

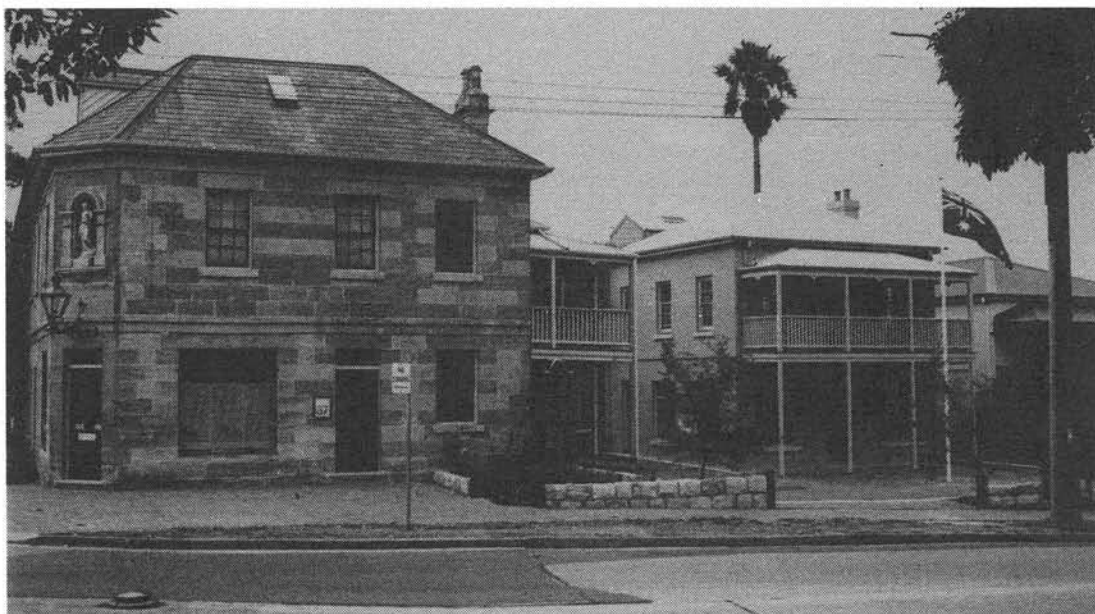


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THE STORY OF THE GARIBALDI



*The Garibaldi Inn, Alexandra Street,
with recent development of the site*

Photograph by Douglass Baglin

Probably the most historic building in Hunter's Hill and a notable landmark on the corner of Alexandra and Ferry Streets is The Garibaldi Inn. It was the suburb's first hotel and was built by John Cuneo from Genoa during the 1860s (the Council Rate Assessment Books indicate that it was unfinished in 1861, substantially completed by 1869, but that Cuneo continued to add rooms until 1881, when it was described as a '16-room stone hotel'). Although no longer used as a hotel, the building survives intact as a reminder of our past, a visible contact with the days when Italian stonemasons emigrated to Hunter's Hill, worked and lived in the area, and constructed out of the local sandstone fine buildings like this.

The Italians brought with them much of their own culture, so it was natural that the building should be adorned with a piece of sculpture in the classical style (moreover, John Cuneo imported statues from Italy through his city business until 1861). What better for a hotel than a statue of a cupbearer in the niche above the door – there she stands, offering her cup, although this statue is a copy of the original, which was stolen in 1973. It was likewise natural for the Italians to name the building in honour of a compatriot, the military leader and hero of the people who fought for the liberation and unification of Italy, Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807-1882). John Cuneo's admiration for the republican movement extended even to naming his son Garibaldi; another son was Joseph Mazzini Cuneo, after the other great revolutionary, Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-1872), also from Genoa.

The Garibaldi was run as a hotel until 1911 and until the 1880s Cuneo's Recreation Ground was on the opposite corner. It must have been a hub of social activity for the community. Some of the fun that revolved around The Garibaldi was observed by the young Robert FitzGerald, who came to live in Hunter's Hill in 1871; he passed on stories of The Garibaldi to his own son, the poet R. D. FitzGerald, who in turn recorded them in a prose piece 'A Garibaldi Veteran' (in *Of Places and Poetry* [St. Lucia, Qld. 1976]).

In the New South Wales State election of 1910, during an era of temperance fervour, a local option vote was taken on the question of reducing the number of hotels and Hunter's Hill (in the District of Lane Cove) voted for reduction. This may relate to the fact that The Garibaldi ceased to be a hotel after 1911. By 1912 the building began to be rented as a shop by Mrs. Nelly Rehm ('confectioner') and continued as such under various tenants. The latest were the Tanianes, who were there from 1934 to 1976; they bought the building from the Cuneo family in 1949 and Mr. Peter and Miss Mary Taniane ran a fruit and vegetable shop where The Garibaldi bar had been.

