



***The Henry Handel Richardson Society
of Australia Inc.***

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April 2011 Newsletter

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2011 Annual Oration by Bruce Steele January 3, 2011

‘Doctor Richardson MD – the man behind Richard Mahony’

What better way to bring in the new year than to visit Chiltern and especially Lake View, the home of the Richardson family from 1876-1877. For the first time in years the lake was full. We sat in balmy weather under the marquee, a light breeze coming from the lake and had the privilege of hearing Bruce Steele share some of his findings as they will appear in his forthcoming *Life of Walter Richardson*.

Clive Probyn introduced the oration with a gesture to the room behind him, the room that was the surgery where Walter Richardson’s physical decline became painfully obvious to himself and his family. This material was the basis of Volume Three of *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony*. Clive spoke of the fun and intellectual pleasure experienced as he worked with Bruce on the Henry Handel Richardson Project at Monash University. He referred to some of Bruce’s other work as a renowned medievalist and a significant editor of the work of D H Lawrence.

In his oration Bruce concentrated on Walter Richardson’s early life from his birth in Dublin in 1825, to his graduation in medicine at Edinburgh University at the age of 21. He considered briefly his early years in Australia. While Henry Handel Richardson herself spoke of her father’s life as a ‘sort of scaffolding’ for the trilogy, Bruce pointed out that the building that emerged was different. He demonstrated some important differences in the man, Walter Richardson and the fictional character, Richard Mahony.

Among other things the oration recalled the visit in 2009 of Patrick Neustatter, great grandson of Walter Richardson, and a doctor himself, during his visit to Australia.

It was indeed a privilege to hear from this work in progress by Bruce and we look forward to the completed work.



Bruce Steele (in the blue shirt) with Meg and Clive Probyn and Gloria Banks at the birthday celebrations at Lake View, January 3, 2011

The birthday tea at Lake View, January 3, 2011



The cake made by Mary Fuge



Graeme and Dot Charles



Marie Bell from Maldon and others in high spirits



Pat Murdoch cuts the cake after reading from *Myself When Young*

Calendar of Coming Events – 2011-2012

Ballarat and Maldon trip – Thursday October 6 - Sunday October 9, 2011



Maldon Post Office where HHR lived from 1880-1887

Birthday Celebrations at Chiltern – Tuesday, January 3, 2012



Lake View, Chiltern, where HHR lived from 1876-1877

Koroit trip – Early 2012 – date to be determined



Walter Richardson's grave at Koroit cemetery. He was buried there in 1879.

2012 Oration –Friday October 12, 2012

Brenda Niall, renowned Australian biographer will speak on HHR and her first biographer, Nettie Palmer, in the Red Rotunda of the State Library of Victoria on October 12th, the one hundredth anniversary of HHR's visit to Australia.

Details and booking information for all these events will appear closer to the time on the website – www.henryhandelrichardsonsociety.net

(Thanks to Helen McBurney for the photographs)

Renovations under way at Lake View

Many of us have been concerned at the state of Lake View for some time now. For example, Society member Graeme Charles has taken it upon himself on a number of occasions, to effect running repairs to a section of veranda guttering that has repeatedly started to disconnect itself from the building.

Finally, after a lengthy delay some badly needed renovations are taking place. The renovations, costing in excess of \$10,000, have been paid for by the National Trust North East Ladies Auxiliary. The Ladies Auxiliary has no official status with the National Trust, but for many years now and long before the demise of the North East branch of the Trust, it has taken it upon itself to raise funds toward the upkeep of North East Victorian Trust properties, but in particular Lake View.

These renovations include major repairs to the veranda, vacuuming the ceiling space to remove dust, and laying brown sarking paper to prevent dust falling into the rooms below, and finally, making minor repairs to the main roof in an attempt to prevent rainwater leaking into the house.

The Society would like to congratulate the Ladies Auxiliary for the wonderful support they have so tangibly provided to Lake View. Next item on their Lake View agenda is believed to be repairs to the garden summer house.

Another major concern, for some Lake View regulars, is the state of many of the internal walls. Nearly all of them have cracks of various length and width. These have been brought to the attention of the National Trust on a number of occasions, but there seems to be some reluctance on its part to do anything about them. We must always recognise of course, that Lake View is but one of a great number of Trust properties that require ongoing maintenance.

At the most recent Society committee meeting, it was suggested that we could consider asking our members to support targeted fund-raising for Lake View. For example, Lake View Property Manager, Beryl Pickering, who is doing a wonderful job there, has recently mentioned that new blinds are badly needed for most rooms. This may be an example of something we could set ourselves to help with. We will discuss the whole question of fund-raising for Lake View, with the North East Ladies Auxiliary before doing anything, but the committee is interested in hearing what you think about this suggestion. If you would like to make a comment, please contact Graeme Charles by telephoning him on 0357261173 or email: gcharles@communityaction.coop

HHR Writing Competition

The committee is currently considering the idea of a writing competition that in some way commemorates and celebrates HHR and her work. At present there are a number of writing competitions in Australia that commemorate writers such as Hal Porter, Elizabeth Jolley and Judith Wright. Some of these competitions offer prizes donated by a patron.

If you have any ideas about the competition please contact Janey Runci by email on j.runci@bigpond.com.

Have you renewed your membership?

Just a reminder that this year's subscription is due.

Individual subs were set at \$10 per annum at the AGM held earlier this year. Listed below are those members who have renewed their membership.

If your name is not on the list, but you believe you have renewed, please let Graeme Charles know on 03 57261173.

If you haven't yet paid, your subscription can be sent to the HHR Society of Australia, c/o 69 Conness St. Chiltern 3683, or direct deposited to our account number 77605 at the WAW Credit Union BSB 803 070.

I & M Whitaker, Erika Hansen, Glenda Campbell (2), P & L Bunn, R & M Fuge, L Doddrell, J Runci, Bruce Steele, Beth Chamberlain, B Minifie, K Voglis, F Newbound, N Reid, S & C Wales, C & M Probyn, G & D Charles, G & G Banks, G Carne, B Wain, P & H Murphy, Jenny Davidson, R. Sinclair-Wood, E. Webby, H. Murray-Gould, S. Kench, J. Dixon, H. McNeill, B. Finlayson, B. Murdoch, P. Clarke, B&M Steels, B. Murtagh, J. Barkla, R. Harvey/R. Salmond, H. McBurney, M. Bell