A GLIMPSE OF HUNTER'S HILL

A SHORT WALK THROUGH HISTORY

THE HUNTER'S HILL TRUST

BRIEF HISTORY OF HUNTER'S HILL

One of the oldest and most charming areas of Sydney, Hunter's Hill was being established as a suburb in the 1840s and its attractive position between the Lane Cove River and Parramatta River has helped maintain the village atmosphere. Its numerous and mature trees, the stone walls, natural landscape elements .... rock outcrops, cliffs and several tracts of bushland and of mangrove, along with the all-important old buildings, consistently of good quality, make the suburb of Hunter's Hill an extremely attractive and pleasant place to live, and to walk through and enjoy.

The origin of the name Hunter's Hill has been the subject of dispute. A Scotsman, Thomas Muir, transported to Australia for sedition, bought land from Samuel Lightfoot in 1794 and called it after his father's house in Glasgow, *"Huntershill"*. However, doubt is cast on Muir being the originator of the name as in the official register of Land Grants, October 3, 1794 mention is made of *"District of Huntershill 30 acres situate at Lane Cove on the north side of the harbour of Port Jackson"*. It has been pointed out by a local researcher that Muir's ship, *"The Surprize"*, did not arrive in Sydney Cove until October 25, 1794. It has been suggested that Hunter's Hill derived its name from Lieutenant John Hunter *(later Governor Hunter)*, before the arrival of Muir.

Some of the early *'developers'* of Hunter's Hill were Didier Numa Joubert, who came to the area in 1846-47 and his younger brother, Jules François Joubert, who acquired land adjoining Didier's in approximately 1855. The two brothers, together with Count Gabriel de Milhau *(another Frenchman)*, using their entrepreneurial talents and those of Viel d'Aram *(who purchased land whilst in France)* set about the business of building the fine but simple stone houses, samples of which can be viewed on this Walk. Labourers, including stonemasons from Northern Italy, built the fine homes and there are still descendants of those workmen living in the area today.

Jules demonstrated an unusual flair in the houses he built, whilst Didier was more conservative. Didier's own home, the famous *"St. Malo"* was demolished in 1960 to make way for the Expressway and new Fig Tree Bridge.

William Weaver, who had been the Government Architect from 1854 to 1856 after Edmund Blacket, built his house in Alexandra Street and would have acted as a local consultant architect during the busy years of building between 1857 and 1861.

Local *'developer'* and mail officer, Felix Cullen, also contributed to the character of the area by building many of the small stone cottages seen along Madeline Street. Two other local builders were John Cronin and John Quirk. In the early 1870's another citizen, Charles Edward Jeanneret, came into prominence and, like the Jouberts, he was responsible for the building of stone houses mainly on the southern side of the peninsular.

In 1861 Hunter's Hill became a Municipality and Jules Joubert was the first Mayor. Charles Jeanneret was three times Mayor of the Municipality, and in 1980 the first woman elected to that office was Alderman Sheila Swain.

The Walk commences at the Town Hall, Alexandra Street. This was the original Government Road and it has the Town Hall, Public School, Post Office, Masonic Hall, R.S.L. Hall and Village shops. In the 1860's a bakery existed at 29-33 Alexandra Street. The cottage remains but fire destroyed the bakery and the building now called *"The Old Bakery"* is a replacement of the earlier one and is used as offices.

On this Walk you will view just a small area of the suburb and it is hoped that you will wander further and enjoy the grace and charm and history of the suburb.

1. **THE TOWN HALL – 1866**

The original Council Chamber, measuring 50' x 30' and built of stone, was opened on January 13, 1866. Additions were made in 1938 and a museum (western corner) added in 1967, care being taken to match the original stone. On January 8, 1978, fire destroyed the Town Hall along with many of the early records. Council's administration was located in temporary premises and, after extensive renovation and extension, the new Town Hall was re-opened on July 11, 1980, the original stone gabled entrance being retained as the focal point.

