From the Editor

Just as we thought things might be getting easier, the Global Financial Crisis really kicked in this year and we all started to work harder than ever just to keep up.

Despite this the Management Committee has again been active and again there has been a variety of activities throughout the year. Much more of this will be in the next issue which we hope to deliver to you soon, whilst in this issue a number of feature articles probe particular questions in depth. With the recent exhibition of London’s Victoria and Albert Museum’s “Art Deco” collection at the National Gallery of Victoria, of special interest is our esteemed President’s article beginning at page 3 in which he poses the most intriguing question “was there in fact such an object as an Art Deco car?”

Your editor was very pleased to be able to participate in a walk around Glebe and Annadale with the Sydney & Northern NSW Branch of the Australian Garden History Society and learnt a great deal about what I’ve called “a good conservation story” (yes, they do happen) and all is revealed, starting on page 10.

We were very fortunate to have the redoubtable Larisa Sarkadi represent us at the 10th Congress on Art Deco in Montreal, Canada, and her eyewitness report starts at page 12.

I’m sure I speak for all continuing Committee members when I say I was delighted to see at our last Annual General Meeting that three members decided to join the Committee, and we welcome them on page 14. On that page we also have some exciting information about our new Paypal facility that will make doing business with the Society that much easier. Through his tireless efforts our webmaster extraordinaire, Matt Stone has reduced the process down to a few clicks of the mouse......

Those that work hard have got to play hard and as usual our Christmas Party was not to be missed, your intrepid correspondent was feeling in an upbeat, if not adventurous, mood, something he felt necessary if he were to venture into the architectural unknown that is Bondi Junction. A plethora of development in the area over the last few decades has given the suburb what I might call an “uncertain” feel.

So it was with delight that I spied, after what seemed as arduous a journey as a trek across the desert, my “oasis”, none other than the Tea Gardens Hotel in Bronte Road. Nestled between two unremarkable buildings, its unambiguously Art Deco frontage is but an entrée to what waits inside, and the Boxing Kangaroo that was fluttering defiantly on the afternoon I noticed it from across the street was taken as a symbol of the spirit that has seen the hotel in continuous operation since 1854.

The promised 100th Management Committee meeting photos have I believe been placed in a time capsule to be released at the time of the 200th meeting, but your editor uncovers some of the flavor of the evening on page 17.

Earlier this year the Canberra charter of the Walter Burley Griffin Society Incorporated hosted the inaugural Marion Mahony Griffin lecture. Appropriately enough, this inaugural lecture sought to answer one’s question about what sort of person she was. Larisa Sarkadi was there and tells us some of what went on at page 18.

Finally, for Lillian Smith fans (and I know there are many) she has again managed to write to us and her letter is on page 17. We have also received anonymously an old news clipping purporting to contain an early photograph of Lillian, but as we go to press this is yet to be confirmed.

I hope you enjoy this bumper 20-page Society newsletter and look forward to bringing you another issue very soon.

John Dymond

OUR 2008 CHRISTMAS PARTY

It was nearly Christmas, and your intrepid correspondent was feeling in an upbeat, if not adventurous, mood, something he felt necessary if he were to venture into the architectural unknown that is Bondi Junction. A plethora of development in the area over the last few decades has given the suburb what I might call an “uncertain” feel.

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Upon walking inside and upstairs to the function room one is greeted by a stairwell boasting most if...
Promotional material associated with the Art Deco exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria featuring a Cord 812.

Art Deco World Congress in Montreal

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Australians were indeed privileged to have the Victoria and Albert Museum’s “Art Deco” exhibition travel to our shores. It was a great opportunity to see at first hand some of the most significant and famous manifestations of this enduring and popular style. The exhibition was accompanied by poster and television advertising that featured one of the most significant and famous manifestations of interwar automotive design – a beautiful 1937 Cord 812 series Westchester sedan. However much the Cord may be an evocative icon, in this context it poses an interesting question. Was there in fact such an object as an “Art Deco Car”?

There is no doubt that motor cars captured the imagination of a large cross-section of Western society before and after World War I. Members of the artistic community were certainly not immune to their seductive allure. For instance, Le Figaro published Italian artist Filippo Marinetti’s first Futurist Manifesto during February 1909. In it he extolled the magnificence of speed attained through mechanical means, and declared that a racing car was thus more beautiful than the celebrated and long-revered exemplar of Hellenistic Greek sculpture, the so-called Winged Victory of Samothrace. In other words, a new and very modern form of beauty had overthrown long-established Western aesthetic traditions.

