

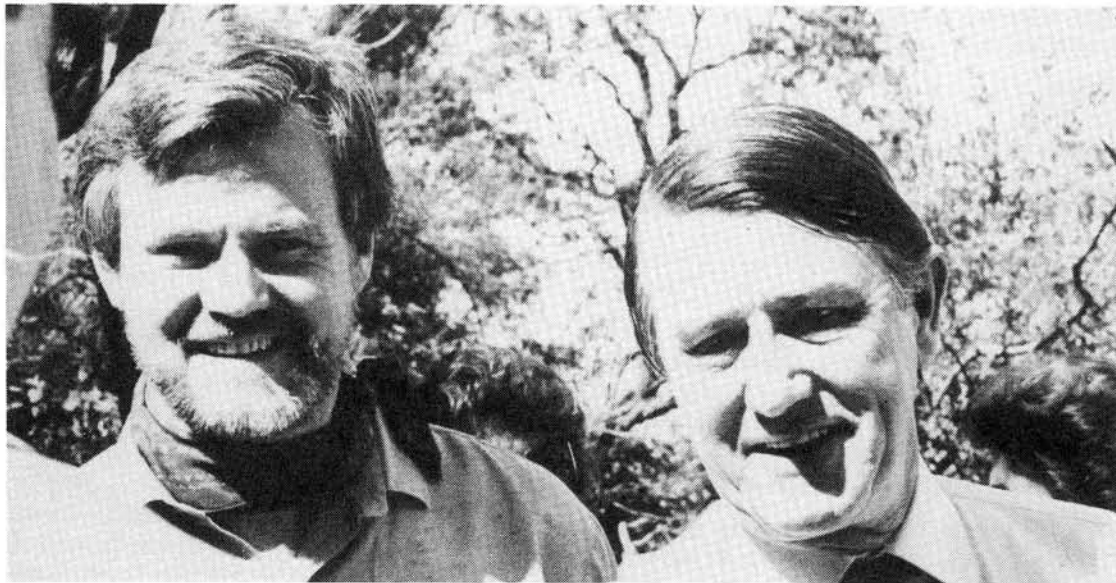


# Hunter's Hill Trust Journal

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## *KELLY'S BUSH — A VICTORY, A TEST CASE AND A SYMBOL*



*The President of Hunter's Hill Trust, Mr. Michael Lehany, with Premier Neville Wran at Kelly's Bush on Sunday, September 4, 1983.*

KELLY'S BUSH derived its name from Mr. T. H. Kelly who built the Sydney Smelting Company on 2 acres of waterfront land in 1892. The adjoining 10 acres of bush land area was zoned as 'open space', a buffer between the industry and local residences.

Almost 7 acres of this 'open space' was purchased in 1956 by Hunter's Hill Council and Cumberland County Council and became Weil Park. In November 1966 the Town Clerk, Mr. Roy Stuckey, wrote to the State Planning Authority that,

*There is insufficient area in the land held and known as Weil Park, and Council feels that it is important in the interest of posterity that additional 'open space' area should be acquired whilst the opportunity exists.*

*[Council corresp.]*

But in June 1967, when the works of the Smelting Company moved to Alexandria, A. V. Jennings took a two year option to purchase the whole 12 acres. They applied to Council seeking suspension of the County of Cumberland Planning Scheme Ordinance thus enabling the development of some 147 home units, including three buildings which were to be eight storeys high. The Council opposed Jennings' development application and renewed its representations for acquisition by the State of the

whole of the area reserved for open space, but they were rejected by the State Planning Authority. The Council insisted that, under the County of Cumberland Planning Scheme, land zoned as open space should be acquired and maintained for that purpose.

A series of modified applications were subsequently submitted by the Jennings group but were not approved. The Hunter's Hill Trust strongly condemned the proposed developments.

Disagreements continued between different levels of Government. In November 1969, the Council agreed, in principle, to a suspension of the zoning to permit town house development. Mr. Pat Morton, then Minister of Local Government, refused the town house approval by the Council, and instead approved single dwelling development comprising 25 allotments. Eventually, by June 1971, a tripartite agreement between the S.P.A., A. V. Jennings and the Council planned to develop 6.5 acres of the bushland.

In what proved to be understated words by the Council, "Kelly's Bush attracted a great deal of publicity". Strong local reaction led to the formation, in September 1970, of the Battlers for Kelly's Bush and nine months later they gained powerful 'Green-Ban' support from the Trade Union movement.

