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LOC:



Hunters Hill Trust Journal

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Concern for Residents

PULPIT POINT...

With such descriptions as "time bomb in the community", "tank farm" and "the cancer of Hunters Hill", the oil depot at Pulpit Point is most unlikely to be cited as "neighbour of the year" in this area. These terms and others have been used, often in desperation and sometimes in fear, by residents living nearby the installation.

The depot, which occupies 26½ acres of choice waterfront land, has generally been under the control of the Mobil Oil Company following the early days of the Colonial Oil Co. at the beginning of this century.

It is, in fact, Mobil's largest terminal in Australia with 53 tanks having a capacity to hold more than 14 million gallons of petroleum and associated product. The throughput of the depot is more than 60 million gallons a year. Six million gallons of oils and a similar quantity of grease are manufactured each year also.

In addition, the Mobil Company informs us through their house journal, that changes are planned for the near future.

Mobil News writes... "The depot's present chemical storage capacity of 1½ million gallons will be increased by another million some time this year or early next.

"Besides our own chemical activity, we also receive and store chemical products for other companies. By late this year it is planned we will be making our own slab wax".

Mobil News further adds... "There is no plan to move our operations from the site and the N.S.W. Government has no plan to move existing oil installations in Sydney Harbour although

any further installations must be erected in the Botany Bay area".

RESIDENTS' CONCERN

In a long standing appeal to the Hunters Hill Trust for assistance, residents' concern over the Pulpit Point installation may be summarised in four areas.

Firstly, the continuing noise of giant oil tankers and other heavy commercial vehicles engaged on company business as they wind their way through the otherwise quiet streets —almost around the clock each day. The breaking of self-imposed curfews set by the company has become a matter of course which clearly indicates that such regulations have never been truly practised.

Secondly, the smell from treatment of lubricating oils and petrol discharge from ocean tankers has necessitated nearby residents keeping all windows closed and further depreciated the value of their properties.

Also of concern to the entire area is the "time bomb" aspect of petroleum products, many of a highly volatile nature, in close storage. Memories of the depot's fire in 1964 still linger with many home owners.

Finally, the threat of continuous expansion is of great importance at Pulpit Point. The depot currently has substantial areas of undeveloped



"... almost around the clock each day".



land and in the company's own words "there is no move for relocation". Projected figures from the Fuel Branch of the Department of National Development indicate overall use of petroleum products in Australia is expected to increase by 70 per cent in 10 years and 100 per cent in 15 years. This will naturally increase the traffic nuisance.

TRUST ACTION

The Trust has been most active in contacting State Ministers on these matters.

A Trust sub-committee together with concerned residents has spent many hours in preparing documented evidence of noise levels, odours, and expansion plans.

As a result of this sub-committee's deputation and report presented last year to the N.S.W. Min-

ister for Environment Control, for example, a letter was received in reply suggesting that the Environmental Impact Policy might help us. But we have found that its provisions cover an existing case in philosophical goodwill only.

The Minister suggested that the Council might close roads to commercial vehicles, however we have seen North Sydney stopped recently from doing just this. Our case is even more difficult; as, Wybalena Road and Alexandra Street are the only access roads and therefore Mobil has a right to use these under law.

In another approach, the Minister for Transport has, through the Commissioner of Police, allegedly scolded Mobil's manager at Pulpit Point for infringements of their voluntary vehicle curfew from midnight to 6 a.m.

As mentioned earlier, these infringements are increasing, as is the smells, as is the overall traffic to the depot.

The Minister for Health is sympathetic with our problems and will give it close consideration. He assures the Trust that the matter is under constant review by the appropriate authorities and refers us to the Minister for Environment Control.

Full circle.

COUNSEL'S OPINION

One point on which all Ministers agree is that the Hunters Hill Council, rather than the N.S.W. Government, is the appropriate body to try to restrict this enormous overseas oil company. And Council, greatly to its credit, has taken legal advice to see if this is practicable.

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ARMADA A SUCCESS ON RIVER . . .

One of the highlights of the Trust's year was undoubtedly the Lane Cove River Armada held on Sunday, October 15.

