

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

April, 2001

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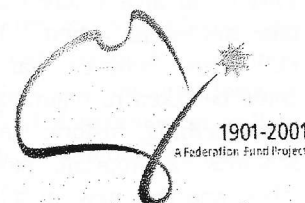
**W**ork is almost complete on the Hunters Hill Trust Centenary of Federation project - the Three Patriots Walk.



The walk is on the Lane Cove foreshore of the Hunters Hill High School. Entrance is from Mount Street and Reiby Road. The walk will become part of the Great North Walk, from Sydney to Newcastle. The Trust applied in October 1998 for a grant under the Federation Fund. This was administered by the Department of Communi-

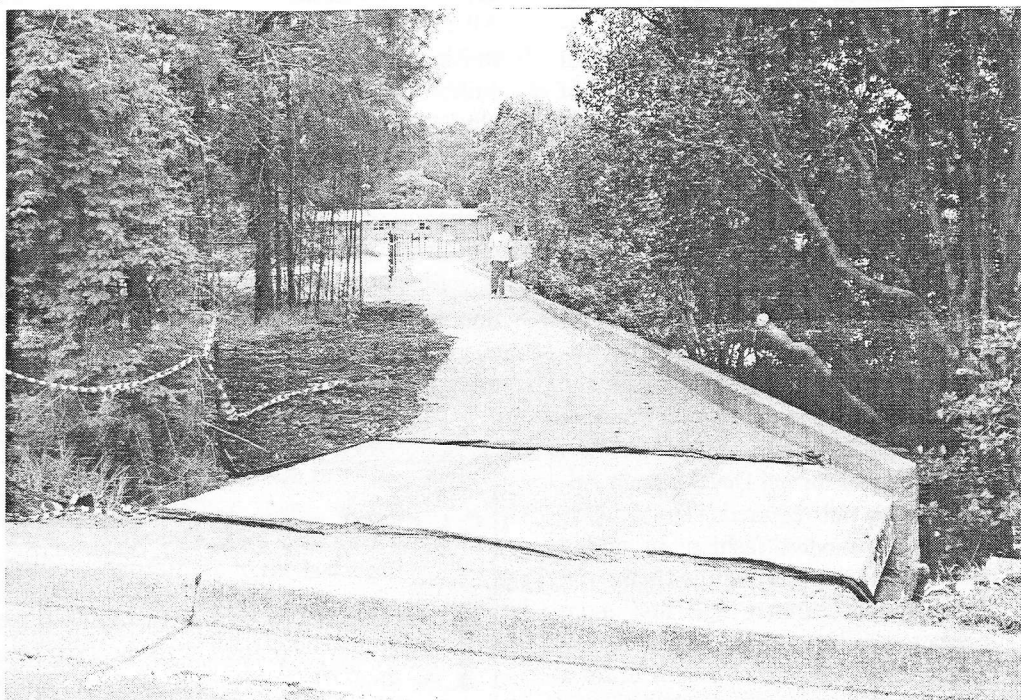
cations Information Technology and the Arts. A budget of \$70,000 was submitted. In December, 1999 a deed was executed between the Department and the Trust for a grant of \$50,000, \$45,000 of which

(Continued on page 8)



1901-2001  
A Federation Fund Project

# The Hunters Hill Trust Journal



## Trust Heritage Walk Project at High School takes shape for Centenary of Federation

# We are wrecking our historic gardens

**T**he Hunters Hill Trust is concerned about a number of issues in relation to the preservation and management of the cultural landscape within the Municipality of Hunters Hill.

The first issue is the preservation of traditional gardens, plantings and species that are in private ownership. New property owners now seem keen to raze a site and replant it with, all too often, formal garden layouts and plants which are uncharacteristic of the historic suburb. The desire to clear a site is usually in conjunction with building works, but it is also apparent that it arises when a formal Development Application is not required. The Trust is fearful that modern fashions in garden landscaping are altering the traditional landscape of Hunters Hill and more vigilance on the part of Council is necessary other than the requirement for a landscape plan as part of the DA process.

