



# Hunter's Hill Trust Journal

Volume XI No. 1

February, 1982.

## SANITY FOR SALE



*Photographs by courtesy of Douglass Baglin.*

"The Gladesville Mental Hospital Precinct is included in the Register of the National Estate because of its architectural and historical significance, being the first purpose built lunatic asylum in the colony. The precinct nestles around a small valley rising from the Parramatta River and both its buildings and the surviving late 19th century landscaping make considerable contributions to the environment of the river. The precinct is located within the Hunter's Hill Conservation Area, which is included in the Register for its combination of natural landscape features, fine harbour views and historic buildings to form an outstanding environment."

Australian Heritage Commission.

# GLADESVILLE HOSPITAL

## HISTORY

Gladesville derives its name from John Glade, a settler who was in the district as early as 1806, according to the Sydney Gazette. He still held the property in 1822, and also settled on a fifty acre grant promised him by Macquarie. Although he was in occupation for many years, no deed was issued.

The next step in the development of the area was the erection of the asylum for lunatics. As the lunatics were all convicts, the government of the day considered that their care should be a charge on England, and not on New South Wales, and a long discussion began. In 1835 it was at last decided to build on the Parramatta River.

### In Good Company

Thomas Stubbs was unable to buy land at Tarban Creek because one of the lots there was required as a paddock for the lunatic asylum, a landing was to be reserved an, wrote the Deputy Surveyor-General, *"nobody but a madman would want to buy the rest"*.

The site for the asylum was known as "Bedlam Point", even before its selection (*in 1820 it was "Bethlem"*).

### Mortimer Lewis, Colonial Architect

The building was designed by Mortimer Lewis in 1835, the year of his appointment as Colonial Architect. Other works by Lewis are the Darlinghurst Courthouse, Hartley Courthouse, Berrima Courthouse, Sydney Police Office, Richmond Villa (*now removed from behind Parliament House*). His first

design was in the simple tradition of the rectangular facade with the small break forward in the centre, surmounted by the pedimented roof. Lewis then added sophistication with a portico designed with Ionic columns, one of the first examples in Australia of the use of these more ornate forms. The Ionic capitals had to be carved by hand, made possible by the now increasing immigration of highly skilled craftsmen.

### Government Economy in the Dark

The new building was estimated to cost £4,000, but was completed for £3,000. During the actual building, Lewis changed the proportions of his design, making the building wider and more squat. The Pediment was replaced by a simple gable and finished with a square head, instead of the narrow arched door originally planned. The building is of stone with a slate roof; near the original main gates at Punt Road, the building is masked from the entrance by more recent buildings.

### Architectural Influence on Patient Care

In 1839, Dr. McLean applied for the position of resident medical officer. The first Keeper, or Steward, was Joseph Thomas Digby, who had previously been employed in English asylums. He arrived in June or July 1838 with his wife, who was to act as matron.

Digby clashed with the architect over the darkness of the corridors and suggested skylights. Lewis replied that this was planned *"so that the Keeper should not easily be perceived moving from one group of cells to another"*. This explanation, and the lower cost, satisfied the Governor.



Would Council's tree preservation order be applied to trees this size, or would it be waived, as recently, "because big trees belong in parks"?



### Generations of Unreflecting Men

In 1846 an enquiry was held as to the treatment of the inmates, as a result of which Dr. Francis Campbell was appointed as the first Superintendent in 1848. On his retirement twenty years later he wrote:

*"I soon discovered that the disclosures made in 1846 were not exaggerated, both the male and female inmates were openly undergoing an unmerciful degree of severe and rough breaking in, if I may so speak - not from any savageness of disposition or motives of cruelty on the part of those in charge of them - it was the hereditary system of inhuman expediency transmitted from one generation of unreflecting men to another for God knows how many thousand years. So, with prudence and resolution for my guide, I began to introduce, gradually, a change in that revolting mode of managing the lunatics which to that time was a very dark and disgusting blemish on the character of the Colony; and before the expiration of six months I had the satisfaction of having set the corporeal part of every insane man and woman in the asylum as free as a zephyr on the mountain top, I think for ever. Of course the disenthralment of their minds was the paramount object to be achieved, and though the lesser necessarily took precedence of the greater, at the beginning, they ran on parallel lines ever after."*