Major architects were also infected by the motor car’s allure. Some professed to learn from its example. The influential French architect Le Corbusier included a chapter on automobiles in his seminal 1923 book Vers Une Architecture, which had already run to thirteen editions by the time it was translated into English in 1927 as Towards a New Architecture. Le Corbusier was less concerned with improving cars than establishing the intrinsically beautiful forms arising from standardisation and purposeful intentions that were embodied in their design and production as a paradigm for architecture. He compared the evolution of automotive design with that of classical Greek architecture (but also found aircraft and ships instructive). Le Corbusier pointed out one of the ironies of prevalent conventional wisdom - “Everybody asserts with conviction and enthusiasm: ‘The motor-car marks the style of our epoch!’ but the Breton bed is sold and manufactured every day by the antique dealers.”

Some years earlier, around 1921, he had developed the Maison Citrohan, “(not to say Citroën). That is to say, a house like a motor car, conceived and carried out like an omnibus or ship’s cabin”. And Le Corbusier did indeed try his hand at automotive design, collaborating on the concept of a “voiture maximum”, a small and economical car, during 1928. In Germany, architect Walter Gropius, the first director of the Bauhaus, toyed with motor cars but at the opposite end of the marketplace, producing an elegant if conservative exterior for the German Adler in 1930. It was a world away from the voiture maximum.

To some extent the motor car was represented at the seminal Exposition internationale des arts décoratifs et industriels modernes that was held in Paris between April and October 1925, perhaps not such a surprise given that the Exposition was supposedly about industrial as well as decorative design. The French motor giant Citroën scored the greatest advertising coup of all when the Eiffel Tower became a gigantic illuminated billboard for the company. Artist Sonia Delaunay, an important avant-garde artist in pre World War I Paris who explored the use of colour and was one of the first...
European artists to explore abstraction, installed a boutique that featured her striking geometrically embellished designs that were accompanied by a stylish travelling companion in the form of a matching car.

In Australia Sonia Delaunay’s foray into automotive decoration found a distant echo when the Ford Motor Company of Australia commissioned publisher Sydney Ure Smith of Art in Australia and The Home fame, along with artists Thea Proctor and the elder statesman of Australian painting, George Lambert. Their task was to provide styling advice and colour ways for the 1929 Ford roadster and sedan. The notion was promoted as “colour harmony – an entirely new note in Ford Cars dictated by well known Australian artists.” Of these three protagonists, perhaps it was Thea Proctor who produced a body of work that most directly contributed to a local Art Deco/Modernist sensibility. She took part in the seminal 1929 Burdekin House Exhibition, undertook interior design commissions and designed covers for The Home, which was Ure Smith’s major contribution to popularizing all that was up-to-date and modern. As far as the motor car was concerned, The Home itself demonstrated how essential an accessory it was to modern Australian life by publishing photographs of celebrities and the social set with their cars. This was not an isolated local phenomenon, as influential fashion journals such as Vogue published similar images.

At the end of the 1920s automobile advertising reflected a keen perception of the modern, exploiting images and graphics to form seductive associations. Artwork was generally preferred to photography and sometimes reflected fine art influence, admittedly softened for popular consumption and thus veering towards the Art Deco style. At times the combination of stylish artwork and carefully considered blocks of text (in a modern typeface) resulted in minor masterpieces. There were other instances where the automobile was presented as the essential accompaniment to life in the towering skyscraper city. Advertising copy might tell you nothing about the car but everything about the social benefits of owning it. In this way being modern was presented as a fashionable necessity and an exciting entrée into the future.

The 1920s gave birth to a more sinister fashion trend in the form of deliberate obsolescence. In part a reaction to Henry Ford’s success, which was founded on competitive pricing derived from improvements to a successful basic design, corporate giant General Motors fought back by making the appearance of its automotive products – their “styling” – a major selling feature. The first example of the corporation’s new approach was the La Salle, which was introduced to the world in March 1927. The car is credited to Harley Earl, who worked with General Motors between 1926 and 1959. His approach was the total visual integration of every component of the car’s exterior, which was an innovative concept at the time. The success of the La Salle prompted the president of General Motors to form an Art and Color Division with Earl as its director and in 1939 it became the corporation’s Styling Division. The notion of “styling” a car’s exterior soon became allied to annual product change. Earl coined the expression “dynamic obsolescence” to describe the role of styling in stimulating constant demand for new cars through the alteration of their appearance.

Some individuals took the technical aspects of the motor car more seriously. For instance, the American industrial and theatrical designer Norman Bel Geddes explored the concept of streamlining: “An object is streamlined when its exterior surface is so designed that upon passing through a fluid such as water or air the object creates the least disturbance in the fluid in the form of eddies or partial vacua tending to produce resistance.” Bel Geddes is perhaps best remembered for his critique of contemporary design,
The motor as a necessary adjunct to life in the skyscraper metropolis (Reproduced in National Geographic Magazine, December 1929).

The extraordinarily versatile Buckminster Fuller developed his “Dymaxion” car during 1927 and was able to have a working prototype on display at the 1933 Chicago World Fair.

