



THE HUNTER'S HILL TRUST JOURNAL

PRESERVING AUSTRALIA'S OLDEST GARDEN SUBURB

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A NOISY MINORITY

TOM FARRELL

When Hunters Hill Rotary Club announced their 1993 Townscape Awards at a dinner in April, they invited Tom Farrell, an original member of the Hunter's Hill Trust, and a resident since 1950, as guest speaker. He suggested the Trust may have to again become "a noisy minority".

This is the text of his address:

I am glad to endorse the Rotary Club's decision to mark Heritage Week by awarding recognition to our fellow-residents of Hunters Hill who have contributed to the beautification and preservation of this unique and remarkable suburb.

Heritage Week is only seven days long. The preservation of our special environment here requires us to have 52 heritage weeks a year, because not everyone shares our enthusiasm for the preservation of heritage values.

When the Hunter's Hill Trust was formed all those years ago, we were a noisy minority. There was a mayor, 30 years or so ago who said, "We don't have an historic suburb. We've only got a lot of old houses."

It was true we had a lot of old houses, and many fine old houses, but we also had old streetscapes which were unmatched in Sydney, old stone walls of greater length and duration, and of course! a greater proportion of waterfront than any other municipality.

The noisy minority put its case convincingly and frequently and pressed for the adoption of local government rules and plans and provisions that would maintain the beauty and character of Hunters Hill against the pressure of people who thought Hunters Hill should be developed as another Kirribilli or Drummoyne — and there were many such people and they were loud in the land.

We preservationists were also determined to make ourselves heard, and for quite a while, local politics in Hunters Hill was a lively pastime. There were meetings which filled the Town Hall and other halls and had standing overflow crowds. I remember chairing one such meeting in the Town Hall. We had one or two rows of people who came along to put the case for closer development — for permitting high-rise blocks of units, relaxing the foreshore protection rules, and ridiculing the Trust's proposals for a special town plan for Hunters Hill.

I recall one persuasive speaker who said, waving a fist, "You are preventing people taking advantage of the demand for land and

housing, people who need the money." I replied as convincingly as I could, "Just wait. If we continue to be a low-rise, green and pleasant suburb, property values will rise to figures we can't imagine."

That, as you know, happened, but it took a lot of faith at the time. The big money did come to Hunters Hill, attracted by the green and leafy environment, the splendid water views and access, and the atmosphere of quiet comfortable gentility.

Not all the big money brought good taste with it. Some fine houses and sites were ruined, some waterfronts became blockhouses prepared for any siege. Up went two-metre brick and concrete walls and spiky iron fences to keep out housebreakers needing to acquire their drug money. Prominent among the newcomers were the DINKS (double income, no kids) who concentrated on internal renovations and landscaping, and the SHRIAs (See How Rich I Am) who frenziedly razed old stone and wooden cottages and built as high, thick and ugly as the rules allowed.

It worries me that this is still going on and that the rules seem to have become rubbery. Not far from where I live, a platoon of tradesmen are converting what were once pleasant free-standing cottages into a complex which occupies almost the entire site, and seems capable of housing an arm of government. With any luck, the street trees will hide it, but it will take time.

Elsewhere in our green and leafy suburb there are blemishes in the form of so-called studios, where neighbours who for generations have enjoyed quiet solitude suddenly find themselves overlooked. One complainant to a person in the Council was told, "Well, you see, it's the trend."

Trend to what? It's a trend I think should be reversed. There are pressures on our decision-makers, of course. There always have been. Taste and principle have always been at odds with money and greed. As well, pressures for closer development are coming from government planners who want local government to cram more people into the older suburbs so spending can be reduced on the suburban sprawl — cut back on new roads, new water lines, power lines, rail lines . . .

It's a gloomy prospect. If Hunters Hill is going to retain its unique character, I think we have to rev up the noisy minority again. I hope, indeed, that it's now a majority, who will stand up and shout for the preservation and protection of Australia's oldest and finest suburb.

Stop Press- The Minister for Planning, the Hon. Robert Webster, MLC, will hand over Kelly's Bush to the Hunters Hill Council on Thursday, 26th August 1993. A special circular will be distributed to the Municipality.