No doubt similar sorts of statements have been made in the years which followed as understanding and treatment have advanced. Dr. Campbell was succeeded by Dr. F. Norton Manning. Formerly a naval surgeon, Dr. Manning suffered so severely from sea-sickness that he had to give up seafaring. His name is still revered for his humanity towards his patients, whom he insisted on giving that name instead of "lunatics". He was responsible for many improvements and new buildings on the site. He described the institution as follows:

*"The greater part of the building is prison-like and gloomy. The kitchen, stores and other offices are utterly unfitted for the purpose to which they are at present applied; and chapel and amusement rooms, important accessories to such an institution, are wanting."*

Recommendations were made to Parliament for erection of a piggery and a byre, extension of accommodation for patients and staff, and acquisition of an adjoining twenty-eight acre property for agriculture, a superintendent's house and improved recreation facilities for patients. Large dormitories of wood and galvanised iron were erected in 1869 and a two-storey building for women in 1871. Gas lighting was installed in 1887. In 1888 "The Priory", on the northern side of Victoria Road, was added to Gladesville Hospital.

### Towards Reflections of Future Generations

The splendid buildings and gardens of the Hospital have contributed not only to the well-being of the patients there, but also to the wider community over the years. The Hospital has been generous in allowing the public to use the sporting grounds and picnic areas, and relatively few areas around the Harbour provide such a restful escape from frenetic building and traffic. The Hospital grounds are an excellent example of what Sydney Harbour foreshores should be like.

## POLITICS

Widespread reports that the State Government intends to sell the Gladesville Hospital site have not been denied. The Trust wrote to Government Ministers in November and January, and by February not one answer has been received.

The Hunter's Hill Trust is requesting that a permanent conservation order be placed on the Hospital's historic buildings and their natural surrounds, extending from the mature trees around the memorials and fountain, past the convict-marked stone walls and buildings, to the foreshore slopes and waterfront.

The Sydney Harbour and Foreshores Committee wrote in December: *"In 1980 press statements and your November statement in the House of Parliament reference was made to your Government's policy which prohibits any Government Department or Statutory Authority from selling any waterfront land without first referring it to Dept. of Environment and Planning for use as parkland. We note also that all Departments were then involved in detailing their surplus waterfront land, so that all land assessed as suitable for parkland would be used for that purpose. Would you kindly advise us of the situation regarding the Gladesville site ...."*

Much of the site remains magnificent because it has been protected as a hospital, immune from commercial over-development. The foreshore grounds and amphitheatre are remarkable, a living museum of early and more recent designs for outdoor space, a natural setting for imposing institutional buildings and their attendant cottages. Surely no government wishes to be remembered for having engineered racks of "villas" on such a site.

In the view of the Hunter's Hill Trust, it is long-term sanity to preserve this site for the enjoyment and enrichment of future generations. The Government of 1835 had planning and site choices which will not be ours again; the best of what is left now must be kept and valued in human and environmental terms.



# DO IT YOURSELF

How much do you know about the history of your house?

Llanthony resident, Philip Jenkyn, became increasingly interested as research led him through Mitchell Library records, Registrar General's Office records, Hunter's Hill Trust information and suggestions, and many other sources. The granddaughter of the original owner was traced through Anne McNally, architectural plans examined and advice given by the National Trust's Clive Lucas; every lead was followed. The result is an amazingly complete report of the land, the house and its occupants to the present day.

Philip Jenkyn has urged the Hunter's Hill Trust to stimulate other owners to similar efforts, and certainly many more owners could respond to requests for information now being compiled into the coming edition on old buildings in Hunter's Hill. The Trust gratefully thanks those who have given us information; it has been invaluable. It is hoped that more people will take up this absorbing interest in the history of their homes, surroundings and people who have become Hunter's Hill's history, and that present owners will share the detective zeal and enjoyment which led Mr. Jenkyn to the completion of his report.

