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PHANFARE



PHA NSW



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Cover image: Quality Row, Norfolk Island
Photo: Dr Peter Tyler 201

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President's Report

August 2010

This year we recognise and celebrate a quarter of a century's achievements. PHA NSW was founded in 1985 the Association was formed to support historians working outside academia. It is good to see that some of the founding members are still part of the organisation: Carol Liston, Terry Kass, Paul Ashton, Christa Ludlow and Rosemary Broomham.

Since its inception PHA (NSW) has set ethical standards, established a scale of fees, negotiated professional indemnity insurance, provided advice on contracts, published occasional monographs and voiced its members opinions in *Phanfare*. More recently PHA (NSW) has set up an electronic weekly employment bulletin, an email newsletter, and an undergraduate history prize. It provides workshops for keeping professional skills current and a network for members to meet and exchange experiences. Advocacy to promote historians in the eye of the community has been ongoing but has been increased recently. Today PHA (NSW) has over 100 members who are accredited according to the standards of the national body Australian Council of Professional Historians' Associations Inc. (ACPHA) formed in 1995.

After twenty five years PHA NSW is still going strong! A major highlight this year was the conference *Islands of History* held on Norfolk Island from 18-25 July. Peter Tyler convenor and the committee; Ismelda Bargas (PHANZ) Bruce Baskerville, (NSW & Norfolk Island), Christine Cheater, Pauline Curby, Cathy Dunn, Sue Mitchell and Ian Willis excelled themselves organising this event.

For the fifth year we held our *History in July* party when over forty members and

guests were fortunate to hear an excellent talk from Senior Lecturer at the University of Sydney Dr Kirsten McKenzie. Based on her book *Swindlers, Rogues and Opportunists: Impostors in the British Empire* she outlined the opportunities for false identity and its exposure in the colonies.

Thanks to the efforts of the executive committee and other members of PHA we have had a memorable and productive year, as you will read in the various reports that follow. It is gratifying to see that many members are contributing by giving us a voice on committees and by helping with workshops, mail-outs, email, website and more.

Our recent submission supporting the proposed new degree, Bachelor of Historical Inquiry at UNE was instrumental in its approval and it:

will provide those who wish to work in museums, exhibition centres and publicly funded heritage and conservation bodies, a combination of study in professional areas, with more academic periodic and thematic approaches and subjects in the discipline of history.

We have also supported the work of the Dictionary of Sydney, lobbied for the continuation of historians positions at the City of Sydney, as well as for the appointment of a historian to the NSW

Heritage Council for another two years until 2011 and opposed the proposal to close the National Archives offices in Darwin, Adelaide and Hobart.

Three committee members are retiring. Jodi Frawley who has worked very diligently during the last year, both as minutes secretary and general secretary. Christine Cheater who has been our representative at ACPHA; and Sue McClean who has acted as membership secretary, represented us at RAHS and ran our pilot undergraduate prize. Our public officer Ruth Banfield has also assisted the committee, especially with social activities. These last three have served on the committee for several years. Our treasurer Christine Yeats, Zoe Pollock and Laila Ellmoos have also contributed much to the smooth functioning of PHA NSW and will be continuing to support the organisation. I would like to acknowledge the executive's efforts and thank them. It has been a most supportive and pleasant committee to work with. I will not be standing for the committee, as after seven years I feel it is time for me to move over and move on.

PHA NSW is still young, at only 25. I feel that the Association is gaining strength and momentum. I hope that the incoming committee will continue to help keep historians in the public eye, in work, up to date and in production.

Virginia Macleod

ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE, NORFOLK ISLAND

PHA (NSW) celebrated its 25th anniversary with a conference on Norfolk Island from 18 to 25 July 2010. And what a wonderful week it was, from the official opening (below left) by the Chief Minister, Hon. David Buffett, to the final Fish Fry at Kingston! Convener Peter Tyler, the Conference Committee and PHA President Virginia Macleod (below right) are to be congratulated on an efficient, informative and, most importantly, enjoyable conference at a great location.



Chief Minister, Hon. David Buffett



PHA President Virginia Macleod

There were sixty registered delegates, including sixteen PHA NSW members and twenty-eight from Norfolk Island. There were eighteen partners and friends who went fishing, horse riding, and exploring during the daily sessions. Speakers came from Australia, New Zealand, Noumea, and the United Kingdom, and included historians, academics, authors, archaeologists, museum curators, heritage specialists, and linguists. We were delighted at the number of Norfolk Islanders who attended sessions, especially the Chief Minister and the Administrator, Owen Walsh.