2. **"MERIMBAH"** *(formerly 'Merilbah')*

This stone house is now flats. The initial part of this house, a small cottage, was built by Gabriel de Milhau in 1864. During 1881 the west wing was added. It was then known as 'Sans Souci'. In 1891 the eastern rooms were enlarged and a balcony added. The entrance porch would appear to be of that date. Mr. Justice Manning of the Supreme Court was living here in 1871. *(Note: the chimney-stack of sculptured stone.)*

3. **CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH – 1875**

The foundation stone for the Church was laid on January 16, 1875 and coins and papers *(including a Sydney Morning Herald)* were placed beneath. The stone bears no inscription but is believed to be in the S/W corner. Built by Swiss-Italian, Antonio Bondietti, the Church was opened for worship in 1878. Stone vestries were added in 1898. The sandstone wall around the grounds replaced the original picket fence and was built in 1934 as a memorial to several church workers.

4. **HUNTER'S HILL PUBLIC SCHOOL**

More than one hundred years old and built in stone by residents of the *"Hill"* who furnished it and gave it to the Education Department, this *'gem'* was opened by Henry Parkes on September 24, 1870. One-third of the cost of the building was donated by Henry Brown, a resident of the *"Hill"*; the remaining two-thirds was collected from other residents. The total cost was £1,427.

5. **"MERILBAH" – 19 Alexandra Street** *(Cnr. Stanley Road.)*

William Weaver, who was the N.S.W. Colonial Architect after Edmund Blacket, built this stone house for his family in 1857 and lived here for three years. The original design has not been spoiled by any later alterations.

6. **"LYNDCOTE" – 7 Stanley Road**

The first Council rating for a house on this site was in 1873, when it was owned by Charles Jeanneret. By 1886 it had passed to Robert Smith, owner of the adjoining property "Lyndhurst".

7. **"LYNDHURST" – 5 Stanley Road**

Built in approximately 1884, it was for some time the residence of Sir Thomas Buckland, Chairman of the Bank of New South Wales, who travelled to the city on the ferry with reserved seats. For many years it was a nursing home before reverting to a private residence.

8. **"LOOMBAH" – 3 Stanley Road**

Built c.1879, Arthur J. Stopps, Surveyor/Draftsman, lived here until his death at ninety-nine years. It was built by the same builder as Eulbertie, opposite.

9. **"EULBERTIE" – Stanley Road**
(Also known as "Marshall House")

The house started as a single-storey cottage c.1857 and enlarged by 1879 to twelve rooms and was named *"Stoneleigh"*. In 1901 extensive alterations were made including the building of verandahs and balcony around the front and sides and a kitchen wing at the rear. In 1903 it was sold to E. M. Betts *(grandson of Rev. Samuel Marsden)* and its name changed to *"Eulbertie"*. It was passed down to Bett's daughter who was married to a businessman, Sydney Marshall, and hence became generally known as *"Marshall House"*. The house was acquired by the Education Department and, after many years of neglect and at a great cost, it was beautifully restored and is today used by the Hunter's Hill Public School.

10. **"ROSAMUND" – 11 Mount Street.**

Records reveal that the house was built in 1878 by George Willis, together with a shop, on the site of Shelley Park. When the corner of Mount and Alexandra Street was widened and the shop demolished, the Shelley family bought the corner lot and donated it as a park.

11. **"I.O.O.F. HALL" – 12 Mount Street**

This building bears the date 1872.

12. **"GLADSTONE" – 2 Alexandra Street**

In 1882 this lovely building was built by Felix Cullen, a local builder and in 1887 it became the Gladstone Hotel. It was still a hotel in 1914, owned by Mrs. Hannah Hardy. In the 1970s it was rescued from decay, restored and converted to units.

[NOTE: Persons unable to cope with steps leading to Madeline Street:– head E. along Alexandra Street after viewing "Gladstone", left at Ferdinand Street, past Cullens Lane (named after Felix Cullen) and past "The Manse" (c.1886) immediately behind Congregational Church, left at Madeline Street to recommence the Walk at "Kyarra" (Map Ref. No. 13).]

