

# Ninth World Congress on Art Deco

By Eugenio de Anzorena

Last April I went to the 9<sup>th</sup> World Congress on Art Deco in Melbourne, Australia. The Pre-Congress events were held simultaneously in Sydney and Canberra. I attended the Sydney portion, under the direction of Jennifer Hill and Scott Robinson (both wrote very informative souvenir notes). After the opening reception, Wednesday the 11<sup>th</sup>, at a restaurant overlooking Sydney harbor, the next day we toured the interwar cinemas of Sydney, and in the afternoon the Castlecrag area where Walter Burley Griffin and his wife Marion Mahony designed various houses following their work with Frank Lloyd Wright in Oak Park, Illinois and their design of the new Australian capital of Canberra.



On Friday we had a long day of touring, including apartment houses in the Elizabeth Bay area, one of the most interesting was the Cahors (1940, arch. Joseland & Gilling) described as an "exterior faced in brick above a base clad in blue ceramic tiles which steps up one level in the middle above the entrance awning." The foyer is intact.



The highlight of the day, however, was a visit to the spectacular apartment of Peter Sheridan and his wife. His collection of ba-

*(Continued from page 1)*

kelite radios and wonderful furniture was unbelievable. He also gave a great lecture on the radios in Melbourne.

Saturday included a tour of small apartment houses, a view of the Sydney Harbor Bridge (1932), the North Sydney Olympic Pool (1936) and the Luna Park amusement park (1935). On Sunday we left for Melbourne.



The extremely well organized program in Melbourne is due to the work of Robin Grow and his associates, especially Julie Law. (The superb souvenir notes for every tour were mostly prepared by Robin Grow and Julie Law.) Both here and in Sydney the meals and receptions were outstanding, allowing us to renew friendships and make new ones.

After the opening reception in Yarra on Sunday, the next day we took the eastern bus tour, visiting Newman College (1915-1918, arch. Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony), the Moderne style former United Kingdom Hotel, which is now a McDonald's (1937-38, arch. J.H. Wardrop) and the spectacular also Moderne Second Church of Christ Scientist (1936, arch. Bates, Smart & McCutcheon).



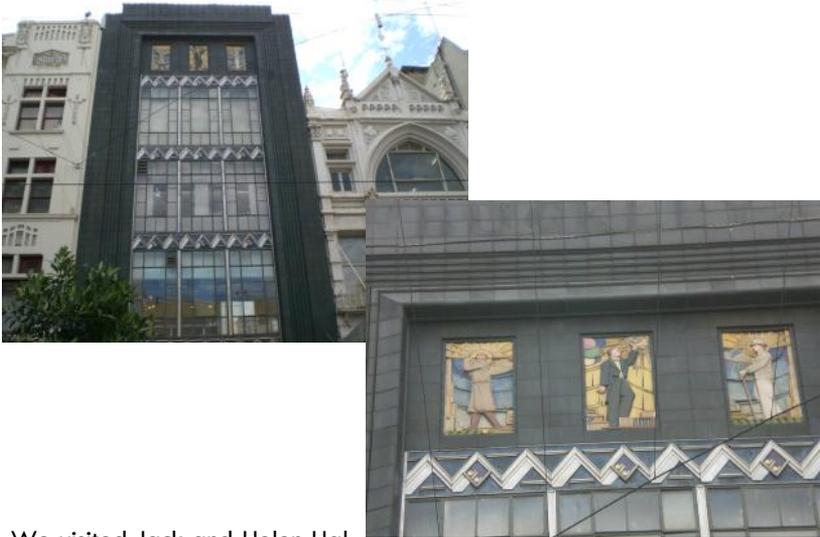
*(Continued on page 3)*



The afternoon was a walking tour of North Balwyn where many of the Moderne/Deco houses have tile roofs in the Spanish Mission style. We visited the interior of a wonderful 1927 house and were served refreshments in the garden.

On Tuesday we got down to business in the great auditorium of the Sofitel hotel listening to lectures on Domestic Deco, including Helen Graham's talk on "It's a Woman's World." The afternoon was a well organized walking tour of central Melbourne, highlights included Burley Griffin's Capitol Theater (some say Marion Mahony Griffin was largely responsible) and the 1930's Mural Hall in the Myer department store. The Wednesday program included a talk by Jeremy Morrison of Sotheby's, London on Art Deco collections and a tour of Deco by the Bay.





We visited Jack and Helen Halliday's house called Janette (1934) in the St. Kilda area with exciting Deco features, including beveled glass for all the windows, elaborate plaster work, including the domed main ceiling in the main bedroom and beautiful deco lights in all the rooms.



Julie Law and Brian Scott's flat in a Streamline Moderne apartment block has 3 bedrooms, two bathrooms and large living areas clearly designed for entertaining, with a largely original kitchen. The furnishings are superb! If this were not enough, we then went shopping in two shops specializing in Deco, with refreshments.



While the ICADS delegates met at the hotel, Helen and Cliff Graham invited some of the delegates to their Deco penthouse open house with views to match and of course beautiful furniture and art objects and a great buffet with drinks.



Thursday's presentations on the World of Deco covered, among other topics, Art Deco in Shanghai by Tess Johnston and Sandra Cohen-Rose's invitation to Montreal for the 2009 Congress. Off to the countryside in the afternoon for a box lunch and tour of the exterior of Dalcrombie (1935, arch. Esmond Dorney), a two story Moderne mansion located on 22 acres on the top of a ridge. Although the owners did not invite us inside (they said it was not in tip top shape), we peeked in the windows and were impressed by the stylish and elegant wrought iron balustrade used on the stairs and the fabulous nautical elements on the exterior.

Next an unrestored mansion, Burnham Beeches (1930-33, arch. Harry Norris). After being a residence for many years, it was converted into a hotel, which hopefully it will become once more.



The last day of the Congress highlighted presentations on preservation and economic development. David Gibson's talk on restoration projects in the New York area included not only Deco buildings, but edifices from other periods as well.

In the afternoon, we toured three art deco theaters, some of which have been preserved due to the showing of Greek films following the advent of television. Significant Deco details appear in the Westgarth and Astor (1936, arch. R. M. Taylor) theaters, such as plaster pilasters and terrazzo floors.



The Congress ended with the dinner-dance at the Centre, Ivanhoe with a three course meal, drinks and dancing to a 10-piece big band. A good time was had by all!



The post congress was held in Auckland, New Zealand, which I did not attend.