

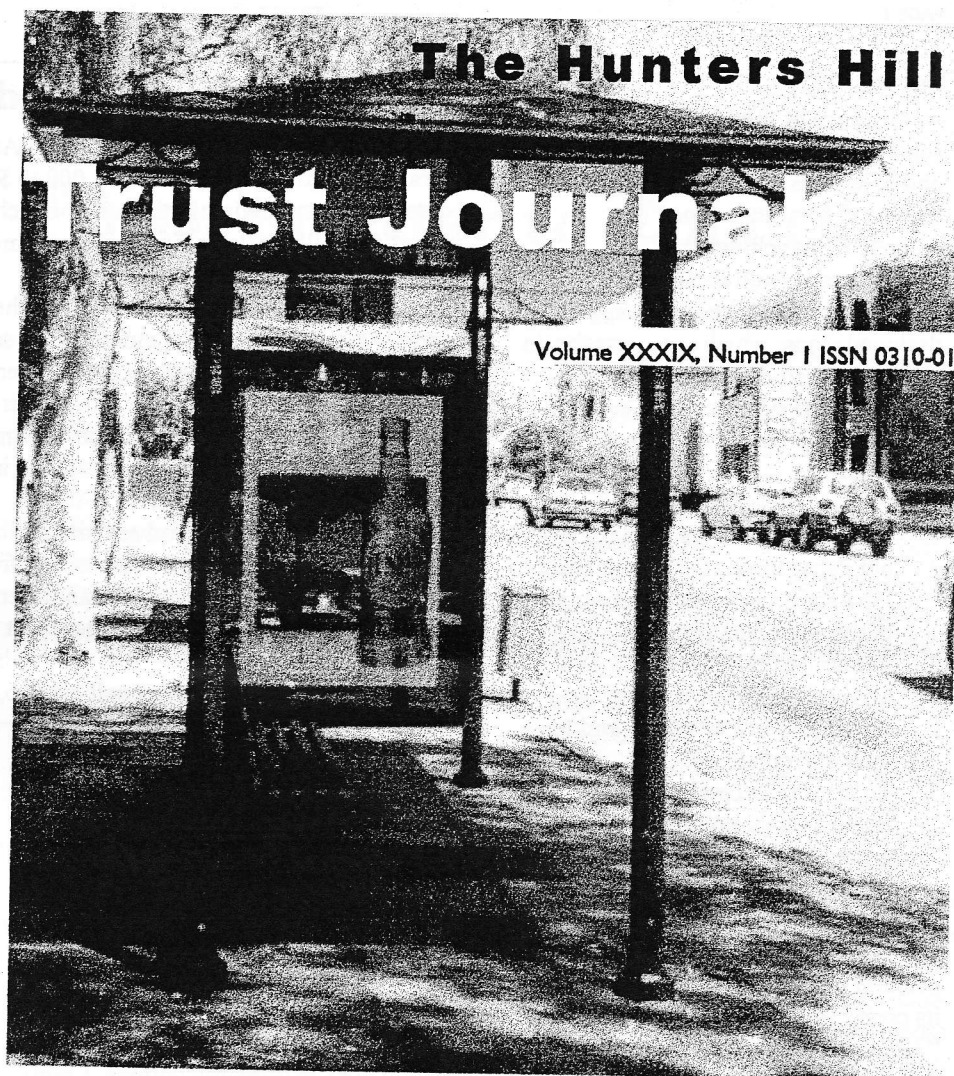
**The Hunters Hill Trust  
Inc.  
Established 1968  
Preserving Australia's  
Oldest Garden Suburb**

March, 2000



**Join the Trust**

Membership of the  
Trust is \$25 a year  
for a family,  
\$15 single and  
\$5 for pensioners  
and students.



**The Hunters Hill**

# Trust Journal

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## Proposal for 20 bus shelters with billboards opposed by Trust at Council meeting

**C**oming soon to a site near you - a bus shelter with an advertising billboard on its end? At its meeting on January 31, Hunters Hill Council had before it a report setting out a proposal from Adshel, a street furniture company which would place 20 advertising bus shelters (sample picture above) in the municipality without cost to the council. The shelters would be along Ryde, Pittwater and Victoria roads. Similar shelters

have been placed in Drummoine, Ryde, and Parramatta. Adshel would have 20-year exclusive rights to advertising on the shelters and to advertising on other street furniture in Hunters Hill.