ARCADIA IN DANGER

RECORDING AND CONSERVING OUR VANISHING PARKS AND GARDENS

By Roslyn Maguire

This is the title of a National Trust (NSW) workshop held at the Trust headquarters Observatory Hill on July 10 and 11 which started by asking "Why recording and classification of parks and gardens is important"?

Classification guidelines for gardens and parks were discussed with models provided by the Australian Heritage Commission and National Trust of Victoria. Their forms adopting a similar approach to that used for listing buildings based on the Burra Charter. This is, of course, the very foundation of the Hunters Hill Conservation Area guidelines and regulations, however effectively or erratically they might appear to be enforced.

The Hunter's Hill Trust has always been concerned with garden preservation, and often fought long and hard for the retention of space around local historic buildings.

Participants at the Saturday workshop included some of Sydney's best-known landscape architects, such as Michael Lehany, a past Hunter's Hill Trust president, Chris Betteridge and Warwick Mayne-Wilson (Chairman), along with representatives of government departments, heritage bodies, local government and students.

Richard Aitken of The National Trust (Victoria) illustrated various types of garden, based on classifications already in practice, and discussed the categories of Institutional gardens, industrial gardens, memorial places, cemeteries and churchyards, and of most relevance to Hunters Hill, Suburban Villa Gardens. A slightly more complex listing approach by Julie Ramsay of Canberra's Australian Heritage Commission, relies on a greater number of categories for classification - cottage gardens, terrace house gardens, homestead gardens, private parklands as well as villa and suburban gardens of different sizes and types.

The intention of the NSW National Trust to establish a register of classified gardens and parks, is clearly prompted by a concern at their vanishing numbers. The Hunter's Hill Trust is in a position to both contribute their local experience and accumulated information, as well as gain larger recognition and support from the National Trust where and when threats loom.

The very basis of Council's Conservation Advisory Panel's deliberations aimed at preserving the character of Hunters Hill, amounts essentially to development control and a retention of original area, and where possible character, of private gardens.

Council ineffectiveness, obvious in many sensitive parts of the municipality, arises from the increasing threat generated by the State government's special planning policies such as Dual Occupancy and Reduced Allotment Size. These policies simply exacerbate the already existing pressure from more and more ratepayers eager to attach large extensions and "improvements" to their houses thereby reducing garden space.

Hunters Hill has abundant examples in many of the proposed National Trust categories. Our significant institutional gardens like Gladesville Hospital (both northern, and the now controversial southern, campuses), the Priory and Villa Maria in Mary street predate the first subdivisions. Reserves and large parks like Boronia Park, Kelly's Bush, Ferdinand Street Reserve, and Clarke's point carry important stands of surviving bushland and are under Council care and control.

Surviving examples of marine villa gardens with terracing, mature trees and shrubs and recreational facilities such as tennis courts, would seem to be the most threatened of all.

Arcadia in danger is correct; subdivisions, engrossment of buildings and dual occupancy are sadly reducing the distinctive tree canopy-cover and garden area and quality of Hunters Hill.

Notes

Ramsay, Juliet - Type Classification in Parks, Gardens and Special Trees, pp2-10; Australian Heritage Commission AGPS 1991

Quint, Graham - Report on Bushland, commissioned by Hunters Hill Council, 1989

The Hunter's Hill Trust has published reports, submissions and journal articles by Michael Lehany and other on local gardens, parks, reserves and bushland.

WOOLWICH SCHOOL SITE

ROB PILLANS ATTENDED THE PUBLIC MEETING MAY 25 AND REPORTED:

On behalf of the Trust, I attended the above public meeting held at the Hunters Hill Town Hall. There were approximately 200 people in attendance and views were expressed by a number of people. Following earlier public interest in the Woolwich school site a community committee was formed to consider possible uses for it and to develop recommendations for consideration by the Hunters Hill Community. This was the first meeting to discuss those recommendations.