For a week, we were feted and fed like visiting celebrities. At the Welcome Reception at the Governor's Lodge (the conference venue), the supply of wine and food seemed endless. And each day the Lodge provided delegates with morning and afternoon tea and a delicious lunch. In his role as Vice-Regal Representative, His Honour Owen Walsh and his wife Mrs Bianca Walsh (of Pitcairn descent like so many islanders) hosted an elegant reception at Government House, the magnificent edifice that is Australia's oldest government house in continuous use. The Norfolk Island Historical Society provided an afternoon of tea and cakes, informative talks and displays, and a tour of their exquisite treasure, St Barnabas Chapel, erected at the Melanesian Mission in memory of Bishop John Coleridge Patterson's tragic death in 1871. We were transfixed as the tones of the Henry Willis organ resonated amidst the carved pews, pearl inlays, marble floors, and stained glass windows. The Lions Club provided more hospitality with a hearty feed of fish and chips in their clubhouse with its expansive collection of historic photographs and memorabilia. Locals soon knew of our presence from daily radio interviews with conference participants and conveners.



At the gaol with Bruce



The old crankmill, guardhouse and store

Our first day was the most active, consisting of an orientation tour (with Devonshire tea) from a local bus company followed by a guided walking tour of historic sites and museums. The latter was conducted by Bruce Baskerville, seen above at left in green jacket as he points out elements of the old gaol. A former PHA (NSW) Secretary, Bruce spoke of his role as Site Manager for the Kingston and Arthur's Vale Historic Area, provided fascinating details as we trudged around the historic site, and organised visits to local museums. And of course there was afternoon tea and cakes, provided at No 9 Quality Row, part of the former Military and Civil Officer Quarters, and now renovated as a Heritage Research Centre. Bruce's keynote conference address dealt with the process of nominating the site, known as KAVHA, for the UNESCO World Heritage Listing. After all that work, he must be as delighted as we are at the announcement on 2 August that eleven Australian convict sites, including Norfolk Island, have been inscribed on the World Heritage Register. Part of the historic Kingston site – the crankmill, guardhouse, and store – is seen above.

So what of the main event? Thirty-two papers were presented over four days, all related, if sometimes tenuously, to the theme 'Islands of History' and all were of a high professional standard. Seven were major keynote addresses while the others were twenty minute talks. Again, the organisers and individual chairpersons are to be applauded for the smooth and civilised efficiency with which each session was run. It must be the first conference I've ever attended where no speakers went over time and there was adequate opportunity for questions. Discussion of particularly interesting or provoking papers usually extended into morning and afternoon tea or lunch. Most people were relieved not to have concurrent sessions, as these usually require difficult choices and mad dashes for alternate venues.

An evaluation survey at the end asked us to choose our favourite papers but it was an impossible task. Occasionally I thought I'd skip a session and sneak off for some much-needed exercise but never managed it. Even papers that appeared irrelevant turned out to be interesting and sometimes surprising. And it was pure serendipity that nearly all the speakers not only knew their subject intimately but could also present it in an engaging way. The majority of delegates and speakers were from Australia so Australian history and heritage predominated but there was much more. Many papers provided new insights into Norfolk

Island history while others broadened the outlook of even experienced professional historians by addressing unfamiliar aspects of the history of our close neighbours in the South Pacific.

The topics ranged across a wide spectrum but most fitted within the following sub-themes: The Politics of Writing History; Convict Life; Norfolk Histories; History, Heritage and Tourism; Ships and the Sea; Pacific Island Histories; Education and History; Intercultural History; and Conservation. Subject matter included women convicts and their children (Assoc. Professor Carol Liston), the complexities of convict management on Cockatoo Island (Sue Castrique), Philip Gidley King and his family's connections to Norfolk Island (Dr Peter Tyler), the past as a tourist destination (Richard White), Dirk Hartog Island and the *Batavia* shipwreck site (Myra Stanbury, Curator of Maritime Heritage at the Western Australian Museum), and the *Phoenix Hulk* for transit prisoners to Norfolk Island (Beverley Earnshaw). My apologies to all those other interesting speakers not acknowledged in this brief review. Their talks will be included in the conference papers to be published later this year.

Several speakers addressed the profession of public history itself. Dr Susan Marsden with her wide experience as State Historian of South Australia and much else spoke about the highly-politicised activity of doing heritage work. Imelda Bargas of PHANZA created some envy among PHA members as she outlined the benefits of the substantial financial support her Association receives from the NZ Government and of the limitations of being employed in the public sector. In a talk entitled 'Petty thief or habitual criminal', Loreley Morling from PHA (WA) used her own genealogical research to examine the common perception that one's own convict ancestors are often assumed to be relatively blameless. Cathy Dunn, a specialist in heritage tourism and regional history from the south coast of NSW, stirred things up by claiming that historians were missing job opportunities by not becoming more involved with tourist operators to ensure more authenticity in cultural and heritage tourism and in the conservation of heritage places.