The Trust stated its objection in a letter which was delivered to all councilors before the January 31 meeting.

The letter said :

"While we are in favor of the provision of bus shelters, we oppose the use of shelters and street furniture

for advertising.

**"DCP No 14 -** The council Development Control Plan No. 14 has protected citizens in the past from intrusive advertising and it has been used to preserve the integrity of the municipality.

"It states :

1.3 "Introduction

This plan aims to control the use of advertising structures and signs, so as to preserve the uniqueness and natural beauty, and the architectural and historical

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significance of the Municipality's environment, and to ensure that the aims and objectives of Hunters Hill Local Environmental Plan No. 1 (as amended) are achieved.

In this regard, well designed signs can enhance a streetscape, whereas poorly designed signs, which are excessive in size and which do not relate to the buildings and surroundings, reflect poorly on the overall quality of our townscape.

#### 1.4 General Objectives.

1. To ensure that advertising does not detract from the scenic beauty, Heritage significance and amenity of the Municipality.
2. To ensure that advertising is in harmony with the buildings to which they are attached, and to their surroundings.
3. To prevent excessive signage, clutter and visual pollution."

The argument that this form of advertising appears in Ryde, Lane Cove, Drummoyne and Parramatta Council areas does not relate to the particular position of Hunters Hill with regard to its conservation status.

#### "Advertisements on other things -

The proposed agreement would give the contractor exclusive rights to advertising on other street furniture, as and when it appears.

The Trust objects strongly to this additional part of the proposal. The citizens do not want to see garbage tins highlighted by advertising messages, nor do they want to rest on street seats adorned with an advertising message.

**"The doggy poo bins -** The Parks and Trees Committee considered a proposal that a pet supplies company provide doggy poo bins in Boronia Park on a similar basis to that proposed for the bus shelters - free bins, free ads.

"Although told that such advertising and bins were provided to other municipalities, the Hunters Hill committee rejected the proposal on the grounds that Hunters

## What Adshel does and what it gets in return

According to a report given to Council Adshel would install 20 illuminated shelters, said by them to be worth \$8,000 to \$10,000 each, free of charge. They would clean them and maintain them without charging the council. They would pay the electricity bills. All graffiti would be removed in 12 hours.

So what's in it for them?

Adshel want a 20 year contract giving them exclusive rights to advertising on all new street furniture in the municipality supplied by them. Adshel would also have exclusive advertising rights over all other street furniture, whether they supply it or not. If council wants to deal with another supplier, it has to give Adshel written notice and give them the opportunity to match the terms of the other supplier. Adshel also has the right to propose the installation of other street furniture carrying advertising.

The bus shelters have an advertising billboard on one end with a panel each side. Adshel will have sole rights to revenue from the billboards. When a Trust member rang Adshel for a quote to place an advertisement on a shelter the member was quoted \$785 a month for one panel short term or \$700 a month for 12 months. Each billboard has two advertising panels for hire - one each side. The gross revenue from each shelter let annually is \$16,800

Hill did not want advertising in its parks.. Several members of the committee offered to meet the cost of a bin out of their own pockets.

**Location -** It is noted in the recommendation that the bus shelters would be in Victoria Road, Pittwater Road, and Ryde Road.

"Parts of these roads are in the conservation area as presently defined. Council supported by the Trust has campaigned in the past for the inclusion of all of the Municipality up to Pittwater road, within the conservation area. We will continue to campaign for the inclusion of the western section in the conservation area and we hope that the council will continue this campaign.

**"The need for shelters -** If council requires 20 bus shelters, why did it provide only \$10,000 in its 1999-2000 budget for the purpose? The report estimates that the cost of a shelter would be between \$8,000 and \$10,000. One might draw the conclusion that mem-

bers of council do not travel by bus. The Trust recommends that council define its bus shelter requirements - hopefully in consultation with residents - then

put the job out for tender.

A Municipality of the status of Hunters Hill can well afford to pay for its own bus shelters.