Key speakers were:

1. Clive Norton, local church representative - he indicated that a strategic plan has been prepared which outlines the committee's ideas. The committee's preferred option for the site as outlined in the plan is for the construction of an old people's hostel. There are no concrete designs or finance ideas at this stage. He said there would be forty units for sale plus 14 units to go to financially disadvantaged people from the state list. Funding from the Commonwealth Government would be given to the tune of \$1.6 million. The land is currently owned by the State Government but it will sell to either the Council or the group operating the retirement hostel, depending on the circumstances.
2. Bob Salisbury, Commonwealth Department of Health - he stressed that an old people's hostel is different to a retirement village and a nursing home and discussed a number of operational issues.
3. Donna Grant, Home Care Service of New South Wales - she provided visual examples of existing hostels and tried to stress that design in the nineties focuses on fitting in with the local environment and that community involvement is encouraged.
4. Ross Williams, Mayor, Hunters Hill Municipality - he indicated that there are no firm plans before the Council at this stage. He felt that there was potentially a demand because already 9% of the residents of the Municipality are aged older than 75 years. He stressed however that normal planning and development control considerations would apply, if and when, a plan is put to Council. He emphasised the consulting with community approach.
5. David McDonald, Chairman of the Committee - talked a little bit more about the finance. He believes the project would cost about \$6 million in total and take about 18 months. Completion around June 1995 was mentioned. He mentioned that the building of a model would show how the existing school building will be retained and he stated that the school building will not be demolished.

There were a variety of questions asked from the floor and it was clear there was a great deal of concern regarding the proposal. The main concern seemed to be firstly that the municipality may not need such a facility and then secondly a number of issues relating to the design and potential traffic problems. Peter Pinson (Trust member) asked if the committee would be seeking input from architects and heritage advisors given the importance of the site. David McDonald confirmed this to be the case. After much discussion it was agreed that a further meeting would be held to discuss the issue. The Trust will continue to monitor developments in relation to this important site and is preparing a submission to the committee.

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LOCAL HISTORY RECORDS LIBRARY

*Michael Stitt, Conservation Planner,
Hunter's Hill Council.*

Hunter's Hill Council is currently undertaking preliminary assessment to consider the establishment of a local history records library. This library is to enable local residents and other interested parties to easily gain access to documents and artefacts relevant to the history of Hunter's Hill. Many readers would be aware that at present many important documents are currently dispersed among local residents who have patiently housed this material over the years. It is hoped that in due course this material will be centrally located. The project requires answers to some important questions and these include: What materials exist and how should they be conserved?; Where should a library be sited? Should it be on Council premises, or at Ryde library?

What physical conditions and storage space are required to ensure the conservation of artefacts? How and who should manage and supervise the materials? In addition Council is also required to consider the cost of the project and how it may be undertaken, that is, that it may be achieved in stages.

Editorial Note - Archives

The Hunters Hill Council has come to the aid of the Trust and provided temporary storage for our Archives at the Fairland Hall Basement. Unfortunately the basement has a damp problem, and will be unsatisfactory in the long term. The Council has advertised for an archivist to assess records held by various organisations, and the need for storage.

The Piquenit family & i

Megan Martindale
Ryde Librarian

William Charles Piquenit was born in Hobart on August 27 1836. His father, Frederick Le Geyt Piquenit, had been transported to Van Diemen's Land in 1830. Frederick's fiancée, Mary Ann Igglesden, followed him and they married in Hobart in 1833. Mary Ann set up a school for young ladies where she taught French, music and drawing.

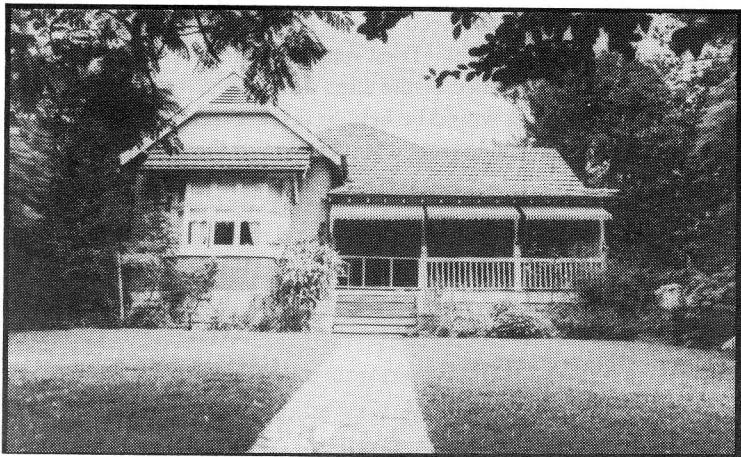
In 1850 William became a draftsman with the Tasmanian Lands & Survey Department where his cousin Alfred Randall was also later