Perhaps the closest actual realization of these ideals in the first half of the 1930s was the Chrysler Corporation’s radical range of Airflow vehicles. The cars pioneered aerodynamics and introduced an advanced streamlined body to the public when first released during 1934. However, the technical innovations and unconventional appearance of the cars were too extreme for the general public and they proved a costly mistake for their manufacturer. It was in part a case of timing – Ford’s sleek top-end Lincoln Zephyr, which appeared only three or four years later, proved to be vastly more successful in the marketplace.

Back to the feature car. The Cord 812 was a product of the Auburn Automobile Company of Auburn, Indiana, founded by Frank and Morris Eckhart in 1900. Their first car, a runabout powered by a single cylinder engine, did not sell in any quantity because it was expensive to produce and therefore purchase. Despite efforts to improve both product and range of vehicles, the company faltered and in 1919 was purchased by a consortium of Chicago businessmen that included one of the chewing-gum Wrigleys. It was to no avail, and by 1924 the company was saved from failure yet again, this time by the advent of Errett Lobban Cord. He is said to have been a used car salesman from Los Angeles but was also reputed to be an energetic and very capable businessman and salesman. Indeed, Cord started his career at age 24 as a salesman with the Moon Automobile Company in Chicago and rose to become that company’s general manager and a director in somewhat less than five years. Cord envisaged that the Auburn Automobile Company could form the basis of an industrial giant to equal Ford and General Motors. 1926 was a milestone - by mid year the Auburn Automobile Company was turning a profit and had been purchased by Cord, and by year’s end he had acquired the legendary Duesenberg Company. He was only 32 years of age.

Auburn now produced a range of mass-market eight cylinder cars at one end and the extraordinary and very expensive Duesenberg at the other. Cord saw the need for a car priced between these two poles and wanted it named after him. In 1929 the range of Cord L-29 cars, based on a Duesenberg platform, was introduced to the public. They were innovative vehicles with front wheel drive (reputedly the first to be produced in America) and elegant bodywork. However, Cord had pushed his teams too hard to get the cars ready for production and so there was insufficient time allowed for development and refinement. It showed up in lack of power, drive train problems and less than perfect handling. The cars were also expensive when compared to the prestigious products of well established and respected rival companies, while their innovations were not appreciated by a conservative market place. To cap it off, the cars were released just before the Depression hit. Needless to say, by the beginning of 1932 production of the L-29 ceased. Only 4,429 were built. Nevertheless, some contemporary observers were impressed. Bel Geddes was one. He was critical of late 1920s and early 1930s automotive design, but recognised the pioneering efforts of Cord’s designers: “For years there was talk about the necessity of lowering the motor car’s center [sic] of gravity, but manufacturers waited for the other fellow to do it first. Mr Cord did it. Immediately, the others followed.”

In the middle of 1933 the president of the Duesenberg division met with 29 year old automotive designer Gordon Buehrig to discuss a new “low-priced” Duesenberg car. As a result Buehrig was joined by two others, Phil Derham and August Duesenberg, and the team set to work. A prototype car was developed very quickly and seemed ready to proceed to production. But the Depression was hardly over and Auburn sales were disastrous during 1934, so Derham and Duesenberg were sent to Auburn in a bid...
to save its line of cars. It was not the end of the junior edition Duesenberg, but events moved in a different direction. In the middle of 1934 the Cord Corporation approved construction of a prototype car that would bear the Cord name and would be built by Auburn rather than Duesenberg. Gordon Buehrig was given responsibility for its styling. He was well aware of the deficiencies of the new car’s predecessor, the L-29, so sought to avoid its problems. In the end the new car was no less innovative and even more beautiful, but history was determined to repeat itself. The new car was introduced to the American public at shows across the country during the final months of 1936. It bristled with innovation and featured an advanced structure and engine, concealed headlights, independent front suspension, a semi-automatic transmission and well designed controls and instruments for the driver. The traditional radiator and grille disappeared, replaced by louvres that extended along both sides of the car. Running boards were also dispensed with. Public response was immensely favourable and numerous orders were taken.

Alas, it took several months before the first cars were delivered, which no doubt sent prospective owners out to look for alternatives. As with the L-29, insufficient time had been allowed for development and refinement, while the cars were still too expensive for their target market. In the end only 2,320 Cord 810 and 812 models were built.

Gordon Buehrig could see the end approaching and resigned from the Auburn Automobile Company at the end of August 1936. It was not the end of an illustrious career, however. After heading the design department of the Budd Company in Detroit he worked with Raymond Loewy at Studebaker at the end of World War II. He subsequently worked as an independent designer for a couple of years before joining Ford in 1949. Buehrig stayed with the corporation until 1965. Retirement was brief; he then spent five years as an instructor at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California.