The building gradually fell into neglect and in 1971 Amoco made a bid for the site with the intention of demolishing the building and putting up a service station. By this time, however, the conservation movement in Australia was well under way and Hunter's Hill people were in the forefront. They fought to save The Garibaldi and won the day.

THE STORY OF THE GARIBALDI (Cont'd)

In 1979 a conservation order was placed on the building by the New South Wales State Government, which meant that it could not be demolished or altered or the land developed without the approval of the Government. In 1982 the Hunter's Hill Local Environmental Plan No. 1 was introduced and The Garibaldi is now protected under that.

Meanwhile the ownership of the building was changing rapidly. From the Tanianes, The Garibaldi passed to a succession of owners in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Attempts were made at that time to return the building to some kind of social purpose, as in the days of Cuneo. There was an application to develop it as a restaurant, then as an historic inn. These efforts failed, mainly owing to resident outcry that an increase in noise and cars would ensue.

Eventually in 1983 The Garibaldi was bought by Barry Webb & Associates, a firm of consulting engineers who now use it as offices. With the approval of the State Government and the local Council, though not without protracted negotiations, the remaining site was developed with two additional buildings for offices and shops and an underground car park. At the last General Meeting of the Hunter's Hill Trust (1984 Christmas Party), differing views were expressed about the development. While it was regarded as sympathetic on the whole, members expressed the feeling that the site is now overcrowded. We were reminded by Douglass Baglin that a service station would have been far worse. Tony Simmons, an architect on the Trust's Committee, offers the following comment:

This development has achieved more for the community than I believe other proposals would have done. Apart from the pleasing manner in which it has related the new commercial buildings to The Garibaldi, it has retained a residential quality in keeping with its neighbours. These professional offices and shops offer quiet daytime activities. The buildings have been sensitively designed

around two historic trees and Cuneo's well. The paved courtyard space between the buildings is for public use and helps to unify the new buildings with the historic Garibaldi which still dominates the site. Cars are parked out of sight and, when completed, the landscape work will add to the visual scene. The owners are lighting specialists who plan to provide subdued external lighting which will enhance the buildings and courtyard at night. They also intend to clean the stonework and replace the timber shutters on the windows (seen in early photographs) to complete the restoration work.

By careful planning and selection of construction materials and colours, the new buildings reinforce and harmonise with The Garibaldi to create a unified scheme which fits in successfully with the streetscape.

Significantly, the building still glories in the name of 'The Garibaldi Inn', written on a signboard for all to see, just as 'Cuneo' is boldly inscribed on a neighbouring property, whose origins also go back to John Cuneo; the statue in the niche is lit at night, and the cultural heritage of the Italians lives on. Realistically speaking, though, the figure of the cupbearer stands there in vain, and voices are heard in Hunter's Hill lamenting the fact that The Garibaldi is now given over to commercial offices and not used for any genial human purpose – 'Why couldn't it have been a private club?', 'a library', 'a guest house', 'why couldn't the Council have acquired it for the people of Hunter's Hill as a community centre?' – and so on. One never knows what the future may bring, for the story of The Garibaldi is not finished. For the present, the important thing is that the building still stands and has permanent protection, that it is being restored and will be maintained. Standing prominently on its corner, one of the finest mid-Victorian sandstone buildings in Hunter's Hill, it has an unmistakable power to call up the past and to make us want to learn about that past – Australia needs such buildings if for this reason alone.

[Historical sources: Mitchell Library and State Library of NSW, Hunter's Hill Trust Collection, Cuneo and Taniane families, residents of Hunter's Hill.]

'Old buildings do not belong to us only; they belonged to our forefathers and they will belong to our descendants unless we play them false. They are not in any sense our property to do as we like with them. We are only trustees for those who come after us.'

– William Morris (1834-1896)

PROPOSAL FOR NEW FORESHORE RESERVE

A proposal has been made by Mr. Graham Lenane, Principal of the Woolwich Public School, to develop part of the School land together with an area of Crown land below the School as a nature reserve and picnic area for school and community use. The land, presently unused and inaccessible, fronts the Lane Cove River; it extends almost to the Woolwich Baths and is approximately the same size as Morningside Reserve. Mr. Lenane has requested the Hunter's Hill Council to submit the project

in the next round of Commonwealth Employment Scheme (C.E.P.) funding. The proposal has the approval of the Education Department and comes at a time when the State Government is undertaking a complete survey of Crown land around Sydney Harbour (reported in *The Australian*, 9/1/85, p.3).

