



Hunter's Hill Trust Journal

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PARRAMATTA RIVER STUDY

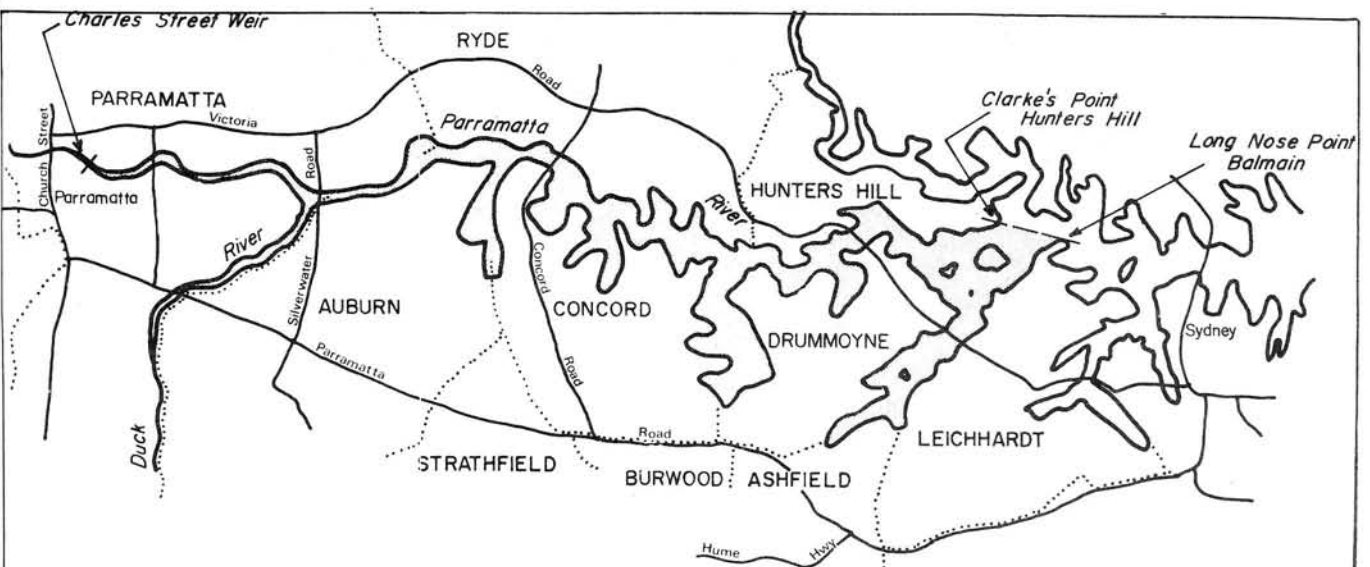
The Parramatta River is to Sydney what the Thames is to London and the Seine is to Paris. It is a major feature in Aboriginal and European history. It is now developing, thanks to the Government's clean-up campaign, as a recreational area. Already the successful Greenspace Programme has shown how formerly degraded foreshore open space areas can be improved and used for active and passive recreation. The Government has acquired former industrial land along the foreshores to be used for open space areas.

Only by proper planning, development and management can the great potential of the river be realised. A draft plan to realise this objective has been prepared by the Department of Environment and Planning. It proposes –

- a consistent approach to development consideration and approval processes to apply to applications for development above and below mean high water mark
- that only one development application will be necessary for any proposal.
- the matters consent authorities must take into account when they consider applications.
- identifying and reserving sites as potential regional open space.
- protecting sensitive wetlands and heritage items.
- extending the range of activities on open space and other foreshore land.
- promoting an increase in all types of quality boating facilities.
- requiring the preparation of plans of management before open space areas are developed.

A Foreshore and Waterways Planning and Development Committee will be established to advise consent authorities such as local councils and the Maritime Services Board on proposed developments.

The Trust has made a submission to indicate our interest in the proposals. Details from Doreen Carter – 817 3410.



PARRAMATTA RIVER STUDY FORESHORE INSPECTION

On Sunday, February 1, 1987 two members of the Hunter's Hill Trust executive committee joined a group of 14 representatives of various local environmental groups for a cruise of the upper Parramatta River. The cruise, organised by the Sydney Harbour Foreshores Protection group, aimed to examine the proposals mooted in the Parramatta River study by appraising them at first hand.