We reprint excerpts to illustrate the sources and sorts of information which may be available on houses. The researched history of Llanthony is now unusually complete; its inhabitants have provided links with other families and houses.



## The Everard Grant

The land upon which Llanthony was built forms part of the earliest Crown Grant in the Municipality (*State Archives*). James Everard was sentenced at the Old Bailey in London, in the Sessions commencing on 9 September 1789, to transportation for life (*Old Bailey Sessions Papers, Mitchell Library*). He arrived in Sydney on 28 June 1790 with the Second Fleet on the vessel Scarborough 2 (*Convict Indentures, State Archives*). On 16 November 1796, he was appointed a constable for the District of Lane Cove, a position he held until 1800 (*Bench of Magistrates Proceedings, State Archives*). On 19 May 1798 he received from Governor Hunter, as a settler, a grant of 30 acres of land "to be known by the name of Everard Farm laying and situated in the District of Eastern Farms" with a proviso that he "shall reside within the same and proceed within the space of one year from the date hereof to the Improvement and Cultivation thereof". This rectangular area of land is now bordered in the east by Augustine Street, in the north by Everard Street, in the west by Pittwater Road, and in the south by a line extending along the southern edge of the St. Joseph's College playing fields to Pittwater Road (*A.O. Maps, State Archives*).

## Early History of the Property

By the early 1800's the district had become known as Kissing Point. Its most notable early resident was James Squire, one of the colony's pioneer brewers and the first to produce ale from local hops. As he prospered he acquired many farms from disillusioned settlers, including the Everard Farm. He had a substantial acreage under crops, and was running sheep, goats and pigs. He died in 1822, leaving the farm to his daughter, Mary Ann. She married Thomas Charles Farnell on 6 April 1824 and the farm became part of his holdings, being let around that time on a lease to clear the land (*Statutory Declaration James Devlin, Real Property Act application, Registrar General's Office*). He, like many others in the area, became involved in the growing of citrus fruits. The farm passed to their eldest son, James Squire Farnell, who later in 1877 became Premier of New South Wales and Secretary for Lands (articles by Philip Geeves, James Jervis). On 20 April

1854, he sold the farm to Didier Numa Joubert for £100. He sold the farm to Charles Smith on 1 September 1863 for £300 ... The Everard grant came back into the hands of Didier Numa Joubert on 11 August 1876, when he purchased most of Charles Smith's holdings. A solicitor, Thomas Salter, purchased 28 of the original 30 acres on 20 July 1881, and divided it into two lots. One of almost 12 acres he sold to barrister John Leo Watkins on 1 November 1883 for £3000 and the remainder was later transferred on 15 March 1894 by Charles Heydon to the trustees of St. Joseph's College and became their playing fields (*Title to the Land, Registrar General's Office*). Near Everard Street forms the crest of one of the hills of the area, and it was here that he built his house.

## LLANTHONY – The House

Llanthony was built during 1884, being completed by the end of that year (*Doreen Saunders' notes on Hunter's Hill Council Rate Books, now destroyed, made for the Trust's Old Buildings of Hunter's Hill, Part I*). While the work was proceeding, John L. lived in a brick boarding house in Alexandra Street, which later became the Gladstone Hotel (*Sands Directory*). Llanthony was built as an imposing Victorian two storey stone house in the Italian villa style ... The house was named after Llanthony, a Twelfth Century Abbey, situated near Abergavenny in the Black Mountains of South Wales. The name is an abbreviation of "Llan Dewi Nant Honddy", "The Church of David on the Honddy" (*J. Timbs, Abbeys & Castles of England & Wales, State Library*).



Other sections of Philip Jenkyn's report give biographical details of John Leo Watkins, his family and their life-style which centred around the home. Additions to the house later, land subdivisions and subsequent owners of Llanthony are mentioned, as is the changing use of the house from family mansion with tennis, servants, balls – to division into ten Strata Title flats, which illustrates one way of saving fine old buildings.