In conclusion - keep gratuitous advertising out of our streets."

The Trust president, Gil Wahlquist, was given permission to address council. He said that on an inspection of bus routes 538 and 506 he could find only 15 shelters. There was one other, not on a bus route. There were 26 seats along the routes and a need for more seats. He said that there was no need for council to purchase seats or give the sites to Adshel. He suggested that organisations or individuals would gladly sponsor them as memorial or commemorations.

There were four bus shelters on Victoria road, two on Pittwater road and two on Ryde road. Where were the 20 Adshel structures to go?

The bus stop in Victoria road at Henley had been moved but the bus shelter hadn't. Other shelters were dirty and needed cleaning and painting, a couple might need replacing. Beyond that, there did not seem to be the need for 20 shelters on the three roads. Residents should be consulted on their needs.

The engineer told council that bus

### Others said "No"

Cr. Margaret Christie told the Hunters Hill Council meeting that the councils of North Sydney, Mosman, Ku-ring-gai and Woollahra had said "no" to the Adshel proposal.

shelters came prefabricated and there were four, not yet erected, in the council yard.

The council had also received a letter from the National Trust of Australia (NSW) condemning the shelters and pointing out that they were in breach of council's DCP-14 Advertising Signs. Nevertheless, the deputy mayor, Cr. Quinn moved that council in principle support the installation of the Adshel bus shelters. The motion was seconded by Cr. Betar. Details regarding the proposed locations were to be cleared up. Other councilors were uneasy about the motion.

Cr. Astridge said that local businesses should be given the opportunity to donate bus shelters, without advertising, their donation being acknowledged with a modest plaque. He said he would be prepared to donate one and pay for its maintenance and others would do the same.

Cr. Lucas said he did not like the idea of allowing a private company to benefit from the sale of advertising erected on the council's land.

Crs. Christie wanted the community to be given the opportunity to see what one of the Adshel shelters would look like erected in the conservation area, in Ryde road.

Cr. Kapel moved an amendment of deferral but then was showered with suggestions from most councilors. The final amendment became:

1. Consideration of the matter be deferred until Council is provided with more detailed information about the proposal and possible alternatives.
2. An appropriate process of community consultation be put in place and this process be concluded and the outcomes reported back to Council by 30 June 2000.
3. The bus shelter requirements of the Municipality be clearly defined.
4. A sample bus shelter be erected for a trial period in an appropriate location in Ryde Road for comparative purposes.
5. The report to Council include in-

## "Degrading" says National Trust in letter to Council

Stephen Davies, Deputy Executive Director and Head, Conservation of the National Trust of Australia (New South Wales) wrote to the Hunters Hill Council saying that the shelters were not appropriate and in breach of Council's Development Control Plan No. 14 - Advertising Signs..

The letter said, in part:

"The whole of the peninsula bounded by the Lane Cove River and the Parramatta River, Old Punt Road, Victoria Road, Pittwater Road, Ryde Road, Farnell Street, High Street, Pittwater Road and Strangers Creek is classified by the National Trust of Australia (NSW) as an Urban Conservation Area, split into six precincts. The proposed location of the bus shelters, along Victoria Road, Ryde Road and Pittwater Road, fall predominantly within this area. The reasons for listing include the following:

"Hunters Hill is one of Australia's oldest suburbs .... Unlike other areas settled in the mid-nineteenth century, Hunters Hill has remained a suburb of cottages and villas set in gardens, with little intensification of buildings and a few industrial intrusions .. In Hunters Hill, the man-made and natural features combine to form a unique suburban environment".

The National Trust notes that the style of shelter proposed is "Colonial" and has been used in heritage precincts in Perth, however this does not deem the

bus shelters appropriate for Hunters Hill. The character of Hunters Hill with its particularly significant gardens and street trees is quite different to the setting of the Western Australian Parliament building.

"The National Trust also understand the attraction of 'no financial impact' if council enters into an agreement with Adshel. 'No financial impact' limits Council's control over these structures and this should not occur in the National Trust classified urban conservation area.

