

SHARING, SAVING, WAITING & MAKING DO

Illustrated talk by Meredith Walker at the MHP Annual General Meeting



The Migration Heritage Project Annual General Meeting was held on Thursday, 1 November 2007. Meredith Walker, heritage consultant and conservation activist, was guest speaker where she presented an illustrated talk showcasing accommodation available to migrants who arrived in Wollongong from 1949 to the 1970s. Meredith used real life examples and many of the contributors of the 'real life examples' were in the audience and their participation during the evening certainly added an extra dimension to the proceedings as they shared their experiences with the audience, bringing to life the images compiled by Meredith.

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2007

The Migration Heritage Project Inc (MHP) celebrates 5 years of incorporation at this meeting so it is with great pleasure that I present to the membership and the community the annual report for 2007.

A year of consolidation

The committee has dubbed this year '*The year of consolidation*' due to the ongoing nature of many of our projects and the up-dating and maintenance of previous initiatives such as the website and the collection of images and stories.

The MHP website

Our website was launched in April of 2006 and just as we had anticipated the site constitutes our most immediate form of communication with the membership, funding bodies as well as the wider community. We have received numerous positive comments about the site as well as many inquiries for information and assistance with personal research or local contacts. For those who haven't visited the site yet, the address is: www.mhpillawarra.com and we are still keen to receive your feedback.

The Places Project – NSW Heritage Office, MHC, WCC

Last year I reported that we had been successful in an application to the NSW Heritage Office for funding to complete a heritage study of migration heritage places in Wollongong. The MHP was granted \$7,500 for the project
(continued over)

2008 MHP MEETINGS

The MHP Committee meets the first Thursday of the month (February-December) at 5.30 pm, Meeting Room 1, Level 10 Wollongong City Council Administration Building, Burelli Street, Wollongong. Members and other interested people or groups are always welcome. The meetings scheduled for 2008 are as follows:

7 February, 6 March, 3 April,
1 May, 5 June, 3 July, 7 August,
4 September, 2 October,
6 November (AGM), 4 December

(Venue for meetings provided through the Wollongong City Council Multicultural Services)

MHP COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman

Franca Facci

Treasurer

Mendo Trajcewski

Secretary

Fidelia Pontarolo

Committee:

Gregor Cullen

Rina Montgomery

Olga Romano

Giulia Bonacina

Ludwik Ihnat

Peter Bestman

Louise Thom

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Don't forget to visit our website

www.mhpillawarra.com

while another \$7,500 was granted to the NSW Migration Heritage Centre and the \$15,000 was matched by Wollongong City Council bringing the project total to \$30,000. This project commenced in earnest in 2007 with the employment of Louise Thom and Meredith Walker as project managers with Glynis Cummins providing research support. The purpose of the project is:

- To identify, document and assess migration heritage places in the Wollongong local government area
- Prepare a physical sites survey with statements of significance
- Complete State Heritage Register nomination forms
- Identify potential LEP listings

Early research indicated that the project was potentially quite large and it was therefore necessary to limit the scope to a number of key themes. These are: Early Accommodation; Workplaces for Women; Worship and possibly; Wollongong Harbour.

Two databases have been set up as part of the collection process, one of photographs and the other of places. The project has already revealed some interesting findings such as photos in the MM (Metal Manufacturers) Kembla Archives and the BHP Archives in Melbourne.

It is hoped the project will provide solid evidence on the value of certain places to the community and assist in the argument to maintain and protect these places of significance to migrants and the wider community. The project officers also propose to write a series of short essays on some of the particular elements of the research they have uncovered in an attempt to reach a broader audience.

Migration to Wollongong Publication

Meredith Walker, has continued to provide the MHP with an enormous amount of her own time to continue her work on the Migration to Wollongong publication. This publication will not only document the impact that migrants and refugees have made in the Illawarra, but it will also act as a thematic guide for people wanting to explore and research the heritage of migrants in the Illawarra and Australia. The main themes identified in the book include:

1. Life in the homeland
2. The decision to emigrate & the choice of Australia
3. Journey to Australia & to Wollongong – first experiences
4. Migrant accommodation & next home
5. Work
6. Worship, maintaining worship and religious traditions
7. Forming organisations – communities of language culture & homeland
8. Home & family life
9. Getting to know Wollongong – leaving, staying, becoming Australian, links with kin

10. Recognising the contributions of migrants – multicultural Wollongong, festivals and traditions

We look forward to its completion which has been funded by the NSW MHC. (The NSW Migration Heritage Centre at the Powerhouse Museum is a New South Wales Government initiative supported by the Community Relations Commission).

Animating Heritage Project

This project is a continuation from last year with funds granted by the IMB Community Foundation. The project is being conducted in partnership with Film Illawarra and the UOW School of Art and Design and aims to digitise old film and videos held by migrants in the area. The project has successfully uncovered a variety of old films and videos held in personal collections however there have been a number of technical hurdles not anticipated in the design of the project that have had to be overcome. These include accessing suitable equipment/projectors with which to view older films, processes to transfer from an old medium to a digital medium plus the enormous amount of time to view and record the images on the footage viewed. We are hoping to have discussions with the funding body to review the next phase of the project which is to use the images to create a moving image of migration in the Illawarra.

Presentation to the Southern Highlands and Illawarra Chapter, Museums Australia

The MHP was delighted to have been asked to present an outline of the organisation to the local chapter of Museums Australia (NSW). The meeting in October provided a unique opportunity to illustrate the work we do and approaches we take in promoting migration heritage as well as strengthening links and connections with the people involved with other museums in the Area.