The function was organised to point out the many worthwhile features of the valley threatened by the impending construction of an expressway along the river bank.

More than twenty guests and their families were entertained for lunch on the grand old steam vessel "Lady Hopetoun".

Visitors included the Prime Minister E. G. Whitlam (then leader of the Opposition) and Mrs. Whitlam, Mr. T. Uren (now Federal Minister for Urban Affairs and Environment), Mr. H. Jago (N.S.W. Minister for Health), Mr. P. Coleman (our local M.L.A.), four aldermen from the Hunters Hill Council — Mrs. S. Swain, Mr. M. Hervey, Mr. E. Cheyne-McPherson and Mr. D. Debenham.

Attending from outside the government sphere were Mr. I. Wyatt (President of the National Trust), Mr. I. McKee (Head of Research and Preservation MSB), Prof. F. Milthorpe (Biology, Macquarie University), Dr. Johnston (Royal Bot-

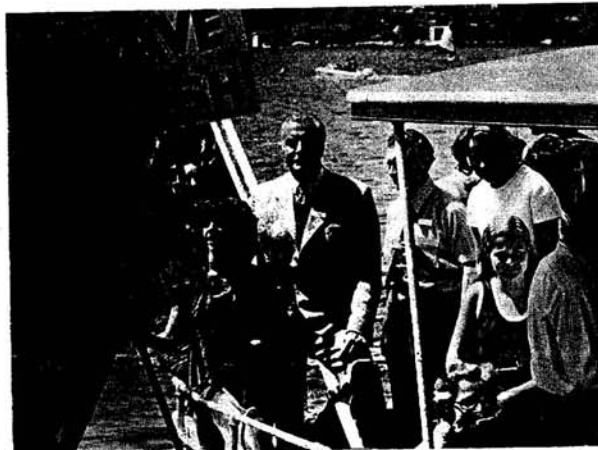
anic Gardens) and Dr. D. Francois (Director of State Fisheries).

Following the luncheon prepared by the Trust Auxiliary, the official party proceeded up the river accompanied by some 50 craft ranging in size from large motor cruisers to small sailing dinghies. There was even an amphibious car.

Large signs proclaiming "Save the Bush" and "Stop This Expressway" decorated many boats. A full complement of national press and TV representatives were present to cover the event.

Spectators lined the river banks and bridges over the water, and in brilliant sunshine the river played its starring role to full effect.

The natural beauty of the surrounding foreshores could hardly have failed to impress the touring party.



Prime Minister E. G. Whitlam "all aboard" for environment cruise.

Pleas for preservation of the Lane Cove Valley came from all quarters.

In his brief opening address prior to the Armada's departure, Trust President Chris Coulman said, "The basic problem facing us is a matter for the State Government, however, major national issues such as urban planning and transportation are also the concern of the Federal Government."

"The banks of the Lane Cove River should not be used for an expressway," he said.

"Urban expressways are not successful in solving transport problems in big cities — this is an outmoded concept. We would like you to join us and explore the river for yourselves," he added.

Speaking after Dr. Coulman, Vincent Servery, President of the Wildlife Preservation Society, said that environmental impact studies should be undertaken before any main roads were constructed. He questioned the influence of the Department of Main Roads and the concept of bush as "useless land".

"The cheapest land is chosen for expressway building, and the cheapest land is public land. The impact study should examine what is best from all points of view," he said.

Peter Coleman, M.L.A. for Fuller, endorsed this view.

"Public Authorities are now required to take environmental factors into

account in any decision. Obviously an expressway in the Lane Cove Valley raises very grave environmental consideration which must be thoroughly investigated," Mr. Coleman said.

He also stated that people are concerned with the loss of bush and mangroves.

Following the trip on the river, Mr. Jago, representing the Premier of N.S.W., said that he would report to Sir Robert Askin expressing the opinion that there is a need to review motorway proposals.

"The cost must run as a second factor to the possible destruction of much natural vegetation," he said.

Pulpit Point

• From Page 1

The counsel's opinion lists possibilities for action. Council has explored one of these, in trying to obtain the proclamation of a regulation restricting the use of the roads at night pursuant to Section 7 of the Metropolitan Traffic Act. Other possibilities are under consideration. . .