As for the Auburn Automobile Company, it finally ceased trading on 7 August 1937. One assumes it would have made little difference to the very rich Erret Cord. He owned airlines and aircraft manufacturing concerns, shipping lines and ship building companies, foundries and communications companies, and went on to amass wealth through real estate, mining and oil. Perhaps ironically, however, he is remembered for the beautiful and innovative motor cars that resulted from his ten year flirtation with the automobile industry. The Cord 810/812 is recognised as one of the most significant products of the American automobile industry.

So, is the Cord 812 (or indeed any automobile) an “Art Deco car”? The answer must surely be no. When interviewed in 1986 about the Cord, Gordon Buehrig emphasized engineering first and foremost, along with budgetary constraints – “… You start with an engineering problem. You’ve got a package to work to. …you establish with the engineers before you do anything else. I think the best way to state it – at least the way I like to work – is that designing an automobile is a sculpturing job but it’s disciplined.” Nothing about Art Deco there. Indeed, when one generally looks at the cars produced during the 1920s and 1930s, all that might be considered “Art Deco” are the embellishments such as radiator mascots, dashboard details, applied trims and badges – all aesthetically appealing but in one sense irrelevant to the complex engineering and manufacturing solutions embodied in the overall product. Art Deco was only one of several aesthetic idioms that
Chrysler Corporation’s Airflow cars, in this case a pair of 1934 DeSotos in Los Angeles (Reproduced in Collectible Automobile, January 1986, p.19).

How to turn a late nineteenth century icon into an early twentieth century advertising billboard: the Eiffel Tower during the 1925 Paris Exposition (Reproduced in Benton et al, p.156).
were available to architects and designers during the 1930s and not necessarily the most prevalent, although it has come to dominate perceptions of the period. It would be perhaps more meaningful but just as misleading to label them “Modernist” or “Functionalist” cars because of factors associated with mechanics, ergonomics, economics and the daily requirements of operation embodied in the final products. Appearance may have initially seduced but reliability, comfort, handling and affordable running costs quickly became the reality of daily driving.

All is not lost, however. If the Auburn Automobile Company did not produce Art Deco cars it certainly displayed them to advantage in Art Deco surroundings. The architect of the company’s 1930 factory showroom and administrative building, A M Strauss, designed an exemplar of the style that now houses the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum. The building is situated in Auburn, Indiana, and is listed in America’s National Registry of Historic Places.

Footnotes:
1 Le Corbusier (translated by Frederick Etchells), Towards A New Architecture, p. 130. Le Corbusier used the traditional bed from Brittany as an emblem of conservative, if not reactionary, taste.
2 Le Corbusier, p. 222.
4 Klaus-Jürgen Sambach, Into the Thirties, no pagination.
5 As time has passed critics and commentators have concentrated on the Exposition’s decorative rather than industrial aspects.
7 Advertisement for Ford cars reproduced in Underhill, p. 152.
9 Norman Bel Geddes, Horizons, p. 45.
10 Bel Geddes, p. 50.
11 James Meller (editor), The Buckminster Fuller Reader, pp. 30-32.
13 Bel Geddes, p. 47.
14 Collectible Automobile, p. 43.
A “Spanish Mission” car? This early Douglas Annand illustration shows the influence of popular Californian architecture on local design. Many interwar service stations were designed in the Spanish Mission style, which seems to have been deemed appropriate for buildings associated with automobiles, but nobody ever suggests that cars also conformed to the style.

**Sources:**
The Society is concerned with preservation of the natural as well as the built environment, as many of our outstanding twentieth century designers were (think of landscape architect and architect Walter Burley Griffin’s work at Castlecrag, for example), and so it was with good heart and great expectation that I set forth on a still fine but cloudy morning to a walk around Glebe and Annandale with the Sydney & Northern NSW Branch of the Australian Garden History Society.

Parking the car near what I was to learn was Federal Park, a park that was still there (or there at all) due to community lobbying over a century ago, I found Rozelle Bay Community Nursery, where the community is still agitating in its effective, consultative way more than 107 years after it all began.

Today there is evidence of nearly three decades of recent restoration and conservation, including a recreated swamp land area indicating what the area used to be like and how bush regeneration, salt marsh preservation and related plantings are vital for the stability of the local ecosystem and to prevent excessive erosion and degradation.

The Rozelle Bay Community Nursery works with Leichardt council to preserve earth tracks, open space etc. and this is most pleasantly in evidence as we start the walk and travel through Federal Park.

Crossing over Johnston’s Creek via a new version narrower version of the old Allen Truss timber bridge that used to be part of Federal Road, linking Glebe and Annandale, we enter what is now known as Jubilee Park. The cricket pavilion has been recently conserved and upgraded and was in use as we strolled through, and the avenue of Canary Island date palms (Phoenix canariensis) likely to date from around the establishment of the park (Jubilee Park was originally part of Federal Park) is beautifully preserved.

