



**Metropolitan Wine and Food Society
of Sydney Inc.**

Celebrating 40 Years

1977—2017

Metropolitan Wine and Food Society of Sydney Inc.

Registered No. Y13780.23

Founded: 22 July 1977

Website: <http://mwfss.com/>

Facebook: Metropolitan Wine and Food Society of Sydney Inc.

Formation and Foundation of the Metropolitan Wine and Food Society of Sydney

The six founder members of the Society, Ian and Mary Arnold (both deceased), Colin and Clare Galbraith (both deceased), and Ray and Helen Wilson (now of Canberra), first met at a Rothbury Estate dinner in August 1974, and subsequently met frequently to pursue their interest and enjoyment of fine wine and food — culminating in the decision to form a wine and food society to extend participation to a wider circle, and further share and extend that knowledge and enjoyment. A draft constitution was prepared, and the name agreed — emphasis was to be on 'member participation in the organisation and affairs of the Society, and the sharing of knowledge and appreciation of wine and food through member interaction'. These **six Founder Members** expressed a sincere hope that the Society would attract dedicated members to guide the growth and extend the influence of the Society for appreciation of and interest in fine wine and fine food.

The Society **Formation Meeting and Dinner was held on 30 January 1977** at the Pennant Hills home of Ian and Mary Arnold. The **Constitution** was adopted and signed with Ian elected as President, Ray as Vice President — Wine Master, Colin Vice President — Food Master, Mary Secretary/Treasurer, Helen Wine Scribe, and Clare Food Scribe. The dinner was held at the end of a Sunday of extreme temperatures, and despite the challenges the report included the following summary. *“A final mention must be made in appreciation of the Wine Master, who through meticulous attention to detail, overcame the climactic extremes and presented each wine at the table, temperature correct and in perfect condition.”* The cost of the evening was estimated at \$27.00ph.

The **Society Emblem** was designed and produced by Clare Galbraith. In addition to use on publications and letterhead, there was a period in which the Society sported the emblem on T-shirts — in 1979 the printing could be put on your own T-shirt for \$1.50.

Following the Formation Dinner a further three Intermediate Dinners were held (March, April and May 1977) adding members to provide for **twenty-four Foundation Members** by the formal **Foundation Dinner on 22 July 1977** at Paternoster Club, Glebe. Foundation Members included Marie and Monty Smith, and by the time of the **first AGM in July 1978** Montague W. Smith was in the role of **Auditor**. In the group who joined the Society between the Foundation Dinner and the AGM were Murray Fletcher and Kerry (then Doyle) Rogers. By June 1978 there were thirty-eight members, and by the AGM in July there were forty-two.

The first **Newsletter of the Society** was produced by Mary Arnold on January 19, 1979. Newsletters have been an intermittent means of communication with members over the 40 years. Communication from the **Secretary**, by whatever means — now email — has been consistent over these years; and recently the **MWFSS Website** was established and is maintained by Lucinda Warren.

Affiliation with the Federation of Wine and Food Societies of Australia

By Friday **20 January 1978** an **Extraordinary General Meeting** of the Society was being held to seek approval to apply for membership of The Wine and Food Society of Australia as the Federation was known at the time. This was passed and the first of the changes to the Constitution made to provide for the membership of WFS of Australia. Membership and support of the FWFS has continued since.

Cellar of the Metropolitan Wine and Food Society of Sydney

The first AGM unanimously supported the establishment of a **Society Cellar**, and a Cellar Sub-committee was appointed to assist in establishing and maintaining the Cellar. *"Having our own Cellar will enable the Society in the future to provide high quality wines for our dinners at a reduced cost, and it will enable members to taste wines which would otherwise be unobtainable and which would not be available to members individually."* So the **Wine Debentures** commenced in August 1978 and February 1979 at a total of \$50, these are now a total of \$75 spread over three payments; and the Society Cellar continues, now housed and maintained by the kind generosity of Trevor Gibson.

Anniversary Dinners of the Metropolitan Wine and Food Society of Sydney

The Foundation President (Ian Arnold) set some guidelines for the annual **President's Dinner** — the president chooses his/her venue; it is a Black Tie occasion; preferably French cuisine and wines; and the wines, where possible, being drawn from the Society Cellar. Obviously over time some of these 'guidelines' may have shifted a little — but, as Mary Arnold wrote in a summary of one of the occasions which met the criteria, importantly *"the evening proved to be a superb marriage of wine, food and companionship"*, something on which no President since has compromised, and some wonderful President's Dinners have been enjoyed!

