as the Corroboree, Booroolong and Golden Bell frogs.

While the zoo aims to keep ahead of conservation approaches, and maintain an environment that is attractive to visitors, attention is also given to heritage conservation. The beautiful Edwardian Baroque style main entrance building with its frieze of flora and fauna plaster decorations and copper dome, is undergoing renovation as part of a revitalisation of the forecourt.

The MHS group was very well looked after by Susan and Jo – enthusiastic ambassadors, not only of the zoo, but also the huge team of volunteers the zoo relies on. Their storytelling – encompassing zoo history, its mission and future directions – was well received and we found it fascinating and informative. Thanks especially to **Lorraine Beach** for tick tacking with zoo staff to make it all happen.

Caite Adamek



Pelicans, Taronga Zoo (photo: Caite Adamek)

Welcome to new members

Stephanie Allen, Enmore; Kathy Sant & Jenny Mann, Marrickville; Peter Marosz, Earlwood; Duncan & Jenny Leys, Forest Lodge; Judith Neville, Little Bay; Barbara Denny, Thirlmere; Yvonne Johnson, Umina Beach.

(Sadly, Yvonne Johnson passed way in July 2025 aged 99. Her obituary was in the September-October 2025 newsletter.)

End-of-Year Pot Luck Dinner

Saturday 6 December — 6 pm

Members are invited to attend this annual event. This year we will gather in a comfortable Marrickville home (different from last year). Come along with a plate which may be a starter, main, side dish, salad or dessert to share.

If you're not sure what to bring, ask Lorraine who will be taking the bookings. In any case, Lorraine will ask you what you will bring so we don't end up with ten salads and hardly any mains. Also bring something to drink.

Street parking is limited but the venue is very close to Marrickville and Livingstone Roads if travelling by bus. Please wear flat soled shoes.

Bookings Contact Lorraine after 17 November on 0416 224 472 or
by email: <lbeach@iprimus.com.au>

Our October meeting: 25 October The Squatters' : where it all went wrong A talk by Wal Walker

Wal Walker is a trained economist and in retirement, has become a formidable researcher in Australian history.

Mr Walker delivered a compelling and thought-provoking account of the frontier conflicts that unfolded on Australian soil between the British colonial administration, the settlers and Indigenous peoples. Drawing extensively on British archival documents, Mr Walker supported the view that official policy in London was, at least in principle, benevolent to the Australian natives. He cited directives instructing colonial governors to 'conciliate the affections' of Indigenous peoples, 'enjoining all our Subjects to live in amity and kindness with them.'

However, as Mr Walker illustrated, the reality on the ground was rather different – the frontier experience was far from benevolent. A profound cultural clash existed between the British administration and the Aborigines. The governors of the Australian colonies were ill-equipped – both in training and allegiance – to navigate the complexities of the encounters.

Their inability to manage the relationships between the Australian natives and the colonial settlers, the squatters in particular, led to escalating conflict with brutal outcomes.

Particularly striking was Mr Walker's reliance on state records to underpin his analysis. A key example was the *British Select Committee on Aboriginal Tribes* of 1837. Quoting from its opening statement, he noted: 'The Native Inhabitants of any land have an incontestable right to their own soil; a plain and sacred right, however, which seems not to have been understood.'

In 1838, Lord Glenelg, the British Secretary of State



Wal Walker (photo Mark Sabolch)

for War and the Colonies, sent a copy of this report to Governor Gipps, outlining the British Government's plan for the better protection of Indigenous peoples in the colony.

Yet, despite these lofty intentions from London, the practical realities of establishing an effective Protectorate for Aboriginal people proved immensely difficult. A deep lack of empathy between the British settler and Indigenous populations ensured that the cultural divide could not be effectively bridged.

Mr Walker's presentation is a moving and significant contribution to our understanding of past injustices and truth-telling in Australian history. Through meticulous research and extensive reference to state records, Wal Walker's research illuminates a sobering story of 'what went wrong'.

Several members snapped up a copy of *The Squatters Grab* which our presenter was happy to sell.