Formerly waterfront industrial land fronting a large part of Rozelle Bay and situated adjacent to Federal Park, 16 years of community action led to the opening of Bicentennial Park, meaning that the parkland now extends from Chapman Road right down to the water and all around the bay. In fact with a bit of effort one can now park the car behind Chapman Road and traverse a loop right around the bay, taking in the new Anzac Bridge, with what I’m told is a great seafood restaurant about half way along the route! As we walk down towards the water we find that again the council is attempting to recreate some of the original environment, with a mangrove recreation area showing very slow progress against the elements.

Continuing along the walkway now skirting the park and continuing to Glebe Point, we find Pope Paul VI Reserve at the end of Glebe Point Road, dominated by two spectacular Moreton Bay fig trees (Ficus macrophylla). Also interesting is the apartment block (Pavilions on the Bay) behind the reserve where the famous (or infamous) Blackwattle Artists’ Studios used to be. An attractive and well designed (Tonkin Zulaikha Greer)
complex but unfortunately lacking in the planned screening vegetation due to the repeated killing of plantings, apparently by some of the residents.

Rounding Glebe Point and continuing on to Blackwattle Bay one can see what a magnificent success local community lobbying was in the establishment of Blackwattle Bay Park was. This achieved the preservation of several significant houses at the end of Leichhardt Street, including The Retreat, Florence Villa, Venetia and Bellevue. These marine villas survived the twentieth century despite at one stage being in the midst of Reid’s timber yard and Stride’s ship breaking yard! The Strides yard crane has even been preserved near the rear of Florence Villa!

Our walk ended just prior to the seafood restaurant (an imminent client engagement prevented me sampling it), in a clearing that superbly presented the 1933 Walter Burley Griffin incinerator, with steel pergolas either side providing one with an idea of what the original space, with twin yard sheds, would have looked like. For many years this was a depot for Council works and municipal incinerator. It has been turned into a community space with a reconstructed pergola interpreting one of the former yard buildings. The incinerator building itself lacks a use as yet.

As I made my way back to my car just in time to escape the rain I was very happy to have taken part in such a fascinating and uplifting walk, a real demonstration of what thoughtful conservation and persistent community action can do, and of course all expertly explained in the most entertaining fashion by AGHS members Janice Cave and Stuart Read.

The Australian Garden History Society runs a regular program of walks and talks and produces a stunning quarterly journal – more information is at www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/branches/sydney

John Dymond
10th Art Deco World Congress in Montreal Canada

With the 10th Congress on Art Deco in Montreal, Canada, behind us, I would like to share some of my impressions. It sounds like an old cliché but it was in this chilly land that we received the warmest of welcomes.

Programs of the pre-congress, post-congress and the congress itself were most informative and well put together. The schedules were busy, full of exciting events, with some of them exclusive to the congress delegates to places normally inaccessible to mere mortals.

In fact, the whole thing had a somewhat surreal quality about it, with us, congress attendees, being fed, driven around and feted like royalty and living a life of glamour, if even just for those few short weeks. It also gave us an opportunity to catch up with old friends from previous Art Deco congresses.

The pre-congress program which took place in Toronto showcased the Art Deco heritage of British part of Canada. It included Toronto city walks and a bus tour to the magnificent Parkwood Estate where participants were treated to a vintage fashion parade, tour of this historic mansion and the real English ‘high tea’ in its formal Art Deco garden.

A visit to the Royal Ontario Museum was another highlight of the pre-congress program. On display was an extensive collection of Art Deco furniture, light fittings and decorative ornaments donated to the museum by a former diplomat stationed in France in the past.

The Montreal program included congress presentations, guided city walks, bus tours of the neighbouring townships and musical soirees. Both, the University of Montreal Library and the Architectural Design Centre prepared Art Deco – themed displays. A French-Canadian immersion package was completed by having a local tour guide with charmingly accented English.

A side trip to Ottawa - the capital of Canada – was an unforgettable experience, with specially arranged curatorial tours of the Supreme Court, National Art Gallery and the Embassy of France among other places of interest. Alongside yet more of Art Deco gems, the post congress program in the Quebec City has given us an insight into the chequered history of French Canada.

The most photogenic of all the Fairmont hotels, Chateau de Frontenac, looked even more imposing when viewed from our ferry ride across the St Lawrence River. By now, the majority of Art Deco enthusiasts know that the next, 11th ICADS will take place in Rio-de-Janeiro in about two years from now.

The closing presentation of the Montreal program offered us a tantalising glimpse of Brazilian Art Deco architecture. A newly accepted member of the ICADS, Cuba, is expected to host the 2013 Congress for Art Deco. This will hopefully help to inspire Cuban government to maintain its crumbling architectural treasures. It was proposed that another new member of the ICADS, Historic Shanghai, will host the 2015 Congress. We look forward to taking part in these exciting events.

