

Royal Australian Historical Society

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

November 2011 to March 2012

Tuesday 29 November 2011

Evening Lecture: Getting to the other side: crossings of the Parramatta River and Toongabbie Creek.

The Parramatta River is a navigable arm of Port Jackson as far inland as the city of Parramatta. Because of the relative fertility of the arable land along its banks and further up where it was called Toongabbie Creek both sides of the waterway were settled in the eighteenth century and initially tilled by massed convict labour. The development of Old Windsor Road concentrated the need for crossing-places. As a result, from the earliest days of the colony there was a need to communicate between the two banks of the river and its constituent creeks. This talk will examine the ways in which people crossed the water, by boats, punts, barges, fords, weirs, wooden bridges, stone bridges and eventually railway bridges. Professor Ian Jack has recently been examining Toongabbie Government Farm and will include in his talk the four bridges within a kilometer, which are associated with the convict establishment.

A joint RAHS and ASHET activity.

Time: 5.30 for 6pm at History House

Cost: \$8.00 Includes light refreshments on arrival.

Wednesday 7 December 2011


Day Lecture: The Circus in Sydney

A regular circus venue was not available until October 1850 when the Royal Australian Equestrian Circus was opened in York Street. With the discovery of gold, the early circus troupes followed the people onto the diggings. The visits of large American circuses were made feasible by the conclusion of the US Civil War, the completion of a railway across the US and the regularisation of trans-Pacific shipping. Their example inspired the organisation of large local companies such as Wirth Bros and FitzGerald Bros, which serviced Australasia by rail and steamship. In 1916, Wirth Bros Circus opened its annual Easter season in its new purpose-built edifice, The Hippodrome, in the Haymarket. This building stands today reconfigured as the Capitol Theatre.

Dr Mark St Leon is descended from Australia's earliest circus – and probably show business - family, the Australian roots of which date from 1847. From inquiries into his family's rich past in circus, Mark pioneered the study of Australia's circus history and is now the internationally-recognised authority on the subject. His book, *Circus: The Australian Story* was published by Melbourne Books in May 2011. Adapted from the doctoral dissertation, under the supervision of Professor Richard Waterhouse, he completed at the University of Sydney in 2007, this work summarises nearly four decades of research. Mark will have signed copies of his book available after the talk.


Time: 1.00pm at History House

Cost: \$7.00 members, \$9.00 non-members



Thursday 8 December 2011


**RAHS
CHRISTMAS
PARTY**



**Time: from 4pm – 7pm
at History House**

Cost: Free!

**Bookings essential
for catering purposes.**



australia day

Thursday 26 January 2012

Australia Day - Potluck with History

Call in to History House, 133 Macquarie Street, Sydney, the home of the Royal Australian Historical Society, open between 10:00am and 4:00pm on Australia Day and grab a chance to hear one of our historians speak about events, people and places that contributed to Australia's history.

Visit a rare surviving example of a first class late Victorian gentleman's townhouse Complete with grand piano and antique furniture the reception rooms, staircase and hallway offer a reflection of the era with their ornate timberwork and cornices, charm and atmosphere.

There will be interesting and historical talks of ten-minute duration every half hour between noon and 3:00pm. Entry to History House and lectures are free, but you might spend some money at our book sale.

Wednesday 1 February 2012

Day Lecture: Are You Going to the Governor's Ball? Elizabeth Macquarie and colonial society in New South Wales.

Vice-regal patronage and entertainment were key features of colonial society in New South Wales in the years 1810-1821. As one of the ladies of 'first rank' Elizabeth Macquarie was ideally placed to shape and influence activities in the colony. Robin Walsh will discuss life and manners in Sydney - and the networks of friendship, loyalty and obligation revealed in Elizabeth's surviving writings.

Robin Walsh is a graduate of UNSW with a BA (Hons) in early Australian history, and holds a graduate diploma in Library Science. He began his career in librarianship in 1976 at the Mitchell Library, Sydney, and worked as a reference and research librarian at Macquarie University Library from 1980 until retiring in late 2011. During this time he was also the curator of the Lachlan & Elizabeth Macquarie Room - the original parlour room from the Macquaries' home on the Isle of Mull, Scotland - and now located inside the entrance to the University Library.