widow and two young children. Agnes' sister Emma Mary had married John Gidley Fleming in 1862. Her remaining family were her parents, Frederick and Mary Ann, her brother William Charles, and her sister Harriet Victoria. They arrived in Sydney in early 1880, together with Agnes' niece Mary Ida Piquenit.

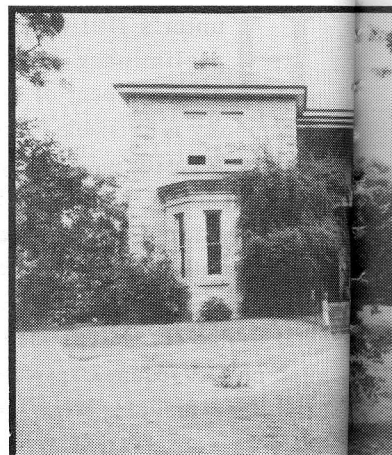
The family lived first in Warren Road Marrickville in a house which they called Saintonge after the French province from which the Piquenit family originated. It was from this house that Harriet married surveyor Gerald Harnett Halligan in November 1881. By 1883 the Halligans and Piquenits had moved to Hunters Hill where Alfred Randall bought part of the Figtree Farm estate from Numa Joubert. Alfred built a large stone house in Avenue Road.

While this house was being built the families lived for a time in Paraza and Eugowra in De Milhau Road. The Piquenits then moved to a house in Joubert Street called Swiss Cottage (possibly Cliff



Lenah, 20 Avenue Road

employed. William left the public service in 1873 to devote his time more fully to painting and his oils and watercolours of Tasmanian landscapes soon brought favourable reviews. Around 1878 Alfred Randall married William's sister Agnes Louisa. They moved to NSW where Alfred began a new career as surveyor for the Department of Railways. They were based at Dubbo but, according to family accounts, Agnes found life in a tent by the railway unsuitable. Alfred offered to build a home for the family in Sydney. Agnes' eldest brother, Augustus Frederick, had died in Hobart in 1859 leaving a



Saintonge

n Ladies Librarian
y &ation Services



After moving to NSW William's landscape subjects included the Darling, Nepean and Hawkesbury Rivers as well as the Lane Cove River close to his Hunters Hill home. By the end of the century he was

regarded as the leading Australian-born landscape painter. Harriet Halligan was also a painter, and is

By 1885 the Piguénit family had moved into the house built by Alfred Randall in Avenue Road. They named this house Saintonge also and it was here that Frederick Piguénit died in 1886 and his widow Mary Ann in 1892. They were buried at St. Anne's, Ryde. Around 1896

Kaoota, 26 Avenue Road

Alfred Randall died at Saintonge in 1912 and William Piquenit in 1914. They were buried in the Field of Mars cemetery. Agnes Randall and her niece Mary Ida moved to Lenah. Piquenit's sister Emma Mary Fleming took over Saintonge and members of the Fleming family remained in residence until 1974.

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The 25th Annual General Meeting was held at the RSL Hall, Alexandra Street on Wednesday 12th May 1993

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of the committee for their support over the last two years, and in particular Patti Mackenzie, the retiring vice-president, who has worked diligently for the Trust as a committee member in various offices for the last seven years. Her energy and enthusiasm know no bounds, and she will be sorely missed.

At the last AGM members voted to alter the Trust's constitution in a number of ways to bring it up to date. Copies of the constitution are now available.

The Trust has been active on a number of fronts during the year.