The opinion gave very guarded encouragement: It suggested that there was reason in principle why the use of roads by heavy or commercial vehicles should cause substantial disturbance to residents. . . "I am of the opinion that there is some prospect of success in a nuisance suit to restrain the Mobil Oil Company from running its tankers at least during the late hours of the night and the

early hours of the morning".

Residents' immediate hope, then, is that Council will take this matter on, that it can finance it, while the Departments of Environment Control, Health, Transport, and Local Government look on as, presumably interested, spectators.

Once again, the situation with Pulpit Point is the story of the individual seeking some rights as all watch the incongruity of 37 ton diesel tankers roaring from gear to gear up the hills and shattering sleep and peace.

The Trust will continue in its efforts to protect the rights of residents in an area which is clearly not the place for an oil company's installation which has shown the ability to grow "like a cancer" from a tiny drum filling plant to a still increasing complex eroding the area around it.

Looking to the New Year

by Dr. C. E. Coulman, President, Hunters Hill Trust

1973 will see the Trust's fifth year of operation.

As time moves ahead, we look forward to playing an ever-increasing role in the community.

From the Trust Committee's point of view, a stepping-up of community affairs and functions will bring residents closer together in the cause of preservation and maintenance of our way of life in Hunters Hill.

During the past year, our sub-committees have worked diligently to provide a better way of life through serving residents' general concerns.

Notably, they have opened a new avenue of communication with the introduction of the Journal; staged one of our most successful events ever — the Lane Cove River Armada; given close atten-

tion to pressing for acceptance of the Draft Town Plan; undertaken detailed investigation into the oil depot's operation with its associated traffic problems; and endeavoured to assist the Mayor in the people's stand against amalgamation — with its resultant loss of a separate identity.

Funds required for these extensive activities have come almost entirely from the efforts of the "auxiliary" and its never-tiring members, in arranging popular house inspections and similar fund raising work.

The Trust's current membership exceeds 600. However, as our only strength lies in our members, this force has ample room for expansion in an area of 14,000 population.

If specific issues are required to increase our membership, Hunters Hill certainly has them for next year.

More work is required to ensure acceptance of the Town Plan, and our fight for a separate existence as a municipality is likely to face the test before a Committee of Inquiry.

As popular opinion has expressed a unified stand on these two issues alone, your way of showing support is by joining the Hunters Hill Trust — the suburb's largest resident group.

On behalf of the Committee, I wish to extend sincere appreciation, to all members and their families, for your interest during the past year; and wish you successful undertakings in a new year.

Henry Higgins of Hunters Hill: The virtues of Small Government

Article reprinted with kind
permission from
"The National Times".

• by DON AITKEN

The N.S.W. Government is currently exploring the vexed question of local government boundaries, which is a polite way of saying that some people think that there are too many local government councils, and that ratepayers would save dough if a few of these councils were amalgamated.

It is one of those issues which the good liberal is inclined to agree with in principle, but fight like fury against if it happens to be his municipality which is booked for the chopper. In the old days, more than a century ago, when settlements first started being incorporated as municipalities, the real test was whether there was a community there, and one that was likely to grow.

If there was, incorporation was no problem. The new municipality could borrow on its future, and until 1890 and the great depression of that decade, that was no problem either. But the twentieth century brought rapid increases in demands for services and the cost of providing them. Many local government councils found that they could not meet either the demands or the costs, and as time went on they were amalgamated with their more prosperous and more populous neighbours.

The local government inquiry that is now taking place has had its own predecessors, and each of them has resulted in the death of shire and municipal councils. This has been seen, very generally, as progress, or at least as an unavoidable course of action. For municipalities and shires have never been able to generate much loyalty.

SOME SPIRITED RESISTANCE

No one much introduces himself as "I'm Joe Bloggs of Woop Woop Shire". And when people say they are from Lane Cove or Prahran they do not usually have the municipalities of those names in mind. Hands up all those in Sydney who come from Ku-ring-gai!