"the National Trust considers advertising on bus shelters to be unnecessary visual pollution and detrimental to the historic characteristics of the Hunters Hill Urban Conservation Area. We also note that one of the general objectives of Council's DCP 14 - Advertising Signs is 'To prevent excessive signage, clutter and visual pollution'. This proposal is considered to contravene the Development Control Plan.

"We understand that the Conservation Advisory Panel of the Hunters Hill Municipal Council unanimously agreed that these bus shelters should not be permitted in Hunters Hill. The National Trust supports this view and strongly objects to Council entering into an agreement with Adshel to provide twenty bus shelters on the grounds that they will degrade the cultural significance to the historic streetscapes of Hunters Hill."

vestigation of possible sponsorship of bus shelters by local businesses.

The amendment was passed.

In discussion, council officers undertook to survey all households in the Municipality on their expectations of the existing public transport services and their needs for associated infra-

structure including the provision of bus shelters.

Forgetting the advertising, Council is between a rock and a hard place on bus shelters. Some people want them removed, others want them to remain.

- Gil Wahlquist



# Basil Turner of the Woolwich ether factory

**I**t was at a time when the clipper ships were plying between the Old World and the New that Basil Turner was born on 4/10/1870. Four years earlier his father, Henry Turner had returned to the Colony from England with his bride Sophia (nee Woods). Their first home was at Lower Dowling Street, Woolloomooloo, and eventually three sons were born - Henry Scholey, Basil, and Hugh Archibald. All three boys attended a private school on the heights of King's Cross and also Dr. Sly's School at Goulburn, prior to their attendance at Newington, once the family had settled in Annandale. On completing his schooling, Basil studied Arts at Sydney University, taking the elective subject of Chemistry. As his interest lay in this area, Henry Turner consulted the head of the Chemistry Department, the eminent Professor Liversidge. A.R.S.M., whose advice was unequivocal: if Basil's interest was in Chemistry, he should attend the Royal School of Mines in London, eventually to study Metallurgy and Mining.

Little is known of the next five years of Basil's life (c. 1891-1896) as no

letters to his family have survived. He was later to recall how much he had enjoyed the annual pilgrimage to Cornwall to inspect the mining methods and metallurgical processes of the Camborne-Redruth area. In 1896 he received the second of two certificates attesting the academic qualifications entitling him to the coveted designation 'Associate of the Royal School of Mines (ARSH)'. In fact, he topped his year against strong competition from students from around the world.

The results published in the newspapers at the time showed no other student in those-years gaining a 'double first' - First Class in the two divisions of Metallurgy and Mining. This could not have been bettered.

On his return to NSW his first position

*The phone number was Hunters Hill 75*



*Otranto, 58 The Point Road – Douglas Baglin picture*

was on the Overflow Mine on the property immortalised in 'Banjo' Paterson's ballad 'The Man from Snowy River'.

Then from 1900 to at least 1917 he

was listed in Sands Directory -

'TURNER, Basil ARSM, FCS. Public Analyst under the Health Act,

Consulting Metallurgist, Analytical Chemist and Assayer'.

His business addresses were given as Scott Street, Newcastle, and 14 Castlereagh St. Sydney.

On 29/9/1902 Basil married Mabel Lilly (nee Breillat - 1872-1927) also from Annandale, and their private address was given in Sands Directory as Palser St. (later The Point Rd.), Woolwich. It is not known why they chose the name 'Clunes' for the Californian redwood cottage, later to be known as 'Old Clunes', but Barba (Barbara Lilly, the only daughter of Basil and Mabel) was always to remember its telephone number - Hunter's Hill 75. The cottage is now called "Otranto".

At the rear of the home Basil built a laboratory for carrying on his practice as an analytical chemist and assayer. It consisted of three rooms closer to the Werambie St. frontage -

- a 'wet lab',
- a 'balance room' for the delicate weighing machines used in assessing the value of ores from particles of metal extracted from small samples,
- a 'furnace room' where a sample of ore with its flux in a pot would turn first red-hot and then into a white-hot molten glow, and where crucibles would come from the muffle with a brilliant haze.

In 1904, events were unfolding in Dunedin, N.Z. which were to give Basil's career a new and wider direction.

