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MOSMAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER - October 2017

Our speaker on 11th August was renowned military historian Dr Craig Wilcox and the story he told was a surprising one for his audience. It was the story of the first overseas military campaign (1845-6) waged from Australia and he called it **Australia's Eastern War** as its location was New Zealand. It is a little known chapter of Australia's history.

The **Annual General Meeting** was held prior to the speaker meeting. The committee remains the same with one exception. Anne Fernandez, shortly to retire from her role at the University of Sydney, will take over the job of Secretary in 2018 and current Secretary, David Carment, will continue in 2018 in a speaker liaison role.

We have been very fortunate to have had the services of Emeritus Professor David Carment for many years in the roles of Secretary and President. David's professional passion for history, his efficiency and his attachment to Mosman, the home of his childhood, have made him an exceptional contributor. He will now have more time for his many other commitments.

NEXT SPEAKER MEETING
Wednesday 8th November at 7pm
Downstairs at Mosman Library

Guy Cooper PSM has been involved with Taronga Zoo for 25 years, formerly as Chief Executive and now Executive Patron. There is no more apt person to talk on **TARONGA ZOO - a History and Intimacies** than he. Last year the zoo celebrated 100 years of operation at its current home and Guy will talk about the challenges in those years as well as its fraught history before 1916. See attached flyer.

CHRISTMAS cake and wine will follow the talk as this is our final meeting of 2017 so we hope you have time to linger afterwards and celebrate with other members.

HISTORY AND SNAGS AT GEORGES HEIGHTS
Wednesday 15 November at 5pm

The next in our popular daylight saving walks starts in the Hospital on the Hill precinct and finishes no more than one hour later with John Dansie's sausage barbeque in the artists' precinct. The walk will be roughly downhill, pausing several times for 2 minute history talks. See attached flyer for map, parking info etc.

TROVE Project - more success!
Our \$3000 RAHS Cultural Grant

In the August edition, we were delighted to report the awarding of a Mosman Council Community Grant to The Society. Following hotly on that success, has been the recent announcement of a Royal Australian Historical Society Cultural Grant.

As with the Mosman Council grant, this will go towards the cost of digitising early Mosman newspapers for their addition to the online facility, Trove.

We now have the financial means to process all available copies of *Mosman Mail*, the earliest of Mosman's local papers and might even have funds to begin processing copies of *Mosman Resident*, which was published briefly in the same era.

The successful application for the RAHS grant was prepared by Phillipa Morris who will be accepting it in person on our behalf at the RAHS Conference in Cowra on 28-29th October.

SUNDIAL unveiling ceremony
Thursday 7th November 3.30pm

You may remember a sundial located near Allan Border Oval close to the Mosman War Memorial. At some stage it seemed to go missing. The sundial has now been found and is being polished and restored to its former glory. The inscription on the sundial gives instructions on how the public can use it but also reads: *'A tribute from the citizens of Mosman 7th December 1952'*.

It will be relocated on Mosman Bay near the Sirius memorial where a new plinth sits ready for its installation. There are plans for a representative of the new Mayor of Mosman to do the unveiling. All welcome.

50th Anniversary of Mosman Tornado

14th December this year marks the 50th anniversary of the tornado which devastated buildings in Spit Road, Awaba and Killarney Streets and put Mosman in the international news in 1967. One member recalls that relatives living in Pittsburg PA at the time *'heard about it on their news and rang to check that we were okay, and not homeless or roofless!'* Another member wrote in his diary of roofs missing, cars overturned, trees uprooted, boats thrown onto land and *'Dick Gooch's service station on Spit Road looks like a bomb ruin'*.

Sydney Harbour Federation Trust
MARINE BIOLOGICAL STATION
Camp Cove, Watsons Bay
Rare Open Day Sunday 29th October

This colonial cottage was the site of the first scientific studies of Sydney's marine environment and is now a private home, rarely open to the public. Volunteers from The Trust will guide visitors through the home and garden at 11.30am, 12.30pm, 1.30 and 2.30 and talk about its history and its first resident, Russian aristocrat, scientist and adventurer, Nikolai Miklouho-Maclay. Phone SHFT 8969 2100 or info@harbourtrust.gov.au

MOSMAN'S LIGHTHOUSES – Bradleys Head (1905) and Rosherville (1911)

By the early 20th century shipping in Sydney Harbour was increasing, and with it the chance of collisions and other mishaps. “A highly dangerous and unprotected part of the harbour is the point known as Bradleys Head”, reported the Sydney Morning Herald on 19/3/1904. This and other danger spots had for some time been pinpointed for lights, but not acted upon for lack of funds. Finally, on 8 Oct. 1904, the Mosman Resident reported that “the Harbour Trust had let the contract for the placing of a guiding light on Bradleys Head, and it will probably be in position in 2 months.”

