NEXT MEETING
The next meeting of the Society will be held on Thursday 8th October,
2nd floor Conference Room, Stanton Library, Miller Street, North Sydney. Light refreshments are served from 6.30pm prior to the meeting which commences at 7pm.

Speaker: Gaynor Austen
Gaynor Austen completed an Honours Arts Degree at the University of Melbourne, specialising in Australian history. She worked in library and information science, initially at the National Library of Australia in Canberra, and subsequently in Brisbane, spending the final 15 years of her career as Director of Library Services at the Queensland University of Technology.

After retiring early, Gaynor returned to her love of history. She worked as a volunteer researcher for the National Trust of Queensland, during which she authored several articles for the Trust’s state and national newsletters. On relocating to Sydney in 2009 she joined NSHS, and now serves as the Society’s Secretary, as well as maintaining membership of several other heritage and history organisations in both Qld and NSW. Gaynor is a Member of the Order of Australia (AM).

When Gaynor Austen and her husband bought Makira, their Lavender Bay home which opens into Clark Park on Sydney Harbour, they began to explore the story of the house and its surroundings. Through research, and considerable serendipity, they uncovered the history of a significant area of early Lavender Bay, and of the people who lived there. Amongst the questions that they answered were:

- How did an 1860’s dispute over land use between James Milson and William Tunks escalate to a Parliamentary Select Committee and lead to the creation of the first harbourside recreation area on the north shore?
- Why were five federation style houses built into the corner of that park in 1907?
- Why, unlike its neighbours, was Makira named after a province of the Solomon Islands?
- Where was Lavender Avenue – the street which ‘never existed’?
- What was the ‘artists’ colony’ which surrounded Makira in the 1970’s and 80’s?
- And, what was the fascinating story of Makira’s first residents, the Scottish master mariner and his wealthy Sydney wife, who owned the property for its first 43 years?

Clark Park & Lavender Bay c1900 - Stanton Photo
Welcome new members - Yvonne Ashfield and Paul Vonwiller

At the Annual General Meeting 10 September 2015 the following Office Bearers were elected:
- President: Geoff Huntington
- Vice Presidents: Vilma Bowers, Don Napper
- Treasurer: Don Napper
- Secretary: Gaynor Austen
- Guest Speaker Organiser: Vilma Bowers
- Publicity: Barvara Hush
- Committee Persons: Ruth Holmes and Susan Wade

November Outing: Tour of Cockatoo Island - Thursday 19 November

Cockatoo Island, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is the largest of several islands that were originally heavily timbered sandstone knolls. Originally the Island rose to 18 metres above sea level and was 12.9 hectares but it has been extended to 17.9 hectares and is now cleared of most vegetation. Between 1839 and 1869, Cockatoo Island operated as a convict penal establishment, primarily as a place of secondary punishment for convicts who had reoffended in the colonies. Cockatoo Island was also the site of one of Australia's biggest shipyards, operating between 1857 and 1991. The first of its two dry docks were built by convicts. Listed on the National Heritage List, the island is significant for its demonstration of the characteristics of a long-running dockyard and shipbuilding complex, including evidence of key functions, structures and operational layout.

Please book with Don Napper no later than November General Meeting. Tour cost: FREE
Meet at Circular Quay 9:15-30 am at City Extra café, then catch 10:07 Rivercat to Cockatoo Island for guided tour. Return 12:19 pm Ferry/Rivercat to Circular Quay; arrive 12:45pm, then Lunch at own choice.
Contact: Don Napper – Phone: 9460 0634 Email: dna678@bigpond.net.au

Christmas Afternoon Tea
Saturday 28th November 2-4pm

Don Bank Museum, 6 Napier Street, North Sydney.
Live entertainment and excellent catering for only $25.00 per person
Bookings/payment required now to Treasurer Ph 9460 0634
or Secretary Ph 9929 6637
Historical Society committee member Susan Wade is an indexing volunteer at the Stanton Library Heritage Centre. Here are a few pieces of interesting correspondence she has recently uncovered.

**Tuberculous** In July 1912 Marrickville Council wrote to the North Sydney Council informing them that their proposed joint deputation to the Chief Secretary urging that Tuberculosis be made a compulsory notifiable disease was no longer necessary. Legislation to accomplish the object sought by the deputation was to be introduced to Parliament very shortly.

**Gas Lamp for Waverton** In May 1913 Mr. E.S. Day wrote to the Town Clerk wishing to draw his attention to the “absolute necessity of providing a gas lamp on the corner of Tunks and McKye Streets or thereabouts, as the road is in a dangerous state with filthy holes of stagnant water lying about”. The Council response was to inform Mr. Day that the Mayor had approved a lamp being erected. The other matter was referred to the Engineer.

