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**Observing History – Historians Observing**



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This issue was produced by the Hills District Group consisting of Ruth Banfield, Cathy Dunn, Terry Kass, Katherine Knight, Carol Liston, and Karen Schamberger.

## President's Report, May 2006



Members are urged to make an effort to attend PHA functions or to contribute in some way to the association. Many already do this by representing the PHA on committees or government bodies, compiling *Phanfare* or serving on the executive. I urge more members to become involved so we can have a lively, dynamic organisation that supports its members in their professional life and makes a contribution to the researching and writing of history in NSW.

At the moment the executive is considering ways in which we can achieve this. We will be looking at recruiting more members and would welcome suggestions from members as to how this could be achieved. At present I estimate that approximately one quarter of the membership is active. While we appreciate the fact that some PHA members have good reasons for being 'sleepers', the executive considers that it would benefit the association to have a critical mass of active members.

I also strongly suggest members on the consultants' register return their entry in the new format – as per notice sent to members on 12 March - to executive member Ron Ringer [ron@syntaxwriting.com.au](mailto:ron@syntaxwriting.com.au) or if you prefer you can mail a CD to: Ron Ringer, 31 John Street, Woollahra NSW 2025 ASAP. This is not an arduous task (the most time-consuming part is scanning book covers) but it will give the register a more contemporary image.

Our Continuing Professional Development committee has planned an exciting series of activities for the remainder of the year. The next event – as already advertised – is a workshop on copyright to be held at History House on 27 May. Please contact Peter Tyler if you would like to attend. In July we are planning to hold an 'industry' event to which members of the wider historical community, publishers, representatives of government agencies and potential commissioning bodies will be invited. This will be a great opportunity for networking so keep an eye out for details in June.

I am pleased to announce that David Lewis has filled the casual vacancy that occurred on the PHA executive. We appreciate David's offer and look forward to hearing about his participation in our national body, ACPHA. We would also like to thank retiring member Kate Waters for her efforts over the last two and a half years. Despite heavy work and family commitments she has made a valuable contribution to the PHA.

The date for this year's AGM has been set for 12 August. As already indicated we need some new blood on the executive so please consider standing for election.

Pauline Curby President

## Archaeology in Parramatta

In early March, archaeologist Dr Ted Higginbotham addressed members of Historic Houses Trust about archaeology in Parramatta – past, present and future. The dining room at Elizabeth Farm was packed with enthusiastic listeners as he explained and illustrated his work. Ted has worked on archaeological excavations in Parramatta since the early 1980s. He summarised early developments following the passage of the 1977 Heritage Act – first excavations including work at Old Government House and Elizabeth Farm, the GIO brick barrel drain of 1980 and the limited understanding of survival of sites in the CBD. At that time, both government and general public had little recognition of Parramatta's archaeological significance.

Discovery of post holes from a convict hut on the site of the Family Court in 1985 suggested potential survival of archeological evidence under the CBD. An archaeological management plan was undertaken in 1987, completed in 1989 and adopted by Parramatta City Council as a planning document. A mechanism was then developed to excavate privately owned sites, mapped from NSW historical records.

Major excavations of the Prospect Electricity site in 1989 revealed evidence of a second convict hut and the Babes in the Wood hotel. A third convict hut was identified under the old Parramatta Telephone Exchange building in George St in 1992 and in the same year the Westfield Shopping Centre site provided more revelations. The present stage of archaeological investigation he defined as beginning with the 1997 move of the NSW Heritage Office to Parramatta. There was a sudden change of emphasis, with many Parramatta sites transferred from regional significance to state significance. In 2000 Parramatta Historical and Archaeological Landscape Studies aimed to integrate all different types of heritage into one plan PHALM. Meantime, the pace of development increased.



*Cellar of the 1801 Wheatsheaf Hotel on public display in June 2005*



The Heritage Office was concerned at the state significance of historic sites underground, but the issue was controversial for developers, for whom delays and possible recommendations could mean increased costs. From March to June 2005, four archaeological excavations were running concurrently, following permission from the Heritage Office.

Ted described the dilemmas confronting the archaeologist and authorities. Do you excavate now, when the opportunities present themselves, or do you pursue it later when the history is better understood and the technology has improved? He cited opportunities possibly missed in putting the past on display, including the brick barrel drain of 1980, the reconstructed well of 1989 and the proposed Parramatta Law Courts.

A dig site that received national attention when put on display last year was at 140 Marsden St, bounded by Macquarie and Hunter Streets. Four potential convict huts on Macquarie and Hunter Sts, could not be reconciled with maps of 1803 and 1804. The Wheatsheaf Inn of 1801 on the corner of Macquarie and Marsden Sts, was followed by the Shepherd and Flock from 1825 to 1870. Is it better to excavate or not to excavate?



*Remnants of a 1990's development in wheelwright John Walker's 1840's house.*

An 1840's house with brick footings gave the first view of a brick floor beneath the footings. Did this mean the rare discovery of a convict hut with a brick floor, possibly because its low lying position required masonry to prevent walking in mud? A big Victorian cistern appeared in the middle of a convict hut – always an anxious experience. A promising discovery lay in evidence of John Walker's wheelwright's workshop established in 1823.

How do you display convict hut patterns of post holes and make them meaningful to the viewer? How do you resolve the confusion of sites, resulting from humps of land being levelled to fill hollows?

Where the results of historical and archaeological research merge, the results are wonderful, Ted said. He spoke glowingly of working with historian Terry Kass. The historian may uncover the biography of a resident or worker and the archaeologist reveal the fruit of their labour. Remnants of charcoal waste were found on the stone floor of the forge. Evidence of a possible baker's oven was revealed. Artefacts uncovered included fragments of Chinese porcelain, scrimshaw and decorative glass.



*Some of the artefacts recovered from the site. (Photo – Terry Kass)*

And what about the future? These excavations were funded by the property owner and developer Estate Properties of Australia. In a rare public/private partnership, negotiations have since been successfully completed for the in situ preservation and display of the remains and an interpretation centre in the central plaza of the proposed development. In return for the loss of basement car park areas, the company has been awarded additional floor space.

Ted Higginbotham believes there is a long way to go in making the most of the archeological sites that we have and that archaeologists themselves have been slow to alert the general public to the significance of their work. But he fired his audience's enthusiasm when he suggested Parramatta should apply for World Heritage listing.

