



BOZ IS BACK IN OZ

DHLA members attend unveiling of statue of Charles Dickens in Sydney



THE MAIN physical monument to DH Lawrence in Sydney is a roundel set in the pathway that skirts the shore of Circular Quay, in what is called "Writers Walk" (it commemorates the visit to Sydney of other famous writers, including Mark Twain, Robert Louis Stevenson and Joseph Conrad). Charles Dickens is not commemorated there, for he never came to Sydney. But now there is a statue of him in Sydney's Centennial Park, and our DH Lawrence Society of Australia was invited to attend its unveiling a few weeks ago.

It was a most impressive literary occasion. All the other Sydney literary societies had been invited to send representatives to be present, and our party comprised our president, John Lacey, secretary Sandra Jobson-Darroch, and vice-president Robert Darroch. (the invitation was a fruit of the recent formation of the Sydney Literary Societies group.)

The statue itself had been



*DHLA President John Lacey and
Secretary Sandra Darroch at the
base of the newly-unveiled Dickens statue*

originally commissioned by Sir Henry Parkes in the 1880s and erected on Dickens Drive in the park. (Parkes was a great fan of Dickens, and befriended his two sons who emigrated to Australia.) Later the statue was vandalised, and disappeared for many decades – until it was rediscovered in the Blue Mountains and restored by the NSW State Government (it had lost its head).

The NSW Governor, Marie Bashir (also a great Dickens fan), unveiled the life-size statue – almost in its pristine condition – and gave a lovely speech describing her childhood readings of Dickens, and the fact that she still reads him today (she also mentioned the Dickens characters who had "Australian connections", including Micawber and Magwitch).

Alas, Lawrence was not a great fan of Dickens (though he had some regard for *David Copperfield*). "There is something fundamental about him that I dislike," he wrote in 1913. "He is mid-Victorian, he is so governessy towards life, as if it were a naughty child...Curse him."



The shrouded statue awaits unveiling



The Governor unveils the statue



Members of Lit Soc Syd at the statue

Photos: John Lacey

What are these monks
doing?



See [page 4](#)



What are
these
monks
doing?
See Page
4



ROSIE RINGS A BELL

Talk delivered by Robert Darroch to the Marickville Historical Society

*Ring a ring a rosie
A pocketful of posies
a-tishoo!, a-tishoo!
We all fall down.*

Today I am here to talk about Sir Charles Rosenthal, known for most of his life as "Rosie".

The nursery-room poem I began with has sinister overtones. "Rosie" is thought by some to refer to a red rash that victims of the plague first evinced. Posies were the Middle-Age's only protection against infection. The plague brought on sneezing. And, inevitably, they fell down, dead.

Rosenthal - Rosie - also has some sinister undertones to his life story. But I will return to that aspect of my topic in a moment.

Meanwhile, you would be perfectly justified in asking why I am talking to you today. What brought me here? I have scant connections with Marrickville. When I was a young reporter I was sent out to cover a meeting of Marrickville Council. I turned up at Marrickville Town Hall, only to find the council met in Petersham Town Hall.

My mother used to come to dances at Marrickville Town Hall (and I think the Marrickville Strutters, who used to put on these occasions, only recently gave up their strutting).

I once played school Old Boys tennis at the excellent lawn tennis courts at Marrickville Tennis Club.

Our DH Lawrence Society holds its AGM at Minhs, further up Marrickville

father and Swedish mother, he was articled to a Melbourne architect, and got his first job in Perth as a draughtsman. He later worked in Coolgardie where he also pursued his interest in music, and particularly lieder. He had a fine bass voice, which went well with his manly, robust figure.

Though he had an entrepreneurial streak, he did not, apparently, have much of a head for figures, and his first bankruptcy led him to quit WA in 1898. Remarkably, he returned overland to Melbourne by bicycle, alone, across the Nullarbor plain (without tyres!). His physical abilities and bravery - foolhardiness even - became a byword in his later life.

Very early on he became interested in military matters, and was an artillery officer in the militia well before the First World War. He was also interested in aviation, especially how it might be used for artillery "spotting" in war. Around 1901 he moved to Sydney with his wife and three sons, working in partnership with another architect, before striking out with his own practice. He also pursued his military and musical interests in Sydney. However, it was the war that made his reputation as a military leader and later in politics.

Today, this is averred to in his entry in the ADB (which, I might add, I did not write).

Road in Dulwich Hill (and a very good Vietnamese restaurant it is, too).

I helped found the Glebe Society, and I know when I see - as I do around me today - a suburb, like Glebe, that is coming up in the world.

And I am very familiar with the yum cha restaurant next door to this Herb Greedy Hall, and I hope that some of you will join us there after this talk.

Yet my knowledge of Rosenthal's links with Marrickville is also limited. I know he was connected with the nearby Holy Trinity church in Dulwich Hill, which, although he may not have designed it (his entry in the Australian Dictionary of Biography is apparently wrong in this regard) is where he often officiated as choirmaster and organist.