Construction actually began in January 1905, the ferro-concrete shell being pre-fabricated in sections on shore, then moved into position and filled with cement for stability. It consists of a cylindrical pedestal and column, on top of which is an octagonal belfry for a fog bell. Above that is the lantern housing surrounded by a circular gantry, surmounted by a semi-circular copper dome and finial. Electric current was used to light the 10 incandescent lamps and work the fog bell motor. This was originally supplied via a submarine cable, 6,750 feet long in one piece, from the Fort Macquarie Electric Light Station, but operated via another cable from a switchboard on Fort Denison.

By April 1905 the structure was complete and satisfactory trials of the “miniature lighthouse” at Bradleys Head had been run. Notices to mariners in the press advised that this new light and fog signal would come into operation on 22 April 1905 ... “The lighthouse is about 60 ft. south-east from the extremity of the point, and from the lantern tower, which is 22 ft above high water mark, a bright electric fixed light will be shown.” (Daily Commercial News and Shipping List, 20/4/1905). The fog signal would be one stroke of a bell every fifteen seconds. Unfortunately the technology and power connections were not completely reliable, and the following month the light failed temporarily, and the fog bell at times was rung manually when power was lost. From October 1936, the bell was replaced by an electric siren, still located in the lighthouse, giving a group of three blasts during foggy weather.

Situated close to the HMAS Sydney memorial within Sydney Harbour National Park, at the end of Bradleys Head Road, the Bradley’s Head Lighthouse continues as an active lighthouse operated by Sydney Ports. Its appearance has altered slightly with changes in light and foghorn technology, but is still a picturesque sight on its rock platform connected to shore by a footbridge.

Within a few years, shipping signals in the harbour were even worse, relying on an out of date array of lights, bells and foghorns. Master mariner Maurice Festu, in an article and diagram published in the Sydney Morning Herald in July 1910, proposed an improved system of beacons and leading lights to guide ships into the harbour. This included 2 new lights, one at Grotto Point near Manly and the other at Mosman, on Parriwi Head near the Spit. This plan was approved and the Parriwi Light was erected on a steep block of land running from Parriwi Road down to the harbour. These two lights would work in tandem, the Parriwi light being the rear range light and Grotto Point, one mile away, serving as the front light into Port Jackson. When in line the lights would mark the entrance

at the Heads midway between the Inner North Head and South Reef. Beginning operation in September 1911, these lights were a great success.

Now commonly known as Rosherville Lighthouse, the Parriwi Light is a cylindrical white brick rendered tower, 15 metres high and topped with a dome. The light, originally powered by acetylene gas and later by electricity, has a range of 12 nautical miles. Still an active light with a focal height of 43 metres, it is the tallest navigation light in Sydney Harbour.

Sitting on a piece of prime Mosman real estate, controversy arose in 1988 when the Maritime Service Board announced plans to auction the surrounding land for residential sub-division. The Rosherville Lighthouse Committee and Mosman Council fought against the sale, and petitioned the Government and Opposition to save the land from development. Following a change in government, Premier Nick Greiner announced that the land would be retained as parkland and managed by Mosman Council, the MSB retaining just the lighthouse and its immediate surrounds. Public access to the waterfront was thus guaranteed and, in 1991, with a State Government grant and public contributions, new steps, fencing, landscaping and interpretive signage were put in place.

Both Bradleys Head and Rosherville Lighthouses are listed as items of historical significance on the State Heritage Register, and also by Mosman Council, thus recognising their cultural, maritime and historical importance.

*P.Morris, Mosman Historical Society
References available on request*



*Bradleys Head Lighthouse
(P.Morris 2017)*



*Rosherville Lighthouse
(P.Morris 2017)*