The second issue concerns the ability of private owners not only to alter the garden layout, but also to change the whole shape of a site through extensive excavation work. At the same time as technical advances in engineering have affected building forms, they have simultaneously affected the freedom with which the original sandstone landform of the peninsula is reworked for the convenience of garages, stepped living storeys, viewing platforms, and so forth.

A final issue of concern is the public domain – Hunters Hill's streetscape. This is an area where Council could take immediate action. The Hunters Hill Trust believes that more care could be taken in retaining traditional stone kerbing, historic street planting schemes, appropriate pavement finishes, and that new amenities such as bus shelters, seats and wombat cross-

ings, are treated in a consistent and appropriate manner.

All matters are succinctly summarised in Rick Leplastrier's words in the latest edition of the National Trust's magazine, *Reflections*: "How can you build a garden if you go in there and rip it to shreds every 20 years?"

Given the national significance of this suburb, it is important to treat, in addition to its built forms, its landscape elements in an appropriate, sensitive, caring and consistent manner. The

Trust suggests that Council look into budgeting for the services of a suitably qualified heritage landscape consultant to oversee, amongst other things, the three issues raised in this letter. The Trust intends to lobby Councillors to support this recommendation to ensure that the historic nature of the Hunters Hill is retained in as best a form as possible for future generations.

*- This is the text of a letter written by Robyn Christie to the Hunters Hill Council in November, 2000 by the Trust.*

## SLOW CITIES, SLOW SUBURBS!

**I** was inspired by hearing that thirty-three Italian towns have told the world they were tired of the hectic pace of modern life, and have formed the Slow City movement, or Citta Slow. Their goal is to preserve the way of life in Tuscany, Umbria and neighbouring regions, setting an example to others. The founder members of Citta Slow, which include Urbino, Asti, Positano and Orvieto have agreed to introduce measures to get rid of cars, rooftop aerials and ugly modern architecture. There will be an absolute ban on car alarms in places where cars are tolerated. Bicycle rental will be encouraged, and residents will be urged to grow sweet-smelling plants. Artisans' workshops - a disappearing sight in Italy - will be preserved. Restaurants will be asked to sell only local produce, and genetically modified food will be banned. "We do not want to be hostages of the past, or to live in the 19th century," the Mayor of Greve said. "We also want progress and to marry tradition with the best of technological innovation. We want aerials removed, but in return we want to install underground cables for everything. In the world in which we live, we leave ever less time for reflection, free time, the pleasures of life, and last but not least among them, that of food. Towns are ever more besieged by cars, noise and air pollution, and are coming to more and more resemble one another," the Mayor said. "McDonalds, and the same franchise outlets for pullovers and jeans, telephones and even bread are taking over everywhere." And although large swathes of Italy - "a country of thousands and thousands of towns with their own identity, cultures and traditions" - had come to resemble Las Vegas, large areas still had been largely spared, he said and the Slow City movement wants to keep it that way. The smallest municipality in Sydney might be just the place to follow suit, and become the first Slow Suburb. I'm sure there'd be heaps of good ideas on what we could do here.

*-Gilly Coote*

# Planned fourth edition of the green book

## "The Heritage of Hunters Hill"

The importance of *The Heritage of Hunter's Hill*, colloquially known as "The Green Book", cannot be underestimated. It is integral to the evolution of the Hunter's Hill Trust which, as a community organization, first defended the peninsula's unique local environment against the development of high rise flats in 1967. The Trust was ahead of its time: it saw the need to document and plan for the retention of the area's heritage long before the present bureaucratic processes evolved. Hunter's Hill Council drew first from the houses already identified in *The Heritage of Hunter's Hill* when finally drafting its heritage list, officially "Schedule 6: Items of the Environmental Heritage". Meredith Walker cites the book as a rare instance where local heritage was first identified by its own community. This is grass roots heritage, not bureaucratic heritage in which heritage professionals identify heritage items with community consultation as only part of the process.

The 1<sup>st</sup> edition of *The Heritage of Hunter's Hill* which appeared as *The Old Buildings of Hunter's Hill* was published in March 1969. The catalogue of old buildings arranged in historic districts, moving from the western part of the Municipality to the eastern point of Woolwich, was the second part of a two part report prepared by the Hunter's Hill Trust. The first part was titled *Town Planning, and Proposed Historic Districts in Hunter's Hill*. Preparation and research for the reports were largely the work of David and Doreen Saunders, with photographs by Douglass Baglin, John Delacour and H.B. Millen. The reports, soon out of print, were reissued in December 1970.