Two of the media favourites were Babette Smith and Tim Causer (below). Historian, author and mediator, Babette Smith is best known for *A Cargo of Women: Susannah Watson & the Convicts of the Princess Royal* (1988). A popular novel on the same topic followed. Her latest book is *Australia's Birthstain* (2008). Her provocative keynote address, to a room full of professional historians, on writing history as both fact and fiction elicited some bristling responses. Her later talk on the logistics of the closure of the second Norfolk Island penal settlement in 1855 drew on Tim Causer's detailed research. In his keynote address and subsequent talks, Dr Causer, of King's College, London, quietly and methodically demolished the myth of Norfolk Island as a 'hell-on-earth' with statistical analysis from his research into 6458 Norfolk Island convicts. This was surprising and perhaps disturbing news to several Norfolk Islanders present whose tourist industry relies on such legends of convict brutality.



Babette Smith & Tim Causer



The new gaol

Another popular speaker was marine archaeologist and Deputy Director of the NSW Heritage Branch, Tim Smith. Barely dry from his recent underwater research in Turkey, he exuded enthusiasm as he described his work on the Australian submarine *AE2* in the Dardanelles and as leader of the joint 2010 Australia-Turkish expedition surveying previously unknown archaeological remains off Anzac Cove and Gallipoli. He also spoke on the maritime legacy of Norfolk Island, Lord Howe and the Great South Land so it was a real coup for the Norfolk Island RSL when he agreed to give them a special presentation on the results of his latest research.

Dr Christophe Sand, Director of the Institute of New Caledonian and Pacific Archaeology in Noumea, provided a touch of exotica and a whole new area of interest with his keynote address on 21st century archaeology in the Western Pacific. It is only within the last two decades or so that professional fieldwork on the archipelagos of Island Melanesia and West Polynesia has begun to reveal the complexity of pre-European cultures. His later talk on French convictism in New Caledonia was also enlightening for those insular Australia historians who thought they had a monopoly on convict settlements.

Other speakers who propelled complacent Australian historians out of their comfort zones included Professor Richard Boast from Victoria University of Wellington who spoke about conflict between the Moriori and the later Maori peoples of Chatham Islands, fellow New Zealander Barbara Gawith who explained the British financial systems underpinning 19th century Pacific trade, and Peter Mühlhäusler, Foundation Professor of Linguistics at the University of Adelaide, who explored the reasons behind the deliberate loss of the Tahitian language on Pitcairn Island and also its disappearance from the Pitkern-Norf'k language.

The final session, chaired by Pauline Curby, consisted of a panel of practising professional historians who spoke of problems encountered in their own work before fielding questions from an audience that was surprisingly large for such a specialised session. Entitled 'Guns for Hire', the discussion dealt with the problems of being an expert witness and of dodging litigation in contemporary history by allowing oral history interviewees to speak for themselves. It examined the ethical and political ramifications of undertaking commissioned

histories for commercial organisations and local government bodies. Many had experienced confronting situations but the decision on whether or not to refuse such loaded commissions is ultimately a personal one. Much of the discussion also centred on the perennial problem of the relationship between academics and public historians. Some of us were concerned at the lack of university recognition for PHA work and for the papers presented at the conference. It is evident that we need to bridge the gap with more collegiate cooperation.

The last event, after the fish fry, was a ghost walk around the eerie Kingston site in the moonlight. It was directed by Liz Wilson from the Norfolk Island Museum, an active and knowledgeable participant in all the conference sessions. She managed to spook some sceptical historians with strange and gory tales of unexplained coincidences. Aptly, we were guided through the darkened ruins, like the New Gaol below which looked much more sinister at night, by the bright torch held by the indefatigable Jannise Witt, the Norfolk Island travel consultant who did so much to ensure the success of the conference from its inception to its final moments.

At the end, everyone was asking about the next conference. So, if you have a lovely welcoming venue, a stable of interesting talkers, a dedicated conference committee, and generous sponsors, do let us know. I'm sure we'll all be delighted to attend.



Chi Chi and Elizabeth



Our intrepid adventurers

The only real complaint was that we didn't have enough time to explore more of idyllic Norfolk Island itself, although various partners brought us news from that front and we did get to sample several excellent restaurants on free nights. Those of us from Sydney made up for lost time on the last free day. While some went shopping, walking or driving, others, like University of Sydney students Chi Chi Huang and Elizabeth Miller (above), went paddling in the Pacific. They had displayed posters and talked about their projects on Sydney's Chinatown and historic tourism in Braidwood, respectively.