13. **"KYARRA" – 1 Madeline Street**

This eleven-roomed stone house was also built for letting by Felix Cullen and first occupied in 1886. The house was built into the hillside and overlooked the then *"Pleasure Ground"*, now the High School. It fell into disrepair and in 1950 the new owners set about to restore it. Over two hundred tons of stone was brought from the old law buildings in Phillip Street for use in the walls and the garage. The Belgian slate roof was saved and when the verandah was extended the iron circular steps were obtained from Gosford.
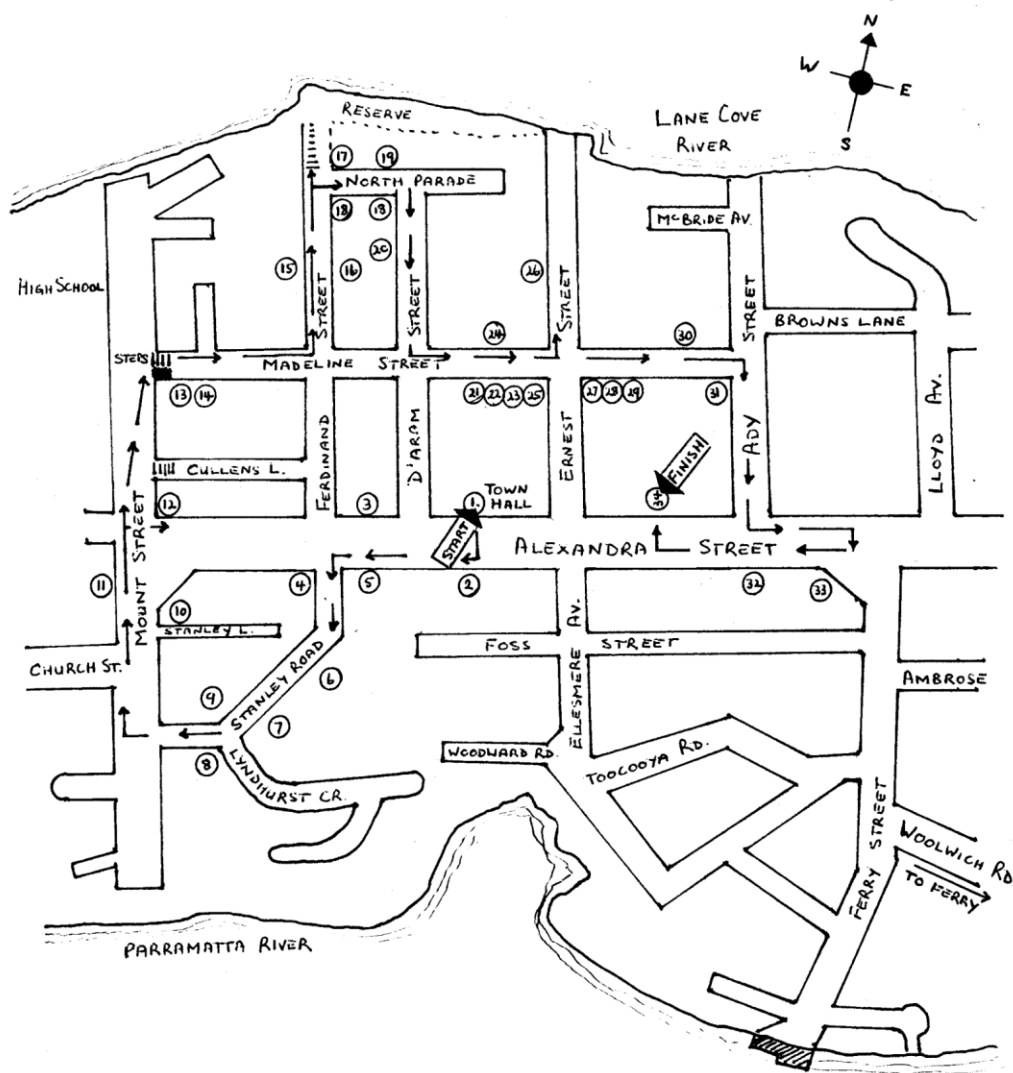
14. **"WYALDRA" – 3 Madeline Street**

"Wyaldra" as it is today is made up of two stone cottages which in 1979 were linked together by an L-shaped construction in similar stone, thereby creating a single family home. The oldest section *(S/E corner)* dates back to 1861 when it was a one-roomed stone cottage built for Richard Jarman. In 1878, Felix Cullen purchased the cottage from Jarman and added to it. Cullen lived in it from time to time and one of his descendants, a grand-daughter, was living in the cottage in 1976.