He believes Parramatta compares very favourably with other contemporary listing applicants and cites known assets like Elizabeth Farm, Hambledon Cottage, Experiment Farm, Old Government House and Parramatta Park, in addition to the archeological treasures already known and yet to be revealed.

Katherine Knight

## Observing History with Historians Observing

The email arrived from the Phanfare Collective....

Hi Cathy,

You said you were very busy preparing a book for publication. Maybe you could get some exposure of the forthcoming publication, by a short item of a page or so, discussing the subject of the book, what sources were used, what issues it raised and how it fits in with your other myriad activities.

I thought, "Yes this should be quick and easy." Wrong - Where do I start?? What are these other myriad activities or which ones are they talking about?

My last print publication in 2002 was *Miryyal : Budawang Aborigines featured in church records*. Since then I have completed indexing of the local church records and cross-referenced these with civil registrations, amongst other regional South Coast history research, writings, articles, papers, teaching, commissioned work and the heritage tourism project on [www.heritagetourism.com.au](http://www.heritagetourism.com.au).

The decision to write and publish *Masters and Convicts* came about when tidying up my filing cabinets and boxes (!!!) after doing a commissioned report on Ulladulla Harbour for Shoalhaven City Council. All these primary resources gave different interpretations of the region's early European history. I decided to go back to the drawing board per se.

Wow! Has research and writing changed since my first publication *Methodist Church of Milton Ulladulla* in 1994. The biggest change compared to 12 years ago, would have to be computers and the Internet. Just being able to access additional primary records, in addition those already in my collection, and eliminating the need and cost of travel, has been a great time saver. An excellent example of this is accessing the report of a NSW Superior Court case between two landowners from Murramarang in 1839:

This was an action to recover damages for a breach of an agreement. The plaintiff is Mr. Carr, late of the firm of Carr and Rogers, and the defendant Mr. Sydney Stephen, the barrister. It appeared from the plaintiff that during the last year the defendant sold him an estate in the county of St. Vincent for the sum of £4,500, and at the same time agreed to allow him the use of certain assigned servants on the estate until he could procure their transfer by the Government in the usual way.<sup>1</sup>

The range of databases online for historians on the net is growing everyday.

Problem: Do I use an image on the cover page of the book? Is so, what?

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<sup>1</sup> NSW Superior Court Records Carr v Stephen [1839] NSWSupC 13 (20 March 1839) at <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/NWSupC/1839/13.html>

Solution: [www.pictureaustralia.org](http://www.pictureaustralia.org)

Outcome: Permission granted by the National Library to use a water wash of Murramarang in 1842 on the cover and for marketing, which had been exhibited in the "Travellers Art" exhibition at the National Library of Australia, 12 June - 21 September 2003.<sup>1</sup> I would never have had the time to travel to Canberra to view the photo collection in person. This is just one example on how the Internet is now and will continue to be a valuable tool in our work.

Some other useful websites used in research for *Masters & Convicts* include:

Braidwood Gaol Admissions Register 1856-1899, Peter Mayberry,  
<http://www.pcug.org.au/~ppmay/braidwood.htm>

*Internet History Resources*, [www.ihr.com.au](http://www.ihr.com.au)

*Index to Certificates of Freedom, 1823-69*, SRNSW, <http://www.records.nsw.gov.au>

Using email as a source for communication is a must for any writing and research. Being able to cut and paste text, and to quickly change the reference NSWAO used in some of my previous writings to the new reference NSWSR via a few clicks on the mouse and keyboard was a good productivity tool.

The ISBN application is still done by hard copy and placed in the post, but no more than a week later, the ISBN number arrives by email. The Cataloguing-in-Publication data application is all done over the net, by just completing an online form and attaching an example of content of the publication. The publication is now officially known as:

*Masters and Convicts: Murramarang and Ulladulla*, ISBN 0-9587586-7-0.  
40 pages, A4 format

*Masters and Convicts* will be launched at the Shoalhaven History Fair, which is being held at Nowra on Friday 16 and 17 June, Berry St, Nowra. The fair will also include many exhibitors and speakers including the Library of Australian History. Cathy's expo will feature South Coast Aboriginal Families, primary records and photos 1828 – 1860 of Murramarang and Ulladulla and much more.

She is also one of the many speakers at the fair about "The Future of History" along with Historian Keith Campbell with "Religious views of Alexander Berry".

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<sup>1</sup> nla.pic-an2969937, Russell, Robert, 1808-1900. Murremurrang [sic] & Wallenga [sic] near Jervis Bay [picture] [ca. 1842] 1 drawing : wash ; 12.3 x 19.6 cm. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.pic-an2969937>



Cathy is based at Ulladulla and like many of us wears many hats. Her company, South Coast Promotions specialises in marketing and promotion in both print and electronic media and was the 2005 winner of the South Coast Tourism Awards for Marketing & Promotion. She works in web design and development, arts & culture, heritage tourism and others. In addition, she is a casual Humanities/English teacher at two local high schools in her area.

Historian Work website [www.ulladulla.info/historian](http://www.ulladulla.info/historian)  
 South Coast Promotions [www.scpromotions.com.au](http://www.scpromotions.com.au)

Copies of her book, *Masters and Convicts: Murramarang and Ulladulla*, may be ordered from the web address:

[www.ulladulla.info/history/convicts](http://www.ulladulla.info/history/convicts)

This includes a link. Pre publication order price is \$15.00 until 13th June. The final price is \$20.00.

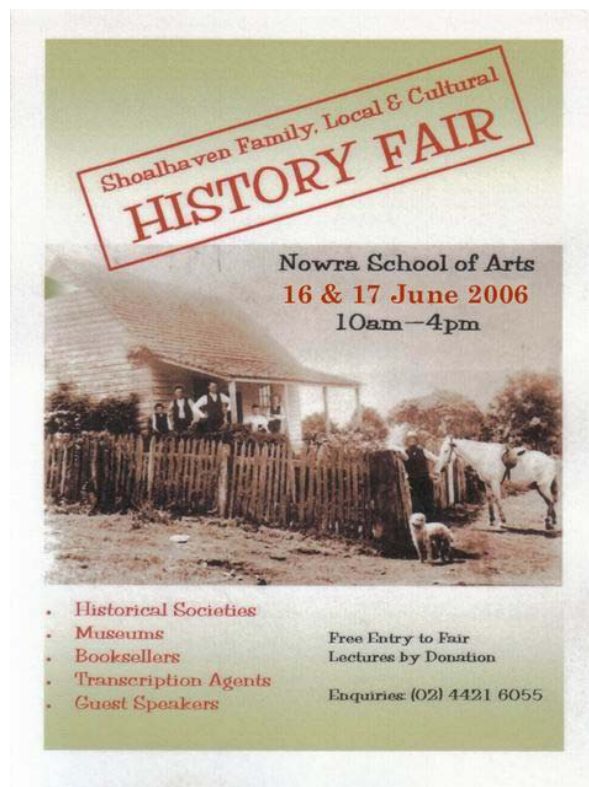
Orders can be made via the estore

<https://ssl.shoalhaven.net.au/ulladullainfo>

or direct to Cathy Dunn

PO Box 52 Milton NSW 2538

Cathy Dunn





# What's On

*by Christine de Matos*

**May/June 2006**

## **Exhibitions**

**'Romance & Industry: Images from the New South Wales Railways'**. Until end June 2006.  
**Venue:** State Records Gallery, The Rocks.