Larisa Sarkadi
Clockwise from left:

Arched passage in an abbey, trip to Eastern Townships, Quebec

Skyscraper - walking tour of Montreal

Fountain in the Art Deco style photographed on the bus tour of Montreal, with some congress delegates in the background.

Looking the part - congress delegates from Melbourne in front of an apartment block, Montreal.
Welcome to new committee members

JOY BURRELL

Jack and I have known Roy since he graduated from Uni. – too many years ago to think about here. Then, of course, along came David and for some strange reason we both liked him!

Roy suggested we join the society about 10 years ago and have been participants ever since. Jack died 2 years ago, however, I am still a keen follower of the “pied-piper” Roy.

Last year, the day I arrived home from O.S. jet-lagged and all that, those two “friends” phoned to say welcome home, then in the next breath, suggested I should become a member of the committee! Well – being off the planet with fatigue I foolishly said yes. I still maintain – that was “sneaky”!!

Seriously, I am going to give it a go for what it is worth and hope I can throw a little bit of energy into this very important Heritage Society.

LYNETTE JONES

Nothing could be further apart than the role of the Twentieth Century Heritage Society and growing up on the family farm, situated on the mid-north coast at Thumb Creek.

The farm has been in the family since the war and is now owned by my brother.

The biggest thing in our lives was when the song *The Pub with No Beer* was released as it was written about Taylors Arm Pub. The farm is 50 km from Macksville, the top end of the Nambucca River. The best thing is that the river is crystal clear.

In 1962 we moved to Sydney and what a change in my life. In 1970 I met and married Richard. With two children, work – and house repairs – the next 30 years passed quickly.

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Then navigate to the the membership section, where you’ll find a link to this ‘Buy Now’ menu:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Membership to the Twentieth Century Heritage Society of NSW.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual $45</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Once you’re there, it’s fairly straightforward. Simply select ‘Individual’, ‘Household, etc., and follow the instructions.

It’s all just so 21st Century...!

LARISA SARKADI

I am a collector of antiques - cum period architecture fan.

My special interest lies with the 20th century architecture and applied arts. By training I am an engineering geologist - someone who comes to projects before a civil engineer. I graduated from the Leningrad Mining Institute in 1974 (that long ago). I worked in the geological field and as a librarian for a number of years in the South of Ukraine and from 1978 in Sydney.

During our travels with my husband Andrew I collected material and photographed cities with extensive early 20th century architecture, such as Shanghai, Brussels, Budapest, New York, Napier as well as rural towns in NSW.

I would like to widen the scope of the Society’s activities and have an input in its contribution for the benefit of the 20th century heritage.
was, as always, playing it cool and mixing easily with the assembled company. Whilst one may have had to queue for the food due to numbers present, all present agreed it was worth waiting for, and the room all but fell silent as Society members and friends eagerly consumed the magnificent repast.

Only that redoubtable publicity hound, webmaster and Committee member Matt Stone stopped to raise his glass in a salute to proceedings as your Editor swung his camera in his direction.

Again Julia Tomkinson did an outstanding job of organising this Christmas function and I’m sure I speak for all who attended when I express my appreciation for all the effort that she goes to each year.

I hope that all our readers have enjoyed the best 2009 has had to offer so far and wish you every success and enjoyment in the months to come. Our President Roy Lumby has been very energetic in organising a year full of activity this year and I look forward to seeing you at as many of these functions as possible.

John Dymond

not all of its original features, including tiles, ceilings and leadlight windows. The ’70s disco-like ball light is a curious distraction. Having conquered the stairs and fronted the bar, your correspondent was almost felled by one of the most mesmerizing backlit bar shelf panels I’d seen in about twenty years……...

Seeking to gain my composure, I drifted half way down the bar, where if one sits in precisely the correct position one may enjoy an almost stiff breeze coming in through the door to the first floor balcony that fronts the street. It was a particularly balmy day and the exceedingly good turn out for the Society Christmas Party was producing a warm atmosphere in more ways than one. Our esteemed President
As mentioned briefly in the last edition of *The News*, Society members were last year provided with the opportunity to take part in a guided tour of the Sydney Tramway Museum in Loftus. The museum’s location more or less opposite the Royal National Park provides for some very special fun, as I explain later below.

The day out was expertly organised by our Secretary Craig Pearce, and so we were taken care of all afternoon and all facets of the conservation work of the Museum, the future programs and aims of the organization were carefully explained to us.

We were also able to partake of a number of tram rides, which were great fun.

One trip in particular took us out across the Princes Highway and down along the old Parklink route into what used to be the key drop off point in the Royal National Park in the days when cars were rare and trams and trains were the preferred modes of transport.

We still had right of way, and so the startled motorists watched as our tram majestically made its way across six lanes of modern vehicular traffic!!