Robin's research now forms a central core to the digital project based at Macquarie University Library known as The Lachlan & Elizabeth Macquarie Archive (LEMA)

Robin's most recent publication is *In Her Own Words: the writings of Elizabeth Macquarie* [Macquarie University/Exisle Publishing, 2011]

Time: 1.00pm at History House

Cost: \$7.00 members, \$9.00 non-members

WEA/RAHS Lecture Series:

Aussies and Greeks in World War II - Maria Hill

These lectures address the much-overlooked Greek and Crete campaigns of 1941. This neglect is surprising given that 83% of the Australian soldiers captured in Europe came from Greece and Crete. Even more shocking is that no soldiers who fought in these suicidal missions were ever awarded a campaign medal. Both lectures will be supported by images and interviews.

Historian Dr Maria Hill has long been fascinated by the doomed campaigns fought by Australian soldiers in Greece and Crete in WW2 with a special interest in Australian history. Her book, *Diggers and Greeks*, also looks at the special connection between the Australian troops and the Greek people and why they formed friendships that endure to this day.

Wednesday 15 February 2012

Diggers and Greeks

In this session the strong bond of friendship forged between Australians and Greeks during the campaigns will be discussed - including how it helped diggers survive in enemy-occupied Greece.

Time: 11am - 1pm at History House, 133 Macquarie St, Sydney

Cost: \$32 each session

Bookings essential through WEA on 9264 2781

Thursday 8 March 2012

Remembering the Greek and Crete Campaigns of 1941

Explores the impact of the campaigns on veterans and also on their

families who suffered as a result of the trauma that many soldiers experienced, explaining how commemoration helps with closure

Time: 11am - 1pm at History House, 133 Macquarie St, Sydney

Cost: \$32 each session

Bookings essential through WEA on 9264 2781

Saturday 18 February 2012

Workshop: CAPTURING MEMORIES - Oral History in the Digital Age

A joint Oral History Association NSW and RAHS activity

This practical workshop offers an introduction to Oral History theory and practice with experienced oral historians Trish Levido and Carol McKirdy. Your facilitators will help you listen to and gather the stories that surround you in an ethical and respectful manner. Topics cover best practice standards for preparing for the interview, choosing and using a digital recorder, downloading recordings to a computer, editing using Audacity free access software, saving sound files, burning to disc and transfer to other storage mediums, and much more. Helpful resource booklet provided.

Time: 9.45 am to 4.30 pm

Where: History House, 133 Macquarie Street, Sydney

Cost: \$85 OHAA and RAHS Members / \$95 Non Members. Includes Morning and Afternoon Tea. Please bring lunch.

Bookings essential as numbers will be limited, contact the RAHS (02)9247.8001 or email: history@rahs.org.au

Full details and downloadable registration flyer at www.ohaansw.org.au and follow prompts

Email for enquiries: ohaansw@hotmail.com

Contact: Trish Levido (02) 9969.5177

Tuesday 21 February, 2012

Evening Lecture: Residential Development of Archaeological Sites in NSW

Two sites will be showcased: a locally significant site and a State significant heritage site, both of which have been subdivided and redeveloped as residential precincts. The first case study site is located on the outskirts of Dapto, 110km south of Sydney. Now known as Brooks Terrace, Kanahooka, the redevelopment successfully amalgamates built heritage elements of the former Dapto Smelter site. The second case study represents a development of the State heritage listed archaeological site of the former Bungaribee colonial estate, located at Doonside, western Sydney. The residential allotments are arranged around the central heritage area that has been transformed into a Heritage Park, with interpretive landscaping of the estate's archaeological remains. It will be demonstrated that both developments represent an effective fusion of heritage resources and contemporary living with comprehensive interpretation of the archaeological evidence.

Anita Yousif is a Senior Consultant with Godden Mackay Logan. As a field archaeologist she has worked on a number of archaeological excavations in Australia, Cyprus, Italy and Serbia. She has recently directed excavations of World Heritage listed sites, including the Old Government House at Parramatta and the Sydney Opera House.

A joint ASHET and RAHS activity

Venue: History House, 133 Macquarie Street, Sydney

Time: 5.30 for 6 pm

Cost: \$8.00 Includes light refreshments on arrival

Tony Griffiths' retirement from electronics has been taken over by the urge to record the history of the Lithgow Small Arms Factory, his grandfather having worked there for parts of both World Wars. He has written a two-volume history covering 1907–1950 and 1950–1990.

