



Hunter's Hill Trust Journal

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TREE SURVEY OF HUNTER'S HILL — PART 2



Part of the Ferdinand Street foreshore reserve, Lane Cove River, with Sydney Blue Gums.

Photograph by Douglass Baglin

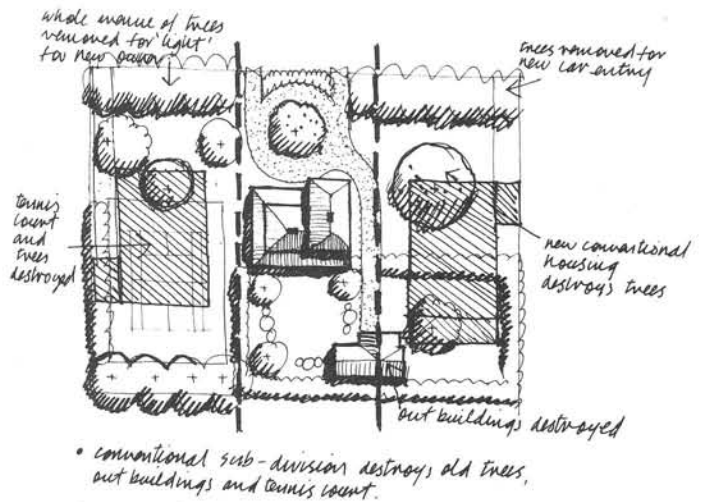
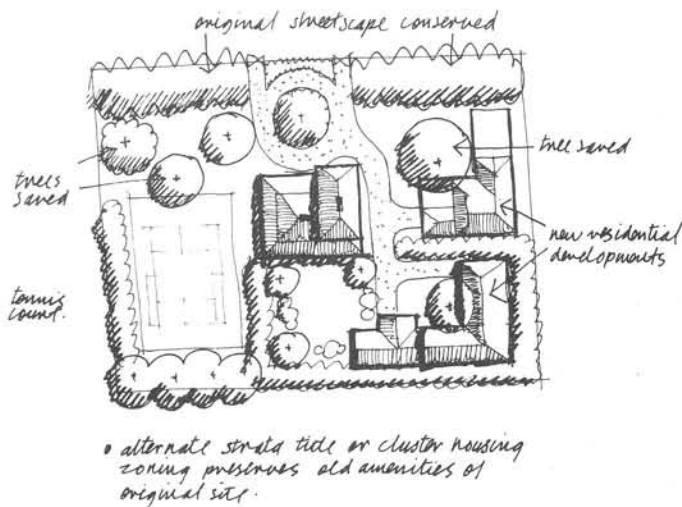
THE HERITAGE VALUE OF INDIGENOUS VEGETATION

Bushland — It is a simple matter to place a protective planning line around a piece of Sydney bushland, the whole being clearly identifiable as part of our natural heritage. The more original and healthy the bushland, the easier the assessment of its natural value and the more recognizable this value is to the average citizen. However degraded or neglected, bushland may still have real heritage value and may be identified in consideration of its restoration potential or, at the minimum, in recognition of its 'green space' value. For the former, the National Trust Bushland Regeneration team is able to assess the restoration and/or regenerative potential of remnant Sydney bushland areas and recommend an appropriate treatment. This work has been carried out for many Municipal Councils within the Sydney region, but to date no such assessment has been made for the Municipality of Hunter's Hill, which has some of the largest areas of bushland remaining (per head of population) in the region.

Remnant Vegetation — Within the Municipality pockets of native trees survive amongst modern (post 1920) subdivisions. These are the remnants of 'indigenous' bushland that itself had survived the pioneering subdivisions of the 1850's and 1860's. Often it is only the

'dominant' tree and shrub species of the original 'community' that has survived. This community of plants has different 'associations' of species. These associations are named according to their dominant species, each association being determined by the immediate environment and microclimate. In parts of the Hunter's Hill area, these associations are remarkably intact despite the impact of subdivision. These remnant plant associations are, however, increasingly vulnerable. This vulnerability stems from a number of inter-related factors:

- (a) To a natural decline of the trees through a lack of regeneration possibilities. The species is unable to reproduce by natural seeding owing to incompatible gardening practices, e.g. normal mowing and weeding may eliminate any young seedlings that have regenerated, thus leaving the 'parent stock' of trees to become 'senescent' (and eventually die).
- (b) Subdivision takes place with little regard to the heritage value of remnant stands of trees and most or all tree cover is removed, depending entirely upon the sensitivity and inclinations of both the developer and new owner; the smaller the subdivision, the greater the intensity of development and the lesser the chance of tree associations surviving. Also, the more desirable the area, the more expensive the land and the greater the pressure to build correspondingly expensive and site-dominant housing.