Llanthony, 1890's

# JAM TO-MORROW

## The Town Plan

*"It's very good jam," said the Queen.*

*"Well, I don't want any to-day, at any rate."*

*"You couldn't have it if you did want it," the Queen said. "The rule is, jam to-morrow and jam yesterday – but never jam to-day."*

*"It must come sometimes to 'jam today'," Alice objected.*

*"No, it can't," said the Queen. "It's jam every other day, you know."*

Lewis Carroll's version of the preparation of a town plan would have the same flavour of absurdity which we sense to-day.

In March, 1981, the town plan was estimated by Council and the Dept. of Environment and Planning to be three to five months away. In May, the town plan was said to be about three months from finalisation. In August, two or three months. In December, imminent. In January, 1982, the estimate is two or three months.

*The most curious part of the thing was, that the trees and the other things round them never changed their places at all: however fast they went, they never seemed to pass anything... And they went so fast that at last they seemed to skim through the air, hardly touching the ground with their feet, till suddenly .... they stopped.*

*The Queen propped her up against a tree, and said kindly, "You may rest a little, now." Alice looked round her in great surprise. "Why, I do believe we've been under this tree the whole time! Everything's just as it was!"*

*"Of course it is," said the Queen. "What would you have it?"*

*"Well, in our country," said Alice, still panting a little, "you'd generally get to somewhere else – if you ran very fast for a long time as we've been doing."*

*"A slow sort of country!" said the Queen. "Now, here, you see, it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that."*

The Town Clerk wrote to the Trust in late November giving the Dept. of Environment and Planning's prediction: The Department's Report was complete and had been sent for typing; it would be presented to the Minister for signature by 4th December, 1981. After signature, the scheme would proceed to Ordinance drafting and plan production; it is not possible to indicate what time will elapse between the Minister's signature and final gazettal of the Plan.

Two months later the Hunter's Hill Trust contacted the Department to enquire about the "progress" of the town plan. Condensed, this is what was said: "Because of the new legislation, the planning instrument (now styled Local Environment Plan No. 1) has had to be rewritten. Council had a lot of objections when the plan was exhibited (1973-74), and there have been a lot of changes in the last six or eight years. So it has to be rewritten and the format changed, new clauses added. The delay has been a bit our fault, a bit Council's fault.

The instrument (plan, not garotte) is with us now, and it's just a matter of man-hours. The instrument is being prepared by the Department; it will not be very long, by very long I mean a month or six weeks, I could say two months, I could say three months, I could be wrong."

Meanwhile, by Trust estimates, approximately three hundred building applications are considered by Council each year, and it is clear that, unlike Alice and the Red Queen, we are not where we were. Hunter's Hill is changing around us, even as we run fast.

*The Walrus and the Carpenter  
Were walking close at hand:  
They wept like anything to see  
Such quantities of sand:  
'If this were only cleared away,'  
They said, 'it would be grand!'*

....

*'It seems a shame,' the Walrus said,  
'To play them such a trick.  
After we've brought them out so far,  
And made them trot so quick!'  
The Carpenter said nothing but  
'The butter's spread too thick!'*

Council is to commence a Heritage Study of Hunter's Hill, aided by the Heritage Council and a grant from that body. The Hunter's Hill Trust congratulates Hunter's Hill Council and reiterates the offer of Trust consultant planner, Ken Latona, to confer with the Council. The offer was made to the Mayor in September. Mr. Latona indicated at the public meeting held in September that there is much which Council can do: "Council has an enormous role to play .... the powers of the local council are considerable. This Council can resolve to make plans dealing with whatever matters it so desires at any of its meetings, inform the Department within fourteen days, and the Department then aids Council preparation of plans. They can also, on a very local level, deal with a lot of the matters that are of concern to the Trust, things like street planning, building materials, walls. And they can do that in a very instructional way, through preparation of guidelines that actually give some sort of education in the way things should be done, what should be respected ....."