The Museum is going ahead in leaps and bounds, and the display is really quite impressive.

At its height, the Sydney tramway system was the greatest in the Southern Hemisphere and rivaled only by Britain.

The Historic Houses Trust currently has an exhibition at the Museum of Sydney entitled “Shooting Through – Sydney by Tram”, which details the rise and fall of the Sydney tram from the first horse drawn tram in Pitt Street in 1861 to the last electric tram (to La Perouse) in 1961. More information is on their web site at www.hht.net.au

I know I enjoyed myself thoroughly as I think did all who made their way down to Loftus, and thanks again to Craig for a great day.
I was down in Sydney the other day visiting a specialist and a friend was ferrying me around as I can’t drive at the best of times, let alone after getting drops in my eyes and goodness knows what else. The friend knew a nice café in Drummoyne and we enjoyed a lovely afternoon tea, every bit as good as those I enjoy at home in Orange.

I must say that I was saddened to hear that the exchange had been closed and converted into apartments but then remembered the fine brickwork and the scale of each storey and that something quite charming may have been developed.

Well, I nearly died when my friend took me to see it. The brickwork has been removed and replaced with featureless cement render, the old entrance way has been crudely truncated and the windows removed and replaced with bland, soulless glass panels. It looks like a poorly designed crypt, such an appalling contrast to the vibrant, functional industrial building it once was. My friend pointed out that your office was just across the road and that you had been there for more than ten years. You must be very disappointed to see what has happened.

It just goes to show that organisations like yours must be ever vigilant and not take anything for granted. I mean, who would have thought that the absentee landlord of the Royal Hotel here in Orange, in a fit of pique, would rip perfectly satisfactory Vitrolite from the walls of his own hotel, as I related in my last letter to you.

So, I got my friend to take a photo and I hope you have space in your very fine newsletter to include it with my letter as I feel that this sort of gross behaviour needs to be curbed.

As always I wish you and your organisation well and would dearly love to meet those fine gentlemen Messrs Rozenker-Apted and Lumby when next they visit Orange.

Lillian Smith

Our 100th committee meeting!

Society Committee meetings are usually sober affairs, in every sense of the word, especially since the Powerhouse Museum took fright in the face of developments in

occupational health and safety legislation etc. and enforcing its “no alcohol” policy.

However, your illustrious Chairman thought that the occasion last year of the 100th Committee meeting of the Society, marking amongst other things an incredible body of work by a number of very selfless individuals, should be marked in some sort of memorable way, so he thought he would don his tuxedo to chair the meeting. Whilst Committee meetings under the Constitution are strictly in camera, a few photographs were taken in the committee room to mark the occasion. These photographs were quickly secreted away and perhaps will surface many years later in the bowels of the NSW State Library along with other rare and long archived material, but for now, dear reader, you can get an idea of what went on from an “after party” photograph of the Chairman back in his office.

Quite seriously, the Committee puts in a tremendous amount of work for the organisation, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Committee members for their determination and support of the Society’s aims and ambitions.

John Dymond
On 12th of February 2009, the Canberra charter of the Walter Burley Griffin Society Incorporated, played host to the inaugural Marion Mahony Griffin lecture. This date was chosen to be as close as possible to Marion’s birthday, falling on 14th of February. With the Canberra Centenary in 2013 almost in view, it was quite a fitting topic to commemorate an often undervalued contributor to our Federal Capital’s design. The guest speaker was Dr Anna Rubbo, an Associate Professor of Architecture at the University of Sydney. The talk was preceded by welcoming words from Professor James Weirick, the current president of the WBG Society Inc, who was followed by a government representative, delivering a speech on behalf of the Minister for Home Affairs, The Honourable Bob Debus MP.

With its title “Marion Mahony Griffin – 21st Century avant gardiste or 19th Century dreamer?” the talk sounded intriguing enough for us to make a dash to Canberra. The event delivered but, alas, only partially so. The speaker did warn the audience that the talk would consist of two parts with a common thread of environmentally responsible development.

Associate Professor Rubbo can be commended for an inspiring choice of the first topic, covering that stage in Marion Mahony Griffin’s life after the untimely death of her husband, W B Griffin. It intended to show Marion standing on her own as an architect, without possible influence of her husband and the professional partner. We learnt of her return to the place of her birth Chicago and of the day-to-day living of her extended family, with Marion taking an active role in bringing up the young children of her widowed sister-in-law. Her professional activity during that period included projects which were submitted for at least two competitions and several projects for socially responsible residential housing development. An interesting feature of the latter designs is the axial orientation at 45° angle within an allocated site, with a mosaic of attached living spaces and adjacent semi-enclosed courtyards. It appears that those years from 1939 to 1951 were the most productive of that late part of Marion Mahony Griffin’s career. She also devoted her time to an enormous task of cataloguing Walter Burley Griffin’s and her own designs. During this decade Marion embarked on her “magnum opus” - the Magic of America. The real trail-blazing achievement of Marion Mahony Griffin as a woman in that exclusively male club of professional architecture was summed up by one of the images which illustrated the talk. It showed a group of about thirty of her fellow students taken at the architectural class reunion some time in 1940s and she is the only one of two female students among them.