## KELLY'S BUSH — Cont'd.

An example of Trade Union encouragement was Mr. J Cambourne's statement, of the F.E.D.F.A., that —

*Members of his union who drive bulldozers, graders and rollers would not clear the land. His union believed that Kelly's Bush was one of the few remaining stretches of parkland on the harbour foreshore and should be preserved.* [Sydney Morning Herald, 16.6.1971]

Further support came from the Builders' Workers Industrial Union, the Builders' Labourers Federation, the Miscellaneous Workers Union and subsequently the Trades and Labour Council of N.S.W., the National Trust, Civic Design Society, Australian Conservation Foundation, the Royal Institute of Architects and the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

In a stand of unified protest and enthusiasm six hundred people attended a rally at Weil Park in August 1971, to demonstrate their support of Kelly's Bush.

With the Union 'Green Ban' in force and a stalemate situation, Jennings unsuccessfully endeavoured to persuade Hunter's Hill Trust and the Battlers for Kelly's Bush to accept their plans. Finally, in 1974, they declared that they were prepared to sell to Hunter's Hill Council.

Commissioner Dale, who was appointed by Council to consider objections to the proposed Town Plan for Hunter's Hill, reported

*Following an inspection of Kelly's Bush, I am of the opinion that it should be preserved for posterity and recommend the 2(a2) acres be reserved as 'County Open Space' as part of the overall plan to preserve the existing character of Hunter's Hill.* [Council Records]

Another report sought by Council from Planning Workshop Pty. Ltd., was an environmental impact study of little consequence. Eventually Council voted that the zoning be made residential.

The next move of major importance was the January 1977 announcement by Premier Wran that the

Government would ensure that no development occur at Kelly's Bush. The Council was then asked to meet half the cost of acquisition.

A highly emotional dimension was added to the whole controversy when some radio-active waste material was discovered, raising serious doubts about the suitability of Kelly's Bush for residential development.

There was a long, uneasy pause in events until the welcome announcement by Neville Wran on 4th September, 1983. After thirteen years of protest and conflict, the problems were resolved and Kelly's Bush will be set aside for full public access on a permanent basis. As Premier Wran rightly claimed on September 4th,

*It represents a victory for environmentalists generally. The land will be used to give people access to a natural bushland fronting Parramatta River.* [Press Release]

Reference was made to a 'landscape and management plan for the area' and the Trust wholeheartedly supports this decision and would like to participate in a committee of management. It is hoped that Kelly's Bush will become part of the Sydney Harbour Foreshore National Park.

We would like to point out that the future of Weil Park, adjacent to Kelly's Bush, is also of vital importance with its recreational space and superb views of the city. It should be carefully considered with, or included in, the new landscape and management plan.

The words of a recent American President echo the ideas and ideals that inspired Kelly's Bush protesters for thirteen years:

*The use of our land ... shapes the pattern of our daily lives ... In the face of rapid urban development, the acquisition and development of open space, recreation lands and natural areas accessible to urban areas is often thwarted by escalating land values and development pressures. We must bring parks to where the people are ...*

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Thanks to Betty James, President of the Battlers for Kelly's Bush, for her assistance with dates and information.

IT IS A WELCOME DECISION and one that requires congratulations to all protesters and supporters of Kelly's Bush, individuals and Trade Unions, for their dedication and persistence.

BUT, in spite of Mr. Wran's encouraging words spoken at Kelly's Bush on September 4th,

*"THE GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO SAVING HARBOUR FORESHORE LAND. ALL THE FORESHORES WHICH ARE GREEN WILL REMAIN THAT WAY."* [Sydney Morning Herald, Sept. 5, 1983]

another of our important foreshore areas is under threat — THE GLADESVILLE HOSPITAL.

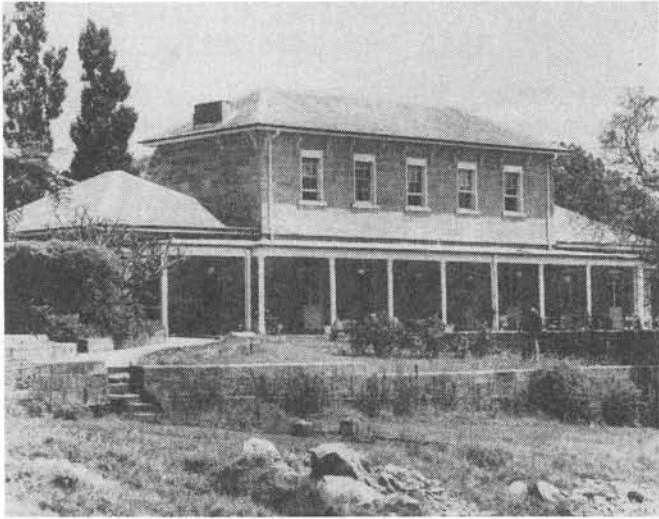
The historic property on Tarban Creek, 'The Priory', is most immediately threatened. It is a particularly fine example of local Georgian-style architecture standing in a large foreshore area planted with some exotic trees from the Pacific Islands. Strong rumours are heard that the State Government proposes selling it as surplus land to one of Sydney's large Real Estate companies, for housing development.