A merchant, Robert Lockhead, sold certain gas mantles and was sued by the Welsbach Light Company of Australasia Ltd. for alleged infringement of their patent. The Welsbach Company consulted Basil on the technical

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**By Virginia Robison**



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aspects of the case and invited him to give evidence on their behalf in the Supreme Court of N.Z.

The case was heard in February & March that year and, with Basil's contributing expertise, the Welsbach Company won. In consequence of this successful court case, the Welsbach Company asked Basil if he would be able and willing to make and supply them with collodion for their mantles. This he readily agreed to do. The collodion manufacture for the Welsbach Company called into being in the Turners' back garden a pilot ether plant, as ether was a solvent used in the liquefying of guncotton and was one of the two major constituents in the manufacture of collodion.

In addition to this work, Basil carried on his profession as an assayer often the 'umpire' between buyer and seller of particles of ore, and reporting on 'prospects' brought to his notice. He also advised in cases where mines had faced difficulties in the extraction of metals from complex ores.

Despite the storm clouds gathering over Europe, early married life in the red-wood cottage, with the Lab at the back, seemed to have been happy for some years. Basil, Mabel and their friends, frequently enjoyed their tennis and dinner parties, the latter followed by music, singing and dancing. In this Edwardian era, three children were born - Henry Basil (Harry - b. 1905 - much later to become the Member for the State Seat of Gordon in Sydney & then the Member for the Federal Seat of Bradfield in Canberra); Barbara (b. 1907 - later Robison) and Alix Breillat (Ted) (b. 1910 - much later grazier - 'Calamondah' sheep property, near Goulburn).

Eventually, close to the redwood cottage, a more commodious two-storey, brick residence was built to house the growing family which, since about 1905, also included Mabel's widowed father, Robert Graham Breillat.

Barba was never to forget her 7th birthday which dawned and set amid the storm

clouds breaking ~ that fateful day, 4th August, 1914, when Britain declared war on Germany.

In the early months of the war the Australian Government turned to Basil to provide anesthetic ether on a large scale. Previously our ether had been imported from the pharmaceutical firm, Merck, in Germany, but, for obvious reasons, this could not continue. Our Government at no time offered to subsidize Basil in this most necessary war effort so, lacking sufficient financial capital to enlarge the (collodion) ether plant, he invited (Assoc. Professor) J.A. Schofield, ARSM, to enter into a financial partnership with him. Presumably the collodion manufacture had to cease and the first project, financed by the joint capital was to call into being a larger ether plant. Then Basil, almost single-handedly - in addition to contributing half the capital - attended to the manufacture and shipment of the highly inflammable product to its various destinations during and after the war. Eventually, the Woolwich ether was being supplied to hospitals in every capital city in Australia, and to hospitals in Wellington, Auckland, Christchurch and Dunedin in N.Z. With the scale of the operations from 1915, Mabel's goats - for milk for the children - had to go. There was no room for them in the pandemonium of a cramped and busy loading and unloading backyard area amongst the outgoing cases and packages and the incoming jars of acid, coke, lime, bottles, paper shooks (for cases), and last, but not least, the great draught horses of the Colonial Sugar Company invading the area with regular deliveries of barrels of white spirit - a by-product of sugar refining - used in the manufacture of ether.

'Methylating day' was the busiest day of the week. Until denatured - i.e. the syphoning off of four gallons of spirit from each barrel and replacing it with a like amount of ether - the spirit was subject to a high duty, so the denaturing had to be done under the eagle eye of a Customs Officer to see

that the measuring was carried out correctly.

All the frenetic activity in the backyard of the home exacted its own price on the family. Gone were the days of tennis and dinner parties and musical evenings shared with friends. The 'Works' took possession of 'Clunes' as well. so that for Mabel, and the children, there was no respite from the comings and goings of a volatile Basil at all hours of the day and evening. Basil often had to take over from the man who usually operated the plant and work up to 9 pm and 10 pm at night, snatching a bite to eat as best he could. Then, at the end of the day, there were always the business procedures and paper work with which to contend.

In addition to the manufacture of ether and the supervising of the loading & unloading of supplies in the back garden, Basil was responsible for the transport of the ether to Valentia St. Wharf and the loading of the crates on to the lighter for transport to the ship's side. Loading the ether on to the lighter and then on to the ship was a hazardous and nerve-wracking operation. Due to its inflammability, therefore propensity for fire, the ether had to be loaded as 'on deck' cargo.