- ◆ **10th Anniversary Dinner 27 June 1987 - Granger Room, Rothbury Estate Vineyard, Hunter Valley President: Steve Liebeskind**
- ◆ **20th Anniversary Dinner 28 June 1997 - Darling Mills Restaurant, Glebe President: Ian Arnold**
- ◆ **25th Anniversary Dinner 29 June 2002 - Tabou Restaurant, Crown Street, Surry Hills President: Steve Liebeskind**
- ◆ **30th Anniversary Dinner 30 June 2007 - La Goulue, 17 Alexander Street Crows Nest President: David Cameron**
- ◆ **40th Anniversary Dinner 8 July 2017 - 'The Ian Arnold Dinner' Bistro 54, Alexandra Street, Hunters Hill President: Jim Rolls**

Ideals of the Metropolitan Wine and Food Society of Sydney

Mary Arnold wrote in *Epicuro* in 2002 following the 25th Anniversary: *"Members now look forward to the next twenty-five years. The Society has an excellent membership and is in the hands of a dedicated and enthusiastic group of people who will undoubtedly continue to exercise the aims and objectives set down in the constitution by its founding members"*. Ian Arnold in a summary he was preparing for the 40th anniversary wrote: *"For the past 39 years 'meeting at the Metropolitan' has been an enjoyable and in many ways rewarding experience for many people: those six who formed the Society, those twenty-four foundation members, those who later joined, some of whom left and some stayed; and there have been many who just visited as guests and we trust, enjoyed the hospitality and experience of appreciating the service of fine food and fine wine. All this has been made possible by the many people who have taken office, not just caring for the administration of the Society, but more importantly, planning and executing the many tasks required to ensure the success of each Society function. To the members at large, those who regularly attend and have not sought to take office, we owe a great debt of gratitude for providing the continuing support which has ensured the ongoing viability of the Society."*

Presidents of the Metropolitan Wine and Food Society of Sydney

1977-1978: Ian Arnold	1997-1998: Ian Arnold
1978-1979: Ian Arnold	1998-1999: Ross Higginson
1979-1980: Ian Arnold	1999-2000: Ross Higginson
1980-1981: Ian Arnold	2000-2001: Steve Liebeskind
1981-1982: Mary Arnold	2001-2002: Steve Liebeskind
1982-1983: Murray Fletcher	2002-2003: Trevor Gibson
1983-1984: Graham Libbeson	2003-2004: Trevor Gibson
1984-1985: Graham Libbeson	2004-2005: Jim Rolls
1985-1986: Steve Liebeskind	2005-2006: Jim Rolls
1986-1987: Steve Liebeskind	2006-2007: David Cameron
1987-1988: Steve Liebeskind	2007-2008: David Cameron
1988-1989: Murray Fletcher	2008-2009: David Cameron
1989-1990: Murray Fletcher	2009-2010: John Higginson
1990-1991: Murray Fletcher	2010-2011: John Higginson
1991-1992: Murray Fletcher	2011-2012: Trevor Gibson
1992-1993: Lyn Fletcher	2012-2013: Trevor Gibson
1993-1994: Lyn Fletcher	2013-2014: Trevor Gibson
1994-1995: Trevor Gibson	2014-2015: Penny Cameron
1995-1996: Trevor Gibson	2015-2016: Penny Cameron
1996-1997: Ian Arnold	2016-2017: Jim Rolls

FWFSA Awardees of the Metropolitan Wine and Food Society of Sydney

Ian Arnold
Mary Arnold
Murray Fletcher
Trevor Gibson
Ross Higginson
Steve Liebeskind
Ian Smalls
Monty Smith

FWFSA Victor Gibson Medal

Ian Arnold

Victor Gibson Commemorative Dinners and Weekends

1997: in conjunction with Pittwater WFS
2011: in conjunction with WFS of NSW

FWFSA Committee

Ian Arnold: Vice President 2006 — 2014; President 2014 — 2016
Trevor Gibson: Vice President from 2015
Steve Liebeskind: Representing the WFS of NSW, Member from 2017
Peggy Sanders: Secretary from 2012