



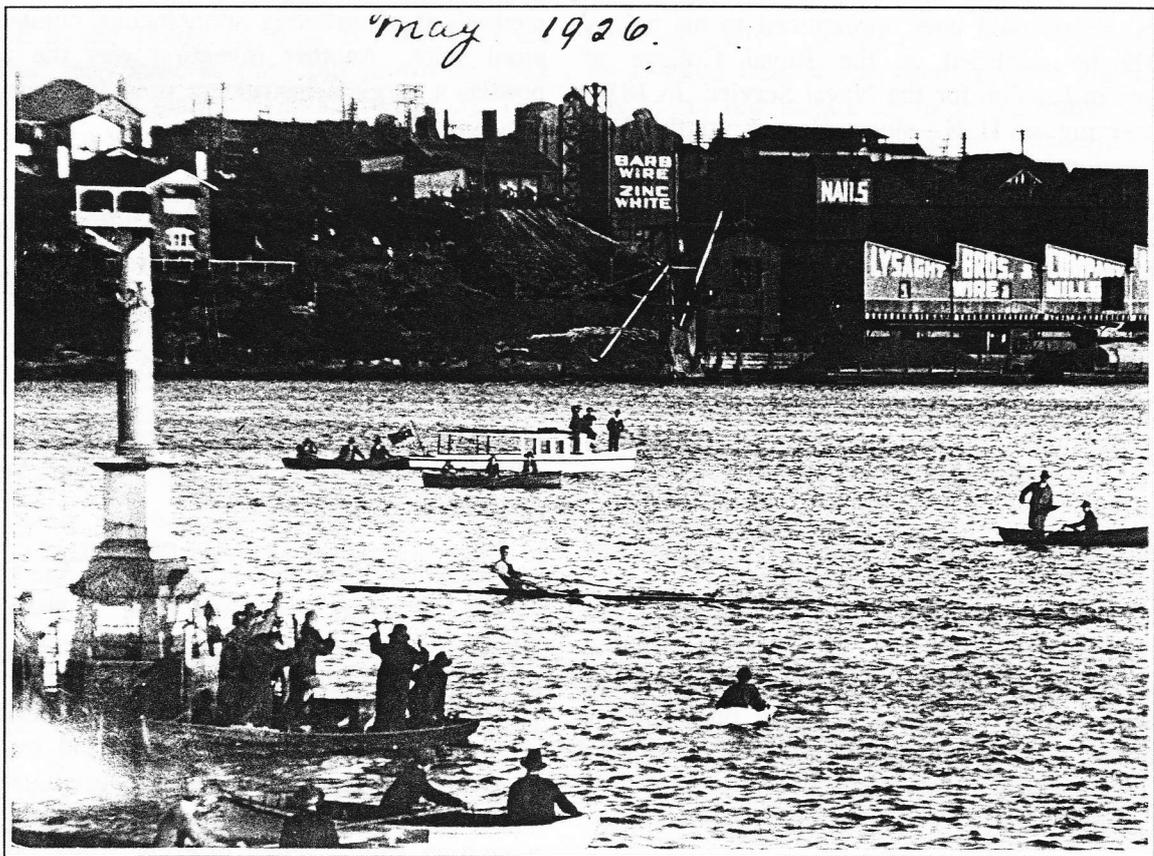
THE HUNTER'S HILL TRUST JOURNAL

PRESERVING AUSTRALIA'S OLDEST GARDEN SUBURB

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Spectators gathered around Searle's Monument at Henley, the finish line for the World Championship Sculling course, cheering as Major Goodsell crosses the line to retain his title in May 1926.

Rowing heritage at Henley

Gil Wahlquist & Diana Drake

The Hunters Hill Trust has made a submission to Hunters Hill Council concerning the disposal of a block of Department of Housing units at 15 Dick Street, Henley. The Trust contends that this block of land has played an important part in the public and sporting life of the citizens of Sydney and that development should accommodate public needs and recognise the important history of the site.