Although the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, again titled

*Old Buildings of Hunter's Hill*, was the work of the Hunter's Hill Trust, it was published by the National Trust of Australia (NSW) with assistance from a National Estate grant. The book appeared in 1977 and, while the houses and buildings are listed again in streets moving from west to east, the identification of historic districts, is less apparent than in the first edition. The book was edited by Alice Oppen and the majority of photographs were taken in 1976-77 "because many of the buildings have changed in appearance in the last eight years (although) some houses have been difficult to photograph because of foliage or obstructions".

The 3<sup>rd</sup> edition which assumed the current title *The Heritage of Hunter's Hill*, was published in 1982 by the Hunter's Hill Trust. The publishing committee, again led by Alice Oppen, had to rely on much of the previous research of David and Doreen Saunders and Joyce Wood, because early rate records were destroyed by a fire at the Town Hall in 1978. Photographs included new ones by Douglass Baglin, reprints of photographs from the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition by Christine Hoheneder, Gunther Rechberger and Christine Seruzier and additional photographs by Yvonne Austin and Conrad Oppen.

There is a gap of just over 33 years between the first and the now planned 4<sup>th</sup> edition of *The Heritage of Hunter's Hill*. Like the earlier editions, the new book will be a catalogue, not just of the individual buildings, but of as much of their context and changing shape as can be pictorially documented. The number of

buildings listed in the book has grown over the years and the 4<sup>th</sup> edition's first function will be to note those buildings that appeared in the first, second and/or third editions and any changes in the information available about them. In addition any newly assessed important build-

ings, omitted from the earlier editions, will be included. Needless to say this increase in the number of buildings listed signifies a growing interest in later architectural styles, as well as an appreciation of a greater variety of building types – the

Californian bungalow, the industrial site and the meagre weatherboard are equally special in the history of Hunter's Hill.

The photographs of buildings are also vital information about changes in the local area over the last thirty years. It will be useful to compare today's buildings with photographs from the three editions, as well as any historic photographs taken prior to the 1960s. In addition to these earlier photographs, a contemporary photographer will be commissioned to take a complementary series of photographs of the present suburb. This creates information about the present against which subsequent change can be plotted in the future. Together the series of photographs add important layers of information about the original building form or now succeeded additions, as well as the nature of original gardens and streetscapes.

(Continued on page 4)

**There's a gap  
of just over 33  
years in  
editions**



(Continued from page 3)

Change and development within Hunters Hill is inevitable, but that change must be controlled if we wish to allow the past a meaningful existence in the future. The new edition of *The Heritage of Hunter's Hill* has an important role to play as a tool in recording change and thereby allowing us to better manage the future of the buildings and houses listed.

We reach, however, a quandary. On the one hand, documenting and listing heritage buildings provides information to understand the composition of our suburb. On the other hand, this listing process can work more dangerously to isolate that which we save from that which is susceptible to disrespectful development. Hunter's Hill is not simply a collection of old buildings, but a conservation area. In a conservation area the aim is not just to retain the heritage items but also to preserve a meaningful context for those items. It is a whole landscape which establishes the character of the suburb - the pattern of subdivision, consistent but varied building forms, tree lined streets and (what is left of) the wooded foreshores. If new development respected the traditional built forms, the pattern of voids, as well as of solids, the sandstone landform, we could keep listing the heritage items and worry less about the planning process. But it does not. So how can we better protect the heritage landscape of Hunter's Hill?

Perhaps the way forward is for the Hunter's Hill Trust to plan a new list, a complementary list to the fourth publication of the Green Book, which identifies only those buildings and other items (garages, swimming pools, etc) which are intrusive in the suburb. The list must remain unpublished, but the Trust believes that only those items within the suburb which appear on this "intrusive" list should be the subject of development. It is assumed that any items not on the list (whether or not designated heritage) sit perfectly comfortably within the present landscape and should

## How Flagstaff Street was named

**F**lagstaff Street takes its name from the signaling station which was operated at the site as a military signaling station in the early days of the colony of New South Wales.