This time, however, there has been spirited resistance to the idea of amalgamation from at least one local government area in Sydney — Hunters Hill. Its municipal council has conducted a poll of residents to see what they think — and since Hunters Hill is Sydney's smallest municipality (with a population of 14,000 or so in only two square miles), its abolition is at least on the cards.

Now local government matters do not usually set the Parramatta River on fire. As soon as compulsory voting for local government elections was abolished, turnout at these elections fell way down, to about 20 per cent. But Hunters Hill Municipal Council has already received replies from 80 per cent of the municipality's residents, and more are coming in. Such a response suggests that the citizens are stirred up, and so does the nature of their replies.

To the question, "Do you wish the Municipality of Hunters Hill to remain a separate municipality as it now exists?" — more than 98 per cent have replied "Yes".

What do they fear they will lose if their present municipality is amalgamated with one of its



Hunters Hill . . . the charm and character of the prosperous Sydney of the 1880's.

neighbours? Probably two things: a loss of identity, and loss of control of their area, since almost certainly the Hunters Hill citizens would be a minority in any new enlarged local government area.

Loss of identity may not be as tangible as kerbs and gutters, but it is not to be sneezed at. Country towns and villages possess a sense of identity, a compound of sights and smells, experience and memories, that is associated with a group of people living together in a well-defined place. The boundaries of country towns are very clear, and so is the question of whether you belong or not.

The force of feeling associated with this kind of corporate identity can be very strong: you hear evidence of it every time another country electorate is abolished, and those who live in a town "lose" their old electorate. It is no use your pointing out that they haven't lost anything — all that has happened is that they have been placed in a different electorate. To them the loss is real and almost physical; things will never be the same again.

Sydney and Melbourne and our other capitals have grown much too

large for this kind of feeling to persist with respect to the city as a whole. But there are parts where it lingers on, and Hunters Hill is one of them. Much of it is well-defined geographically by the Parramatta and Lane Cove rivers. Much of it is old and well preserved. Much of it has been built in Sydney sandstone, quarried on site. The home-unit blight has been kept down, and you have to ask council's permission to do more than prune any tree in your property. Parts of it retain the charm and character of the prosperous Sydney of the 1880's.

The sense of identity that goes along with the community is strengthened of course by the fact that it has a corporate legal identity in the Hunters Hill Municipality. Perhaps those who live there are unduly worried about the consequences of amalgamation, but it cannot be denied that they have something to lose.

Hunters Hill is not the only community inside the metropolis: Balmain is becoming one, Paddington already is one, and some northern harbour suburbs have claims to be considered. What is more, these communities-inside-communities are to be encouraged: they break down the sense of helplessness and isolation that residence in a big city all too often produces.

They reduce the city to a more manageable size,

and provide those who dwell in the communities with a network of local social contacts and shared experiences that give urban life a personal dignity it generally lacks.

The Mayor of Hunters Hill claims that local residents would pay substantially more in rates if the municipality were absorbed by another, and he may well be right. But even if he were wrong, and amalgamation were followed by cheaper rates (if that is not a consequence then the advantages of amalgamation seem non-existent) that would seem a high price to pay for the erosion of the basis of a flourishing local community.

A FEELING OF BELONGING

Sydney is going to get bigger and bigger. As it grows there will be a corresponding need to provide those who live in it with a feeling of belonging and with the institutions that go along with it, namely local organisations and local government. It may be that the cost of providing these services exceeds the financial capacity of all but the largest local government units, and that the trend must be towards amalgamation and efficiency.

If that is the case, then the answer must be found in a better basis for local government finance. Most of the money which local government bodies spend comes from the taxpayers' pockets and is spent in their interests. It makes no sense at all to pursue the goal of efficiency to the point where the purpose of the efficiency has been lost sight of. That is to put the cart before the horse.

We are going to need more institutions of local government in the future, not fewer of them, and the outcome of the Hunters Hill poll is an indication that citizens are becoming aware of the virtues of small government. I hope the local government inquiry ponders on its implications.