**'Convicts: Sites of Punishment'**. **Venue:** Hyde Park Barracks Museum.

**'The Vikings are Coming!'** Until 18 June 2006 **Venue:** National Maritime Museum.

**'City of Shadows'**. Until October 2006. **Venue:** Justice and Police Museum.

## **May Events**

- 10 **Walking tour.** *'Mort Bay: The Union Pub Crawl'*. HHT. **Meeting venue:** tba **Time:** 6-8.30pm **Cost:** \$49, mem \$39 **Bookings essential:** ph: (02) 8239 2266.
- 12 **Tour.** *'Barracks after Dark'*. HHT. **Venue:** Hyde Park Barracks **Time:** 7-9pm **Cost:** \$15, mem/conc \$10, family \$35 **Bookings essential:** ph: (02) 8239 2211.
- 13 **Tour.** *'The Mint Site Tour'*. HHT. **Venue:** Hyde Park Barracks Museum **Time:** 2.30-3.15pm **Cost:** \$7, mem/conc \$3 **Bookings essential:** ph: (02) 8239 2211.
- 17 **Lecture.** *'Forgotten Hero: Governor Richard Bourke'*. HHT. **Venue:** Museum of Sydney **Time:** 6-8pm **Cost:** \$15, mem/conc \$10 **Bookings essential:** ph: (02) 8239 2211.
- 21 **Walking tour.** *'From Milson to Medium Density: Kirribilli'*. HHT. **Meeting venue:** tba **Time:** 2-4pm **Cost:** \$20, mem/conc \$15 **Bookings essential:** ph: (02) 8239 2211.
- 24 **Seminar.** *'Serving the people through responsible government: representation, accountability and public service'*. State Records. **Venue:** Parliament House Sydney **Time:** 1-4.30pm **Cost:** Free **Bookings essential:** Lindsay Allen, ph: (02) 82478613; Email: [accinfo2@records.nsw.gov.au](mailto:accinfo2@records.nsw.gov.au)
- 24 **Lecture.** *'An Empire without Slaves'*. HHT. **Venue:** Museum of Sydney **Time:** 6-8pm **Cost:** \$15, mem/conc \$10 **Bookings essential:** ph: (02) 8239 2211.
- 24 **Walking tour.** *'The Rocks Uncovered'*. HHT. **Meeting venue:** tba **Time:** 10am-1.30pm **Cost:** \$39, mem \$29, lunch optional \$12 **Bookings essential:** ph: (02) 8239

2266.

- 25 Seminar.** *'Legal Lucky-Dip: Real Property Packets'*. State Records and RAHS. **Venue:** State Records, Kingswood **Time:** 10am-1.30pm **Cost:** \$12 **Bookings essential:** ph: (02) 9247 8001; email: [history@rahs.org.au](mailto:history@rahs.org.au)

## June Events

**3,10,17 or**

- 24 Walking tour.** *'Sydney Architecture Walks: Utzon'*. HHT. **Meeting venue:** Museum of Sydney **Time:** 10.30am-12.30pm **Cost:** \$25, mem/conc \$20 **Bookings essential:** ph: (02) 8239 2211.

- 4 Talk & Walk.** *'The Garden Palace Walk'*. Royal Botanic Gardens, RAHS. **Venue:** History House **Time:** 12n-4.30pm **Cost:** \$30, mems \$27 **Bookings essential:** ph: (02) 9247 8001; email: [history@rahs.org.au](mailto:history@rahs.org.au)

**7, 14, 21 or**

- 28 Walking tour.** *'Sydney Architecture Walks'*. HHT. **Meeting venue:** Museum of Sydney **Time:** 10.30am-12.30pm **Cost:** \$25, mem/conc \$20 **Bookings essential:** ph: (02) 8239 2211.

- 16-17 Fair.** *'Shoalhaven Family, Local and Cultural History Fair'*. **Venue:** Nowra School of Arts **Time:** 10am-4pm **Cost:** Free **Enquiries:** ph: (02) 4421 6055; web: <http://www.shoalhaven.net.au/historyfair/>

- 21-22 Conference.** *'Working To Live: Histories of the 8 Hour Day & Working Life'*. University of Melbourne. **Enquiries:** Peter Love, email [pjlove@infoxchange.net.au](mailto:pjlove@infoxchange.net.au) or [plove@swin.edu.au](mailto:plove@swin.edu.au); web: <http://www.asslh.com/> or <http://www.australian.unimelb.edu.au/> or <http://www.8hourday.org.au/>

- 24 Workshop.** *'Photographic Collection Management'*. RAHS. **Venue:** History House **Time:** 10am-3pm **Cost:** \$35, mems \$25, 3 mems affiliated society \$50, lunch \$5.50 **Bookings essential:** ph: (02) 9247 8001; email: [history@rahs.org.au](mailto:history@rahs.org.au)

- 26-29 Conference.** *'16th Biennial Asian Studies Association of Australia (ASAA) Conference'*. University of Wollongong. **Enquiries:** <http://www.uow.edu.au/arts/conferences/asaa/>

- 29-30 Conference.** *'The Civic Historian: A Conference for Graeme Davison'*. RACV Club, Melbourne. **Enquiries:** Liza Taylor, email: [liza.taylor@arts.monash.edu.au](mailto:liza.taylor@arts.monash.edu.au); fax: (03) 9905 2210.