In the 1820s a lunatic asylum (later to become Gladesville Hospital) was established on a headland of the Parramatta River which was named Bedlam Point. The asylum adjoined land owned by John Glade and Thomas Stubbs.

The lunatic asylum was guarded by a detachment of soldiers, lunatics at the time being considered criminals. Some had been sent to New South Wales as Imperial Convicts.

The soldiers operated one of five military signal stations that relayed semaphore signals and military and government information between Sydney and Parramatta. The flagstaff was on the

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remain unchanged. The removal only of intrusive items is to be recommended. The method is in line with the revised Burra Charter which advocates that good conservation practice depends on "a cautious approach to change: do as much as necessary but as little as possible". The Trust hopes that, like its original list of old buildings which became the focus of the Hunter's Hill Council's present heritage schedule, this new intrusive list may become the basis of a new planning process which succeeds in encompassing heritage in a much more meaningful way than in the past.

- Robyn Christie

### Heritage walk for disabled

The Hunters Hill Access Advisory Committee has asked the Trust to design and map a self-guided heritage walk that is accessible for people with disabilities..

highest ground near the asylum. In 1829 the Bedlam Point asylum was closed and a new building was erected three-quarters of a mile east on Tarban Creek. At this time a punt began operations from Bedlam Point to Abbotsford.. The soldiers were still operating the signal station in 1842, according to a reference in Teggs Almanac of a "signal staff named the Bedlam Telegraph ... situated about 3/4 mile beyond the punt".

The signal flagstaff is shown on a plan produced in 1841 for the auction of land owned by J. Terry Hughes adjoining the asylum. Thomas Stubbs was the auctioneer. The land was called "Battersea". Roads in the area today do not carry the names suggested in the subdivision. However the plan indicates that the flagstaff was in a position approximating the eastern end of today's Flagstaff Street.

An advertisement in the Sydney Herald in 1841 said the land for sale was "on a line of that road nearly to the Flagstaff".

"The public will be pleased to bear in mind that this is the grand key to the whole district of Kissing Point, including East and West Ryde, and is situated only a short distance from its pretty church. It is the pivot around which all the delightful society of the surrounding gentry move..." according to the advertisement.

The auctioneer Thomas Stubbs had purchased two allotments in 1836 at the southern end of Tarban Creek and lived there with his family. Stubbs moved to Sydney after selling his farm to the Marist Fathers in 1847.

- Gil Wahlquist

"A Short Account of the History of Gladesville", J. W. Milne. Gladesville Historical Society. The History and Description of Sydney Harbour", P.R. Stephenson, Rigby, 1966.

Ibid

Teggs Almanac, 1842. Page 274.

Ryde Library, Local Studies section.

Ibid

"The Priory at Hunters Hill, N.S.W." Roslyn Maguire and Diana Drake, Hunters Hill Trust, 1992

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*The book **The Industrial Village of Woolwich**,  
by **Connie Ewald** has been reprinted.  
Copies are available over the  
counter at the **Hunters Hill Post Office**,  
**Alexandra street** for \$12,  
or posted from the **Treasurer**,  
**The Hunters Hill Trust Inc.**,  
**P. O. Box 85, Hunters Hill, 2110** for \$14.  
The book has been published by **The Hunters Hill Trust**  
assisted by a grant from the **Royal Australian Historical**  
**Society** from funds  
allocated by the **Ministry for the Arts, New South Wales**.  
All Trust publications are on sale at the **Post Office**.*

## **George Richard DIBBS Politician, Premier, Patriot, Paradox**

**The life and times of Sir George Richard DIBBS**  
**Three times Premier of New South Wales in the years before federation**  
by

**T W Campbell**

**George Richard Dibbs**, three times Premier of New South Wales in the period 1885 to 1894, made significant contributions to the well-being of the people of his colony and the embryonic Australian nation.

Sydney born and educated, variously ship owner, colliery proprietor and general merchant, Dibbs was almost alone among the politicians of the time who could hold his own in argument with Sir Henry Parkes.