The cruise headed west from Abbotsford to the weir at Parramatta. The most striking features of this part of the river were:

1. the magnificent trees and buildings of Yaralla and Rocky Point which lie just in front of the Concord Repatriation Hospital. The other outstanding buildings and gardens when viewed from the river are those of the Gladesville and Rydalmere hospitals. These four areas are lush and verdant and almost incongruous amongst the generally flat and industrialised river banks.
2. the absence of boats – sail or motor. The area of the river west of the Mortlake punt was almost devoid of people – either on the shore or on the water. This was surprising for an area that has enormous potential for recreational use. It has been proposed to create artificial beaches and boat launching facilities here to encourage local residents to make better use of this recreational resource.
3. the planting of foreshore open spaces by councils and companies with Australian native shrubs – notably, a preponderance of casuarinas and melaleucas. Apparently, it is intended to plant "European" trees in Bicentennial Park (this park will have some frontage to the Parramatta River at Silverwater). It is imperative that tree plantings be more closely appraised in order to provide diversity of vegetation – in scale, density and colour. The present planting of open spaces is dull and unstimulating – and no consideration has been given to the needs for shade and shelter.
4. the remarkable regenerative capacity of the mangroves – which thrive naturally in many places along the river. Consensus of opinion was that it is not desirable to have mangroves running riot along all shores of the river as they do restrict access and views.
5. the large scale industrial establishments along the river give one an interesting perspective on the scale and operation of industry – both historic and modern – and an appreciation of the importance of a river site as a locational determinant. The mammoth Shell oil refinery on the banks of the Duck River at Clyde contrasts with modern light industrial premises at Rhodes and with the old Australian Gas Light Company's extensive brick complex at Mortlake.

HUNTER'S HILL HERITAGE STUDY

On Monday, 14 April, 1986, the Hunter's Hill Council resolved that a draft local Environmental Plan be made in respect of the whole of the municipality. This will protect the environmental heritage of the area in accordance with the recommendations made in the Heritage Study of Meredith Walker and associates adopted by the Council on 21 October, 1985.

In our last journal, we congratulated Hunter's Hill Council on their initiative in appointing Penny Pike to report on the implications of Meredith Walker's Heritage Study. Her comprehensive report is now with the Council for consideration and action.

MOBIL – PROGRESS REPORT

It is not likely an early decision can be expected on a project of such importance and ramifications. Negotiations are proceeding between the Council's Planning Consultants and those of Mobil in an attempt to find common ground. Mobil is understandably concerned to recover their costs in removal of their facilities and their transfer and establishment elsewhere. They believe the building of 400 dwellings of a mixed type would be necessary to meet their costs.

On the other hand the Council considers that such a proposal would be contrary to their Town Planning provisions which would allow only 150 dwellings on the site. Their other parameters are:

- no change to the existing dwelling allotments in Tiree Avenue;
- maximum of two storeys for developments along Francis Street, Wybalena Road, and Fern Street and around Pulpit Point;
- a waterside walkway with public access through the site;
- provision of additional open space;
- provision of a walkway from Tiree Avenue to Francis Street;
- consideration to the visual aspects of the development – especially from the river.

Arising out of discussion on these guidelines, the planning representative of Mobil developed new proposals which, if approved by them, would be presented to the Council's planning consultant for reporting to the Council.

HUNTER'S HILL GOLF CLUB

A former caddy, Mr. L. A. Cook of the long defunct Hunter's Hill Golf Club, writes from Queensland to remind us of this once flourishing club. The Gladesville Hospital Nurses' Home now occupies the 50-acre site which from the beginning of the century provided many of the well known residents of the Hill with their recreation. It was obliged to close in the 1930's. A caddy's life in those now far off days included cleaning the hickory shafted steel headed clubs with Brasso at the end of the day, a can of which was carried in every golf bag.

The 9-hole course was shared with farm animals so that there was a double reason for careful aim. Cowpats seemed to be magnetic to golf balls. Conversation was concerned with the rival merits of 'spoons, mashies and niblicks'. Even a top flight player would have no more than eight clubs which was just as well as he often had to carry them. Golf buggies were a technological leap into the future and caddies expensive.