THE TRUST wishes to draw attention to the importance of its preservation and emphasise the need for careful planning of the foreshore area.

# THE PRIORY

by JOHN HOSIE S.M.

*'The Priory' today looks as it did in 1858 — only minor alterations at the rear of the building have changed the original. (Thomas Stubbs' cottage is the single storey wing on the right.)*



With the destruction of Mary Reiby's cottage for the sake of a freeway, one of the earliest buildings of Hunter's Hill is the 1840s cottage of Thomas Stubbs. It is the northern wing of 'The Priory' (see above), the front of which was built in 1857.

It stands unobtrusively among trees in the grounds of Gladesville Hospital, on a large area of land running down to Tarban Creek. The nearest street is Salter Street named after Thomas Salter who bought the property from the Marist Fathers, the Society of Mary. They called it "Villa Maria" and later transferred the name to their new and present home in Mary Street.

The first Marists came to Sydney in 1837 en route to the Pacific Islands, and groups of missionaries continued to pass through Sydney at regular intervals until the decision was taken to form a Sydney foundation, to be both a staging post and a supply base for the island missions.

In 1845, 3 men arrived to begin a Procure House, as they called it: Father Antoine Freydier-Dubreul, the original superior who remained only eighteen months; Father Jean-Louis Rocher, a long-term resident of Hunter's Hill and Brother Auguste Leblanc who left the Order in the 1850s to go digging for gold.

After several unsuccessful attempts to establish in other locations, Dubreul had already departed when Rocher bought Stubbs' house and land in May, 1847. Didier Joubert negotiated the purchase and the Marists became the first of many French people to live in Hunter's Hill.

Only two months later, the Marist missionaries in New Caledonia were dramatically rescued from massacre by the unexpected arrival of a French warship. In August 1847, the residence and its surrounding buildings sheltered no fewer than 17 men including 13 priests and brothers from New Caledonia. The Milan Foreign Missionaries replaced the Marists in the Solomon Islands and they also used 'The Priory' as their accommodation and supply base. With their arrival, in 1852, Rocher wrote to France that 29 people were in residence: Bishop Bataillon, 7 priests, 3 brothers, 2 lay Italians, 14 Pacific Islanders, a gardener and the cook. Bataillon had brought the islanders to Sydney where they learnt to cut sandstone in Pyrmont, shipping it to Wallis Island and Samoa to build churches.

Besides the provision of accommodation, Rocher's activities included contracting with ships' masters for transport of goods, and sometimes chartering ships for the less-frequented route to the Solomons and New Guinea. Didier Joubert often acted as their agent until the Milan Missionaries evacuated the Solomons' mission in 1855.

The Marists planted a vineyard at Tarban Creek, under the direction of a priest from the Beaujolais region exercising skills of his youth. The vines produced enough wine for the house and island missions, for religious and table use, until the 1890s.

The original buildings of the Stubbs property were soon inadequate and, in 1849, Rocher erected an extra four-room building in brick and timber. Fortunately, we have an exact idea of the appearance of the land and buildings during those years, because one of the Italian missionaries was a competent artist. He made two paintings in 1852; originals were sent to France, but copies are held at Villa Maria.

One painting looks towards the property from the waters of Tarban Creek and, for the second, the artist set up his easel on high land directly opposite, near present James Cres. It gives an excellent idea of the entire estate with Stubbs' sandstone home in the centre and shows a large wooden chapel marked with crosses.

By 1856 the inadequacies of accommodation were regularly argued by Rocher in his correspondence with France and, in March 1857, he had permission to build extensions. The result turned a very ordinary small building into a large comfortable dwelling.

It is a unique example of the architectural talents of William Weaver, who succeeded Edmund T. Blacket as Government Architect in 1854. Tenders were called in February 1857 when Weaver was in private practice, and the building as it looks today was completed nine months later at a cost of £1,685.15.1. Preservation of the building and its foreshore land is of the utmost importance, as a record of early colonial architecture and as evidence of the first French mission settlement at Hunter's Hill.