HUNTERS HILL TRUST JOURNAL

EDITOR:

R. B. Budd

PICTORIAL:

M. Santry

PRODUCTION:

K. Knudsen

CONTRIBUTORS:

S. Sheffer

A. Oppen

P. A. Twigg

D. Aitken

P. Healey

C. Coulman

All correspondence
should be addressed
to:

The Editor,
P.O. Box 85,
Hunters Hill, 2110

MARSHALL HOUSE Still There

A number of school children from Hunters Hill Primary School, have come to the Trust with a desperate plea to "Save Marshall House" — (Eulbertie). Young 11 year old Michael Stitt is the spokesman for these ardent preservationists, and we do congratulate the children on their

ideals and enthusiasm. Perhaps it is still not too late for someone to buy the building (rapidly disintegrating in the grounds of the Hunters Hill Public School) and re-erect it in some other part of Hunters Hill. There are many precedents for such a task — so surely it's worth a thought!

* Dr. Aitken is Professor of Politics at Macquarie University, Sydney. He is a resident of Hunters Hill and has personally expressed his concern on the possibility of amalgamation by assisting the Trust's sub-committee set up to investigate this threat.

HUNTERS HILL TRUST JOURNAL

Two Firsts to Winner of Essay Competition

Anna Martin, the 15-year-old winner of the "Life in Hunters Hill" essay competition conducted in the "journal", chalked up two "firsts" with the entry that gained her the \$25 prize.

It was the first essay of its kind she had written, and the first time she had entered a competition.

A student in 4th Form at Hunters Hill High School, Anna is keen to go on to university and study architecture.

She lives with her mother and father and two sisters in "Glen Maher", Margaret Street, Woolwich, a stone home set in quiet gardens under a large willow tree. Anna's father, Professor R. T. Martin, works at the University of New South Wales.

The entire family are Trust members.

Part of Anna's pleasure in winning the competition, which attracted wide interest, lies in the fact that she is able to have her work read by all residents in the municipality.

Trust committee members who judged the competition highly commended the essays of two runners-up, Ann Kirby of Henley, and Martin Terry of Hunters Hill.



Anna Martin receives First Prize from Trust President Chris Coulman.

THE TRUST CENTRE

Saturday, October 7th, was an important day for Hunters Hill. A Trust Information Centre and Reference Library was opened at 44 Alexandra Street — the beginning, we anticipate, of a long-lasting rapport between the past of Hunters Hill, and the present and future residents.

Come in and browse awhile — there are books on architectural styles, history, furniture, art, buildings — especially applicable to the period and style of the buildings in Hunters Hill. There are overseas and Australian journals and magazines on good modern design, and on trends in art, architecture and preservation. There are specially printed Hunters Hill greeting cards, Trust publications, coloured map of historic Hunters Hill, leaflets, documents and photographs.

Perhaps you are restoring a 19th century

house and want to know what the original architectures or door knobs were like — or you want to know the age of your house or its various occupants throughout the years — then come and visit the Centre. If we don't know the answer instantly, we will endeavour to find it.

A "Christmas Special" is a collection of drawings by Cedric Emanuel of Hunters Hill. These are the original drawings for his "Sketch Book of Hunters Hill", shortly to be published by Rigby. The drawings are for sale at \$45 each, an excellent investment.

Local residents are invited to exhibit their locally made "arts and crafts" at the Centre. At present there are some delightful beeswax candles and original paintings on display. If you have something you would like to show — just phone 89-5278.

HUNTERS HILL TRUST JOURNAL

The Winning Essay — "Life in Hunters Hill"

Life in Hunters Hill has changed in only a few ways since the last century. Improvement in the community's make up is ever present, but the quiescent country manner still remains — quite believably we could still be in the times of Barnard Eldershaw's "A House Is Built".

This feeling goes deeper than merely the pleasant stillness and tranquility of the municipality — a close-knit community is evident in the strong support of the corner shop and local schools.

This feeling is supported by the tendency of internal mixing because of the peninsula's natural boundaries. In a small section of the community the locals all know each other and communicate

and co-operate with each other to a far greater extent than people in a suburb completely surrounded by other suburbs.

The children have been influenced and have adopted the area idea and tend to play with the other local children on their "pad".