The third Dibbs Government protected the value of the borrowings of the Australian colonies in London in 1892, prevented a major economic crisis in 1893, and introduced universal male suffrage to New South Wales in 1894. It is because of the insistence of George Dibbs during early Federation Conventions that Federation was finally achieved by a referendum of all eligible voters, an idea rejected by almost all politicians during early discussion stages.

Opposed to Australian Federation as finally achieved, but passionate about the need for an Australian nation, George Dibbs was a strong advocate for the unification of the colonies, with one strong, central government. He led the Anti-Federation movement during the debates of the late 1890s.

**Tom Campbell**, who lives in Canberra, is a retired Commonwealth public servant with a long interest in late nineteenth century New South Wales history. This political biography is the culmination of over thirty years of research into the life of one of the lesser known political statesmen of New South Wales.

Pages ix, 355, incl bibliog, index, 25cm, ISBN 0 646 37588 1, self published by the author 1999.

**Copies available from the author**  
**T W Campbell, PO Box 63, BRADDON ACT 2612**  
**\$35.00, incl postage (cheques or postal orders only)**

## Trust writes to Minister asking for rebuilding of High School hall

**H**unters Hill High School is one of a number of secondary schools, including Glebe High School and Balmain High School that the Sydney Morning Herald reported as being considered either for closure or reallocation as lesser institutions. This report appeared while parents of children at the school were considering the sort of school hall which would be built to replace the heritage building destroyed by fire last year.

The Trust has written the following letter to the Education Minister expressing its concern.

*John Aquilina  
Minister for Education  
and Training,  
Parliament House,  
Macquarie Street,  
SYDNEY, 2000*

*Dear Mr Aquilina,  
RE: HUNTERS HILL  
HIGH SCHOOL*

The Hunters Hill Trust understands that funds for the rebuilding of the school hall, destroyed by arson in October 2000, are still not forthcoming.

The site remains a demolition zone and the school has to cope without a suitable indoor space for all the functions previously held in the hall. As well, the school suffers from the grounds being neglected and overgrown because the full time groundsman, who left at the end of last year, has not been adequately replaced.

The Hunters Hill Trust is very aware of the situation at the school because we have been involved with a new public walkway along school's foreshore to the Lane Cove River. The walkway is part of the Great North Walk which goes from Circular Quay to Newcastle and is being constructed by the Hunters Hill Trust and Hunters Hill

Council. It is funded by a \$50,000 Federation grant to the Trust from the Commonwealth Government together with a contribution from the Hunters Hill Council.

The Hunters Hill High section of the walk commemorates three local patriots who were active in the Federation movement. It will have interpretive signage telling the story of the patriots, the aboriginal history of the area and the history and significance of the school grounds, where from the 1860s until the 1930s, the

Avenue Pleasure Grounds existed as public open space.

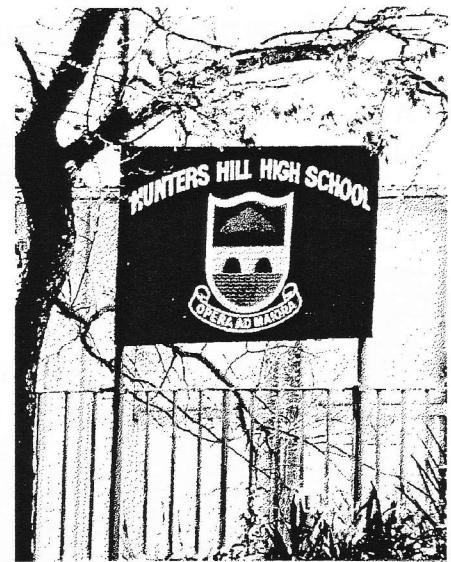
The new section of the walk allows the public access to a magnificent stretch of the Lane Cove River for the first time in 70 years, and we anticipate that not only locals, but people from all over Sydney will take advantage of this. It will greatly

increase the visibility of Hunters Hill High and its presence in the Municipality.

The school will also be the focus for the official ceremony for the opening of the walk by the Prime Minister, tentatively scheduled for May 12 this year - the school's open day. Also in attendance will be our local member of parliament, Kerry Chikarovski and the event should attract a lot of media attention.

