



DHL WELCOMES RLS TO LITSOCSYI



The Rose Garden Pavilion



ON Saturday May 25, 2013, a new literary society was born in the Rose Garden Pavilion in Sydney's Royal Botanic Gardens.

The newly-formed Robert Louis Stevenson Society of Australia & Oceania will join the Literary Societies of Sydney/ (LitSocSyd) which include the DH Lawrence Society of Australia, The NSW Dickens Society Sydney, The Dylan Thomas Society, Jane Austen Society Sydney, Australian Bronte Association, The Kipling Society of Australia, and The Sydney Passengers (Sherlock Holmes Society) *

The birth of the RLS Society took place on the 21st anniversary celebrations of the DH Lawrence Society of Australia, which was itself formed in the Rose Garden Pavilion in 1992. The DHL Society was also celebrating, with a picnic buffet lunch in the Pavilion, the 91st anniversary of Lawrence's arrival in Australia.

It is no coincidence that the two societies should be linked. Lawrence was a great admirer of Stevenson, and they shared a number of things.

Both visited Australia. Both were enamored of the South Seas. Both wrote novels (*Kangaroo* and *The Wrecker*) with scenes in the Domain/Botanic Gardens. *Kangaroo* is set mainly in the coast south of Sydney, while one of the characters in *The Wrecker* goes down to work on a railway on the coast south of Sydney.

Lawrence named his main protagonist Richard Lovatt Somers, whose initials, RLS, mirror those of Stevenson's.

Moreover, Lawrence met Stevenson's stepson, Lloyd Osbourne, and Stevenson's widow, Fanny, in Capri in 1921. (Lloyd co-wrote *The Wrecker*.) But the connections between Lawrence and Stevenson don't stop here.

Stevenson visited Sydney several times,

and on each visit he stayed at the prestigious Union Club. His special chair is still in the Club's library (where the RLS convention members will foregather in July, at the invitation of the Club).

Several members of the DH Lawrence Society of Australia - including Robert Darroch, Sandra Darroch, Robert Whitelaw, and Paul Delprat - are current members of the Union Club, now called the Union, University & Schools Club.

In 1892 Paul Delprat's great-grandfather, the artist Julian Ashton, invited Stevenson to visit the artists' camp he and other celebrated artists (such as Arthur Streeton) had set up at Balmoral Beach, thus establishing a tradition of painting en plein air in Australia.

Stevenson then invited Ashton to lunch at the Club.

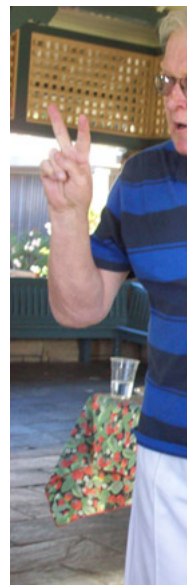
However, there is another link between the Rose Garden Pavilion and DH Lawrence.

The head of the secret army Lawrence describes in *Kangaroo* - Benjamin Cooley ("Kangaroo") - was based on a real person, Major General Sir Charles Rosenthal, an architect in peacetime. In Rosenthal's army division during the War was a fellow architect, Hugh Venables Vernon, who was also deeply involved in secret army activity after the War. (The Vernon Papers in the Mitchell Library lists the members of the Old Guard who lived on Sydney's North Shore.)

The architect who designed the Rose Garden Pavilion, Walter Liberty Vernon, was Hugh Venables father.

Sydney was a small world then (and still is, to some extent, today).

* <http://www.litsocsyd.net>



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Jan Andrews, Rob Darroch and Lindsay Foyle relax during lunch



John Robens with his young son, Jasper



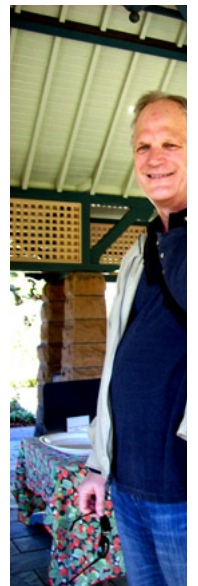
Robert Whitelaw sh



John and young Jasper Robens chat with Greg Baran



The cake, wrongly inscribed RSL instead of RLS (even today, the "Diggers" have an influence)



Greg Baran f.



Michael Lester, an enthusiastic founding member of the RL Stevenson Society



A friendly ibis joined the party



Peter Jo Dean Laurance, c

During the buf
Lawrence Soci

Robert Darroc
President of th

death of Presic
elected the nev

Sandra Darroc
Secretary and
Barker was re-
Treasurer.

If you wish to join the DH Lawrence Society of Australia, it's free. Just send us your name and email address. Click [HERE](#)