The Trust wholeheartedly supports this proposal and any other which aims to develop open space around the harbour for community use.

PORTABLE GERMAN HOUSES IN VICTORIA AND NEW SOUTH WALES

Lorraine Huddle

There is some evidence that The Heights, a house in Geelong, Victoria was prefabricated in Germany and erected in Geelong in 1854. The only other known surviving prefabricated timber houses from Germany are in New South Wales – The Chalet at Yerton Avenue, Hunter's Hill and Wellings Gatehouse Museum, Woodside Avenue, Burwood (a house originally in Hunter's Hill and moved to Burwood in 1967). There may be a fourth German house at Bowral, New South Wales, said to be identical to the Burwood house.

The most convincing evidence of German origins is for The Chalet. A document written in Hamburg, Germany on 8th July, 1854, states that four houses in packages and three German carpenters are to leave Hamburg on the *Jenny Lind* in August, 1854 for 'Sidney' Australia. The Chalet was one of these houses and Robert Irving, John Kinstler and Max Dupain in *Fine Houses of Sydney* (Sydney, 1982) establish its connection with the three other almost identical houses, which were also erected in Hunter's Hill but are now demolished. The German origin of The Heights is recorded in a Rate Assessment Book for 1854/55 which lists at least sixty other imported timber houses in the Geelong area, although only four of these are specified as German. The *Geelong Advertiser* recorded a Frederick Bauer importing wooden houses from Hamburg in 1854-55. The Wellings Gatehouse is said by its owners and by Irving, Kinstler and Dupain to be imported from Germany.

Evidence on the fabric of The Heights and The Chalet shows they are prefabricated. The Chalet roof structure

is largely intact and is a simple structure of vertically strutted and braced purlins supporting the rafters. These structural members are held together by large wooden dowels and inset jointing. The purlin supports have chiselled markings in a code which resembles Roman numerals. The Heights has similar markings, mainly on ceiling joists and wall studs.

In architectural style, The Chalet, The Heights, and Wellings Gatehouse differ. The Chalet resembles an Indian bungalow designed for the colonies with its wide encircling verandah and French doors. The decorative wooden fretwork is reminiscent of German or Swiss chalets. It was a standard design, used four times in Hunter's Hill. The Heights is more like a large colonial house designed in Australia. It is a single-storey mansion with a separate verandah on three sides, whereas the verandah of The Chalet is incorporated within the main roof structure. The exterior cladding of The Heights is long wide weatherboards rebated together to form deep horizontal grooves. The Chalet has this type of weatherboard but of a different width, and the lengths are cut to fit between standard vertical panels; the grooves are not so deep. The Wellings Gatehouse is completely different again. It has vertical boarding and is a two-storey, four-roomed house in the Gothic-Revival style, common in pattern books of the time and also popular in Geelong in the 1850s.

[I would like to thank Ms. Nora Heysen, Miss Del Agnew, and Dr. Bev Sherry for their time, help and hospitality during my brief stay in Sydney. – Lorraine Huddle]

Lorraine Huddle has been commissioned by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) to make a Conservation Analysis Report on The Heights, Geelong, a property bequeathed to the Trust in 1975 by Mr. L. M. Whyte. She visited Hunter's Hill in January 1985 in order to examine The Chalet (2 Yerton Avenue).

QUESTION TO OUR CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

'What is the best thing a citizen can do for Hunter's Hill?'

The Trust put the above question to Mrs. Anne McNally, Citizen of the Year for 1985, and this was her reply:

'Take a pride in your area today and preserve it for tomorrow. Don't let it deteriorate, and make sure the Council you elected doesn't let it deteriorate. Don't be apathetic. If you think improvements are needed, get off your backside and do something! And ask the Council to do something – often all they need is to be asked. Maybe a signboard is needed somewhere, perhaps a seat in a park needs repair or more garbage bins are needed, perhaps a foreshore reserve wants clearing of noxious weeds – and rubbish – and made more accessible and attractive, so people will want to use it.'

Mrs. McNally was recently on holiday in Victoria and was impressed by towns she visited and by how civic-minded people were. One town with a population of only 1100 had won a Tidy Town Award – 1100 people were responsible for meticulous gardens and footpaths and a beautiful shopping centre with a grassy strip down the middle. In the town of Sale, there were black swans in the lake and signposts with the emblem of the black swan, making visitors realise they were in black swan territory. Hunter's Hill is one of the most historic suburbs in Australia, and citizens as well as visitors should be aware of this as soon as they step into it.

Warmest congratulations Anne from the Trust!

