



HAAH and the 'Three Rs'

HAAH has a long standing interest in education. Both Sue, who did a degree in early childhood development, and Emma, who has carried out research for the Institute of Higher Education Research at Macquarie University, have a deep seated interest in the social, economic and political history of education at all levels, as well as its built forms. Children's education has changed so much over the past century, with the demotion of rote learning from the very framework of the 'Three Rs' to a seldom used tool, the steady breaking down of gendered curricula, the development of a true children's literature in the 1960s and 1970s, and the recent rise of electronic and interactive education media.



Way back in 1989 Sue prepared a history of Riley Street Infants School, Surry Hills, when the changing demographics of that inner city area left the school without enough pupils to continue. This month Emma prepared a Statement of Heritage Impact for the nearby Crown Street Public School, Surry Hills, for the NSW Department of Commerce, a thriving school where modern children learn amidst a distinctive Victorian architecture. Both these schools were opened in the latter half of the nineteenth century in drafty, cramped, temporary accommodation to serve the rapidly growing working class population of Surry Hills. Although education was not compulsory in NSW before 1880, and came at a cost, the schools in the area were bursting with children - and these two schools and the public schools at Cleveland Street, Macquarie Street South, Bourke Street and Albion Street were opened in quick succession in the last decades of the century, alongside a number of private schools for children from wealthier families, and several Catholic schools.

Some of HAAH's other education-related projects include: Trinity Grammar Oral History Program, current (see story below); University of Sydney Grounds Conservation Plan, 2000; a history of St Joseph's School and St Joseph's Domestic Science School at Mount Street, North Sydney, and a Heritage Assessment of the Wallerawang Schoolhouse, 1992. See our website for more.



Trinity Grammar Oral History Program

Since mid-year, Sue has been conducting videoed interviews of Trinity Grammar old boys with memories of the school from the 1930s and 1940s, with Kel Daniels of Trinity wielding the camera. The interview program for this year has been completed, and 2007 may see an expansion of the program to include Board Members. The interviews will be preserved in the School Archives to be used in future history projects, including the School's centenary in 2013. It's great to be working with an institution so conscious of its history, and so forward looking both in preserving it, and understanding just how long it takes to prepare the kind of history warranted by centenary celebrations.

Spitfires at the flicks?



Sue is currently researching the land use history of the Bass Hill Drive-In site as a background to a history of the drive-in for Greater Union. The Bass Hill Drive-In Australia's oldest continually operating drive-in cinema, opened in 1957, and one of only two left in Sydney.

An urban myth suggests that one or more Spitfire aircraft are buried under the drive-in, left behind by the American forces after WWII - but we're sceptical (if you have any leads please let us know...).

Although Bankstown City Council has identified the drive-in site as a suitable location for urban development, Greater Union does not appear to be considering closing the drive-in for the time being. (Picture courtesy http://www.drive-insdownunder.com.au/australian/nsw_basshill.htm)

Why not catch a double feature? See www.greaterunion.com.au/cinemas for what's on.

Terrific Training for Oral Historians - the OHA

The Oral History Association's regular training days are a great opportunity for people who want to acquire basic oral history skills and also to gain some insights from experienced practitioners. Frank Heimans was the speaker at the November training day. Frank talked about the Lawrence Hargreaves Drive Project that he undertook for the RTA and an interview series on Lord Howe Island. With digitized interviews now the way to go Frank records into a lap top computer and edits with ProTools. At HAAH we have a Marantz Professional PMD 671 which records onto a flashcard and then is transferred to a computer for long term storage, editing or duplication.

Noël Noël

Seasons Greetings to all and thanks for all your support. After a great year in which we've undertaken some exciting projects, made some terrific links, and made our most serious efforts yet at planning for the future, we look forward to a terrific Christmas and New Year break and a busy and fulfilling 2007.

The HAAH office will be closed between 22nd December and 8th January.



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