Mark Sabolch

Vale: Shirley Kirkman and Beverley Martin

Shirley Mavis Kirkman died on 19 May 2024 aged 93. **Beverley Celina Martin** died on 26 July 2025 aged 85. They were MHS members and sisters who grew up in Marrickville. Their maiden name was MacLean.

Shirley as a child lived at 39 Pine Avenue and then 228 Livingstone Road. She attended Marrickville West School, then Stanmore Public School. She married in 1948 and relocated to West Wyalong where she remained. Shirley joined MHS in 1993 and for many years wrote regular letters to the Society reflecting on what life was like growing up in Marrickville.

Some of her reminiscences made their way into the MHS newsletter (February 2000, May 2002, July 2003, October 2006 and April 2009). Shirley was a volunteer at the Wyalong museum. Sadly, some 15 years ago she got dementia and went into a nursing home.

This spurred Shirley's younger sister Beverley Martin of Blacktown into joining the Society in 2009. Beverley grew up at the Livingstone Road address, then at 199 Illawarra Road. In the November 2013 newsletter Beverley recalled how her sister Mary and she:

usually caught the 'toast rack' tram to school but on the rare occasion when we walked we had to go past St Brigid's Girls' School, and the kids would sing out: 'Catholics, Catholics ring the bell; while all the Protestants go to hell!' But we got back at them when the Catholic kids went past Marrickville West school, and we sang out in reverse!

In May 2014 Beverley and Brian, her husband of 64 years, joined a Society tour of the former Addison Road Army Camp with Sue Castrique and Graham Chalcraft. Brian was a former veteran who had passed through the Addison Road depot.

The Society extends its condolences to Beverley's children Darren and Raelene, and to Shirley's son Paul.

Richard Blair

Parramatta high rise rezoning?

Concerns about over development, loss of heritage and open spaces are shared in other parts of Sydney. Recently the attention of MHS was drawn to a meeting on 18 October and a petition to save precious and historic green space in Parramatta.



(Photo from The Parramatta Foundation)

People are calling for rezoning plans for the state heritage listed landscapes of the Cumberland Hospital Precinct in North Parramatta to be halted immediately. Nearly 400 trees and shrubs, carefully selected by the Royal Botanic Gardens in the 1850s adorn the estate. Instead of more concrete and glass, visionaries would like to see a Parramatta Botanic Gardens. Now isn't that a great idea!

For more information check out The Parramatta Foundation.

Mary Barthelemy

Controversy on Warren Road Marrickville

A house in Warren Road, Marrickville, on the Society's radar for over a decade, has recently been at the forefront of the debate over affordable housing and a 'fairer future' for Inner West residents.

In 2015 the Society sought to have the buildings at 50-52 Warren Road heritage listed in the former Marrickville Council's South Marrickville Heritage Review. The owner did not agree, so the listing did not take place.

Then in 2021, a Development Application was submitted to council seeking to demolish the buildings and erect a four-storey boarding house. Boarding houses were a priority and the objections of the Society and council were overridden by the Land and Environment Court.

However, the plan did not proceed and the 17 residences within the buildings remained, offering low-cost housing for the occupants.

At the time we took a good look at the history of the buildings and published a story on our website. The story points out that numbers 50 and 52 are actually two Victorian villas that had been built around 1886, after the subdivision of the Harnleigh Estate.



Victorian Interior
(Photo Rod Aanensen)

A number of significant people have owned or lived in the houses over time, including Ninian Melville, Member of the Legislative Assembly of NSW, and renowned feminist and trade unionist Kate Dwyer and her husband Michael.



50 Warren Road 1930s façade (Courtesy Google Maps)

In the 1930s the buildings were purchased by the brothers Jones who had carried out some extensions and added the facade, converting both into the flats we see today.

When the state government's plan for buildings around transport hubs and the Inner West Council's 'Fairer Future Plan' were adopted, a new DA was submitted. This time the building would be nine storeys with three underground levels as well. Now, 38 apartments would be offered for sale at market rates while eight would be designated 'affordable housing' at 80% market rental rates for a period of 15 years.