WOOLPAC reports 'Some progress is being made in our efforts to prevent the Army developing the open space at Woolwich between Clarke's Point and Kelly's Bush. On the plus side, Premier Wran and various conservation bodies have expressed strong support. The Hunter's Hill Council finally on February 11 resolved to support our proposal that the Army's 'horse paddock' at Woolwich be preserved as foreshore open space for the people of New South Wales.

Meanwhile, the new Minister of Defence, Mr. Kim Beazley, has given us the straight bureaucratic reply from the Army that they own the land and will develop it as and when they want to. All arguments against development have been ignored.

We are now waiting on John Howard, our Federal MP, to arrange for a deputation to see the Minister for Defence and others in Canberra.'

– WOOLPAC (Woolwich People's Action Committee).

ACTIVITIES



HERITAGE ARTS FAIR

— a major Trust activity for 1985 —

The Hunter's Hill Trust Activities Committee is currently organising a Heritage Arts Fair to be held in Heritage Week this year.

Friday, 19th April, 6.30 p.m. — 9 p.m.

Cocktail Party — Hunter's Hill Town Hall.

At this function Margaret Throsby will open the Fair. \$15 per head — bookings essential.

For tickets, please send payment by 11th April to:

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

Saturday, 20th April, 10 a.m. — 4 p.m.

The Fair — Hunter's Hill Town Hall.

Entrance charge: \$2

The exhibitors are still being invited to participate but we plan to include antiques, glassware, jewellery, paintings, stained glass, calligraphy, maps, boats, woodwork and lace. A percentage of every sale will go to the Trust. The Hunter's Hill Historical Society have agreed to open their Museum, and during the cocktail party there will be a trio playing classical music.

Half of the entire proceeds will be given to the 'Vienna' Appeal and we hope to have 'Vienna' open on the Saturday.

There is much to be done to make this Fair a success, and we hope it will attract people to Hunter's Hill, with the best examples of Australian Arts. If you would like to help, please contact: Diana Bryant (817-4139), Jenny Lockyer (816-4922), or Alysoun Ryves (816-1741).

ANNUAL HOUSE INSPECTION Since preparations for the Heritage Arts Fair are taking up a great deal of our time and energy, we are holding the Annual House Inspection later this year, tentatively the first week in November. More details in the July **Journal**.

Please note: After the A.G.M. in May, Life Membership increases from \$75 to \$100.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, 29th May, Hunter's Hill Town Hall
6.30 p.m. — drinks 7.15 p.m. — dinner

Tickets — \$10

RSVP by 22nd May

Elizabeth Shaw (817-2311) or Anne McNally (817-2035)

This year we will have plenty of time to have a leisurely dinner as well as talk and exchange ideas, since there will be no guest speaker. There are a number of important and fundamental issues which need airing among all our members and not just in committee — for example, the question of how we should regard development and what kind of development we think best protects the environment, what directions the Trust should be heading in the future, what projects, activities we should pursue, how we should spend our money etc. So do come along.

NEW MEMBERS WELCOME.

TRUST PUBLICATIONS

Available from: Hunter's Hill Trust, P.O. Box 85,
Hunter's Hill 2110.

Heritage of Hunter's Hill — The only book-length study of Hunter's Hill in print, a comprehensive register of historic buildings and places, fully illustrated.

\$17.50 plus \$2 postage

Keeping Hunter's Hill Alive: the Hunter's Hill Trust Guide to Restoration

\$1.50

A Glimpse of Hunter's Hill:

A Short Walk through History

\$1.00

A Glimpse of Hunter's Hill: A Short Walk — Some of the Grand Homes

\$1.00

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Great Houses of Australia (Sydney: Lansdowne, 1984) — Douglass Baglin's latest achievement in recording Australia's history through photographs.

House Search (Sydney: Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, 1984). A useful and plainly written guide to researching the history of your house or suburb. Lists possible places to look, such as local Council records, Registrar General's Department, and libraries.

Joseph Elliott, **Our Home in Australia: A Description of Cottage Life in 1860** (Sydney: Flannel Flower Press, 1984). Based on a remarkable letter written home to England in 1860. Describes a typical nineteenth-century cottage in Australia, what was in it, how the people lived. Illustrated with sketches.

Michael Stringer, **Sydney Harbour: A Pictorial History from the First Settlers to the Present Day**. (Narrabeen: J.M.A. Stringer & Co., 1984). Essentially a history of shipping.

TREE SURVEY — THANKS

Many thanks to residents who have sent us in lists of their trees. We still need much more information. Don't worry if you don't know the botanical name, we can check that, just list the trees you have in your garden together with any personal or historical details about them. One palm, for example, on Woolwich Road is 75 years old and was one of several planted to mark the birth of sons.

TRUST MEMBERSHIP 1985-1986

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.



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