Other more intrepid souls – Chris Cheater, Sue Mitchell, and Terri McCormack – took to the sea with a couple of locals and a 175 hp engine. We experienced the arcane but effective boat launching method at Cascades (above). This with a similar lighterage operation at Kingston Wharf is how all cargo and cruise passengers are brought ashore. We explored the rugged and beautiful coastline first sighted by James Cook in 1774. Landing a longboat on that shore

seemed impossible until we later drove to the Captain Cook lookout above and sighted the rocky inlet where he reputedly first set foot on this isolated island.

The *ISLANDS OF HISTORY* Conference Organising Committee of the Professional Historians Association (NSW) Inc acknowledges with gratitude the support received from these sponsors:

Allen & Unwin; Australian Council of Professional Historians Associations; Australian National Maritime Museum; Copyright Agency Limited; Governor's Lodge Resort Hotel; History Council of New South Wales; Kingston and Arthur's Vale Historic Area, Norfolk Island Government; Professional Historians Association New Zealand Aotearoa; Professional Historians Association (NSW) Inc; Royal Australian Historical Society; State Library of New South Wales; The Travel Centre, Norfolk Island; And the several Universities, Government Departments and Museums that subsidised the attendance of staff members

Review: Terri McCormack

Photographs: Dr Peter Tyler



Site of the HMS Sirius Wreck, Norfolk Island

La Perouse Chinese market gardens under threat

Recently members of the Chinese Heritage Association of Australia and other interested parties were dismayed to learn that 60 per cent of the state heritage-listed Chinese market gardens at La Perouse/Phillip Bay were to be resumed to allow for the expansion of the adjacent Eastern Suburbs Memorial Park Botany Cemetery.



**Chinese market gardens at La Perouse with cemetery visible in the background, August 2010.
Photo: Pauline Curby**

Market gardens have been a feature of the Randwick local government area since the 1840s. In fact the first mayor of the Municipality of Randwick was an English migrant market gardener. In view of their location, within easy reach of central Sydney, gardens at Randwick and Coogee were cultivated throughout the 19th century. It was essential for Sydneysiders to be able to source fresh vegetables close to where they lived, something that is still desirable, especially in view of the environmental impact of ‘food miles’.

Chinese market gardeners have been a highly visible group in Sydney for more than 100 years and have had a presence in Randwick since at least the 1890s. The remaining gardens at La Perouse are a remnant of what was once a widespread phenomenon across the Sydney basin. In the interwar years their presence increased markedly, albeit temporarily, in places such as Ryde where Chinese men often farmed agricultural land abandoned by ‘Anglo’ cultivators.

The presence of Chinese market gardeners in the southern part of the Randwick local government area has long been noted. In the 1920s, for example, one family harvested flax that Chinese market gardeners had planted years before. Unemployed people who lived in shanties in the La Perouse area during the 1930s depression bartered fish for vegetables with

the 'boss' Chinese gardener. Many of the children recalled their kindness. The extensive network of gardens almost disappeared in the post-war years as suburban development encroached. Large Chinese market gardens located in Wassell Street, Matraville, for example, ceased operating in the late 1950s.

It is important that the gardens at La Perouse be retained, not only for the vegetables produced there, but also because they represent a long tradition of intensive agriculture in the Sydney basin practised by a community whose contribution to Australian culture has only begun to be acknowledged over the last two decades.

How can this site be threatened when it is state-heritage listed? Wasn't the listing based on thorough research? Unfortunately little primary historical research seems to have been done on the site. The State Heritage Inventory listing for the gardens cites general material from a 1985, wildly inaccurate history of Randwick and, in relation to the site itself, a 'local historian' is quoted:

Count de La Perouse cleared a piece of land and established a vegetable garden in Phillip Bay to prepare vegetables for his return journey back to France ... It is believed that this vegetable garden was Australia's first primary industry site and the site was more or less the same site as the Chinese Market Gardens.

A big call! I won't even venture into the 'first primary industry site' claim.

There has been a long tradition, from the 1820s when a monument to La Perouse was erected on the northern shore of Botany Bay that this French explorer planted a garden nearby. Perhaps he did, although this is not mentioned in primary sources. La Perouse did record that he had a 'very good retrenchment' constructed, behind which new boats were built. This was done, he confided in a letter to a friend, because 'the Indians of New Holland ... are ... like all savages, very ill-natured and would set fire to our boats if they had means of doing so'.¹ The site of the 'retrenchment', and presumably the garden if it existed, is approximately 1.5kms from the present market gardens, not 'more or less the same site'.