The front section of the house *(N/W corner)* was originally a four roomed stone cottage built by Felix Cullen in 1885. The front door of this cottage was saved from a building now demolished behind Parliament House.

15. **"MARUNA" – 12 Ferdinand Street**

The first part of this large stone house, reputedly built by Jules Joubert in 1861, was owned by Henry C. Brookes, saddler's ironmonger, who in 1868 sold it to Henry Prior Palser *(after whom The Point Road, Woolwich was for some time called Palser Street)*.

16. **"CORIO" – 15 Ferdinand Street**

Captain J. H. Watson *(one of the founders of Beard Watson & Co.)* purchased this house in 1888. He also paid rates on an 'armory' adjacent to the house and used by the First Hunters Hill Regiment. *'Corio'* was the FitzGerald's family home by 1905.

17. **"CLEVERTON" – 21 Ferdinand Street**

The initial part of this beautiful stone home situated overlooking the Lane Cove River was built in 1876 by Alfred Weeks. Several extensions have been made, one of four rooms before 1886.

[NOTE: FOR WALKERS IN GOOD HEALTH AND STOUT SHOES: at the end of Ferdinand Street are steps leading to a natural bushland public reserve which extends along the foreshore of the Lane Cove River.]

18. **19 FERDINAND STREET**

This timber cottage built by Mr. A. Norrie in 1887 belonged to the family for many years.

2 D'ARAM STREET in 1886 was a two-room timber cottage.

19. **"WOODBANK" – 2 North Parade**

In the late 1870s this house was a small stone cottage. The brick upper storey and timber additions are later. A two-storey wing was also built where the garage and kitchen once stood. Some of the stone for the additions came from Waverley College and some from a Balmain cottage. *(Note the variations in colour of the stone.)*

20. **4 D'ARAM STREET – c.1887**

In 1887 William Poulton had a four-roomed wooden cottage built on the Brooke's Estate in D'Aram Street and this would appear to be that cottage. A member of the FitzGerald family *(occupants of "Corio")* remembers this cottage being moved on rollers to its present site.

21. **11 MADELINE STREET**

Built originally as a one-room stone cottage for a quarry worker's family, it was enlarged both in wood and brick as the family grew. A stonemason, Jeremiah Cronin, added to this cottage in 1875 and in 1879 sold it to Jacob Ferrari. The camellia trees at the gate are very old, one dating back to the building of the house, and planted to celebrate the birth of a son of one of the early Italian settlers.

22. **"GENOA" – 15 Madeline Street**

Built in 1875 for Elijah Green, it was later bought by Walter Cuneo, whose father owned the Garibaldi Inn. It was occupied by Mrs. Cuneo until her death in the 1980s.

23. **15A and 17A MADELINE STREET**

In the 1870s a stockyard stood here, through to Alexandra Street.

24. **HUNTER'S HILL BOWLING CLUB**

A small general store owned by the Rostock family and a sandstone house built by Antonio Rinaldi were the original buildings on this site.

25. **19 MADELINE STREET**

Renovated this century after falling into disrepair this cottage was probably built during the 1860s by Hunter's Hill first postmaster James Stanner.

26. **"YSABEL" – 6 Ernest Street**

This lovely brick house with wide verandahs was built in 1890 and by 1912 was a Boys' School known as *'Malvern'*. It was once owned by tennis player Lew Hoad and in 1976 was renamed *'Ysabel'* after Jules Joubert's first small Lane Cove River steam ferry.

27. **23 MADELINE STREET**

In 1861 when the Municipality was created, this stone cottage was occupied by Henry Glassock. In 1862 Glassock was Town Clerk and one room of this cottage was used as a council chamber.