Although the Turners appeared to be a more privileged family in a working class area, the nature of the product being manufactured contributed to the family being ostracized. The children felt this keenly and this feeling of not being accepted or wanted was to leave its mark for the rest of their lives. As the War dragged on, the only 'visitor' to the home, apart from the Customs Officer on methylating days, was the Inspector of Public Nuisances.

Once the War ended in 1918, the pressure for the ether manufacture slackened off - a welcome relief from the wartime frenetic pace. By this time, another company in Sydney had installed a plant for ether manufacture and the Woolwich ether competed with it successfully for a number of years,

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# PM meets our delegation on Army Land

**F**ollowing the publication in The Trust Journal of July, 1999 of a letter which had been written to Mr. John Howard. M.P. the P.M.'s office offered a meeting of half an hour at 10 a.m. on October 25 for three or four people. I invited the mayor, Cr. Sue Hoopman to lead, with Pam Alvarez from the Community Reference Group, Alysoun Ryves from Foreshores 2000 and me representing the Trust. The meeting was cordial and lasted for half an hour.

The points put to Mr. Howard were: The horse paddock to be made available for public use forthwith. On the Dock area, we said that we wanted it retained as a working dock and that we were pleased that it was being put to use for New Years Eve celebrations and for the Olympics. We said we wanted it used eventually as a

place to repair heritage ships for the maritime museums and to teach young shipwrights. We said that this could probably be done by adapting existing buildings.

We said that the goat paddock would need to be retained in its role as a traditional noise buffer for the dock. Funding to be provided to the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust so that it was not necessary to sell part of the Army lands around Sydney Harbour.

Mr. Howard said that our concerns would be addressed when the Bill to set up the Trust was in the Senate.

Submission to Senate Committee.

Following this meeting the Trust responded to an advertisement from the Australian Senate Legislation Committee calling for comments on the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust Bill 1999.

We made a couple of points.

Firstly, that there is no provision for

the Federal Government to fund the preservation of the sites.

The requirement that the Trust fund itself by selling something misses the point.

This goes back to the position under the MacLachlan plan for Defence Lands. They were viewed as merchandise. The disposal of the lands was linked with funding the Defence Forces.

In the short couple of years since that idea was aired there has been a sea change both in the way in which open space is evaluated and in the funding of Defence Forces.

Taking the second point first, the public showed overwhelmingly, following the East Timor involvement, that it would support a direct income tax to maintain and equip and adequate Defence Force.

Secondly, in the evaluation of the land it cannot be seen merely as merchandise.

The real estate view does not take into account the role that such lands provide in preserving a source of biodiversity within the city envelope.

Additionally, the trees on the lands are bankable assets providing overall environmental credits, a means of reducing carbon dioxide levels, again within the city envelope.

Australia has been slow to place a cost benefit on city parklands for the role they play in providing relief from stress, an opportunity for relaxation and for recreation with an improvement in public health.

Stress and fatigue have been identified causes of ill health, physical, mental and moral breakdown in urban residents.

The retention of the defence lands as parks is a cheap way of reducing the demand for stress and fatigue related health services.

The Coalition prides itself on being a

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many doctors preferring the Woolwich product.

During the War years, Basil also acted as supervising chemist for the Australian Munitions Department - 1915 - 1918

In addition to his time spent at 'the Works', Basil, before and after the War, lectured one day a week at Sydney University which he very much enjoyed. Sadly, by the mid-1920's, what with the work of the large home and the stress of the war years, Mabel's health began to fail and she died at the age of 56 from cancer in May, 1927. At this time Harry was preparing to travel to London to go up to Cambridge, so Barba had to take over the reins of the household at 19, with a watchful eye on 17-year-old Ted.

The 1930s and 1940s saw Basil with a former employee, Mr. Fred Brown, experimenting in the 'wet' lab with lacquers, and trying to perfect a more enduring finish for furniture than that of French polishing. In this they were suc-

cessful, and Basil subsequently manufactured a one-coat varnish which was sold to Beales, the piano company/factory at Annandale, to give a more lasting finish to their pianos.