## Upcoming Conferences

***"Genres of History": The Australian Historical Association's 13th Biennial National Conference***, 3-7 July 2006, Australian National University, Canberra. **Enquiries:** web: <http://histrsss.anu.edu.au/aha/index.html>

***'Performers, Practitioners and Audiences in American Studies: Biennial conference of the Australia New Zealand American Studies Association (ANZASA)'***, 6-12 July 2006, University of Tasmania. **Enquiries:** Tom Dunning, email: [tdunning@utas.edu.au](mailto:tdunning@utas.edu.au); web: <http://www.anzasa.arts.usyd.edu.au>

***'Dancing with Memory: Oral History and its Audiences: XIVth International Oral History Conference'***. 12-16 July 2006, Sydney. **Enquiries:** email: [IOHA@uts.edu.au](mailto:IOHA@uts.edu.au); web: <http://www.une.edu.au/ioha2006/>

***'Rethinking the Past: Experimental Histories in the Arts'***, 28-29 July 2006, University of Technology, Sydney. **Enquiries:** email: [Tara.Forrest@uts.edu.au](mailto:Tara.Forrest@uts.edu.au); web: <http://www.hss.uts.edu.au/rethinking/>

***'Walter Benjamin and the Architecture of Modernity'***. 17-19 August 2006, University of Technology, Sydney. **Enquiries:** email: [walterbenjamin@uts.edu.au](mailto:walterbenjamin@uts.edu.au); web: <http://www.dab.uts.edu.au/walterbenjamin/>

***'World Without Walls: International Conference of the Oriental Society of Australia'***. 3-7 December 2006, University of Sydney. **Enquiries:** web: <http://www.arts.usyd.edu.au/conference/OSA2006/>

### Call for Papers

***'2nd Biennial ANU Missionary History Conference. Asia-Pacific Missionaries: At Home and Abroad'***. 25-27 August 2006, Australian National University, Canberra. Abstracts due **30 May 2006**. **Enquiries:** Dr Ian Welch, email: [ian.welch@anu.edu.au](mailto:ian.welch@anu.edu.au)

***'Indian and Pacific Crossings: Perspectives on Globalisation and History'***. 12-15 December 2006, Fremantle, Western Australia. **Enquiries:** web: <http://www.ecu.edu.au/ses/iccs/conference2006/callforpapers.pdf>

***'Historicising Whiteness Conference'***. 22-24 November 2006, University of Melbourne. Abstracts of 25 words due by **31 July 2006**. **Enquiries:** email: [lboucher@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:lboucher@unimelb.edu.au); web: <http://www.history.unimelb.edu.au/>

***'Landmarks in Legal History: The 25th Annual Conference of the Australian and New Zealand Law and History Society'***. 8-10 December 2006, University of Tasmania. Abstracts of 300 words to be submitted by **31 August 2006**. **Enquiries:** email: [stefan.petrov@utas.edu.au](mailto:stefan.petrov@utas.edu.au); web: [http://www.utas.edu.au/history\\_classics/Conferences/ANZLHSConference.html](http://www.utas.edu.au/history_classics/Conferences/ANZLHSConference.html)

To contribute to What's On, send details of your event to [cdm@uow.edu.au](mailto:cdm@uow.edu.au) by 20<sup>th</sup> of the month.

## The future of Goat Island

Following last year's absorbing History Week excursion to Cockatoo Island, a small notice about an open day on Goat Island on Sunday, April 2, found me at Campbell Cove taking a chance on getting a seat on the first ferry to the island. I was in luck. The newspaper item had said the island had been known to Aboriginal people as Mel Mel, meaning eye of the harbour, but other than that I had little information. Perhaps there would be hand-outs or a guided tour.

But no. The only people who seemed to have any information were visitors with prior knowledge and two apparent volunteers in the Harbour Master's Residence. The former barracks now houses the Goat Island Museum. The museum display seemed to date from an earlier era – an assemblage of information and artefacts with little to indicate the sources or purpose of the display. One item described convict dress, where the top order wore a red heart on the back, the next a yellow heart and the lowest order was unadorned.

Imagine my surprise on walking towards the legendary Bony Anderson's Couch chipped out of rock in 1834 to be confronted by a convict figure – "Bony Anderson" – dressed in a black and yellow costume. One half of the jacket was in black, the other in yellow, above the colours in reverse order in the pants. When asked, he explained that his costume was of the style worn by Tasmanian convicts!

At intervals around the island, a small photocopied map of the island showed highlights for a self-guided tour, locations of displays and the Goat Island Day order of events. NPWS officers seemed unable to provide information. In response to a request for a copy of the program, one said that nothing was available, because the last time they had provided information sheets they ended up in the water. Eventually they were persuaded to make a few copies available. The whole atmosphere seemed to suggest an event hurriedly organised and poorly coordinated.

A replica sleeping box stationed near the Queen's Powder Magazine advised that 20 convicts slept in this hut and offered a diagram showing four lots of five convicts side by side, two lots below and two on a wooden slats above. Eventually, the number increased to 200, said the cryptic information alongside. The mind boggled! Much later, a reading of the conservation plan for Goat Island prepared by James Semple Kerr in 1987 described accommodation boxes for two classes of convicts reaching a total of 12 by 1836. "The boxes housed approximately 200 ironed and unironed prisoners who were engaged in cutting stone and erecting the powder magazine."<sup>1</sup>

Eventually the purpose of the day became clear and may have explained rushed organisation. In his official opening speech, the Minister for Environment and Conservation, Bob Debus, said the day marked the beginning of public involvement in the development of the draft conservation management plan for Goat Island. It had been known to the Cadigal people as

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<sup>1</sup> Kerr J S, *Goat Island – An investigation for the Maritime Services Board of NSW*, National Trust, MSB, 1987, p.6



Mel Mel and had a significant relationship to Ball's Head, already restored and to Ballast Point, now in process of restoration.

In its 2005/2006 budget, the NSW Government had allocated \$9.4 million for work on wharf areas, historic buildings and island landscapes and for improvements to visitor access to the island. Currently, stabilisation of buildings and landscape were in process. The minister outlined possibilities of B&B facilities, cultural workshops, a restaurant, commercial use of slipways and wharves and the re-establishment of some original landscape. He encouraged people to respond to the questionnaires available, and to make submissions about future use to the management plan consultants.

The Kerr report listed approximately 50 "Original native plants growing on Goat Island, 15/1/1985".<sup>1</sup> Information on indigenous occupation of the land appeared limited, but evidence suggested fishing and shellfish gathering. Aboriginal people had a significant role in the open day's events, though local representatives were unavailable to tell more of the story. Official use of the island by colonial authorities began with a quarry on the eastern point in 1831, quickly replaced by Water Police facilities. The significance of the site for defence purposes was too great.

