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MOSMAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER - June 2015

Greetings.....

In May we had a big crowd to hear John Dansie talk about *The Roads of Mosman*. He enlightened us with lots of interesting facts about structure, disasters etc and trivia, including the revelation that the shortest road is Dream House Lane (find it opposite the famous Women's Weekly lottery house).

NEXT SPEAKER MEETING

At 7pm on Wednesday 8th July, downstairs at Mosman Library, Richard Reid will present '*That Faraway Experience' Australia's Great War 1916-1918*, the quote being from *My Brother Jack* by George Johnson, a former Mosman resident. Dr Reid reflects how the war altered the lives of most NSW families, by recounting some of the personal experiences. He has led tours to Gallipoli and to the old Western Front in Belgium and France. *See attached flyer.*

For our speaker meeting in September, we have just secured John Vaughan, the renowned vexillologist who was responsible for the new Scottish-Australian flag at the Scots Kirk.

Two excursion dates have been set. The trip to **Goat Island** announced in the April newsletter will be on Tuesday 13th October and will have to be limited to 30 people, \$35pp.

The date for our summer evening **history walk** with sausage sizzle at Mosman Bay will be Wednesday 18th November. *More in the August newsletter.*

OPPORTUNITY

Would you like to join the committee of Mosman Historical Society? In particular, would you be interested in taking on the role of Honorary Secretary? David Carment has been doing a great job but needs to retire soon and would love to hear from an interested member. *Ph.0418 857 182*

DO YOU REMEMBER THE O'MALLEYS?

The Society has received a query from Bill O'Malley in South Australia – John and Helene O'Malley (both deceased) moved to Mosman c1936. They had 3 daughters, **Peggy, Judy and Susie** who grew up in Mosman and went to school at Wenona in 1940s and 1950s. Does anyone have contact details for any of these daughters or know their whereabouts or married names?

If so, please reply to mosmanhistoricalsociety@gmail.com to be forwarded to Mr O'Malley.

SYDNEY HARBOUR FEDERATION TRUST

Australia's oldest and longest operating light station is **Macquarie Lighthouse**.

It was designed by convict architect Francis Greenway and constructed in 1818 but when the stone used in 1818 eroded, the lighthouse was rebuilt in 1883. It is still used for its original purpose, which was a guiding light for sailors navigating entry to Sydney Harbour.

Every 2 months, tours of this historic landmark are available. They take place between 10am to 4pm, duration 20 minutes. The next dates are Sunday 28th June, 16th August and 25th October. Bookings are essential and they are now open for the June date. *Ph.8969 2100 Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm*

CHAMPAGNE SUPPER - History House Fundraiser

To be held in the reception rooms, 133 Macquarie Street, on Friday 10th July between 4.30 and 7pm. The \$50 ticket includes a tax deductible \$35 building fund donation. *Ph.9247 8001 or history@rahs.org.au*

A MOMENT IN TIME – BALMORAL BEACH BATHERS in 1935

Summarised from an article in the Mosman Daily 10th Jan 1935

At the Mosman Council meeting on 8th January, 1935, outrage was brewing at the beach attire worn by some of the men among the large crowd at Balmoral Beach that New Year's Day.

Current legislation still dictated that *"all persons over four years, bathing in any waters exposed to the public view, other than baths, shall be clad in a bathing costume covering the body from the neck to the knee"*. Times were changing however and the regulations were unable to keep pace with prevailing fashion.

"Today", said Mayor Wallace, in support of the changes, *"practically no costume would comply with the foregoing - thighs are devoid of covering and following the dictates of feminine fashion the backless costume for women is the prevailing mode ... and we hear no public outcry against the scanty garment"*. Men using public beaches however were still expected to wear swimming costumes which covered the thighs and upper front part of the body.

A number of complaints were received that on New Year's Day *"youths from other suburbs"* had flouted this rule, rolling down the top part of their costumes *"to such an extent as to offend one's sense of decency"*, some bathers appearing on the beach *"with practically no costume at all!"*

At the time a new style of approved swimming shorts for men was being adopted in England, America and Europe. At other Australian beaches such as Palm Beach and St Kilda they were being worn. Supporters of these *"standard shorts"*, with their modest skirt and belt, had enquired whether these would be permitted on Balmoral Beach.

Mayor Wallace was inclined to grant permission for their use, provided that wearers covered themselves with a coat or towel while sitting on or walking about the beach. Inspectors could restrict wearers of these shorts to swimming and sun bathing, and ensure that those wearing neck-to-knee costumes did not remove the straps and roll them down to the waist, he proposed. The Mayor argued that the front V shape of the current costumes already exposed men's hairy chests without offence being taken, and he was sure beach

goers would soon become accustomed to the sight of men's bare chests as they had to the more revealing women's costumes. Those who objected to the sight of men's hairy legs might also like the apes and monkeys at Taronga Zoo be clothed to protect the sensibilities of women and children, he suggested.

Ald. Pursell also accepted that inevitable change was occurring, and that it would require an army of beach inspectors to enforce the current rules. Proper shorts, he thought, were better than the existing costumes which were being rolled down to an unacceptable extent.

Although Mayor Wallace was in support of change, other aldermen were outraged when a pair of the new shorts was exhibited. Ald. Osborne objected to them *"from an artistic point of view, and to allow their use would drive people away from the beach"*. Ald. Clegg thought that *"quite sufficient of the body is exposed at present"* and that if the trend persisted, Balmoral Beach would become like Clontarf and Freshwater. Ald. Henderson had received complaints of visitors at Balmoral *"almost in the nude"* and it was time *"stern measures were taken to repress the trouble"*.

Ald. Carroll argued that the current style covering the chest, which was good enough for the thousands of members of life-saving and amateur swimming clubs, should be good enough for Balmoral Beach in accordance with the existing legislation. Modesty was changing, he admitted, but he would not like the customs of other countries regarding bathing costumes to come here!

Ald. Carroll suggested that a conference of all metropolitan councils controlling bathing beaches be held in order to agree on suitable bathing attire for both sexes. Recommendations could then be presented to the Minister for Local Government for incorporation in proposed new legislation on the subject. In the meantime, the meeting voted on the issue, the majority supporting Ald. Clegg's motion to *"prohibit the wearing of costumes which expose the front upper part of the (male) body"*.

How times have changed!

M.H.S.