In the early 1950s, gracious 'Clunes' was sold and Basil, ever frugal, moved with his house-keeper of long standing - Miss Mollie Bloomfield ('Marmie' to the grandchildren) - to a little cottage in Stevens St., Pennant Hills, in Sydney's north. In 1956, Basil caught a cold which, perhaps neglected, turned into pneumonia. He was hospitalised but failed to respond to treatment, and died on 20/8/56 after a long and most productive life.

## Grant for Heritage Walk

The Trust has received its grant from the Federal Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts for construction of the Heritage Walk Project. The walk will commemorate the centenary of Federation.

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bottom line, pay your way sort of government.

They will be able to demonstrate a cash profit to society by retaining these lands as open space.

The Bill should shift the emphasis away from real estate.

The Bill should also provide funding for the Trust to purchase land adjoining the sites if these are judged to be needed to enable the parks to fulfill their purpose.

The Commonwealth also reserves planning rights in the Bill. This can be seen as a reaction to possible intransigence by the State Government but realistically, if community consultation and community needs are to be realised, these functions need to be conducted by the State which is in a better position to determine needs. State Governments of every persuasion have put in the hours on the future of the harbour and they have to be the ones to control planning.

The State Government needs to be whipped into participating in the proposed Trust.

Community consultation was referred to in the Second Reading speech. The Hunters Hill Trust suggests that the Federation Trust make use of the members of the Community Reference Group elected at a public meeting in 1997 to negotiate with the Defence Department concerning the lands. The CRG has developed a good knowledge of the lands.

**Invitation** - the Hunters Hill Trust invited the committee members to inspect Woolwich and familiarise themselves with the precinct.

- Gil Wahlquist

## Editor Sought

The book "The Heritage of Hunters Hill", published by the Trust in 1982, is out of print. The Trust will issue a new book if a volunteer editor can be found. Apply to The Secretary, Hunters Hill Trust Inc., P. O. Box 85, Hunters Hill, 2110.

## Woolwich we love you

Connie Ewald's book "The Industrial Village of Woolwich - the bustling past of a suburb on Australia's Sydney Harbour" - was a new publishing venture for the Hunters Hill Trust. It was our first social history - a reminder of the community spirit which existed at Woolwich in its roaring days as an industrial centre.

What we didn't anticipate - the community spirit is still there, as strong as ever.

On the tip of the peninsula, amongst the money, are people who have always lived in Woolwich and still love the place with a passion.

They are the ones who say hello when you are out walking and stop to help you if you need it. They are the ones who stay on in modest homes despite being slugged with land taxes and high rates designed for millionaires.

Woolwich also lives on in the hearts of people who used to live there, or visit

in the old days. We found that out when Geraldine O'Brien kindly put a notice in the Saturday SMH saying that the book was available. Requests came from all over the State many of them accompanied by letters of reminiscence. To subsidise the printing we applied for and received a grant of \$1,000 from the Royal Australian Historical Society from funds allocated by the Ministry for the Arts, New South Wales. We printed 300 copies. They have sold out.

Now we want another soul like Connie to put a human face on another part of the municipality - we will do our best to publish it under the Trust banner.

## Notice of Annual General Meeting of the Hunters Hill Trust Inc.

The Annual General Meeting of the Hunters Hill Trust Inc. will be held on Thursday, May 18, 2000 at the RSL Hall, Alexandra Street, Hunters Hill.

Business

1. President's Report
2. Treasurer's Report
3. Election of nine committee members

4. Any other business of which due notice has been given

Note: Any two members of the Trust may nominate another member for election. Such nominations shall be signed by the two proposers and shall bear the written consent of the member as nominated and shall reach the secretary at least 14 days before the Annual General Meeting. If insufficient nominations are received in advance, nominations will be taken at the AGM.

## Demolitions opposed

The Hunters Hill Trust has written to council opposing the proposed demolition of two houses:

**1 Ferry street** - World War II dwelling built for ex-serviceman. The proposed demolition and re-development disregards the historical theme of the Ferry street precinct which is related to transport, maritime pursuits, subdivision and development.