- (c) Where remnant vegetation occurs either within a built-up area or in open space, the competition from introduced weed species successively degrades the native environment to such a level where even the dominant 'upper canopy' of trees is in danger of extinction. This will occur where the weeds are so competitive that they starve out the less competitive indigenous vegetation.

Some Remnant Tree Communities in Hunter's Hill worthy of Special Attention

- (1) The handsome stand of mature **Sydney Blue Gums** (*Eucalyptus saligna*) along the 'hidden' Ferdinand Street foreshore reserve.
- (2) **The Christmas Bush** (*Ceratopetalum gummiferum*), **Old Man Banksia** (*Banksia serrata*), and **Pittosporum** (*P. undulatum*) stands on Mobil land (largely now confined to Fern Bay) along the Parramatta River.
- (3) The remnant stands of *Eucalyptus saligna* (or *E. tereticornis*) surviving in many properties running from The Avenue-Figtree Road area to along the Lane Cove River below Bonnefin Road.
- (4) The remnant **Coastal Banksia** (*Banksia integrifolia*) stand at Valentia Street reserve.
- (5) The rare (for Hunter's Hill) stand of **Smooth-Barked Apple** *Angophora costata* along the back of houses to the northern end of Prince Edward Street, Gladesville.
- (6) The remarkably large **Stringy Bark** in the nature strip to the western end of Prince Edward Parade, together with the remnant mature **Eucalyptus** species in both Prince Edward and Prince George Parades (either side of Gladstone Avenue, Woolwich).

All these remnant stands of trees are extremely valuable. They form an attractive part of the unique townscape of Hunter's Hill and, more importantly, they form the last remaining link with the original indigenous bushland communities, important in itself and as a habitat for 'suburban' wildlife.

The tree survey of Hunter's Hill will identify the existing state of the tree ('healthy', 'in need of treatment', etc.) and will investigate the ongoing viability of the tree or tree group. Aspects of special zoning, heritage zoning benefits, and other planning methods used to save 'green elephants' will be investigated (see diagram). In other States (e.g. Victoria) residential zonings have been introduced that allow for the maximum retention of physical and garden features while increasing the site density, an alternative to the standard subdivision.

GLOSSARY

indigenous — (plant) species peculiar or common to a specific locality, in this case local to the Sydney Harbour environs.

community — A large group of vegetation with a reasonably common species composition, e.g. Sydney Bushland Community.

association — A stable species composition of plants usually found in a similar community with the same dominant species, e.g. Foreshore Casuarina associations, mangrove associations, Sydney Blue Gum associations, (Sandstone) Angophora associations etc.

parent stock — The trees (or any species of plant) from which regeneration (seeding) may take place in order to maintain species viability (new plants for the future).

senescent — Through increasing age the species has reached an irreversible state of degenerative change.

dominant — Through natural competition with other species and by a compatibility with conditions of its environment, a species or number of species becomes dominant (i.e. most common).

upper canopy — The tallest layer of vegetation within a community (in this case the trees).

— Michael Lehany.

Michael Lehany is a landscape architect with the Government Architect's Branch of the Public Works Department. His specialty is heritage landscapes and his work has included the landscaping of the Mint Building in Macquarie Street, supervising the conservation of the grounds of Rouse Hill House, Windsor, and a report on the conservation of Government House gardens and grounds.

Please note: The categories of trees mentioned in the foregoing article are only intended to be a guide. So that we may be able to cover the area fully, the Hunter's Hill Trust would be grateful to learn of any trees thought worthy of inclusion in our Heritage Tree survey. Please send information to:

The Secretary, Hunter's Hill Trust,
P.O. Box 85, Hunter's Hill, 2110.

NEWS OF KELLY'S BUSH

from

VINCENT SERVENTY

The Kelly's Bush Management Committee has now been formed and its members are as follows:

Representing the NSW State Government from the Department of Environment and Planning: David Brigden (Chairman), Don Davison, Deanne Morris.

Representing the Hunter's Hill Council: Ald. G. Grace, Ron Powell, Vincent Serventy.

Local Representatives: Kerry Bennett, Chris Dawson, Mrs. G. Kallir, Kath Lehany.

This gives a good majority to local groups and should ensure that the views of residents and Battlers will be heard. The first stage will be to ask all those interested to send us their ideas on how the Bush should be restored and finally managed. It was generally agreed that the removal of weeds should be conducted by the National Trust using the Bradley Method and the Trust be asked to act as sub-consultants in this matter. As to the final management of the Kelly's Bush area, some ideas were aired but this will have to wait until we have received public ideas and been able to evaluate them. The Committee were agreed they wanted speedy action and decisions hopefully made and carried out within twelve months.