Life is enjoyable with so many different recreations to follow. Being a well orientated area, Hunters Hill caters for many people's tastes — sailing, football, bowling, tennis, guides and scouts clubs are spread throughout the district.

Being so close to the city, the municipality must cater for the daily rush into the city. Buses shuttle the businessmen to highways, railways and ferry wharves. Standing

in the queue for the ferry one can easily daydream. In early Hunters Hill history, small ferries puffing out old-fashioned smoke — ladies with parasols and frilly dresses and men with top hats and canes waiting on a long jetty while the small ferry chugs laboriously to neatly dock itself. Old sandstone houses sparsely scattered in the new community. Even today an essentially residential area, Hunters Hill still prides itself in its beautiful stone houses integrated with pleasant modern homes. Multi-storey units have been kept to a minimum, but a few modern, well planned groups of town houses have appeared on the scene.

Life in Hunters Hill is congenial and pleasing. I am proud to live in such a beautiful and unspoilt area. I hope in future years the changes, which are bound to eventuate, are minimal.

WHAT PRICE OUR DRAFT TOWN PLAN?

The preparation of a suggested Draft Town Plan for the Municipality of Hunters Hill is a task which has involved hundreds of working hours in the Trust's life. Hours given voluntarily to preserve this suburb.

We are all indeed fortunate that this suggested plan, in its presentation to Council, was largely adopted.

Council's formal Draft Town Plan is now before the State Planning Authority for approval.

Maybe the people of Hunters Hill are not aware that their elected aldermen have been consciously and repeatedly ignoring it.

Perhaps, the Hunters Hill Trust will incur the wrath of some for bringing breaches of the plan to the attention of those who don't care or who are apathetic.

We have a Draft Town Plan which lays down, in legislative form, a code for building and development applications in the Municipality.

The most recent example of the way Council has ignored the provisions of the Draft Town Plan occurred on the 13th November, 1972. On that night Council approved an application to erect five Town Houses with associated garages and swimming pool on the site of 22 Church Street, Hunters Hill. This is a beautiful and historic house, which is listed in Schedule 4 of the Draft Town Plan, that is, it is a house within the proposed Historic Precinct which is of significance both architecturally and historically. It is therefore covered by Clauses

66 and 67 of the Draft Town Plan.

They read as follows:-

"66 — Notwithstanding any other provision of the ordinance a person shall not in any Historical and Environmental Precinct or on any land referred to in Schedule 4 to the ordinance erect, alter, carry out, use or demolish a building or work or use land without the consent of the responsible authority.

"67 — (1) In respect of any application for consent in pursuance of the provisions of Clause 66 of this ordinance to be erection, alteration, use or demolition of a building, or to the carrying out or use of a work or to the use of land the responsible authority (the Council) shall refer such application to the Advisory Committee."

It is true that the area in which 22 Church Street is located is zoned 2(b) under the Draft Plan, which permits the erection of Town Houses with a maximum of two storeys. It is also true that there are other home units both opposite and adjacent to this site. No doubt the Council had

the zoning before it, when it made its decision. Yet it chose to ignore a clear mandatory provision that a house of historic significance should have the benefit of the Advisory Committee, whose members have been appointed and await the day when the Council will regularly seek their advice.

Where will it be next that the Council chooses to ignore its own Draft Town Plan in order to have yet another example of group housing?

HOUSE INSPECTION

A warm sunny day with all the world and its trees looking fresh and clean after the rains, was the day happily chosen for the "mini-house inspection" held on November 19th.

About 400 residents and visitors enjoyed a quiet, relaxed tour of "Oatlands" — a warm, inviting home filled with early Australian furniture and delicate tapestries, and "St. Claire" — stately two-storey home of lace and stone and antique English and Chinese furniture.

The proceeds of the day — about \$750 — will provide the rent for the Centre and help pay for books and printing.

We do most sincerely thank our two Auxiliary members, Mrs. Joyce Wood and Mrs. Astrid Burden, for opening their homes for the Trust, and we thank our many helpers who always so tirelessly support our "House Inspection Days".