

# DICTIONARY *of* SYDNEY



[www.dictionaryofsydney.org](http://www.dictionaryofsydney.org)

## **'Talkabout Sydney' at the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts (SMSA)**

In 2008, the Dictionary of Sydney entered into a Partnership arrangement with the SMSA. The School of Arts funded a researcher/writer to work for several days a week on Dictionary entries, while the Dictionary provided access to historians and other specialists, to present SMSA's series of "interesting and eclectic lunchtime talks".

So far this year there have been talks on The Writing on the Ground: Reading pavements from Eternity to here; Esther Abrahams and the Johnstons of Annandale; Hawkesbury River & Berowra Valley; Sydney's Unusual Crimes; Lucy Osburn: Australia's Florence Nightingale; and Literature In & About Sydney.

The talks are held at the SMSA rooms, at 280 Pitt Street, on Tuesdays from 12.30-1.30pm

## **Catherine Freyne joins the team**

Courtesy of our partnership with the SMSA, the Dictionary's team has grown with the addition of Catherine Freyne. Catherine will be writing on a range of topics reflecting the diverse activities of the Mechanics and similar institutions and technical education generally.

She divides her professional time between the Dictionary of Sydney and ABC Radio National where she produces social history documentaries for Hindsight. Catherine studied Australian history and Spanish language at the University of New South Wales, and has been engaging exuberantly with both disciplines ever since. She spends her spare time ocean swimming, making travel plans, and touring Sydney in a time machine or at least dreaming about doing so!



## **Volunteer profile - Emma Baker**

One of the early presenters at the SMSA was Emma Baker. Emma writes: I have been working at the Dictionary of Sydney on and off as a volunteer since 2006. During that time, I've been asked to do some rather unusual things! Initially, my work involved compiling a list of some of Sydney's more noteworthy crimes. From reading about Australia's first bank robbery, to the more grisly details of various murders that have occurred over the years, this work has, to say the least, been an eye-opener. More recently, I was asked to give a talk at the SMSA as part of the 'Talkabout' series. The topic was the 'Shark Arm' murders, and I had a chance to share the details of this extraordinary event with a warm and enthusiastic group of people, which I enjoyed thoroughly.



## Congratulations to a board member ...

Congratulations are due to board member Elizabeth Ellis for her award of an OAM - recognition of a lifetime's contribution to libraries and the community's cultural life.



## ... and a team member

Congratulations, also, to Multimedia Coordinator Liam Wyatt who was awarded a University medal by UNSW for his thesis 'The Academic Lineage of Wikipedia: Connections and Disconnections in the Theory and Practice of History'.



## We're looking for digital video of Sydney past and present

The Dictionary is seeking interesting and hitherto unknown video to help in our efforts to curate and illustrate our many articles.

We would like to know if you have any footage relevant to Sydney's history or that simply gives an interesting window into the city in times past. If you do, please let us know and tell us what topics you think it would be a good illustration of. Please note that it must already be in digital format - on a CD, DVD or file in your computer. If you have something, email [info@dictionaryofsydney.org](mailto:info@dictionaryofsydney.org) but please don't attach huge media files - just tell us what you've got first and one of our multimedia team will discuss it with you.

## Website development underway

Work on the first website is underway with the Dictionary engaging web developers StudioEmotion to assist with the interface and graphic design. There are plenty of challenges but we still expect to complete the development around mid-year.

Some final workshops were held to thrash out any remaining design issues but we feel we are getting past the 'workshop' phase now and well into the 'implementation' phase!



## Harvesting the Dictionary

Now that the main body of text for the first Dictionary of Sydney is ready, a band of intrepid volunteers have read through it and extracted all the names of people, organisations, places, buildings, events, natural features, groups and artefacts that have been mentioned. We now have several thousand names which will each become a separate item in the Dictionary of Sydney, linked wherever they are mentioned.

Emma Grahame and Catie Gilchrist are tackling the task of checking and cross-referencing this list. Many named items have several names and appear in different articles under different names. Checking which is which and deciding which name should be used as the primary one sometimes becomes quite a sleuthing job. So, if you've ever wondered whether Haslam's Creek and Haslems Creek are the same, or where Jack's Island, or Old Man's Valley were (they were earlier names for parts of Hornsby), Catie and Emma should be the people to ask!

### Spreading the word ... Volunteer Trudy Holdsworth reports:

On 10 February 2009 I gave a talk to the Tuggerah Probus Club about the Dictionary of Sydney project. I was helped with the talk by Shirley Fitzgerald and with that assistance was able to put together a well rounded talk about the project, its goals, the technology and what the team and volunteers are doing. I was a bit concerned that, as they were a group of people in the 70s and 80s, it might be a bit overwhelming for them. I am pleased to say they were quite enthused to hear what is occurring and had lots of questions for me.

I was very pleased with the response and I have been asked to give 2 more talks in the Central Coast area on the same topic.

I was the inaugural president, and am currently secretary, of the City of Sydney Historical Association - [www.sydneyhistorical.org.au](http://www.sydneyhistorical.org.au). I am also on the committee of the Friends of the First Government House site and am a volunteer at SMSA and the Dictionary of Sydney - all connected with history which I find fascinating!



### Women's Map of Sydney

Emma Grahame, our editorial coordinator, has been working with Lisa Murray, historian with the City of Sydney, and a committee of women from the Jessie Street National Women's Library, to produce a Women's Map of Sydney. The map, which will be part of the City's walking tour brochure series, will mark key sites of women's history in central Sydney. While there are too many sites for one walkable route, the map will enable Sydneysiders and tourists to note the role and struggle of women across the City area. Look out for the City of Sydney Women's Map later in 2009.

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