The primary function of the island soon became the storage of gunpowder for public works and defence. Convicts were employed on the building of a magazine from 1833 and probably a cooperage from 1836. A Water Police station was built on the eastern tip of the island between 1836 and 1839, with a "wet ditch" to be dug by convicts to separate it from the main ordnance function of Goat Island. In the following years complex issues often arose over the storage needs for explosives by merchants. Facilities were less secure and payment sometimes uncertain.

Kerr's research suggests Goat Island became a bacteriological station during the plague outbreak of 1900. The island then functioned as the Sydney Harbour Trust Depot for the control and reconstruction of the port of Sydney from 1901 and the development of island shipyards. In 1936, the Maritime Services Board replaced the trust with state wide responsibilities. Wharf, storage and shipyard facilities were constructed during the 1940s and 50s and staff and families resided on the island.

Submissions to the Goat Island Master Plan, PO Box 461, Rose Bay 2029.

Katherine Knight

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, p. 45

## Maps, Maps, Maps!

PHA Maps Workshop with Terry Kass, 29 April 2006

On Saturday 29th April, about a dozen eager participants spent an engrossing two hours at History House trying to absorb as much information as we could about different kinds of maps. Terry had so much to tell us in the time allotted that the pace was relentless, with overhead images, sample maps and handy hints delivered pretty much non stop. Every so often our attention was directed to the photocopied maps and notes we'd been given at the start. Some of us found our eyesight, not to mention our prescription glasses, sorely tested and a few made comments about needing to pack a powerful magnifying glass in our bags for next time. At the end of the workshop our knowledge was tested with some practical exercises, just to see if we had all been awake and alert (but not alarmed!)

Along the way we found out that maps are tricky creatures. No matter how much one thinks one knows about them, there is always something else to learn. The workshop started with the fundamentals; scale, title and north point. Terry then moved through the value of maps for historians, the different types of maps and the pitfalls of map reading. The most surprising part of the workshop was discovering how many types of maps there were. OK. We probably all knew about topographical, county and parish maps but did you know there are at least six different types of Crown surveys and three versions of town maps? Then there are the cadastral maps from both government departments and private cartography firms.

Not surprisingly most maps relate to some form of property development; the layout of a town, a subdivision, boundary survey or an auction plan. Then there are the maps which show infrastructure; roads, railways, water and sewage works. Exploration and mining maps can be fascinating too. Slightly bewildering were the widely scattered locations of the research archives; a packed lunch might be in order if travelling from one repository to another, especially on the trek out to Kingswood. More perplexing are the number of branches of the Lands Department – Sales or Conditional Sales, Miscellaneous Lease and Alienation, to name just a few.

Key points Terry impressed upon us were that maps 'can demonstrate relationships far better than prose' and 'a series of maps from different dates will provide data about change over time'. Finally one of the most important pieces of advice Terry gave us was to treat maps the same way as other source materials – 'with some caution,' as maps are not always correct. Details may be left out, 'maps can be compiled from other data or copied' and some maps are produced for other purposes such as advertising or propaganda.<sup>1</sup>

Margaret Blundell

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<sup>1</sup> Terry Kass, Notes for Maps Workshop, 29 April 2006

## Joseph Lycett – Convict Artist

The new exhibition at Museum of Sydney, *Joseph Lycett – Convict Artist*, is a fascinating mix of illumination and frustration. Guest curator John McPhee describes the process of intensive research in the UK and Australia as unearthing more mysteries than it solved. Searches for basic information such as Lycett's birth date and his artistic education were unsuccessful. Previously unattributed botanical studies were identified, but only speculation continues about the origin of his Tasmanian watercolours, since it appears he never went there.



*Aborigines using fire to hunt kangaroos – Joseph Lycett (image courtesy HHT website)*

The exhibition is a collaborative project between Historic Houses Trust and the two holding institutions for the majority of Lycett's work in Australia – the State Library of NSW and the National Library of Australia.

John McPhee explains that Lycett is a common family name in Staffordshire and Joseph a popular first name, during the years Joseph Lycett spent there – approximately 1775 to 1813. An orphan by the age of about six, his adult life seems to have continued a pattern of interrupted relationships, though he appears to have remained loyal and protective towards his two daughters born of those relationships.

To date, no record has been found of his art training – drawing, painting, engraving and lithography – but he may have had an informal training at a small printery common in provincial towns. His painting may have had similar informal development as a china painter in the potteries of Staffordshire. One of the characteristics of his work is his skill with a brush, requiring no preliminary pencil outlines, which was the way in which china was decorated.

By 1810 he was apprehended in London and charged with forging five pound notes. While his art skills seem to have been substantial, his skills in subterfuge and commonsense often appeared wanting. He arrived in Sydney on January 9, 1814 on the *General Hewitt*, the same ship to deliver Francis Greenway to the colony. His older daughter Mary-Anne had arrived a month earlier as a nine year old unaccompanied minor. The record of her time in the colony is poignant and disturbing.

As part of Governor Macquarie's practice of ensuring that talents of skilled men were put to good use, Lycett was granted a ticket of leave on March 25, 1814. By July 1815, Lycett was convicted of forging a five shilling promissory note and sentenced to three years at Newcastle. A change of commandant the following year led to the appointment of Captain James Wallis. The appointment was Wallis's reward for leading his regiment in savage reprisals against Aborigines at Appin and Airs in response to Governor Macquarie's commands.

According to documents uncovered by Richard Neville's research at the State Library, it was a form of success that left Wallis uneasy and questioning. The new commandant apparently had a personal interest in the visual arts and allowed Lycett and others with artistic skills to make occasional trips around Newcastle and even to Sydney. Authorship of art works from that period is often uncertain – whether by Lycett or by Wallis – though one in particular is described in the exhibition as Lycett's most important painting while in Australia.

Shane Frost is a direct descendant of Burigon, a head man of the Awabakal people of the Newcastle area. Shane was among a group of indigenous people who worked closely with the exhibition organisers. Lycett executed many works about Aboriginal people. The one they all consider outstanding is his *Corroboree at Newcastle*, painted in oils in about 1818. It is a composite of several vignettes of ceremonies and events forbidden to any outsider, unless there as an invited guest.