Perhaps the major issue this year has been the continuing development of plans for the rezoning of the Riverglades site. The issue has not had an easy path through Council. Nor should it. There are a number of issues still to be resolved. From the viewpoint of the Trust the current plans are perhaps the best we can hope for given the rapacity of the Health Commission and the push for greater density by the Department of Planning. The view corridors both from and to The Priory are to be retained. Areas of importance are to be protected, and a large area of public land and waterfront will come under the management of Council. The Trust has submitted comment, criticism and suggested amendments each time plans have been displayed, and has met and consulted with Council and other interested parties at all stages during the debate.

Treasurer's report

The total accumulated funds of the Trust increased from the previous year by \$1,385 to \$19,982. These funds are represented by cash and receivables of \$12,464 and books and other items held for resale of \$7,610 less a creditor of \$92. Income for the year was \$8,952 and expenses \$7,567.

The Trust is financially well placed to continue its important role in the community and achieve its objectives.

For the financial year ended 28 February 1993 the membership records showed the following financial members: Life members 94; Family members 63; Single members 69; Student/pensioner members 17; Total 243.

This represents a reduction of 63 members from the prior year, a situation which indicates a membership drive is in order to counter this drop-off of numbers.

Archives Committee report

The Trust in its 25 years of existence has accumulated a great volume of archival material which provides a valuable and irreplaceable historical record of the heritage history of this suburb. These archives have never had a proper home

There have been discussions with staff at the library in Pittwater Road and at Ryde Library. It was suggested that significant items of the Trust's archives might be deposited at this facility. The committee believes that archival material

belonging to Hunter's Hill should not leave the municipality, but should be kept in a location which permits safe and secure storage, and space for projects and historical research.

We hope to have a resolution to this situation in the near future, with some assistance from Council.

Foreshore reserves

The waterfront reserves committee has not progressed significantly since last year in its appraisal of the state of the various (43) reserves in the municipality.

The Trust has indicated its strong disapproval of the leasing by Council of waterfront land adjoining and forming part of disused roads to adjacent owners. It is not Council's task to enrich waterfront land owners at the expense of the amenity of the rest of the community. In addition, many waterfront reserve areas are used as convenient locations for adjoining owners to dump garden waste.

Moocooboolah

The Trust had a successful stall at the festival to sell Trust merchandise and promote the Trust generally

Journal

The Trust continues to publish the journal thrice yearly under the guiding hand of Jenny Thompson and Patti Mackenzie, and is attempting to canvass wide views to provide interest and variety.

Conservation Advisory Panel

The Trust continues to support the activities of this important body. The official Trust representative on the Panel, Roslyn Maguire, provides a report to the Committee on a monthly basis of the workings of the panel, and any issues which might warrant the Trust's involvement.

The Trust is extremely appreciative of the contribution Ros makes to this panel on the Trust's behalf. In particular I would like to thank Ros for her assistance in the Riverglades zoning proposals, and to both Ros and Diana Drake for their researches into the history and heritage of The Priory and its site.

Kelly's Bush

The Trust is liaising with Council regarding the handover from the Department of Planning.

Council Meetings

All Council meetings are attended by a member of the committee on a rostered basis.

Christmas function

An extremely successful and well-attended function was held at Eulbertie in the grounds of Hunter's Hill School, with an interesting and amusing talk given by conservation architect Clive Lucas.

Ian Kelley, President

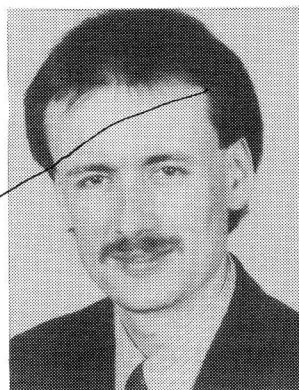
Committee News

The new Committee met on the first Wednesday of June, the usual meeting time, and was surprised to hear Ian Kelley step down as President. The Committee has thus been depleted as Patti Mackenzie, our hardworking Vice President had not renominated for the Committee. However, Ian is staying on the Committee and will continue as the Trust's Representative for the Riverglade redevelopment.