It is disappointing to see a hotchpotch of second hand material masquerading as history on the official NSW heritage website. Instead of borrowing from dubious sources when assessing a site's heritage value, professional historical research should be done as a matter of course. In addition the importance of visiting sites and understanding the lay of the land should not be underestimated. Implementing such procedures would give NSW's heritage-listed sites some credibility.

This does not mean the Chinese market gardens at La Perouse are not worthy of listing. It is their importance within the tradition of intensive Chinese agriculture in Sydney, not a spurious link with an 18th century French explorer that gives them significance. This remnant garden should not be used to bury the dead, but continue to feed the living.

For further information concerning the criteria under which these gardens are listed in the State Heritage Inventory: www.heritage.nsw.gov.au/07_subnav_01_2.cfm?itemid=5044696

Pauline Curby

¹ J. Dunmore, (ed & tr.), *The Journal of Jean-Francois de Galaup, Comte de La Perouse (1785-1788)* V2, The Hakluyt Society, London, 1995, p. 539.

The Governor: Lachlan Macquarie, 1810-1821

The opening of the state's pre-eminent commemorative Macquarie exhibition was held at the State Library on 6 July 2010 - the anniversary of Macquarie's swearing in. The exhibition represented the research, support and interest of public institutions and private collections. The large audience was constituted of interested historians, curators, librarians, collectors, benefactors, sponsors and other devotees of Australian history and heritage. PHA members Pauline Curby and Peter Tyler were to be seen among the throng.

The formalities were initiated by Mr Rob Thomas, President of the Library Association of NSW. Mr Thomas introduced the Hon Carmel Tebbutt MP, Deputy Premier and Minister for Health who opened the exhibition by introducing Lachlan Macquarie and the themes and issues implicit in it. Ms Regina Sutton, NSW State Librarian and Chief Executive thanked benefactors, sponsors and staff and outlined the current priorities of the State Library, highlighting those enhancing public access to the collections.

The exhibition weaves together a dazzling array of original documents and historic artefacts in twelve themed cases whose topics range from 'A Soldier's Life' (before his advent to NSW), to 'Commerce and Trade', to 'Relationships with Aborigines', to 'Opposing the Governor' and many more. Together they highlight issues and stories associated with the man, his contemporaries and the 'Australian' context of his time. Furthermore the organization and commentary provide critical assessments of Macquarie, his character, actions and values - not to mention insights into the wider colony, its state of affairs and values between 1810 and 1822.

In short this is an exciting and illuminating exhibition, a comprehensive and visually stimulating spectacle – definitely not to be missed.

Susan McClean

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Award for PHA member

Pauline Curby, *Randwick*

Randwick City Council was the winner of the RH Dougherty Award, Division C (an LGA population over 100,000) with Pauline Curby's publication, *Randwick*. Presented annually by the Local Government and Shires Association of NSW, the RH Dougherty Awards aim to recognise and encourage greater understanding and communication by Councils to their local communities. According to the judges: *The book will stand the test of time. An incredible achievement - something the council and community will be able to reference forever.*

This award builds on the commendation by the National Australian Publisher's Association's Annual Book Design Award for 2010 - for best designed reference and scholarly book.

Rare & Curious: Broadcasts from a Tardis

Having recently had a book published by Melbourne University Publishing*, I also found myself, with a degree of surprise, and for the first time in my life, assigned a dedicated publicist to help launch my offering on its way in the world. While I had had many dealings with publicity and marketing departments in my previous place of employment, it felt different to be allocated someone who had as one of his jobs of the moment arranging special placements and interviews for me and my book.

The publicist turned out to be a courteous and professional youngish man with a passion for sailing and a background in book publishing, now working as a freelancer. At the same time, he was also involved with the release of Blanche D'Alpuget's new biography of Bob Hawke and I suspect by comparison the brief for *Rare & Curious* seemed very genteel and modest compared to dealing with high-profile celebrity authors, their expectations and their entourages.

ABC Radio formed a cornerstone for the publicity and the subsequent small exposure to some of their internal operations proved to be a fascinating experience. Over the next weeks, I became quite familiar with the 'Tardis', the remote broadcast studio at the ABC Centre, Ultimo. The technical staff were uniformly polite, humorous and helpful, with the relaxed air of people who knew their jobs inside out and had seen every possible type of interviewee. Sometimes I had to wait in the adjacent area, as when Peter Fitzsimmons was inside the Tardis with his red head scarf, gesticulating animatedly into the air as he promoted his latest book.