Prominent members and well known residents of the 'Hill' included Sir Thomas Buckland, Judge Billy Windeyer, Herbert Lysaght, Bill Manning and T. B. Cooper. One time caddy correspondent Mr. Cook reminds us that it was an elite club; to become a member select qualifications, both socially and golfwise, were mandatory.

HERITAGE CONSERVATION – Part 1

This subject will be presented by means of a chronological survey of the major bodies and acts concerned with Heritage Conservation, in this and the next Journal. The first section will deal with its beginnings, emphasising the initiation and contribution of private individuals and groups, leading to the Federal Government's action and Australia's participation in the World Heritage Convention.

The first important step in promotion dates from 1947 with the formation of the **National Trust in N.S.W.**, an association of private individuals who modelled their body on the National Trust in England which was established in 1895. Their concern had been for the effect of the Industrial Revolution on the countryside and historic buildings.

The objectives of National Trust of Australia (N.S.W.) are the acquisition, protection and preservation of lands and buildings of national, historic, scientific, architectural or aesthetic interest and the promotion of public appreciation and knowledge of these items.

In 1960 **The National Trust Act** empowered them as a statutory corporation, but gave no legal powers to protect the buildings and sites included in their register of items considered significant to the State's heritage.

In 1968, as many will know, over 500 residents of Hunter's Hill packed the Town Hall to protest against certain Council actions and the proposed town plan. They decided to form the **Hunter's Hill Trust** to protect the unique character of the area, and has been involved since then in many issues concerned with the environment and heritage conservation.

In 1972 the Federal Government entered the field of heritage conservation with a **Committee of Inquiry into the National Estate** under Mr. Justice Hope. This showed a great need for public education and legislation to protect and conserve the National Estate and culminated in setting up in 1975 the **Australian Heritage Commission**.

The National Estate is a far reaching concept, defined as components of the natural and cultural environment of Australia which have aesthetic, historical, scientific or social significance or other special value for future as well as present generations. These items or places of heritage value are recorded in a Register of the National Estate, a continuing process. In 1980 'The Heritage of Australia – The Illustrated Register of the National Estate' was published with a description of more than 6,600 listings. This listing imposes no legal restrictions on the owners or State or local governments.

The Australian Heritage Commission provides advice to the Minister for the Arts, Heritage and the Environment, develops policies and programmes for appropriate research and training, public education and administers gifts and bequests made to the Commonwealth. A Grants Programme provides some financial assistance for the conservation of items in the Register – this is given directly to the State or Territory governments responsible for such items.

In 1972 the General Assembly of UNESCO adopted the **World Heritage Convention** which Australia ratified in August 1974 and has now been signed by over 80 countries. This aims to ensure international co-operation in the protection of the world's irreplaceable heritage. Five

Australian places have been included in the World Heritage List for their 'outstanding universal value' – Great Barrier Reef, Lord Howe Island group, Kakadu National Park, Willandra Lakes Region and Western Tasmania Wilderness National Parks.

Our second part of this article will describe the provisions for heritage conservation in N.S.W. from the **Heritage Act, 1977**.

STONE WALLS

Stone Walls are a vital element in the street scape of Hunter's Hill. While many notable walls have been demolished over the years, sufficient examples remain to show the wide variety of types of construction. Most of the existing walls were built in the second half of last century and it is a tribute to their builders that they are still standing, notwithstanding little maintenance, expanding tree roots and the tenacity of vines and creepers.

The early walls were battered, (sloping on each side) and capped with a rounded top stone designed to shed water and so prevent its penetration of the interior where clay was used as a cheap mortar. A cement and lime mortar filled the gaps between the stones as a further waterproofing medium. No. 9 Ferry Street provides an excellent example of a wall of this type.



The more usual walls are of shaped stone not requiring a batter and therefore occupying less land, with the stones mortar jointed. Few dry walls remain. Such walls are built with irregular stones and with such skill that no clay or mortar is used. A magnificent example of a wall of this type was located on part of the Victoria Road frontage of the Gladesville Hospital. It was demolished when the road was widened some years ago before such a feature was appreciated.