Shane believes Wallis was trying to document Awabakal life and ceremonies and that Lycett was probably sent with an Awabakal escort to record a series of events. Shane sees significance in many aspects of the painting not otherwise recognised by most white observers. "He must have been well guided by the Awabakal in his representations as well as having a certain degree of respect for them," he writes in the exhibition's handsome catalogue.<sup>1</sup>

Dr Jakelin Troy, director of the NSW Aboriginal Languages Research and Resources Centre says in exhibition wall text: "Three cheers for Lycett, his powers of observation, sensitivity to his subject and eye for detail. It is not surprising he was such a successful forger!"

Lycett returned to Sydney in 1818, but he was not given another ticket of leave or pardon. It was in this period that most of his dated watercolours were produced. Some of the landscapes appear to be commissioned works, including one very large view of Sydney from the north

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<sup>1</sup> McPhee, J., editor, *Joseph Lycett – Convict Artist*, Historic Houses Trust of NSW, 2006, p.95

shore of the harbour, which seems to have accompanied a report to the authorities in Britain. Governor Macquarie appears to have appreciated his attention to architectural detail.

Pardoned by Macquarie on the penultimate day of his governorship, Lycett returned to England with both his daughters in 1822. Again, there is a strong suggestion that forgery and deceit played a part in raising the money for their return.

From 1823 to 1824 he seems to have worked primarily on the preparation of Views of Australia, dedicated to Earl Bathurst and clearly intended to promote the attractions of the colonies to educated emigrants and wealthy investors. Sales did not reach expectations and by 1827, Lycett had been arrested again for forgery. Threatened with transportation, he attempted to slit his throat, but was taken to hospital, where he died three months later.

Richard Neville considers Lycett's aesthetic derives mostly from the topographic view industry of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Tourism and the view industry in Britain developed when war prevented travels in Europe. In Australia Lycett usually worked in the provincial artist and tradesman tradition, recording landscape, Aborigines and natural history according to the requirement of his patrons. His painting of Samuel Marsden's mill at Parramatta was unusual for the picturesque characteristics it seemed to embrace. Buildings were recorded as a key indicator of moral progress.

Roger Butler of the National Gallery of Australia highlights Lycett's skills in printing and engraving and his ingenuity in creating his own printing equipment, undetected, in Sydney. Nonetheless, his trials and reports of his activities also revealed his lack of commonsense.

*Joseph Lycett – Convict Artist* is a remarkably comprehensive collection of work by a significant colonial artist containing newly gathered information about him. There are 143 works in the exhibition – water colours, oils, drawings, etchings and lithographs – and most people would certainly need more than one visit to absorb the experience. A series of talks by curator John McPhee, sometimes includes talks by others who participated in the exhibition's development.

The exhibition continues at Museum of Sydney until June 18 and then transfers to Newcastle Region Gallery and later, the National Library of Australia.

Of the research trails which have proved so elusive, John McPhee and Richard Neville both say optimistically "Stuff just turns up". Richard thinks that in England in particular, there may be lots more information and art works currently unrecognised in public archives and private collections.

Katherine Knight



## Perpetual Calendars

Ever wondered about how to find the year a certain document was created. Have you ever despaired when you have a press cutting with the day of the week, the day and the month but no year? Have you noticed how many land sale auction plans are glorious examples of graphic art, with lots of data about the site, the layout of the land, and lavish with praise of the land for sale, but only provide the day of the week, day and month but no year?

Take heart!! There is a solution. The perpetual calendar is not simply a subtle device that allows you to refuse all of those free calendars from your local tradespeople with pictures of cute cats, fruit, truck tyres or, blonde bimbos demonstrating how to save money by wearing as little clothing as possible. The perpetual calendar is a useful tool for historians as well.

They are set up in different ways, but all allow you to locate all the years on which a certain date, say 3 March, for example, appears on a Saturday. If, you know within twenty years what was the likely date of your document, you can easily locate the likely years in which the document was produced by using your perpetual calendar.

Some are available in hard copy. If you want something right away or keep losing things in your office, such as your perpetual calendar, you can try the Internet. Some Internet perpetual calendars are basically on-line versions of printed calendars, allowing you to select the year you want, e.g. [www.infoplease.com/calendar.php?month](http://www.infoplease.com/calendar.php?month). There are many more like this one. Others are more interactive, allowing you to find likely dates such as <http://utopia.knoware.nl/users/eprebel/Calendar/Perpetual/> or Java Perpetual Calendars such as <http://my.execpc.com/~mikeber/calendar.html>. The major problem with them is that you cannot simply cast your eye over the months and years in the range that you think most likely to be the date of your document. You need to key in some data to find the months and years in your range.

If you prefer a printed one at hand, the PHA, NSW is selling one, which can be put on the wall, or kept rolled in a secure place. They cost \$5.00 each. Due to their bulk, they are best bought at PHA functions, since postage and packing is cumbersome.

Terry Kass

## Sipping Champagne for the PHA

One of the joys of being elected Vice President of PHA is that you get invited to all the functions that the President can't attend. I should like to tell you about a few where I have represented you recently.

The launching of the new quarterly magazine *Australian Heritage* took place at a luncheon in the refurbished Mint Building. The honours were done by Her Excellency the Governor, Professor Marie Bashir AC, in her customary warm and knowledgeable style. Unlike the usual VIP "blow in – blow out" at such functions, the Governor was still mingling with guests three hours later. The excellent catering doubtless convinced many people to stay away from their offices longer than usual.

The magazine itself is published commercially in Melbourne by Hallmark Editions, edited by Rosalind Stirling. It is attractive in layout and presentation, with articles to appeal to residents of every State and Territory, and almost every conceivable interest group. Judging by the first issue, the link with what most of us regard as "heritage" is sometimes rather tenuous. Most people with an interest in heritage would be members of organisations like the National Trust or the Historic Houses Trust, from which they already receive similar material that is probably focused more directly on their concerns. What is happening in Western Australia may be mildly interesting, but would you pay \$28 a year to find out?

I must say however that the publishers have modified the focus somewhat in the second issue (Autumn 2006), in which the front cover announces that it is "Australia's own history magazine". Again, however, there are more specialised publications catering for the history market, including those produced by various historical societies, national, state, and local. The content is popular rather than scholarly. Although I wish the publishers well in this venture and hope they find a niche, I must say that I am not convinced there is a market for yet another magazine of this type. But don't take my word for it – buy a copy and judge for yourself, or look at the website [www.heritageaustralia.com.au](http://www.heritageaustralia.com.au).