**46 Woolwich road** - The house is on a scale which suits the site and which has become accepted into the streetscape. It is an important contributing feature of the street. Beneath the modified exterior lies an Edwardian structure which might one day be restored should an owner be so inclined. Both its present contribution and its future possibilities are arguments for its retention.



## THE HUNTERS HILL TRUST INCORPORATED

### Address mail to

Hunters Hill Trust Inc.  
P. O. Box 85,  
Hunters Hill, 2110

### Officers for 1999-2000.

President – Gil Wahlquist phone 9816 2627

Vice-president – Tony Coote;

Secretary – Len Condon, 9816 2796.

Treasurer – Chris Rumble,

Journal editor – Gil Wahlquist.

Committee – Sally Gaunt, Robyn Christie,  
Celia Roberts,

Committee meetings are held on the second  
Thursday of each month at Vienna Cottage,  
Alexandra Street, Hunters Hill.

## Trust website has some exclusive features

**T**here have been 1338 visitors to the web site of the Hunters Hill Trust since June last year. In addition to material from the Journal, we are placing material on the site which is NOT in the Journal.

One of these items is the Hunters Hill Council's heritage policy, as outlined for us by the council's heritage consultant Greg Path at our annual general meeting last year. People purchasing into the area or consideration renovations and additions are advised to read this valuable outline. The council has a new and positive policy on protecting heritage.

Another item exclusive to the site is "Whispering - our Aboriginal Heritage" the text of an address given to the Hunters Hill Council last year when it decided to adopt the "Sorry" motion and the motion acknowledging prior ownership of the area by aboriginals. The website address is [www.interweb.com.au/hhti/](http://www.interweb.com.au/hhti/)

*We're on the web  
[interweb.com.au/hhti/](http://www.interweb.com.au/hhti/)*

## Decision to sell High School land taken by 1 % of parents

**O**n Wednesday 10th February 2000 twenty one members of the Riverside Girls High School P&C passed a motion to sell off a swathe of undeveloped open land overlooking the Parramatta River, adjacent to Betts Park and Gladesville Reserve.

This is the first step in a process that could result in four more monster houses being built where now there is green space. If you look to the left from Gladesville Bridge you can see the land in question. At present there is a green belt running right up from the river with just the roof of the school building visible at the top of the site. It includes the school tennis courts and a steep area below which is covered with mature trees. We are sympathetic to the principal's argument that the school needs upgraded facilities, but the process of selling off school land raises a number of highly contentious issues that I think deserve our consideration.

1. The group of parents (21) at the P&C meeting who voted for the land sale comprise around 1% of the parent body. The motion was put on the agenda at very short notice, before the school year was really underway, and before any Year 7 or other new parents could reasonably acquaint themselves with the issue. The meeting was not widely advertised, making a mockery of the P&C President's assertion that the broader community can have a role in the P&C. The suggestion that a further public meeting be held before the decision was taken was rejected out of hand.

2. The whole idea of making school communities responsible for these decisions is just the State Government's way of sidestepping its responsibility to public education and the public land it is entrusted with. When the Department of Education is approached for funds for capital works it covertly suggests a land sale as the only option. Other schools are being forced along the same path. The ordained stakeholders can then be held responsible and the Government escapes the community's ire.

3. The ordained stakeholders for making these decisions are the school's P&C, its teachers and the student body. While not denying their commitment to Riverside, most parents and students are engaged for 6 years at the most, and most live outside the Hunters Hill municipality. Teachers in the main also have a fleeting relationship with the school. No provision is made for the local community, who may have a different perspective, to be engaged in the process of decision-making. No mention is made of the wider context of the school or its responsibility to the broader community for the public land it holds in trust.

4. The principal argued that the land sale was needed to keep the school viable. She inferred that it was in danger from the process of rationalization of schools in the inner north-west. This view is disingenuous - Riverside is in no danger of being closed. As the only girls' high school between Beecroft and Burwood it has a huge student base and ever-increasing demand. The school should be protecting their land against encroachments which will cut off future possibilities, and working to make sure that Riverside Girls gets the money it deserves to upgrade its facilities. - **Sally Gaunt**