

MOSMAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER – October 2013

UPCOMING EVENTS

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday 13th November 2013, at Mosman Library, starting at 7 pm

Speaker is Judith Dunn on "*Colonial Ladies: Lovely, Lively and Lamentably Loose*", the women convicted of crimes committed in the colony of NSW and incarcerated in the Convict Women's Goal at Parramatta. See *attached flyer*.

As this is our last meeting for the year, please join us after the talk for some festive season cheer - Christmas cake and a glass of wine will be available. Note that visitor donation for this event will be \$10 instead of the usual \$5.

BRADLEYS HEAD – HISTORICAL WALK guided by David Carment

Sunday 20th October 2pm to 4.30pm. Meet at Athol Hall Car Park on Bradleys Head Road.

This is part of the Festival of Mosman and participants will learn about the first Aboriginal inhabitants, sea explorers, the early defence of Sydney, prominent artists, the First and Second World Wars, and various recreational activities. Participants must be at least moderately fit. **Free**, enquiries: 0418 857 182

DOING OUR BIT - HISTORICAL TALK at Mosman Library – Monday 18th November 2013, 7.00 – 9.00 pm

AuthorTalk: David Wilson on "*Fighting Nineteenth: history of the Nineteenth Infantry Battalion AIF 1915-1918*". An event for Mosman Library's Great War Project *Doing Our Bit – Mosman 1914-1918*. **Free**, but for tickets please go online to Mosman Library or ring 9978 4091.

Tour of GORE HILL MEMORIAL CEMETERY – Sunday 3rd November 2013, commencing at 11 am.

A bi-annual event conducted by the Friends of Gore Hill Cemetery, the two hour tour includes discussion about some leading North Shore historical figures who are buried in this cemetery. Time will also be spent in the St Mary McKillop precinct. Following the tour there will be an opportunity to enquire about the location of graves and deposition of ashes. Participants are advised to wear good walking shoes, and bring a camera to record the memorials in a sea of flowers!

Bookings essential – Contact John May on 9906 5106 to reserve a place.

NEXT YEAR – Wednesday 19th March, 2014 – Daylight saving **Excursion to Clifton Gardens**, followed by one of our famous **Sausage Sizzles!** Keep this evening free – more details to come.

A MOMENT IN HISTORY: MOSMAN – 110 YEARS AGO

The 1903 Commonwealth of Australia electoral roll for Mosman (1) reveals a suburb quite different to that we know today. Houses did not have numbers, but names like *Weetuppie*, in Muston Street and *Nuhulailai* in Muston Street. Unfamiliar streets such as Norris Street (now Rangers Avenue) and Heise Road (now Bayview Avenue) appear, as do the artists' camps with which we are familiar. Those listed at Curlew camp at the time included a painter (Harry Beale), also a commercial traveller and a cook. The Mia Mia camp and Euroka camp at Balmoral were home to a mixed group of people: labourers, a journalist, clerk, bank clerk and a bookseller, cook and women doing domestic duties.

Other camps off Rangers Road, Raglan Street, a tent off Avenue Road, in Bradley's Head Road and Milner Street, at Reid Park, and Athol Gardens appear to be accommodation for workers, probably building houses and roads, or those living rough, as many have occupations such as labourer, cook, quarryman, and domestic duties, with several fishermen in camps and bays around the foreshore.

Mosman had grown considerably in the ten years since it became independent of North Sydney in 1893, but by 1903 still consisted of only approximately 1796 dwellings and 6320 inhabitants (2). Many of these would be children, but by 1903 the roll of people who had registered to vote in Mosman consisted of 2816 names. 1553 of these were women, who had won the right to vote only the previous year and, although not compulsory, had enthusiastically enrolled, making up 55.2% of the electorate.

The Commonwealth Franchise Act of 1902 “required voters to be British subjects aged 21 years or over – it did not discriminate on the basis of marital status or property ownership”. Those of coloured races, however, were not entitled to vote.(3)

The vast majority of women did not work outside the home. Domestic Duties is the largest occupation (including 3 men), with servant, housemaid, housekeeper, cook and lady help augmenting this category. Others such as waitress, barmaid and laundress did similar work in the public arena. Those who had occupations beyond the domestic fell into a narrow range – the largest group were teachers, plus governess, and music and singing teachers who probably taught at their home. Others ran small businesses related to beauty and apparel, such as dressmakers, milliners, seamstresses, a tailoress, hairdresser and a manicurist and, also catering to other domestic needs, shopkeepers and a florist. Office work was an emerging opportunity for women to forge a career beyond the home, with a number of typists, clerks, saleswomen, a bookkeeper and a cashier. Thirteen nurses and one midwife are listed. More adventurous female occupations consisted of two actresses, a machinist, a journalist, a photo re-toucher and a Christian Science Practitioner.

The occupations of the 44.8% on the roll who were male reflect, to a large extent, occupations still current today – doctors, solicitors, architects, engineers and other professions, plus clerks, civil servants, shopkeepers etc, and probably a larger proportion of labourers and tradesmen than would live in Mosman today. Several master mariners, graziers and an orchardist probably used a home in Mosman as their city base, and the Barracks at Middle Head was home to a range of military men. A large number of men are described as an agent, importer or merchant, with no further qualification, though a number mention the wool and tea trades. Emerging skills such as electrician and electrical engineer are represented, while other jobs such as dairyman, coachman, groom, sanitary man and lamplighter hark back to a long gone era.

Mosman has certainly changed in 110 years!

1. Division of North Sydney, Mosman's Bay polling-place: roll of persons entitled to vote under the Commonwealth Franchise Act of 1902. Commonwealth of Australia, State of NSW, 1903.

2. SOUTER, Gavin, Mosman: a history; Melb, U.P., 1994. p. 136.

3. Australian Electoral Commission; Fact sheet 3: Voting in the Federal Election 1903. Canberra, 2001.

(The 1903 Mosman electoral roll is available on microfiche in Mosman Library Local Studies Room).