Of more practical value to us practising historians was the launching of the *Guide to New South Wales State Archives Relating to Responsible Government*, written in-house and published by State Records as part of the Sesquicentenary of Responsible Government in 2006. The launching took place at the Globe Street reading room on 7<sup>th</sup> March, with Rodney Cavalier as the guest speaker. You will recall that Mr Cavalier was Minister for Education in the Wran Government; he is now chairman of the Sesquicentenary Committee.

It is an impressive publication, illustrated, and running to over 300 pages. Even so, it does not pretend to be exhaustive. Yet it is a useful resource or reference tool for anybody researching official events between 1824 and the present. Copies are available from State Records for \$35, or you can borrow a copy in either of the City or Kingswood reading rooms while you are working there.

Another ceremony was held at State Records on 20<sup>th</sup> February, to announce that another four Australian historic documents have been inscribed on the UNESCO Memory of the World Project Register. This is like the World Register of Heritage Sites, but for intellectual material rather than physical locations. The presentations were made by former Liberal Senator and NSW Privacy Commissioner, Chris Puplick, who stood-in for Malcolm Turnbull MP at the last moment.

In New South Wales, the Convict Records held by State Records are one of the four items added to the register. Others announced that day were the Ned Kelly archive in Victoria, the Tasmanian convict records, and the Yirrkala drawings at the University of Western Australia. Key Australian documents already on the register include Cook's Endeavour Journal and the Eddie Mabo papers, both held by the National Library.

On the day before Anzac Day, I visited the Officers' Mess at the Royal Military College in Canberra for the official launching of the latest book by PHA Executive member (Major) Michael Tyquin. Titled *Madness and the Military: Australia's experience of the Great War*, and published by Australian Military History Publications, it was launched by Lieutenant-General Peter Leahy, Chief of Army in the Australian Defence Force, who clearly is very supportive of the Army History Unit.

The timing of the launching ensured that the book attracted media attention, including a front-page article in the *Sydney Morning Herald*. Michael challenges some of the long-cherished myths about the ANZACs at Gallipoli and on the Western Front. The book's blurb describes it as an unsettling but compassionate counter-history dealing with Australian soldiers who suffered psychologically as a result of the War.



*Duntroon House, Royal Military College, Canberra. (Photo by Peter Tyler)*

A good crowd of service and civilian personnel were present for the occasion, to enjoy morning tea in the delightful surroundings of the impeccably maintained Duntroon House, the original homestead on the property that became our national capital. Sympathetic modern extensions are entirely in keeping with the values of the original building. General Leahy's comments, and Duntroon itself are proof that the Australian Army is proud of its traditions and heritage. Would that some other government agencies shared that commitment!

Peter Tyler

### **History Council of NSW – report from PHA representative**

In the period 2005–6, the History Council of NSW (HCNSW) continues in its work as the peak body representing and promoting the profile of history in the state.

In late 2005, nominations were called for the Management Committee of the History Council. Mark Dunn was elected as the PHA representative, replacing Laila Ellmoos who had served as the PHA representative for 2004-2005. Perry McIntyre was returned as President of the HCNSW at the first meeting of 2006 and Mark Dunn was elected to the Executive Committee as an ordinary member.

The first meeting of the Management Committee was in February where the theme for History Week in September was discussed. This year's History Week program will focus on two themes celebrating two important anniversaries:

**Mapping Australia** – commemorating the 400th anniversary of the first European mapping of the Australian continent; and

**Power to the people!** – marking 150 years since the people of NSW elected their first Parliament under a system of responsible government.

History Week continues to be the Council's key event for promoting the profile of history in NSW.

## **Mission: Duty Curator**

“Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to be a call centre for public enquiries and to collate all appropriate offers of material. You will present these offers at the next Acquisitions and Collections Group meeting in two weeks time.”

Well, my supervisor did not quite put it that way but she might as well have. The role of Duty Curator is so intense that for those two weeks you cannot do anything else. The system is unique to the National Museum of Australia. It is an efficient, centralised way of dealing with public enquiries and offers of material. The Acquisitions and Collections Group, made up of conservators, curators, registration and library staff, discuss each offer presented by the Duty Curator and decide what should proceed to assessment based on the NMA’s Collection Development Policy. All curators at the NMA rotate through the role of Duty Curator. However, a gap in the roster propelled me into this role earlier than expected. I started at the NMA in the Gallery Development section in December 2005 and began my mission as Duty Curator in the middle of March 2006. This role enabled me to learn about the National Historical Collection, how the museum is viewed and what the general public thinks of as historically significant collections.

Public enquiries made up most of this Duty Curator’s mission. Questions range from the basic “when is this event on?” to “can you do my history assignment?” Boundaries of what the museum can do are often not well understood by the general public. A request for photos of an object might be possible after copyright clearance. There was also a request for tests to be made on objects (does the bottle still hold water?) and all the research we have done on a very recently acquired object. The museum will endeavour to provide information about its own collection, advice about sources of information and the best people to contact but this may take some time. Likewise, I fielded questions, which could be better answered by another institution and simply referred them on.

“How do I freeze dry a bird specimen?” The National Museum of Australia is often confused with the Australian Museum in Sydney and vice versa. The visitors’ book at the Australian Museum will attest to this. Also as a museum, we are perceived to be “full of dead things” as one museum visitor put it. This is partly true as the NMA inherited the Australian Institute of Anatomy’s wet specimen collection but the strength of the National Historical Collection relates to Australian history.

It is our standing as Australia’s national museum that sometimes brings international queries. As a national institution our policies are always under scrutiny from both within and outside of Australia. A Canadian MA student enquired about how controversial topics were dealt with by the NMA. I was able to provide her with news resources, academic references to the “history wars” and the contact details of the Directorate if she wanted an official comment. This was in contrast to the other international query from Mumbai, India. I could answer this one easily. A man asked for the identification of an object dug up near Mumbai. He thought it was an ancient



Greek object. Before sending him off to another museum, I dutifully consulted my colleagues. It was a modern bottle opener with a generic Classical Greek portrait appearing on the handle. As a “museum” we are expected to know about objects from all over the world or at least how to find out about them.

Identifying mysterious objects is a fun part of the mission. As a museum we often do have the resources and the knowledge to identify objects but it can be difficult when expectations are of an immediate answer. “Can you identify a convict made brick?” Over the phone! I did ask for a picture but it has not yet arrived. Some objects can be identified with a little research; others though, just remain mysteries and even a museum has to admit defeat. Although, the file will be kept open in case we do work out what it is. I was sent photos of a cast iron pouring object, about 30cm long, found in Cunnamulla, QLD. It has “Pinnacle M.B.T. Ltd” on the lid. Research on blacksmithing tools, cooking utensils and lamps have so far failed to turn up anything. If anyone has a clue of what it or the name might be please let us know!