As the mission house was being completed and after twenty years of experience in the Pacific Island missions, decisions were made in France to considerably expand the activities of the Sydney base. This was to make even the new building less than adequate.

Studies and reports were compiled during the next three years and land and buildings on the opposite side of Tarban Creek were purchased in 1860. The purchase included a deepwater wharf for island ships where St. Joseph's College rowing shed now stands.

The present Villa Maria was begun in the mid-1860's and the main activities of the Procure House transferred there in 1865. Two brothers continued in the old building for a few more years. They cared for the vineyard and orchard until the property was sold to Thomas Salter in 1874, when it was given the name by which it is known today, 'The Priory'.

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*John Hosie is a member of the Marist Fathers Order and completed his M.A. (Hons.) thesis on the early settlement of the Missionaries.*



# ACTIVITIES

## CHRISTMAS PARTY

*Let's celebrate the end of the year with a great Christmas party!*

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11th, EVENING**



R.S.L. Hall, Alexandra Street  
(Opposite Cuneo)

6.30 p.m. drinks — 7 p.m. dinner

ALL WELCOME AND BRING YOUR FRIENDS

\$6.00 each

For bookings, tickets, please ring by Dec. 6th

**89-2035 — 896-1922**



## A NEW ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Since the Annual General Meeting in the middle of the year, when it was agreed to form the present Committee, we have been busy with the 'Oatlands' Day, kindly offered by Mrs. Joyce Wood. Two thousand dollars was raised and has been presented to the Vienna Appeal. Our stall at Moocooboolah was our most recent function and the Raffle on that day was won by Diana Lakeman of Huntley's Point.

Our next activity will be the Christmas Party. This year it will be a Colonial Dinner, and we have arranged for three musicians to perform. Members of our group are Diana Bryant (89-4139), Patricia Lane-Brown (816-2553), Myra MacIntyre (89-4705), Anne McNally (89-2035), Jenny Pinson (89 2235), Carol Piper (89-1313) and Elizabeth Shaw (89 2311). We would welcome many new helpers,

Jenny Lockyer (896-1922)

## NATIONAL TRUST — VIENNA APPEAL

*invites you to*

**An Alfresco Luncheon and House Inspection**  
by kind permission of Mr. & Mrs. Trevor Wadland  
on **27 November, 1983**

at 'Vailele', 2 The Point Road, Woolwich

Time: 12 - 4.30 p.m. House Inspection 2 - 3.30 p.m.

Donation to Vienna Appeal — \$45, or \$80 (double)

Enquiries, telephone 896 2870 - 89 2677 after 6 p.m.

## THE HUNTER'S HILL RATE ASSESSMENT BOOKS 1861; 1864; 1866-1881-82

The Hunter's Hill Trust Journal of February 1983 mentioned that the above books had come to light and that the Trust had recommended they be copied.

This has now been done by the Council and both the Trust and the Historical Society have each purchased a copy.

**MEMBERSHIP** fees are due on March 1 each year.

Types of membership:— Single \$5.00; Family \$10.00; Pensioner \$1.00; Student \$1.00; Life Member \$75.00. Please post to Hunter's Hill Trust, Box 85, Hunter's Hill, 2110.

## KELLY'S BUSH STUDIES

There have been two detailed studies done of types of birds and flora found in Kelly's Bush. In 1970 Professor Le Gay Brereton (Department of Zoology, Uni. of New England), observed the following birds:

Eastern Spinebill	Little Wattle Bird
Yellow Robin	Blue Wren
Silver Eye	White-browed Scrub Wren
Welcome Swallow	Indian Turtle Dove
Bul Bul	Indian Myna

The late Joan Bradley prepared the following short list of Native Plants found in Kelly's Bush:

Platysace Lanceolata	Banksia Spinulosa
Lomandra Longifolia	Elaeocarpus Reticulatus (Blueberry Ash)
Banksia Serrata	Banksia Integrifolia
Omalanthus Populifolius (Bleeding Heart)	
Acacia Longifolia (Sydney Golden Wattle)	
Acacia Suaveolens (Sweet Scented Wattle)	
Acacia Ulicifolia (Prickly Moses)	
Acacia Terminalis (Sunshine Wattle)	
Culcita Dubia (Soft Bracken), Pteridium Esculentum (True Bracken), Themeda Australia (Kangaroo Grass), Kunzea Ambigua, Polyscias Sambucifolius	
Hakea Sericea (shortish thin leaves, bulgy fruit)	
Hakea Tereticolia (longer leaves, long fruit)	