Perhaps, after all the practice which Municipal and State Representatives and staff have had with Local Environment Plan 1, the next will be developed efficiently and well, without compromises which undermine stated objectives.

*"I can't believe that!" said Alice.*

*"Can't you?" the Queen said in a pitying tone. "Try again: draw a long breath, and shut your eyes."*

*Alice laughed. "There's no use trying," she said: "one can't believe impossible things."*

*"I daresay you haven't had much practice," said the Queen. "When I was your age, I always did it for half-an-hour a day. Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast."*



# ACTIVITIES

## HERITAGE WALK

Heritage Week, innovated last year, will again be the last week in March, from 22nd to 28th. Special entertainment is being arranged for Martin Plaza at lunchtime, and the Week will end with the Heritage Week Fair on March 28th at Parramatta. The State Library of New South Wales will be holding a special exhibition as will the Australian Museum, the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, and the Macleay Museum of the University of Sydney. The Historic Houses Trust will hold an exhibition of Australiana with the Australiana Society at Elizabeth Bay House, Sydney.

The Hunter's Hill Trust will introduce the second of its 'Walk' series, **A Glimpse of Hunter's Hill**, Some of the Grand Homes. This walk ranges from eastern Alexandra Street to Wybalena Road, including secluded streets and fine buildings. The booklet has been prepared by Jo Rees.

Guides will conduct groups, giving additional commentary, on Saturday, March 27th, at 1.30 and 3.30 in the afternoon. Please telephone Mrs. Rees (816-2746) in order to be included in a group with a guide. There is no charge for the tour; booklets will be for sale at the starting point, the corner of Ferry and Alexandra Streets.

## HARBOUR CRUISE

The Sydney Harbour and Foreshores Committee and the Australian Conservation Foundation will again run a cruise both enjoyable and informative. The cruise will be on March 7th and will concentrate mainly on areas west of the Harbour Bridge. This is an excellent opportunity to view the harbour and rivers from the water while listening to enlightening commentary, often from speakers representing local specialised groups such as the Hunter's Hill Trust. A must for politicians, but there will be plenty of room for others. Telephone the Total Environment Centre (27-4714) for tickets.

## HOUSE INSPECTION

An inspection of historic buildings will be held on April 25th, between the hours of 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. The Trust advises at least two hours' viewing and strolling time, as there will be a great deal to see.

St. Joseph's College and Houses in the Avenue Road area.

For tickets send cheque and self-addressed stamped envelope to P.O. Box 85, Hunter's Hill, 2110.

Tickets are \$6, and \$3 for pensioners and students.

For information, telephone Anne McNally (day 89-2035) or Alice Oppen (evening 89-5175).

The Hunter's Hill Trust is grateful to St. Joseph's College for this opportunity to view fine art works, historic buildings, and Hunter's Hill from the tower. Houses kindly offered vary from mansion to delightful cottage, in an area of peaceful streets shaded by large old trees.

## PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

**Infill**, by the Historic Buildings and Sites Committee, Royal Australian Institute of Architects, illustrated, shows how not to spoil your house and neighbourhood by unsympathetic, visually jarring additions.

**Durability Tests on Sandstone Treated with Silanes**, and **The Treatment of Salt-Contaminated Masonry with a Sacrificial Render**, both by J. L. Heiman of the Experimental Building Station, Dept. of Housing and Construction. Both are technical studies of problems affecting sandstone in Hunter's Hill buildings and are available for perusal (89-5175).

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name ..... Telephone .....  
Address ..... Postcode .....  
Willing to help with .....

### Type of Membership:

1981-82

Due March 1

Single	\$ 5.00
Family	\$ 10.00
Pensioner	\$ 1.00
Student	\$ 1.00
Life Member	\$ 75.00

*The Hunter's Hill Trust,  
Box 85, Hunter's Hill, 2110.*

*The Trust Centre  
The Hunter's Hill Gallery*