The Kelly's Bush Management Committee **want to hear your views**. Please send any suggestions on how the Bush should be restored and managed to:

Mr. David Brigden, Chairman Kelly's Bush Management Committee, Department of Environment and Planning, 175 Liverpool Street, Sydney 2000.

*Vincent Serventy's latest book, in collaboration with John Olsen, Mary Durack, Geoffrey Dutton, and Alex Bortignon, is **The Land Beyond Time: A Modern Exploration of Australia's North-West Frontiers** (South Melbourne: Macmillan Australia, 1984).*

LESSONS FROM BRITAIN ON 'OPEN SPACES'

In its concern for the environment Britain has certainly had a head start on Australia, since the conservation movement began there in the 1860's with John Ruskin in Oxford. This movement was the forerunner of the National Trust, which was registered under the Companies Act in 1895 as a private charity and is now the largest private landowner in Britain. As early as 1865 the Commons Preservation Society was formed and later became the Open Spaces Society. Today there are **120,000 miles of public footpaths** in England and Wales alone. These walking paths traverse farmland, forests, hills and dales. They are in fact the ancient tracks which were swallowed up by successive development but have now been returned to the people. They are enjoyed by ramblers throughout the country and in all kinds of weather!

Hunter's Hill is one of the few suburbs in Australia which has walking paths and common land for the enjoyment of everyone — Morningside reserve, Prince Edward Parade reserve, Kelly's Bush, the Ferdinand Street foreshore reserve, Passy Walk, the Boronia Park walk, and Tarban Creek reserve are some of these areas.

TRUST'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held at Hunter's Hill Town Hall, May 30, 1984

The evening began with drinks, followed by a very special dinner Italian-style.

Lyn McLaughlin on THE LANE COVE VALLEY

Guest speaker was Lyn McLaughlin, who gave an illustrated lecture on the Lane Cove Valley — the river, foreshores, and adjacent bushland. She traced the environmental history of the valley from 1788, pointing out a series of exploitations by man, leading to one of the greatest problems today, that of sediment. In wet weather there is even sewerage overflow into the river. Her talk was geared towards what she regards as the greatest exploitation and an imminent threat — **the possibility of a freeway through the valley**. This is on the State Government's books and looks like becoming actuality unless something is done to avert it. She argued:

- (1) That the Valley is an exceptional area of high quality natural environment which should be reserved for passive recreation — similar in concept to the river corridors or 'greenways' in the U.S.A.
- (2) That a Regional Environmental Plan is needed from the State Government, a plan which treats the Valley as a whole, and that we need to push for this.*
- (3) That a viable alternative be put to the Government, namely to upgrade existing roads.

The third point, which would seem to be crucial to a campaign of action, was not treated explicitly and, as the hour was late, there was not time for members to discuss the subject fully. There is no doubt, however, that the Trust would prefer a greenway to a freeway, and Ald. Sheila Swain urged the Trust to support Lyn McLaughlin's stand and to co-ordinate with other conservation groups in Lane Cove and Ryde.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Michael Lehany then followed with his Report. He observed that some progressive and intelligent debate and good decision making are coming from the present Hunter's Hill Council and noted the following:

'Vienna' — its purchase for preservation — as an excellent example of the co-operation of the Hunter's Hill Council, the 'Vienna' Appeal Committee, and local interested groups and individuals. The active co-operation between the Trust and the Council in the effort to preserve 'Allowah', a timber cottage at 6 Bateman's Road. The Trust's influence in the retention of a unique stone-roofed cistern at the Garibaldi. Advice from the Health Department that The Priory (Salter Street) is to be restored as an administration centre. The retention of the stone cottage at 165 Victoria Road as part of the Hunter's Hill Motor Inn [the cottage was built in 1855 as the first post office in Gladesville and is now known as 'The Post and Whistle Restaurant', transformed now that the aqua-green paint has been sandblasted off].

At the same time, the President emphasized the need for concerned local groups, such as the Hunter's Hill Trust, to actively monitor Council deliberations.

He thanked retiring Committee member Caroline Burke for many years of service to the Trust, also Diana Drake, who does so much work for the Trust behind the scenes.

* Such a plan is now being drafted for the Parramatta River by the Department of Environment and Planning — the foreshore and waterway from Long Nose Point and Clarke's Point to Charles Street Weir, Parramatta, and including Duck River from Silverwater to Parramatta Road.