He had a strong association with church architecture, and for some years he was responsible for that aspect of Anglican church activity in northern NSW. He was also closely associated with architectural work in the Blue Mountains, and built war-memorial arches at Lawson and Blackheath, where he also laid the foundation stone for the Blackheath Golf Club. He designed some fine residential buildings in Sydney, including the outstanding Darnley Hall in Elizabeth Bay.

Originally born in Berrima in 1875, the son of a Danish



Robert Darroch signing a copy of his book, DH Lawrence in Australia

I quote its second-last paragraph: "Rosenthal may have been a part-model for the authoritarian ex-soldiers' leader Benjamin Cooley in DH Lawrence's novel, *Kangaroo* (London 1923). Rosenthal had been the founding secretary in 1921 and later president of the King and Empire Alliance, with which Lawrence had been in contact, probably through WJR Scott."

[continued on page 3](#)



ROSIE RINGS A BELL

con't from page 2

And indeed he was, no ifs or buts about it.

I used above the word "awful". This needs explanation. So let me now read you what Lawrence had to say about the eponymous subject of his eighth major novel, written in Thirroul in June-July 1922 (Kangaroo is Cooley/Rosenthal, and Somers the Lawrence figure). You can judge for yourself:

...Kangaroo's face had gone like an angry wax mask...an angry wax mask of mortification, haughty...with two little near-set holes for eyes, behind glass pince-nez...He had become hideous, with a long yellowish face and black eyes close together, and a cold, mindless, dangerous hulk of his shoulders. For a moment, Somers was afraid of him, as of some great ugly idol that might strike. He felt the intense hatred of the man coming at him in cold waves. He stood up in a kind of horror in front of the great, close-eyed, horrible thing that was now Kangaroo. Yes, a thing, not a whole man. A great Thing, a horror.

Collaroy. Lawrence was in need of cheap accommodation. This fellow-passenger invited him up to Collaroy to view possible holiday houses. There was an afternoon tea-party. At the party was someone who knew of a cheap, holiday house that had just become vacant in Thirroul. Next day this person took Lawrence and Frieda down to Thirroul and installed them there.

But this man also knew some figures in the secret army. These figures may have been looking for someone to contribute to the journal of their "cover" organisation, a patriotic body called the King and Empire Alliance (called in the novel "The Diggers"), of which Major MJR Scott was the treasurer, and Rosenthal the secretary. Lawrence was introduced to Scott, who introduced him to Rosenthal. The rest is literary history.

How did I run across all this? The sheerest accident. My wife Sandra wrote a biography of a famous English literary hostess, Lady Ottoline Morrell. We did the research in Austin Texas in 1972. The head of the library there was Lawrence's bibliographer. He suggested that after we returned to Australia we look into Lawrence's time there, as nothing had been done on that. We returned in 1975 and started the research. We quickly came across a lot of parallels between the novel and what was happening in Sydney



Major-General Sir Charles Rosenthal (note his eyes - "two little near-set holes for eyes")

Not a description of oneself that anyone would like to have preserved forever, like a fly trapped in amber, in a major work of "fiction" in the upper echelons of the canon of western literature.

And, yet, it happened, it happened..

...for when Lawrence arrived in Sydney at the end of May 1922, on his way from Europe to America, he ran across a real, not fictional, secret army, which he then portrayed - in a full-length portrait - in his Australian novel, *Kangaroo* (called by one critic "the most important book ever written about Australia").

Its leader was indeed Rosenthal, and he is the main Australian character in the novel - Benjamin Cooley, nicknamed "Kangaroo", the head of the secret army of "Maggies", which is plotting to take over Australia in a fascist coup.

In fact, the novel *Kangaroo* turns out to be a thinly-fictionalised diary of what happened to Lawrence in the few short weeks he had in Sydney and Thirroul in mid-1922. (How can it be otherwise? Lawrence could not have made up, in a matter of weeks, the accurate picture he draws of what it is now generally

at the time.

At an Australia Day party in January 1976 I was sitting next to someone who had written an article about Lawrence in Thirroul some years previously. I told him that I was beginning to suspect that there could have been a real secret army in Sydney in 1922. "Strange you should say that," he responded. "I interviewed Eric Campbell before he died. He asked me if I knew why his 1930-32 civilian para-military organisation had been called The New Guard. Then he added: 'Because there was an Old Guard.'"

I discovered that the "Old Guard" had been the name given - somewhat derisively - to the organisation that Rosenthal and Scott had founded in 1920, and which Lawrence describes in *Kangaroo* so accurately, and so extensively, that the novel remains the best description we have of secret army activity in Australia between the wars.

Interestingly, *Kangaroo* is not the only novel in which Lawrence portrayed Rosenthal and Scott. (Lawrence was almost incapable of invention, and used real people and places over and over again throughout his literary works.) He portrayed Scott - the creepy Jack Callcott in *Kangaroo* - in the second version of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* as the impotent secret army aficionado Jack Strangeways (Scott, who indeed had some very strange ways, was impotent, due to wartime trauma).

Rosenthal he portrayed again in *The Virgin and the Gypsy* as the powerfully-built Danish artillery officer, Major Charles Eastwood, whose face is "like a

agreed by historians to be an actual secret army, formed in Sydney in July 1920 - not 1921 - as a response to the election of a radical left-wing Labor government a few months previously.)