**Trees in Shell Cove Road** In October 1913 a petition was received from Mr. S.H. Buchanan and 4 other residents of Shell Cove Road Neutral Bay, between Wycombe Road and Burroway Street, desirous of having Lotus Stemum\(^1\) trees planted. They were prepared to pay for the cost per tree including guards, of 7 shillings and 6 pence each.

The Council response expressed concern that “the season is rather late for tree-planting, but the Mayor has approved the work being carried out provided the residents undertake to water them”. Once the residents agreed that this would be done and a cheque for £13/10/00 for the 36 trees received, the work would “be put in hand”.

**Brennan Park Seat Strangers** In September 1914 Mr R. Brennan of “Killara” Hayberry St, North Sydney, wrote to the Council pointing out that 10 park seats had been presented by the Citizens of Wollstonecraft for use in Brennan Park and additionally, through an application to the Mayor, Mr Wilson, they requested 5 or more be supplemented by the Council. Mr Brennan expressed his disappointment that to date no further seats had been placed in the park by Council. He highlighted that the residents of Wollstonecraft subscribed £237 towards the purchase of the park, had prepared the ground, planted 200 ornamental trees, placed tree guards and wire around the trees, and watered the trees during the summer months. Mr Brennan was unhappy that there was not enough seating for residents on Sundays, when strangers visited the park and felt the local residents should be treated with a little more consideration after all their contributions towards Brennan Park.

**Gambling in Cammeray Park** The Town Clerk wrote to Inspector Fullerton of the North Sydney Police Station in April 1916 wishing to draw his attention to the Engineer’s report that the pavilion in Cammeray Park was frequently misused by persons who frequent it and that he observed it was being used as a gambling school and requested Inspector Fullerton instruct one of his officers to keep it under surveil Ground.”

\(^1\) I have searched extensively for a species of tree called Lotus Stemum, including contacting the Botanical Gardens Reference Centre, but to no avail! Then I came across some correspondence from the residents of Yeo Street in 1914, where they requested Lophostemum trees for their street. The common name is Queensland Brush Box and is known as an effective street tree. As it sounds like Lotus Stemum I think one can assume this is the species of tree the Shell Cove Road residents were referring to in 1913 ..... SW
In today's world of digital video technology and the ability to "shoot" movies anywhere with cameras and cell phones, the idea of utilising an Olympic pool for scenes in a feature film could be considered rather uninteresting. But this wasn't the case in 1937 when film director Ken G Hall created his movie *Lovers and Luggers*; a story about romance, adventure and the diving for pearls in the waters around Thursday Island. After failed attempts at the Cinesound studios to film underwater sequences in a tank containing Sydney drinking water (which was too murky) he filmed his pearl divers in North Sydney Olympic pool, suitably set with fake rocks and coral.

Fifty years before this, adjacent to the present pool site, stood the harbour ferry terminal and the termination point for the 1886 Ridge Street cable tramway. A large arch glass-roofed structure was built over the ferry terminal and this provided commuters some cover between the trams and ferries. In 1892, on the pool's western side, the Lavender Bay to St Leonards (and Hornsby) railway was opened and access from the Lavender Bay Station to the ferry terminal was via ramps and stairs located in the area where the pool is today.

In 1925, construction of the Dorman and Long Sydney Harbour Bridge fabrication workshops commenced on the original Lavender Bay station site. This was a huge steel-framed earth-floor workshop stretching along Lavender Bay from where the Pool and Luna Park stands today. Seventy nine percent of the steel (silicon steel; a precursor to modern day structural steels) was imported from Dorman Long steel-works in Middlesbrough England, then fabricated and assembled on this site. It was loaded onto barges and towed beneath the arch structure, then hoisted into position by giant creeper cranes.

The 'Olympic Pool with its strong art deco styling and decorative plasterwork, was officially opening on 4th April 1936. It was touted as the "wonder pool of Australasia"; one of the most advanced in the world because of its high standard facilities and its modern filtration system. Costing £47,000, it was constructed for the 1938 Empire Games and became the Australian team's centre for aquatic excellence. Over the years, 86 world records were set at this unique harbour-side pool.

Preparing the site for Harbour Bridge fabrication workshops - 1925. The ferry terminal arch can be seen in the background.

Photo Credit - State Records Authority NSW 12685_a007_a00704_8725000032r