Franca Facci giving her presentation at the Southern Highlands and Illawarra Chapter Museums Australia Meeting

Financial Report

A full financial report will be prepared by the treasurer and audited independently. It will be available at the Annual General Meeting. A new volunteer recruit has joined the MHP to provide support to our treasurer. William Hu was recruited through volunteering Illawarra and we welcome his input.

With thanks

The MHP is an extraordinary organisation as organisations go. The committee is made up of a few dedicated individuals who come together each month at quite ordinary meetings to produce results of great quality and note. As chairperson I am humbled and privileged to work with such an impressive group of individuals and would like to extend to all of them my heartfelt thanks.

We would also like to thank the people who have had carriage of some of our projects this year, in particular Meredith Walker, Louise Thom and Glynis Cummins for the Places Project and to Meredith for the Migration to Wollongong Publication.

To Louise McBride from Film Illawarra and Gregor Cullen from the School of Art & Design at the UOW for their work on the Animating Heritage Project. I would also like to add that Gregor provides the MHP with an amazing amount of in-kind support in visual design and inspiration ideas.

Thanks again to Mendo and Danco at Macedonian Welfare for assisting us with our bookkeeping and to Fidelia Pontarolo for keeping the MHP paperwork flowing.

Wollongong City Council has been generous as always in allowing us to use rooms for our meetings. We have also received additional support from WCC Cultural Services, specifically Eva Castle, and WCC Multicultural Services through Darinka Radinovic. This support from Council allows us to ensure we can utilise as many of our scant resources on projects and not administration.

Thanks also to Wollongong City Council Cultural Services who generously print the newsletter as part of a negotiated agreement.

The Migration Heritage Centre for NSW, through John Petersen and Andrea Fernandez, are always generous with their time and professional advice.

Many thanks of course to the IMB Community Foundation, Heritage NSW, the Migration Heritage Centre for NSW and Wollongong City Council for the funding they have provided for our projects.

*Franca Facci
Chairperson
1 November 2007*

MEET THE MHP COMMITTEE

Our newest committee member, Louise Thom, was elected at the Annual General Meeting on 1 November 2007. While new to the committee she has been a staunch supporter and willing volunteer of the MHP, as well as a past project officer. Her current involvement is with the Wollongong Migration Heritage Places Project. Her career and professional background has been of great benefit to the MHP.

Louise Thom - Committee



Louise Thom was born in Glen Innes, a small country town in north west NSW. Her father originally came from Palmwoods in Queensland and her mother from Whyalla in South Australia. Their families many generations back were from northern England and Scotland. Louise went to Sydney University and obtained a degree in architecture. She then went on to practice architecture and conservation. In 1996 she accepted a position with Wollongong City Council as a Heritage Officer. During her ten years with the Council Louise got to know the committee of the MHP and was greatly impressed by the work they were doing. She was able to allocate some funding to kick start projects such as the forthcoming MHP Publication. In 2004 Louise left Wollongong Council to become a private heritage consultant as well as doing some part time work for Woollahra Municipal Council as a Heritage Officer. She undertook some work for MHP as a project officer and in this role was able to attract \$30,000 for the Wollongong Migration Heritage Places project. This project has been undertaken by Louise in collaboration with Meredith Walker and Glynis Cummins and is now nearing completion.

SENTIMENTAL OBJECTS



This sugar bowl was brought over from Italy in 1952. It is glass with an aluminum lid that is slightly dented. Its value is in that it was something that was used in the home and was brought over in a suitcase when coming to Australia. Why a sugar bowl? Did they think that

maybe they couldn't get one here in Australia? Who knows, but it has survived the journey and 55 years later it sits in a cabinet ready to be passed onto the next generation who has been told about the sugar bowl, where it was used, who used it and how it came to be in Nonna's china cabinet.

Objects like these do not have to start out being expensive items, but they do end up being an important part of your children, grandchildren or even great grandchildren's heritage. Do you have such an item at home? Does your family know the story behind it?

NISSEN HUTS When everything old is new again....

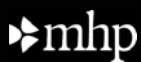


The MHP Committee was invited to the Kids Uni at Campus East who is housed in a restored Nissen Hut. What started out as the dining hall in the days of the Balgownie/Fairy Meadow Migrant Hostel, and then became the Science Centre before it moved to its current premises, now enjoys the laughter and joy of children's voices as they are in the care of the Kids Uni After School Care and Vacation Care staff headed by their Director, Debbie Foster. Debbie has been exploring with the children the history of the Nissen Huts and of the migrants who used to live there. The children have become engrossed in this history and have been doing some of their own research. Quite likely some of the children are grandchildren and great grandchildren of former

residents. In addition to the former dining hall, two accommodation huts are located right beside it. One accommodation hut slightly larger than the other. There has been some external restoration work done to the accommodation huts as they had to be relocated and situated on a built up area to avoid the flood area. This work has been carried out by the University of Wollongong. It was good to see the huts and heartwarming to know that under Debbie Foster they are in good hands. Kids Uni and After School Care and Vacation Care is available for children 5-12 years of age. For further information phone 4221 8035 or visit the website kids-uni@uow.edu.au



To all our readers thank you for your continued interest throughout 2007. We hope you continue to read our newsletter to keep you informed of what we are up to and what we hope to achieve. If you are interested in helping with any of our projects please contact the MHP. May we take this opportunity to wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season and a Merry Christmas to all those who are celebrating Christmas and Happy New Year to one and all.



www.mhpillararra.com

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MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Joining Fee: Individual \$5.00 (Pensioners \$2.00) Organisations \$10.00
Annual Fee: Individual \$10.00 (Pensioners \$5.00) Organisations \$10.00

Joining fee + Annual Fee payable within fourteen days of receipt of advice of membership approval. Membership renewal annual fee payable by 30 June of each year.

We would love you to join but you don't have to be a member to participate