Sometimes the interviews were live-to-air such as the program broadcast from Longreach. I did wonder what listeners in outback Queensland thought about the era of Governor Macquarie in colonial New South Wales and esoteric objects like collectors' chests, which I valiantly tried to describe in what I hoped were evocative word pictures. At the other end of the continent there was a morning program in Hobart, where fortuitously and surprisingly, the interviewer knew a great deal about Newcastle (the origin of the chests) and its history, having been born and brought up there. Talking on ABC Newcastle was like bringing it all back home for the collectors' chests and the main challenge was to try to not become too extended in descriptions and anecdotes.

The longer ABC programs were also, for this novice anyway, fascinating for what they revealed about different styles of interviewing and approaches. The one stipulation for Richard Fidler's nationwide Conversation Hour was that I fly to Brisbane for a face-to-face direct-to-air presentation. So I dutifully turned up at the ABC's temporary warehouse-like studios at Toowong, having caught a cab directly from the airport and failing to find any resemblance en route to long ago faded memories of living in Brisbane in the mid-1950s as the suburbs sped by.

The ABC's cramped quarters felt like being in the country after Ultimo, but there was a wonderful warm welcome from producer Pam O'Brien, and again, the sense that nothing was too much trouble. I was amazed that Richard seemed to have read the entire book inside out and started quoting obscure passages during the interview. He also turned out to be passionate and very knowledgeable about Australian history. The hour on air passed quickly in an easy, free-flowing discussion (although afterwards I had no idea what I'd said); at the end of 50 minutes it was hard to stop.

Then there was the piece for The Book Show, which is produced in the ABC's Melbourne studios. This was quite a contrast to Richard Fidler's easy-going approach and there were many emails and telephone calls with the producer over several weeks, planning how the interview would proceed and the different angles we could take. *Rare & Curious* seemed to be a bit of an oddity for The Book Show's literary focus and at one point, almost in desperation trying to describe what kind of book it was, all I could think of was to call it a hybrid, combining as it does colonial, political, local, family, furniture, art and natural history. In the end, a beautifully crafted 15 minutes of radio time emerged, almost a work of art in its own right, especially considering the disjointed comments I made into the void of the Tardis Room's microphone.

So, what came out of all this? Well, for a start, it is probably critical to have an agent who knows the media and the people in order to open doors. Once through the doors, it is encouraging to find how much interest there is in even fairly arcane and esoteric aspects of Australian history, both from program producers and presenters, and from the listeners and general public who are still telling me where they were when they heard the interviews broadcast.

Elizabeth Ellis

Emeritus Curator, Mitchell Library

* *Rare & Curious: The Secret History of Governor Macquarie's Collectors' Chest*, Miegunyah Press, Melbourne University Publishing, 2010

Rosie Block Retires

Two occasions marked the retirement of Rosie Block, Curator of Oral History at the Mitchell Library, in August. By chance the Annual General Meeting of the NSW Branch of the Oral History Association of Australia was held on 17 August in the Friends Room at the Library (and the following evening was her celebratory farewell from the Library).

Rosie had been President of the OHAA since 1993, 17 years, and first joined the Library in 1982, 28 years ago. For some she is oral history. The new president, Mrs Trish Levido, and the committee were elected and words of appreciation and farewell, personal and on behalf of the Association, were spoken by Di Ritch, Margaret Park and Frank Heimans – who presented Rosie with a copy of her own oral history interview commissioned by the OHAA to mark her retirement. Virginia Macleod recorded a series of extensive interviews with Rosie and a copy destined for the Library's Oral History Collection was presented to the guest speaker, Paul Brunton.

Mr Brunton was to speak on *David Scott Mitchell – his Library and his Centenary*, but before doing so he announced he wanted to say a few words about Rosie.

He has known Rosie for 28 years and reminded us she established the Friends of the Library, the Library Society whose aim was fundraising, and the Oral History program – *two major achievements created out of nothing*. Rosie also initiated the merchandising program and harnessed volunteers. The fact that there was no oral history collection to speak of then (with the Library lagging behind every institution in Australia) was something of a scandal: almost instantly Rosie became the face of oral history and *she put us on the map*.

Recalling the speed and energy of Rosie he said *she came into our lives with a rush and a personification of energy 28 years ago and she's never really slowed down*. Before the proceedings of the evening began he recounted that he spied Rosie pushing a trolley and declared he'd seen her push trolleys for the last 28 years ...there's Rosie, pushing her trolley – nothing is too humble to get things done.

His affection for a dear colleague and friend marked the occasion well. Her retirement *will be such a great loss*. Some people are irreplaceable, it's what they've contributed that cannot be replicated, he declared, and *Rosie will be irreplaceable - there will be a big hole in the Library*.

