

# MOSMAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

February 2014

**CONGRATULATIONS** to Mosman Historical Society Committee Member **JOHN DANSIE** who was recently named Mosman **CITIZEN OF THE YEAR** for his commitment to community service. Great work John!

## UPCOMING HISTORICAL SOCIETY EVENTS

**NEXT MEETING:** Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2014, at Mosman Library, starting at 7 pm.

**Speaker is Bruce Baskerville on Norfolk Island.** See attached flyer for further information.

### **Future speakers:**

May: Susan Steggal on "Joan Kerr – Art Historian"

July: Jody Rose on "Mosman Musical Society"

September: A speaker from the Mosman Parks and Bushland Association

**"HISTORY AND SNAGS AT CLIFFO" - EXCURSION TO CLIFTON GARDENS -  
Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> March.** See attached flyer for further information

Join us for our daylight saving walk and historical talk, followed by our famous Sausage Sizzle!

**Clifton Gardens** has a fascinating history – a grand hotel demolished, dance pavilions and pleasure grounds, tennis courts, a circular swimming pool and high diving tower, now all lost in time. Come and listen to its story, see old photos of Clifton Gardens as you could never imagine it to have been.

## AT THE LIBRARY –

Thurs. 27<sup>th</sup> Feb, 10 – 12.30: Now & Forever: preserving your memorabilia workshop

Sat. 8<sup>th</sup> March, 10 – 12: Doing Our Bit 1914-1918 – workshop for volunteers

Sat. 29<sup>th</sup> March, 10 – 3.30: Mosman Faces: Mavis Sykes. Come and share your memories

**See the attached flyer for more information about these events coming up at Mosman Library.**

## OTHER EVENTS -

**Tour of GORE HILL MEMORIAL CEMETERY (Repeat) – Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2014, commencing at 10.30.**

Numbers are limited. Bookings are essential – please phone John May on 9906 5106.

## A MOMENT IN HISTORY: CLIFTON GARDENS 110 YEARS AGO

To set the scene, and whet your appetite for our upcoming March excursion, here are two newspaper articles about Clifton Gardens from last century. Firstly from the ***Mosman Mail*** of **Nov. 1, 1900**, a description of a Harbour cruise on the Government steamboat "The Dawn" enjoyed by delegates to the Inter-State Conference of Australasian Chambers of Manufacturers....

*"When they first left the wharf, the boat crowded with ladies and gentlemen in bright colours flashing in the sun and flowing in warm breezes from our beloved Pacific, the fore part of the boat laid with tables covered with dishes of open oysters from our shores, and richly tinted with the hues of native wines, they were taken up the Parramatta and Lane Cove rivers" ..... after which "the delegates were taken close by the warships in the Harbour and were then steamed across towards... Clifton Gardens.*

*A good opportunity was given the visitors of inspecting the many beauties of this popular resort, with its fine grand hotel, looking in its sublime loneliness like a castle in the wilderness surrounded by forest, deep green and mysterious, pavilions innumerable with a great long one in the centre of the wide frontal view. The race tracks could be seen from the boat, the shells on the beach, the wharves with their fisher-boys catching crabs, mullet and bream, the houses of the Submarine Miners, the little trolley track for training up loads of ginger and hop beer, ham, bread, and other things edible and delightful to picnic parties, as well as the more serious aids to long life required by patrons of the hotel. There were as usual a few yachts lying idly about like swans on an inland lake. It is a great pity the delegates did not step off for a shot or a race, or a game of cricket, or a fling at the fish, or a drink of Mr A.J. Thomson's fine liquor...."*

By 1906 laws governing public bathing had been relaxed, mixed daylight swimming was allowed, and a grand new swimming pool was built at Clifton Gardens. ***The Mosman, Neutral and Middle Harbour Resident*** of **Dec. 15, 1906**, reported on a swimming carnival at the *New Baths at Clifton Gardens*.....

*"On Saturday afternoon last the North Sydney Swimming Club held their annual carnival at the new baths recently constructed by the Sydney Ferries, Ltd., at Clifton Gardens. Although not quite complete in every detail, the baths were formally opened on the occasion by the Chairman of Directors (Mr. H.E. Russell), he being presented with a gold key for the purpose by Mr Rutledge Louat, architect for the baths. There were about 1600 present, and great interest was manifested in the proceedings." "An exhibition of fancy diving was given by members of the Seagull Club, and other novelties added to the general enjoyment. The band of the training ship Sobraon played numerous selections during the afternoon.*

*The new baths are described as a veritable natatorial amphitheatre, constructed to a picturesque and unique design, and cover an area of 30,000 square feet. When completed they will provide accommodation for 5000 spectators. The basin is circular in shape, and a platform 12ft wide runs around it, and will be used as a promenade. Underneath is a similar platform for the swimmers. Some 200 dressing rooms are provided in the shore structure (of two floors), which comprises refreshment rooms, observation gallery, and other conveniences. A high diving platform rising 50ft above the high-water mark, with separate platforms at each 10ft, is also provided, and novelties such as revolving casks, giant strides, etc., will also be fitted up. The baths should prove a great attraction to the public."*

What became of all these facilities? Join us to learn the Clifton Gardens story on **Wed. 19<sup>th</sup> March**.