How did Lawrence run across this momentous secret? By the sheerest accident. He met someone on a boat to Sydney who had a holiday house at

mask". (The surname is a typical Lawrentian literary pun - Rosenthal is a village in the middle of the Black Forest in Germany, east of the Rhine, near where Lawrence stayed in 1912 - it was "an east wood".)

(Neither of these novels were published in Lawrence's lifetime, and when Lawrence re-wrote the second version of *Lady Chatterley* into the third version that was banned for so long, and which he knew would be published, he downgraded Strangeways into a minor character, removing all reference to his fascism and impotence.)

This week, however, happens to be national architecture week. And it is this aspect of the life and work of Sir Charles Rosenthal that we are here today to note, and with it Marrickville's connection to a prominent Australian soldier-architect.

Rosie left his mark here - and that is nothing to sneeze at.

- Robert Darroch



Our Annual DHLA Spring Picnic

WHAT were those monks doing? Well, they were doing much the same as the DH Lawrence Society of Australia was doing on that balmy Spring morning on Saturday 20th November, 2010 - they were relaxing in spring sunshine at Jubilee Park, Glebe.

We watched them walking by as we sat under the shade of a tree by the water's edge of Rozelle Bay. Almost above us was the glorious span of the Anzac Bridge, and across the Bay, as our President, John Lacey, pointed out, were some historic vessels moored, including the 1902 steam tug, *Waratah*, the old Sydney ferry, *Kanangra*, and a 1927 Brisbane River pilot steamer, the *John Oxley* (see photo below).

Robin Archer and Evie Harrison brought delicious picnic food, as did our President John Lacey and Vice-President Rob Darroch. Greg Baran brought his dog, Bella, who enjoyed her day out. But, sadly, it was one of her last excursions, because she died of leukemia on Boxing Day, leaving Greg and his family devastated.

Kerie and Roger Hooke came a little later and added their contribution to the feast. Alex and Peter Lansdown sent their apologies - they were in the middle of selling their house.

The conversation drifted leisurely around topics such as the history of Glebe and we had a laugh about the decision by the Union, University & Schools Club to ban philosophy speakers giving talks to the Club if they refused to wear a tie. (I arranged these talks, which are now being transferred to the Blackheath Philosophy Forum.)

Other matters discussed were the annual Harbour cruise on the steam yacht, *Lady Hopetoun*, planned for later in 2011, and the 12th International DH Lawrence Conference to be held in Sydney late June-early July (see more details [page 5](#)).

Meanwhile, the water swirled peacefully by. A perfect DH Lawrence Society Spring picnic.

- Sandra Jobson

Photos: John Lacey



The Buddhist monks



Leisurely conversation in the shade



Greg Baran with Bella

We sat by the water's edge at Rozelle Bay



Historic vessels (see details in main stor)



*Two Sydney bridges viewed from Jubilee Park: the Anzac Bridge (foreground)
and the Sydney Harbour Bridge in the distance*



12TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL LAWRENCE CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN SYDNEY

THE biggest and most prestigious literary conference ever held in Australia will take place in late June in Sydney this year.

Organised by the DH Lawrence Society of North America, it will attract leading Lawrence scholars from around the world.

The goal of the Conference, say its organisers, is to "bring together scholars interested in all aspects of D. H. Lawrence's writing with those interested in its reception by modernist, post-modernist, and post-colonial writers. When Lawrence arrived in Sydney in 1922, two decades after Federation, Australia was consciously redefining its relation to its colonial past and imagining new nationalist futures, as Lawrence recognised in *Kangaroo*."

Our Secretary, Sandra (Jobson) Darroch, will be presenting a paper. Sandra will speak about her literary discovery demonstrating that Lawrence based much of the character of Alvina Houghton in his novel *The Lost Girl* on the New Zealand writer Katherine Mansfield.

Our President, John Lacey, has been asked to help guide delegates to places Lawrence travelled to while in Sydney in 1922, including a ferry trip to Manly.

For more details, see the Conference website:

<http://dhlsna.com/australiacon.html>

OUR CHINESE MEMBER'S LATEST SUCCESS



Bi Bingbin is one of several overseas members of the DH Lawrence Society of Australia. He is a Chinese literary scholar and has translated into Chinese a number of DH Lawrence novels, including *Kangaroo*. (See some selected covers of his translations above - his *Kangaroo* edition is second from the left.) Bi regrets he will not be able to make it to Sydney for the DHL Conference in June, but he sends his greetings and best wishes for the event. He hopes he can obtain some of the papers given at the conference. We will certainly keep him posted, via *Rananim*, on what happens. – RD

FORTCHOMING EVENTS

We are planning our annual Harbour cruise on the steam yacht *Lady Hopetoun*. This has been delayed because the *Lady H* has been in dry dock, undergoing repairs. We will have a date for a voyage soon. Please check our website for this and we will also email as many people as possible. (Please send us your email address if you think we haven't got it already) To email us, click [HERE](#).

future events