Jenny Thompson takes over as President; Len Condon remains Secretary and Rob Pillans Treasurer. Diana Temple is in charge of the Archives; Robyn Christie may take over the Journal after her overseas trip, and Moya Crane joins us for the first time. Rae Hensley has also left the Committee defecting to the Blue Mountains. Rae's work with the Waterfront Reserves is of great use but we need a Chairman for this important Committee to continue Rae's work.

Our Committee members need some introduction. Jenny Thompson is a psychiatrist working with the Glebe Community Centre and Crisis Team, with one

session per week at Parramatta Prison. Len Condon is an architect, based at home. Rob Pillans (pictured) is a Chartered Accountant with Price Waterhouse, and commutes by cycle and ferry. Rob is a keen cyclist who believes that the integration of cycling and public transport is the way



Rob Pillans

of the future for urban travel. Diana Temple, a medical scientist, works at the University of Sydney. Diana is a member of the Board of the Family Planning NSW. Ian Kelley has established his own Public Relations business in Cremorne. Moya Crane, a retired academic, will be a big help as she has a bit of time to spare during the day. Robyn Christie is a qualified curator, and is completing a heritage Conservation course. Robyn Christie has worked with the National Trust.

President:	Jenny Thompson	817 4440
Secretary:	Len Condon	816 2796
Treasurer:	Rob Pillans	816 2971
Members;	Diana Temple	817 4941
	Moya Crane	817 1137
	Ian Kelley	879 6640
	Robyn Christie	817 1670

HELP WANTED

Your Trust committee needs some help. Due to various reasons we are short of members on the committee and two sub-committees. If you can help, we would like to hear from you.

— PLEASE CALL —

the President, Jenny Thompson on 817 4440, or the Secretary, Len Condon on 816 2796.

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS

- Subscriptions are due on the first of March each year.
- Current rates are:
 LIFE MEMBERSHIP\$200
 FAMILY\$25
 SINGLE\$15
 PENSIONER/ STUDENT\$5

To renew or to subscribe please post your cheque to the:

Hon Secretary The Hunter's Hill Trust
 PO Box 85 Hunter's Hill 2110

You are invited to

HUNTER'S HILL TRUST CHRISTMAS COCKTAIL PARTY

on

WEDNESDAY 1ST DECEMBER, 1993

6 PM TO 8.30 PM

THE PRIORY

SALTER ST., GLADESVILLE

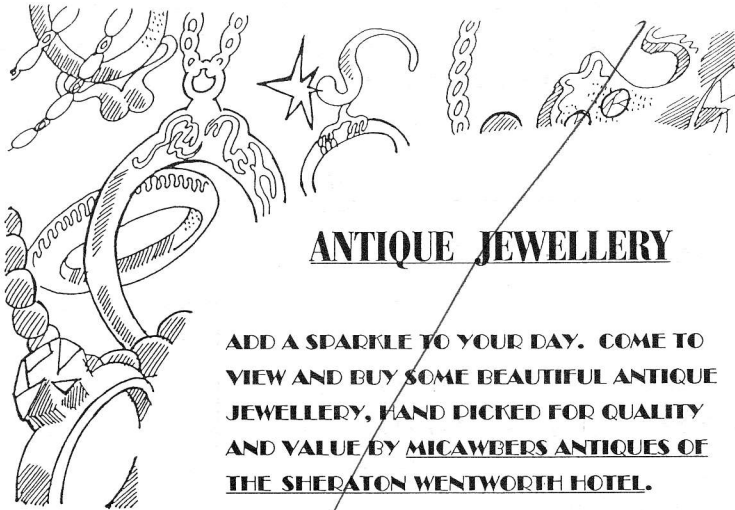
Guest Speaker: Jean Rice - Conservation Architect

Our guest speaker has recently completed
a Conservation study of the Priory and has made
NEW DISCOVERIES!

Tickets \$25 per person payable in advance:

PO Box 85, Hunters Hill 2110

Inquiries: Jenny Thompson



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&
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TIME: 11am - 4pm each day

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ENTRY: Free

ENQUIRIES: Ivana Puren - 816 1419

VIENNA

27-29th August
Quilters' Bazaar at
Vienna. The
Hunter's Hill
Quilters are having
a display and sale
of their work.

Further
information: please
ring Sheila Swain
817 2510.