The occupants of the flats have begun a campaign to save the buildings as affordable housing and to ensure that they are not forced out of their homes with nowhere else to go.

The society has also returned to the fray again. We are seeking to have the buildings listed as an example of the adaptive reuse of Victorian villas as flats, with aesthetic and historical significance at the local level.

After an inspection of the interiors of 50 and 52, we noted that there was still period detail such as Victorian decorative cornices, ceilings and fireplaces. There is also Interwar (1930s) architectural joinery such as decorative glazed doors and stair balustrade.

The Society has requested that council reject the development as it is stylistically intrusive and out of scale for the surrounding character area of the former Harnleigh Estate.

Rod Aanensen

Inner West Council Medal for Conservation 2025

This year the Inner West Council Built Environment Awards proudly marks 30 years of awarding the Medal for Conservation, celebrating three decades of recognising excellence in heritage conservation and engagement within our built environment. Sadly, the long tradition of acknowledging the original Marrickville Council origin of the Medal (known from 1995 to 2024 as the Marrickville Medal) has ended.

The judges this year were heritage architect **Anita Krivikas** (Associate Partner at Purcell Architecture), the winning architect of last year's Medal winning house; **Simon Wilson** (of Potter & Wilson); and **Sinclair Croft** (Inner West Council's Heritage and Urban Design Acting Team Leader).

Judge Anita Krivikas, in her speech at the awards ceremony, noted that this year's theme, *Unearthed*, highlights the importance of celebrating those who reimagine our heritage, enrich the community, and inspire sustainable futures through design, conservation, and cultural memory.

The shortlisted projects were certainly a diverse group, however, each exemplified many of these qualities. Of the shortlisted group, four projects encompassed contemporary additions of various scales to historic family homes.

High Commendation: 4 Rose Street, Birchgrove



Designer: Benn + Penna
(Photo: Tom Ferguson & Cieran Murphy)

At 4 Rose Street, Birchgrove, the interventions and additions were notable for their thoughtful reference to the original detailing of the building to create a new era in the home's history.

High Commendation: 13 Jane Street, Balmain



Designer: David Mitchell Architect
(photo: Clinton Weaver)

At 13 Jane Street, Balmain, the solidity of the new additions provides a contrast with the original sandstone character of the building, and unsympathetic additions and alterations were reversed to reveal lost features.

Both projects incorporated sensitive conservation of the original 19th century components of the building conservation.

Winner of the Medal: White Bay Power Station, Rozelle



Designer: Design 5 Architects
(Photo: Design 5 Architects, Placemaking NSW and FDC Construction)

Finally, at White Bay Power Station, the winner of the Medal, the judges witnessed a project driven by a deep understanding of the significance of the place. The employment of best practice conservation techniques of 'do as much as necessary but as little as possible' delivers a result that is – for all extents and purposes – a snapshot in time.

We also saw the sensitive approach to the interventions necessary to enable its activation. As a major piece of infrastructure within the Inner West, the fact it was retained at all is worth celebrating and is a testament to the vision of many that fought for its survival. Its future as an important cultural institution, creative and educational facility for the Inner West cannot be underestimated.

The **Inner West Urban Photography Competition** encourages residents to engage with the Inner West Council urban landscape, and again this was a popular competition, with many submissions across the three categories.

Andrew Witham won in the General category for his formal heritage composition of the Dulwich Hill Pressure Tunnel Shaft Building. The winner of the High School category was **Clara Drumond** for her misty study of the Sexton's Lodge, St Stephen's Anglican Church, Camperdown, *Steps in Time* (pictured below). And with a striking night photo of the old Marrickville Police Station, the winner of the Primary School category was **Ariana Rahi**, *Unearthed New Ways to Protect*.