A joint ASHET and RAHS activity

Venue: History House, 133 Macquarie Street, Sydney

Time: 5.30 for 6 pm

Cost: \$8.00 Includes light refreshments on arrival

Thursday 29 March, 2012

Evening Lecture: Lithgow's Small Arms Factory Centenary; a century of service

This factory, opened in June 1912, introduced precision mass-production to Australia and has equipped Australia's infantry from the First World War to the present with over a million rifles and light machine guns, plus sundry other military hardware and services. Its presence in Lithgow was a source of great local pride. It was a supportive local citizen and, in busy times, it boosted the local economy. In lean times, however, it struggled to keep its workforce employed; its efforts at commercial work often unprofitable victims of its own excellence.

Wednesday 2 May 2012 at 6.00 pm

**RAHS Annual General Meeting
History House,
133 Macquarie Street,
Sydney**



If you would like more information:

- about the RAHS and future events
 - on becoming a member
 - want a copy of our new brochure
 - our library collection
 - be included on our e-newsletter mailout
- please contact us!

History House, 133 Macquarie Street, Sydney NSW 2000

Phone: 02 9247 800 Fax: 02 9247 7854

Email: history@rahs.org.au • Website: www.rahs.org.au

RAHS Booking Form

members non-members

NOVEMBER

Tuesday 29	Evening Lecture: Getting to the other side: crossings of the Parramatta River and Toongabbie Creek.		\$8.00
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DECEMBER

Wednesday 7	Day Lecture: The Circus in Sydney	\$7.00	\$9.00
Thursday 8	RAHS CHRISTMAS PARTY	Free!	

JANUARY

Thursday 26	Australia Day - Potluck with History		
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FEBRUARY

Wednesday 1	Day Lecture: Are You Going to the Governor's Ball?	\$7.00	\$9.00
Wednesday 15	WEA/RAHS Lecture: Diggers and Greeks		\$32
Saturday 18	Workshop: Capturing Memories – Oral History in the Digital Age	\$85	\$95
Tuesday 21	Evening Lecture: Residential Development of Archaeological Sites in NSW	\$8.00	

MARCH

Thursday 8	WEA/RAHS Lecture: Remembering the Greek and Crete Campaigns of 1941		\$32
Thursday 29	Evening Lecture: Lithgow's Small Arms Factory Centenary; a century of service	\$8.00	

MAY

Wednesday 2	RAHS Annual General Meeting		
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Newington Armory Tour – Donna Newton

Part of the former Royal Australian Navy Armament Depot Newington, the site comprises a range of historically features including former navy armaments storage and workshop facilities, administration buildings and the unique small-gauge railway associated with RAN activities for over 100 years.

The Government Powder Magazine was established 1897 on a Government reserve between the Newington Asylum and Parramatta River initially comprised of the powder magazine, Superintendent's cottage, workmen's cottage, guardhouse, lock-up, lamp room, cooperage, examining room and laboratory and gun-cotton store. The historic gatehouse was also built at this time.

The facility was used to transfer ammunition between manufacturers, storage depots and ships in Sydney Harbour. Initially the gunpowder moved between wharf and powder magazine by hand lifting, trolleys and horse-drawn carts.

From 1909 transfers were made on the 2 foot gauge light rail and then trucks to various buildings across the compound. Rail tracks extended directly into buildings, and were laid through narrow cuttings and low tunnels to maximise use of the land. The rails in the magazine are made of brass strips over timber rails to prevent sparks. Hand trolleys on light steel rails were pushed to the magazine, three of which remain today. The last ammunition operation conducted over the wharf December 1999. Management of this Depot was transferred to RAN 1921 and subsequently to the Government in 1996.

We viewed the former Naval Dock wharf with its impressive cranes, the inspection rooms inside the gatehouse and walked through the powder magazine. Blast walls were erected alongside buildings to contain any accidental explosions.

On the fascinating trip around Newington on the Heritage Railway loop of 1.7km we passed armament workshops, storage facilities, remnant forest and wetland communities. Armaments were received, inspected, tested, stored and distributed and consisted of explosive shells, cordite fuses, depth charges, torpedoes and missiles. These rail tracks were once used to move these throughout the Depot. A stop at a facility allowed viewing of torpedoes, missiles

and other munitions. Large proportions of existing wetlands are fenced off due to possible unexploded ordinance.

Listed on the National Estate register, the Armory has high heritage value as an example of a military/industrial landscape and the building design reflects the evolution of armament types, explosive storage facilities and transportation strategies over time.

An educational and thoroughly enjoyable morning was had by the RAHS members and guests who attended and thanks to our wonderful guides, Alana & Stan and trairdriver Ian.