Unusual objects also turn up as offers of material. Rare objects are seen as historically significant. A piece of driftwood shaped like a horse, eagle and wolf all in one, was offered as the person thought it was a rare item. Another object offered to the NMA because of its rarity was an autograph book signed by athletes from the first three Empire Games. Its lack of contextual information and strong provenance, however, reduced its historical significance to the NMA. The driftwood simply did not fit into the NMA’s collection policy. The NMA collections are built on three core fields of study identified by the Pigott Report of 1975. These areas are: the interaction of people and the environment, the history and culture of Indigenous Australia, and the history of Australian society since 1788. Australian history is seen as the result of productive encounters between these three fields.<sup>1</sup>

As public historians we must continually ask ourselves: “What do people perceive as history?” Is it just something old? An ‘early’ Victa lawnmower mysteriously appeared on the Museum’s doorstep as a donation with nothing but a note reading “Donated by [. . .] after many years of faithful service.” No contact details, no story, no context. In the modern age, museums want a relationship with people who choose to offer objects to the museum, but apparently not everyone wants a relationship with the museum. Anonymous donations are relatively common.

Items that are representative of principal characteristics of an Australian environment, society or cultural life are thought to be historically significant. If there was a known context and not already a collection of Victa lawnmowers, this donation might have been welcome. White goods, household appliances, computers and wedding dresses are often offered to the National Museum of Australia. Most are no longer accepted as we either already have them or there is a more appropriate institution, which collects these kinds of items by type. The NMA’s collection policy is selective and representative, rather than comprehensive. The offer of a 19<sup>th</sup> Century Gunter’s Survey Chain was welcome as it had a strong context and provenance. It had been a family heirloom and the current owner had researched a detailed family history. Even

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<sup>1</sup> National Museum of Australia, *Collections Development Policy*, Version 1, December 2005, p.9

though Gunter's Survey Chains are not particularly rare, this one is significant because it represents an important aspect of early land surveying and settlement in South Eastern NSW. Likewise the offer of a brochure about the first Holden was equally well provenanced and it represented an important aspect of Australian social life. People are aware that items of everyday life both those in the past and of the present are of historical interest.

An object might have social significance to a particular community in Australia. The offer of a sugar craft display cake illustrating scenes from "My Fair Lady" is representative of the passions, dedication and skill of members of the cake decorating society. However, the Acquisitions and Collections Group thought it might not be of national significance. In this case, it may be more appropriate for a local museum to collect the sugar craft display. When locally significant objects are identified the NMA often suggests that the objects stay with the community and we do advise the offerer about what may be the best location for the object.

Items associated with a person or event of importance in Australia's history were also offered. A dashboard clock from the "Southern Cloud" aircraft, which crashed in the Snowy Mountains on 21 March 1931 was such an example. The aircraft was one of five AVRO 10 aircraft owned by Australian National Airways, which had been started by Sir Charles Kingsford Smith and Charles Ulm in 1930. The wreck was only discovered on 26 October 1958 and the clock was removed by a well - known journalist. The clock's association with Kingsford Smith and Australian National Airways, as well as its rarity were seen as historically important by both the donor and the NMA.

While I am sure there are many other interpretations of what is historically significant to people and communities, these were just a selection of what I came across as Duty Curator for two weeks. From the rather simplistic notion of history as something old, dead and/ or rare to more sophisticated ideas of social and representative significance, the general public provides us as historians, with inspiration, awe and lots of surprises. They also challenge us to explain what historical significance is and challenge our own ideas of history. As one colleague put it: "Nothing can prepare you for being Duty Curator".

Karen Schamberger, Curatorial Assistant, National Museum of Australia

## Working Lives: Industrial Archaeology Workshop

On May 5, the NSW Heritage Office held a workshop in its offices at Parramatta, on the theme of *Working Lives: Industrial Archaeology*. It was a well-attended event and the audience comprised a wide range of professionals from many related disciplines, including history. Papers presented gave an insight into the dynamic nature of the practice of industrial archaeology in Australia, and there was an acknowledgment throughout of the necessity for solidly grounded research into historical context if interpretation of industrial archaeological sites is to have any real meaning or usefulness.

Lisa Newell, archaeologist from *Godden, Mackay, Logan* spoke of changes in the general industrial archaeological landscape and the way that development on the back of the movement away from cities by sea changers and tree changers is opening up industrial archaeology in regional areas of NSW. Ian Jack acknowledged the constraints imposed by ‘developer-driven’ archaeology, but also drew attention to the way that the practice of *historical* archaeology developed at Sydney University, in contrast to the practices in England and the US. Ted Higginbotham of Edward Higginbotham and Associates gave a case study of the excavation of the workshop of John Walker, Wheelwright, in Marsden St, Parramatta.

Troy Bramston from the Property Council of Australia provided an extremely useful outline of proposed economic and industrial development of the several ‘cities’ and ‘corridors’ within Sydney, which will introduce new areas for the pursuit of industrial archaeology as redundant industrial sites from the relatively recent past come up for redevelopment. Siobhan Lavelle from the Heritage Office spoke of the legislative framework within which the practice of industrial archaeology has developed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in NSW.

Kate Langford and Bob Walker from the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust discussed the many challenges involved in interpreting and conserving Cockatoo Island, an extremely complex and unusual site that has incorporated diverse tasks including penal functions, social institutions, naval dockyards and vast engineering works. The transition to a functioning site for multiple cultural purposes will be a fascinating one.

The final three papers of the day all focussed on the Fitzroy Iron Works site at Mittagong. The papers were given by Anne Mackay, archaeologist; Leah Day, historian; and Nigel Smith, site manager for the developers of the site, Woolworths. This was a very informative approach, which revealed the complex interaction from three perspectives that eventually resulted in a satisfactory outcome. Because it was largely unknown, this highly significant site was unlisted and unprotected. It was the early and continuing work of local historians that brought it to the attention of local government, the Heritage Office, archaeologists and ultimately, the developer.

For those who missed this workshop, papers will soon be available on the Heritage Office website.

Margo Beasley



**The Professional Historians Association (NSW) Inc** is the organisation representing qualified historians in NSW and ACT who are professionally employed or commissioned to undertake historical work.

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