The second part of the talk covered the activities of the so-called Global Studio project. This academic program involves taking groups of architecture students to residential slums in various countries of the world. Streams of refugees displaced by military conflicts and economic as well as natural disasters in many of the Third World countries seem to provide a constant boost to the slum population. It appears that only miniscule funds could be spared by hosting local authorities during Global Studio visits towards actual improvement of living conditions of slum dwellers. In one case study, painting roofs of make-shift corrugated iron huts with heat-diffusing paint counted as a major achievement.

These doubtless worthwhile intentions were rather too little to alleviate the endemic problems of unemployment, overcrowding, lack of clean water and sanitation, as well as shortage of recreational facilities. Without any indication of what such an aesthete as Marion Mahony Griffin would have thought of it all, one could gauge a slight air of embarrassment to those wall-papering solutions from the evening’s audience.

As a subject of this inaugural lecture indicates, we are sure that there will be many more facets of Marion Mahony Griffin’s talent, her fascinating life and personality left to reveal for many years to come.

Larisa Sarkadi

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DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY?
SOMETHING TO PROMOTE?

Contributions to this newsletter are welcome, either in the form of an article or a letter to the editor. 
Submissions may be emailed to the Editor, John Dymond, at john@dfv.net.au.

NB Text in MS Word format only please, and images in high resolution jpeg format.

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Doing business in Malaysia

In the last issue of The News I discussed the incentives provided to those wishing to retire to New Zealand, including the absence of capital gains tax and the provision of a “golden hello” by the New Zealand Government to new immigrants insofar that, with effect from 1 April 2006, any person migrating to New Zealand will have a 4 year income tax exemption in respect of all foreign source non employment income, even if that income is subsequently remitted to New Zealand.

Of course one has to be able to finance one’s retirement, and that inevitably involves building up one’s own retirement nest egg. Here Malaysia, like New Zealand more or less on Australia’s doorstep, has been seeking to do what it can to make doing business in its region very attractive.

Back in 1990, the Federal Territory of Labuan was established as an offshore financial centre. The Labuan Offshore Business Activity Tax Act 1990 provides for special tax incentives for offshore companies operating within the territory. An offshore company has the option of paying income tax at the rate of 3% of audited net profit or a lump sum of RM20,000 (about $A7,500) per year.

The significance of this financial centre to Australia is that it is covered by the Double Tax Treaty between Australia and Malaysia. Typically, the effect of a Double Tax Agreement (“DTA”) is to limit the incidence of taxation on income derived in a Contracting State (a country a party to a DTA) to that Contracting State. In other words, where a business is established in Malaysia, and tax is imposed by Malaysia, the income derived is only subject to Malaysian income tax.

Of course, one will wish to repatriate the income back to Australia. Here is where the DTA becomes important. Australian taxation legislation effectively provides that whilst generally an Australian company is subject to full Australian tax on any dividend it receives from a foreign company in which it holds a greater than 10% interest, if that foreign company has a DTA with Australia, then the Australian company is effectively only subject to whatever tax is imposed on the dividend by the foreign country, in this case, 3% or $7,500, whichever is less.

So, a person wishing to benefit from the Labuan low tax regime must do so through a wholly owned subsidiary of an Australian company. Further, in order to avoid the application of Controlled Foreign Corporation (CFC”) measures the subsidiary must be carrying on an active business. This in practice will mean that the Malaysian subsidiary will need to employ at least one local and rent a local office so that the company has a physical presence and can actually source business in Malaysia.

The devil is, as always, in the detail, and often in the past the trend has been to try to set up offshore companies “on paper” without any regard paid to legitimate business planning issues. Typically, these sort of “quick fixes” have come to grief as soon as being exposed to any sort of scrutiny. The key is to plan for the medium to long term and develop appropriate structures that have commercial and strategic attributes over and above any concessional taxation treatment that may apply. The fact that, unlike South Korea in 2006, Australia has not recognised Labuan as a tax haven and imposed withholding taxes provides some assurance that, if approached on a reasonable, commercial basis, a medium term plan of some advantage may be sought out. Introduction of greater clarity to some of the important elements to this medium term planning as a result of the above legislative developments is significant and those wishing to build long term wealth and who are open to cross border planning should seek out their advisers to revisit this area.

Dymond, Foulds & Vaughan works with fellow professionals to provide structured estate planning, asset protection and wealth preservation services for individuals and their businesses.

To discuss these issues and their relevance to you call John Dymond at Dymond, Foulds & Vaughan.

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