28. **25 MADELINE STREET – c.1880s**

The initials "J.Q." are chiselled in stone on the southern wall of the kitchen wing of this cottage, suggesting that John Quirk, quarryman, built it.

29. **27 MADELINE STREET**

Built in 1866 by Antonio Bondietti, a Swiss Italian stonemason, this cottage was sold to John Quirk in 1871 and his widow, Elizabeth, lived here until she was over 100 years old.

30. **26 MADELINE STREET – c.1880s**

Originally built as a stable and later altered to a gardener's cottage for *"Clarenceville"*, later *"The Haven" (1 McBride Avenue)*, this cottage is on an Estate which originally extended from the Lane Cove River to Madeline Street and from Ady Street to Ernest Street.

31. **"MILANO" – 31 Madeline Street**

Appearing in the 1861 rate books as belonging to Bondietti, this *'cottage'* was probably not two-storeyed at that time. In 1866, Angelo Tornaghi, watchmaker and Mayor of Hunter's Hill in 1879 and again in 1882-83, bought the property. The house fell into disrepair and, except for the stonemasonry, was almost entirely rebuilt.

32. **"CUNEO" – 54 Alexandra Street**

Built by John Cuneo in 1883 this property has been restored. It is an example of a commercial property renovated and extended in the style of the original building. Charles Cuneo, grandson of John Cuneo, was present at the re-opening of the building on 22nd November, 1980. A new two-storey office building stands to the east.

33. **"GARIBALDI" – c. 1861**   *(Cover photograph)*
(Cnr. Ferry & Alexandra Streets)

Reputed to be the first Inn in Hunter's Hill, the Garibaldi was commenced by John Cuneo in 1861 and has been a major landmark since the beginning of the Municipality. A statue of Hebe was originally in the niche but was stolen and has been replaced.

The Garibaldi Inn played an important part in the social life of the district and is supposed to have housed some Italian stonemasons. Named after the famous Italian political leader, it was conveniently located, as there was a stiff uphill climb to reach Alexandra Street and the nearest 'watering hole' from the wharf at the end of Ferry Street.

In 1973 the property was for sale, the best offers coming from oil companies wishing to build a service station. This was opposed by the Council and it was sold in 1979.

34. **"VIENNA" COTTAGE and HILLMAN ORCHARD – 38 Alexandra Street**

This four-room stone cottage was built in 1871 by John Jacob Hillman and remained in the family's possession until 1984 when it was purchased by The National Trust. The fabric of the building has since been carefully preserved to retain its character and it is open for inspection by the public during weekends.

The Orchard land adjoining the cottage is a Council park, landscaped to remind visitors of its earlier purpose.

KEY:

1. The Town Hall
2. Merimbah
3. Congregational Church
4. Hunters Hill Public School
5. Merilbah
6. Lyndcote
7. Lyndhurst
8. Loombah
9. Fulbertie
10. Rosamond
11. I.O.O.F. Hall
12. Gladstone
13. Kyarra
14. Wyaldra
15. Maruna
16. Corio
17. Cleverton
18. 19 Ferdinand Street
    2 d'Aram Street
19. Woodbank
20. 4 d'Aram Street
21. 11 Madeline Street
22. Genoa
23. 15A & 17A Madeline St.
24. Hunters Hill Bowling Club
25. 19 Madeline Street
26. Ysabel
27. 23 Madeline Street
28. 25 Madeline Street
29. 27 Madeline Street
30. 26 Madeline Street
31. Milano
32. Cuneo
33. Garibaldi
34. Vienna Cottage and Hillman Orchard

BORONIA PARK

HUNTERS HILL

BORONIA PARK

LINLEY PT

RIVERVIEW

St Ignatius College

ST IGNATIUS COLLEGE GROUNDS

LONGUEVILLE

WOODFORD BAY

TAMBOURINE BAY

Lane Cove River

HUNTERS HILL

WOOLWICH

HUNTLEYS POINT

Gladesville Hospital

Hospital

Gladesville Bridge

Parramatta River

HENLEY

FIVEDOCK POINT

Tarban Creek

St Joseph's College

Saint Josephs College

Fig Tree Bridge

Gladesville Hospital

PENROSE