ACTIVITIES

TRUST COMMITTEE

President:	Mr. Michael Lehany	816-1526
Vice-President:	Mr. Sam Sheffer	817-1712
Secretary:	Mrs. Anne McNally	817-2035
Treasurer:	Mrs. Doreen Carter	817-3410
	Mrs. Sheila Andrew	816-2537
	Mrs. Roslyn Maguire	816-4614
	Mr. Hudson Shaw	817-2311
	Mrs. Bev Sherry	816-2107
	Mr. Tony Simmons	816-4912
Co-opted	Mr. Douglass Baglin	817-1534
	Dr. David Bryant	817-4139
	Dr. Malcolm Lane-Brown	816-2553

THANKS TO AUXILIARY COMMITTEE

This committee, formed last year, is a dynamic addition to the Trust and has injected new life into our organization. The Italian dinner provided at the A.G.M. was quite exceptional — food, setting, atmosphere — and generated a spirit of companionship and enjoyment among our members. Many thanks to every one of you: Robyn Bond, Diana Bryant, Moya Crane, Rene Holt, Patricia Lane-Brown, Margaret Ledowsky, Jenny Lockyer, Myra MacIntyre, Anne McNally, Carol Piper, Alysoun Ryves, and Liz Shaw.

IN FUTURE THREE ANNUAL EVENINGS

At the first meeting of the new Committee, it was decided to change the format of the A.G.M. evening to allow more time for our members to express their views. In future we will devote one evening to a dinner, meeting, and free-for-all discussion. Another evening will be set aside for a guest speaker, followed by a light supper or perhaps coffee and desserts. With the Christmas party, this will mean we will all get together at least three times a year. We hope our members approve of this idea — please let us know, also, any other changes that you might prefer.

Note for your Diary: Sunday, November 25 — Trust's Christmas Party, Hunter's Hill Town Hall.

'VIENNA' Striving Towards 1988

The 'Vienna Ball' on June 2 — \$4,000 profit.

NSW State Government grant — \$92,000

(\$42,000 for the land adjoining, 'Hillman Orchard', to be purchased on a dollar-for-dollar basis with the Hunter's Hill Council. The remaining \$50,000 for urgent restoration work.)

\$15,000 has already been advanced by the State Government and work on 'Vienna' will soon commence. A programme of fund-raising activities has been organized for the remainder of the year. More money, effort, and time are needed but it looks like Hunter's Hill will have something to show in 1988!

MOOCOObOOLAH

The Trust is running a stall at the Moocooboolah Market Day, September 15, at the Hunter's Hill Town Hall. The Auxiliary Committee would like donations, particularly for their raffle — a hamper of good-quality food and wine. Enquiries: Jenny Lockyer 816-4922.

For **HERITAGE WEEK** the Trust organized a walk through Gladesville Hospital grounds on April 14 and ran a stall at the Heritage Week Fair on April 15 at Observatory Hill.

The Trust's **ANNUAL HOUSE INSPECTION** was held on April 30 and this year it was a specially generous package — three houses open for inspection, two gardens, a display of early photographs, a walk through Kelly's Bush, lunches available, and **A Short History of Woolwich** for sale, compiled by Roslyn Maguire and Diana Drake. Many thanks to all who helped and particularly to the owners of 'Verdelais' (9 Hunter Street), 2 Mayfield Avenue, 5 Werambie Street, 'Wandella' (18 Gale Street), and 'Vailele' (2 The Point Road) — their generosity in offering their houses and gardens made the day possible.

The Demise of 'Sunnyside'

In our last issue of the **Journal** we printed a 1913 photograph of 'Sunnyside' (36 Woolwich Road), a house built c.1893. The house was recently demolished. Fortunately the photograph survives, showing something of the way of life in the early twentieth century. Early photographs of this kind are valuable as evidence of social history and should be kept. The Trust would like to print material like this again and welcomes the loan of any such photographs. (Send to: The Secretary, Hunter's Hill Trust, P.O. Box 85, Hunter's Hill 2110).

Call for Information on LITERARY HUNTER'S HILL

The Association for the Study of Australian Literature (ASAL) is compiling the **ASAL Oxford Illustrated Literary Guide to Australia**, to be published as a companion to Oxford University Press's **Literary Guides** to the U.K. and U.S.A. There is to be an entry on Hunter's Hill which will include information on: (a) writers who have lived, or are living, here (e.g. R. D. FitzGerald) and (b) books which deal with Hunter's Hill (e.g. Barnard Eldershaw's **A House is Built**). In short, all literary associations of Hunter's Hill are to be included, together with a description of the suburb, map, and photographs. Residents throughout Australia are being asked to help with the **Literary Guide**, please send information on Hunter's Hill to: Beverley Sherry, 22 Woolwich Road, Hunter's Hill 2110.

TRUST MEMBERSHIP 1984-85

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.