Many equally significant old stone walls have disappeared over the years. Strangely they have been replaced by less harmonious walls and fences. Inevitably they are beginning to change the street scape once such a distinctive feature of our suburb.

ACTIVITIES

HERITAGE ARTS FAIR

The Hunter's Hill Trust will lead New South Wales into Heritage Week this year with its second Heritage Arts Fair.

The first Fair was held two years ago in 1985 and was very successful, both financially and as a means of promoting Hunter's Hill to visitors from outside the Municipality. It also gave the opportunity to view artisans at work and to buy beautiful hand-made goods at much less than retail prices.

This year's Fair will follow a similar pattern to the first Fair. Stalls will be set up inside the Hunter's Hill Town Hall to allow participants to demonstrate their craft and to offer their goods for sale. On show will be all types of needlework including ways of making romantic old clothing, Fabergé eggs, jewellery, weaponry, antique canework and many more exciting arts.

The Fair will open with a cocktail Party at 7 p.m. on Friday, 3 April and continue through Saturday, 4 April (10 am to 4 pm) to Sunday, 5 April (12 noon to 5 pm). Ticket prices are unchanged from 1985 – \$15.00 for the cocktail Party and \$2.00 admission during the weekend (\$1.00 for students and pensioners).

The Trust will use proceeds from the Fair to provide furniture for the "Vienna" Orchard which will be public open space. The garden furniture will be the Trust's "gift to the Municipality" in 1988 to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Trust, as well as Australia's Bi-centenary.

On Saturday and Sunday of the Fair, refreshments and lunches will be available, "Vienna" cottage will be open for inspection and guided walks will be conducted. Please support the Trust by attending the Fair and bringing along your family and friends. An enjoyable outing is guaranteed!

A form to request tickets for the cocktail party is enclosed with the Journal.

Enquiries about the Fair can be made to Diana Bryant (Tel. 817-4139; Alysoun Ryves (Tel. 816-1741) or Jenny Lockyer (Tel. 816-4922).

CENTENARY OF ALL SAINTS

Our magnificent Church of All Saints will be 100 years young on 22 April, 1988.

The Church authorities are keen to make this important anniversary widely known. They are also anxious to obtain photographs, written material and relevant reminiscences of the Church and Parish.

Please contact Margaret Spinks (817 1429).

DINNER AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Please note that the Annual General Meeting will be held in the Hunter's Hill Town Hall on Tuesday, 12th May at 6.30 – 11.00 p.m. The Committee hopes that members will be early to enjoy a "happy hour" before dinner at 7 p.m. Bookings to Anne McNally (817 2035) or Jenny Lockyer (816 4922).

The meal will be followed by the Annual General Meeting when President Roslyn Maguire will report on the year's activities. As Roslyn retires from the Presidency at this meeting it is hoped that members will make a special effort to attend as a mark of appreciation for the excellence of her work and leadership over the past two years.

In the meantime it is hoped you will give careful consideration to the nomination of a member of the new Committee as the Constitution of the Trust provides for all members of this existing Committee to resign at the year's end. They of course may be nominated for the new Committee, but some have indicated they do not intend to stand again.

We accordingly invite applications to join the Committee and hope that members who feel that they could make a contribution will offer their services. 1987 is a very important year as the Mobil problem will loom large on the agenda and September will see another Council election. There is also much to be done in preparation for the Bicentenary.

All that is necessary is to record the potential candidate's full name, address and signature on a sheet of paper together with the names of the proposer and seconder and post it to the Hon. Secretary, P.O. Box 85, Hunter's Hill, 2110 **before** 20th April, 1987.

THEY'RE BACK – SUNDAY FERRIES

On Sunday, 7th December, approximately 100 people gathered at Valentia Street wharf to greet, board and farewell the first Sunday ferry in 8 years. Those who stayed behind threw streamers whilst those on board drank champagne!

Leaving at 10.13 a.m. we returned from Circular Quay at 11.50 – there are 5 return ferry trips at 2 hour intervals.

Thanks to Joan Croll for printing notices and leaflets, and to Tom Farrell for arranging media coverage for the event.

The UTA has returned this service to the people of Hunter's Hill, so please make use of it and enjoy the Harbour and City on Sunday.