This is a perfect opportunity to raise the profile of the school and we hope that the Education Department will have made a firm commitment to the rebuilding of the hall by the time of the opening. As well, we

**"a vibrant,  
successful,  
close-knit high  
school in a  
beautiful  
setting."**



expect that the Department will have appointed a new full time groundsman well before that date, so that the grounds will be looking their best for the ceremony. This is a great opportunity for the State Government to show its commitment to public education. However, on May 12, if the high school grounds are still overgrown and unkempt, the hall a blackened demolition site with no commitment to its replacement, then the public will take away a very different message from the State Government.

Hunters Hill High is a vibrant, successful, close-knit comprehensive high school in a beautiful setting. It caters for children from all levels of society as well as acting as a bulwark against the erosion of the student base amongst the middle class, not known for its wholehearted support of public education. When the Three Patriots walk is opened by the Prime Minister, the Hunters Hill Trust, the Hunters Hill Council and the community of students, teachers and families that supports Hunters Hill High School all hope we can feel proud of our school. We hope we can also feel supported in this by the State Government.

*Yours sincerely,  
Tony Coote (signed) President of the  
Hunters Hill Trust*



## THE HUNTERS HILL TRUST INCORPORATED

### Address mail to

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

### Officers for 2000-2001

President – Tony Coote; 9817 3466  
Vice-president – Gil Wahlquist phone 9816 2627  
Secretary – Len Condon, 9816 2796.  
Treasurer – Chris Rumble, 9879 0308  
Journal editor – Gil Wahlquist.  
Committee – Sally Gaunt, Robyn Christie, Stephen Ramsey, Glenys Murray, John Birch.  
Committee meetings are held at 8 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month at Vienna Cottage, Alexandra Street, Hunters Hill.

## I remember Turanburra

In recognition of the many thousands of previous residents of the Hunters Hill area who never paid rates, had their rubbish removed, or kept their dogs on leads, but fished from unpolluted rivers, and made their art and their homes in sandstone overhangs, singing and walking this country in ceremony, why not write their word for the Lane Cove River, Turanburra, alongside our own? We could start with the new signage for the Three Patriots Walk. –G.C.

## Historical Society Talk

Hunters Hill Historical Society meets on April 26 at the RSL Hall, Alexandra Street at 8 p.m.  
The Hunters Hill museum curator, Ivana Puren, will speak on Federation and World War I.

*More than 22,350 people have visited the Trust website. The site has a number of valuable features, including the Hunters Hill Council's new thinking on heritage policy. [www.interweb.com.au/hhti](http://www.interweb.com.au/hhti). We have links to other important Hunters Hill sites, including the Council.*

The Annual General Meeting of the Hunters Hill Trust Inc. will be held on Thursday, May 10, 2001  
at

the RSL Hall, Alexandra Street,  
Hunters Hill at 8 p.m.

### 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.

*Len Condon, Secretary,  
Phone 9816 2796*

*(Continued from page 1)*

## Walk nears completion

was forwarded to the Trust. The remaining \$5,000 will be handed over when the project is complete.

Construction of the walk has been managed by the Hunter's Hill Council on behalf of the Trust.

This has involved demolition of a 1.8 metre chainwire fence near the water's edge and the erection of a 1.2 metre chainwire fence three metres back from the site of the original fence.

Landscaping has involved planting of shrubs and ground covers. All of these are species indigenous to the Hunters Hill area. They were raised from seed under contract by the nursery at the former Gladesville Hospital.

A stand of casuarinas has been retained at the Mount Street entrance to the walk. A community of native saltmarsh plants has been preserved at the water's edge and this will be the subject of regeneration activity. There will be disabled access at Mount Street.

The Three Patriots of the walk are Hunters Hill residents who took part in the debate on Federation. Angelo Tornaghi (1834-1906) a spokesman for the Italian community and a mayor of Hunters Hill, Charles Jeanneret (1835-98) a member of Parliament, free trader and supporter of Sir Henry Parkes, and Sir George Dibbs (1834-1904) a former Premier who attended the Federal Convention of 1891.

It is hoped that the walk will be declared open on Saturday, May 12 as part of the High School Open Day. This date has yet to be confirmed. Members are invited to attend. Please watch the Press for confirmation-

- G.W.