She has made *a contribution which can never be exceeded*.

Roslyn Burge

The Challenge of Conserving Goat Island

National Trust Talk – Hunters Hill, 14 July 2010

Sites on Sydney Harbour continue to provoke vigorous public debate: Barangaroo; White Bay; and Goat Island.

Until recently Phil Jenkyn was a member of the Goat Island Conservation Review Committee which prepared the draft Goat Island Conservation Management Plan (2009): a Plan which raised concerns at the National Trust and beyond for its policies on the removal of buildings obstructing viewlines of colonial structures and the assessment of the crane (formerly of Mort's Dock), among others.

For many years Phil has been associated with battles for various harbour locations and groups supporting public access to public lands: Sydney Harbour Federation Trust; Protectors of Public Lands; Callan Park; Defender of Sydney Harbour Foreshores; and Concord Foreshore Trail (incorporating the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway). Only weeks earlier the Department of Health decided the public could no longer access parts of the Concord Foreshore Trail. Phil felt he could no longer criticize the government on this issue and at the same time sit on the Goat Island Conservation Review Committee. He resigned from the Committee.

Returning to the challenges of Goat Island, Phil spoke about the program of workshops held in 2006 and the regular meetings of the Review Committee from 2007. For a short time in 2009 the Committee was in agreement about the decisions made for the use of buildings on Goat Island. But inevitably there were public discussions about increasing tensions about the Plan. Some of those difficulties arose from the changing nature of the working harbour and the shifting order of community values about significance on Goat Island.

The shipyard is still operational, but there are financial constraints on its upgrade. National Parks and Wildlife Service has spent money on wharves and the Queen's magazine and none of its \$9 million budget remains.

Colonial structures have been given a greater significance than many other structures built in the twentieth century. Prominently sited on the eastern headland of Goat Island is the Water Police building and behind it the barracks for single men who were part of the Maritime Services Board's Fire Brigade. As a post colonial structure it is mooted for demolition and shipyard buildings on the island's west are also recommended for removal since they restrict the view of the splendid gunpowder magazine building.

Unlike Cockatoo Island, where dozens of volunteers are engaged, volunteers are not wanted at Goat Island. The tourist industry is lobbying intensively and has the ear of government. Goat Island's challenges are multiple and the island is very much at risk.

Roslyn Burge

Callan Park – the third master plan in eight years

www.callanparkyourplan.com.au

Tell us what we need to know

Leichhardt Council's 2010 Master Plan for Callan Park will evolve from your contributions to this website, your participation in workshops, your feedback at public drop-in events, and your response to draft drawings, documents and analysis

Callan Park's third master plan in eight years is under way. Though this is the first without a specific outcome articulated by the government, the community supports the process Leichhardt Council has set in train. At the outset there was hope that the process would canvass ways in which Callan Park should be conserved, adapted and managed in the future, with opportunities along the way for robust, transparent public debate.

Discussion at the workshops indicate that community general knowledge about the site differs widely (and is remarkably limited in some instances). Among the important roles of the master planners is to educate the community about the process though a general explanation of Callan Park and its historical associations is missing from this multi-dollared process, as is the provision of a map. Instead people resort to scribbling on scraps of paper to indicate where particular sites under discussion are located.

Also concerning is the computer call from McGregor Coxall (the master plan team) to "tell us what we need to know". The community needs the master planners to offer ideas and ideals about what is possible, what could be done at Callan Park, and to date there has been no discussion of alternative examples of successful adaptations of historic cultural landscapes which might mirror some of the ways in which Callan Park could be re-used.

Comments can be made on the website (or at workshops on large sheets of paper, one set to a table) but the requirement to click on a smiley face before comments (restricted in size) can be lodged suggests superficiality. Judging from the weight of numbers in sporting and gardening categories particular community groups have galvanised members to "get involved", access the website and, with the press of a button, support particular activities. The emphasis this gives to numerical supremacy, decisions about future uses of the site at the press of a button, together with the invitation to nominate 'which building would you like' ~ suggest the current master plan has about it the air of an auction.

Written submissions are accepted and it will be interesting to see what importance the community gives to this method of involvement rather than the internet.

McGregor Coxall may have fulfilled their obligations to inform the public by lodging background material on the website but sixty-six reports (and thousands of words) presumes too much. And given the computer is the principal driver of this master plan, taking a month to convert these documents to searchable PDFs is four weeks too long. Adding to the abundance of reading material are thirteen *Discussion Papers* based on the background materials on topics as dense and diverse as mental health, heritage, legislation, contamination

and other categories, which sit on the website. Once more the box is ticked, but little in the way of explanation follows.

A wealth of words and technology, only minimal debate and an absence of vision.