Steps in Time

(Photos sourced from Inner West Council website)

Scott MacArthur

Spring Trivia Answer



Illawarra Road, Marrickville in flood near Wharf Street, probably in the 1960s (Source: Daily Telegraph site)

Congratulations to a number of members who identified the location of the flood image as reproduced opposite. In order of contact: **Andrew Burns, John McGrath, Megan Hicks, Bob Rein, Jan O'Reilly, Peter Dixon, Diane McCarthy, Jan Gaynor, Peter Chessell and Ian Phillips.**

The location is Illawarra Road, Marrickville, near the corner of Wharf Street, opposite Steel Park. Jan O'Reilly said she 'went to West Marrickville Primary School with Jennifer, whose parents had the corner shop, and it always got flooded too.'

Peter Chessell identified the main car in the photo as a 1963 Ford Falcon and the obscured car in the rear as possibly a 1950s Holden. Peter recalls he played tennis in courts that used to be in a nearby abandoned quarry.

Ian Phillips well remembers the regular Illawarra Road flooding largely due to the inadequate catchments above, poor drainage along Illawarra Road and the nearby overflowing Cooks River. He recalls AH McDonald was an electrical business of some sort and that ironically, the name of the shop owners was also McDonald. Both buildings have long gone, the business site now a block of flats and the site of the shop absorbed into HJ Mahoney Memorial Park. The flats above are in Hilltop Avenue.

Richard Blair

How to Join the Society

Download a membership form from our website, complete and email to Society; pay by direct debit, by cheque or cash at a meeting. Our fees have not increased for over 20 years, so for a small outlay you can receive the newsletter and occasional journal, attend our monthly meetings and contribute towards preserving our built and environmental heritage.

Calendar of MHS events

Saturday 22 November

Solicitor Emily Lane will talk on assisting wills/estates for disposing of memorabilia/documents, followed by Show and Tell. Details on front page.

Saturday 6 December

Pot Luck Dinner—details and invitation on page 3

Saturday 28 February 2026

Patricia Skehan – a talk on her book *The Secrets of Anzac Ridge*. Details next newsletter

Saturday 28 March 2026 To be advised

Saturday 18 April 2026 Paul Brennan talk on Grosvenor Theatre and other lost cinemas

How do you get your newsletter?

Most of our members receive their newsletter in PDF by email, but we still post about 80 newsletters of each issue.

We are sometimes advised by a member of a preference to receive a hard copy newsletter by post.

Reasons for this are because PDF files can't be opened, or emails are only received on a mobile and the print is too small to read, or emails are infrequently checked, or because some members like to keep and file their newsletters and don't own a printer.

Conversely, some who have been receiving their newsletter by post decide they would prefer a PDF by email. Some advantages of this approach are having the images in colour, receiving the newsletter more quickly and less paperwork to handle.

In brief, if you would like to switch from your current arrangement, it's not a problem – just let us know.

After emigrating to Australia from England in 1963 as a 'ten-pound Pom', the late film critic **David Stratton** and his then wife and baby lived 'for a few months in a flat above a G & G store' in Petersham. In his 2008 autobiography *I Peed on Fellini* he described the flat as 'rundown but bearable' although his memory fell short in terms of its location. That G & G store was on the north east corner of New Canterbury Road and Gordon Street.

A circular plaque was installed earlier this year in the footpath outside the Randwick Ritz cinema honouring Stratton and fellow critic **Margaret Pomeranz** just months before his death on 14 August aged 85.

Summer Trivia Question



Identify this building in the local area and its location. Ring or text Richard on 0413 335 897 or email MHS at address at bottom of this page.

Members to note re making payments

Our Treasurer, Stuart Grigg, has asked if we can all please take special care when making payments into the MHS bank account. He often finds payments for unusual amounts – sometimes including more than one renewal, a donation, or something else. Without notes telling him what it is, he can't allocate the funds correctly, which he's obliged to do.

So, unless it's one simple amount (for, say, 'Renewal – J Bloggs') can you please *always* include your name and *always* define the payment? Example, in the reference area, you could say: 'Renewal J Bloggs \$12 donation (\$8)' or something similar. If insufficient space for a message while banking, could you please email or text Stuart and tell him what you've paid? His contact details just below.

Lorraine Beach

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