Callan Park is still the property of NSW Health and any master plan for the site should be properly funded by government and a planning framework for secondary and tertiary plans and policies established.

Each iteration of these publicly funded processes consume immense sums: if but a fraction was allocated to heritage conservation, interpretation or traditional uses in the mental health sector a measurable difference could be made in both heritage and health.

Roslyn Burge

World Heritage Listing for 11 Australian Convict Sites

UNESCO World Heritage Committee inscribed 21 new sites on its World Heritage List during the 34th annual meeting in Brazil in July. The 11 convict sites are:

- NSW - Old Government House and Domain, Hyde Park Barracks, Cockatoo Island Convict Site and Old Great North Road
- Western Australia - Fremantle Prison
- Tasmania - Brickendon and Woolmers Estates, Darlington Probation Station, Port Arthur Historic Site, Coal Mines Historic Site and the Cascades Female Factory
- Norfolk Island - Kingston and Arthur's Vale Historic Area

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/647>

Welcoming the announcement, the Minister for Environment Protection and Heritage, Peter Garrett, spoke of the importance of such listing and the global recognition of places of universal significance and high cultural or natural value.

The 11 convict sites are included on the National Heritage List and are protected under national environment law. www.heritage.gov.au

Index to the Oral History Association of Australia Journal

No.1 – 1979 to No.31 2009 Elaine Peta Crisp prepared this index, building on the earlier work of Beth Robertson. Such an index, searchable by subject and name, is an invaluable research tool. The index was published in the most recent issue of the Oral History Association of Australia Journal, Islands of Memory, No.31 2009 and is accessible via the national and NSW OHAA websites:

www.ohaa.net.au www.oaansw.org.au/page/ohaa_journal_indexes_1979_2009.html

Hortus Camdenensis –Colin Mills

www.hortuscampen.com

Hortus Camdenensis is an illustrated online catalogue of nearly 3,300 plants grown by Sir William Macarthur at Camden Park between c.1820 and 1861.

This is by no means a finished project: Colin Mills has worked on the *Hortus Camdenensis* for the last decade and his research will continue. The Director for the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney, Dr Tim Entwisle, launched the website on 5 August. Emphasis is on 'illustrated' - this website has luscious images from (among other sources) *Curtis' Botanical Magazine* of contemporary horticultural 'releases' causing excitement then - these are so sharp they're still exciting.

Colin Mills has patiently compiled this using the extensive Camden Park records of plants stocked and sold in its renowned nursery from the 1840s and garden records (letters, diaries, notebooks) of the Macarthur family about other plants in the extensive garden. Also to be found on the website are notes about nomenclature (much changed since the 1800s); influential people, such as gardener Edmond Blake, essays (for example, laying out an orchard in colonial Australia, wine growing and production at Camden Park, gesneriads, gloxinias, fuchsias) and references (including copyright-free images which allow *Hortus Camdenensis* to be so 'visual').

Stuart Read
Chair, Sydney and Northern NSW Branch
Australian Garden History Society



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REMINDER: 2010-11 MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS NOW OVERDUE

This year you can renew your membership either by cheque or direct payment to the PHA bank account. Please be sure to put your name and renewal in the description field and email the treasurer when you have paid treasurer@phansw.org.au. The renewal form is at <http://www.phansw.org.au/membership.html>

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***Brought to Light* – Exhibition at Newcastle Lock Up**

Brought to Light explores the fragments of three hidden sites in the City of Newcastle. It is inspired by the recollections of experience that aggregate to form collective memory. *Brought to Light* revels in the slippery potency of what might have been, at three historic places normally hidden from view. These sites are the state heritage significant Australian Agricultural Company House (AA Co) in Hamilton, the Canoe Pool in Newcastle East, and the Corporation Baths, the remnants of which survive below the floor of a shopping arcade in downtown Newcastle.

The project explores the heritage values of these sites through artistic expression.

Collaborating artists are Matthew Tome, Darren Siwes and Mark Tredinnick who use a variety of artistic expression including multi media, photography, sculpture and poetry to explore the meanings and heritage of these sites.

The project is an initiative of the Lock-Up Cultural Centre under the direction of Geraldine Bobsien with the support of Newcastle City Council's heritage officer and communications team. Financial assistance has been provided by ArtsNSW.

The exhibition will be launched this Friday evening at the Lock-Up Cultural Centre by the ABC's Caron Duncan and runs until August 1.

Feel free to swing by if you're in or around Newcastle for a look at what artists do when let loose with historic materials.

PHA (NSW) Directory 2010-11

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Editorial Collectives: See list inside front cover of *Phanfare*

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