The priorities are to: *Legitimise* public access to the superb beach and tree-lined foreshore; *Recognise* the role played by the site in the history of rowing in Australia; *Recognise* the connection with the land's first European owner, Dr William Bland, and his part in the foundation of many important features of Australian life; and *Add* the beach to Schedule 6 of LEP 14 (Environmental Heritage).

HISTORY OF THE SITE

The first European owner of the Henley peninsula was Dr William Bland (1789-1868), granted 30 acres in April 1837. The area was at that time generally referred to as Three Brothers Point, derived from the Aboriginal name *Urroo-Bunchi* for a formation of three rocks jutting out into the Parramatta River. The locality was named Blandville in the 1860s when first attempts were made at subdivision.

In his memoir of Dr William Bland, Dr George Mackaness reports that Bland was the son of Robert Bland, a distinguished London physician and obstetrician. William was educated at the Merchant Taylors' School and later apprenticed to his father. In 1809 he qualified at the Royal College of Surgeons in London for the Naval Service. In 1813, while serving in H.M. sloop *Hesper* on the East Indies station he became involved in a quarrel with the purser of the ship, Robert Knight Case whom he subsequently killed in a duel at Bombay. Bland was tried for murder at Calcutta and was sentenced to a minimum penalty of seven years transportation to Botany Bay. He was 24 years of age.

Soon after his arrival in Sydney he was appointed as a professional prisoner in charge of the lunatic asylum at Castle Hill. After 12 months he was emancipated and fully pardoned. He established a private medical practice and became a friend and supporter of William Charles Wentworth.

After lampooning Colonel George Molle, then military commandant of New South Wales, in 1816, and later making a sarcastic attack on Governor Macquarie in 1818, Bland was arrested, charged with libel, fined £50 and sent to Parramatta Gaol for 12 months.

When he was released from gaol in 1819 he settled down and devoted himself to philanthropic works. He was honorary surgeon to the Benevolent Asylum and played a part in the establishment of a grammar school whose buildings were handed over to the University of Sydney in 1853. He was a life member and benefactor to the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts. He took an active role in opposing Governor Darling's attempts to revive press censorship in the colony and in 1835 became secretary of the Australian Patriotic Association with Wentworth, Sir John Jamieson and others.

The efforts of the Patriotic Association led in 1843 to the first election of representatives of the people to the new Legislative Council. Bland and Wentworth topped the poll to represent Sydney.

Bland was a member of the Council until 1848 when he was defeated by Robert Lowe. Lowe opposed Bland's appointment to the Senate of Sydney University, bringing up the 1813 conviction for murder. Bland challenged Lowe to a duel but Lowe did not take him up on it. Bland returned to the Legislative Council as a nominated member in 1858 and retired in 1861.

He was the first president of the Australian Medical Association and a prime mover in founding the Sydney Dispensary, the ancestor of Sydney Hospital. He invented an airship and exhibited a model in 1852 at the Crystal Palace. The German Zeppelin resembles this model. Bland also devised a method of suppressing spontaneous combustion in wool ships. Another invention was the aneurism needle, a surgical instrument used in operations on blood vessels.

Bland had a house in Pitt Street in the city and seems not to have ever lived on his grant nor even to have undertaken any "improvements" on the property. One possible exception might have been the establishment of a stone quarry in the centre of the property as shown in an 1857 subdivision plan. (Mitchell Library: ZM2 811.1421/1857/1) The name Blandville nonetheless appeared in real estate advertisements down the years from September 1866 to 1901.

In December 1895, during the golden age of rowing on the Parramatta River, one H.M. Shelley wrote to Hunter's Hill Council proposing that the name of the area be changed to Henley, a reference to Henley-on-Thames, the home of rowing in England. Shelley submitted names of local land owners and residents who supported the proposed change. At another meeting in September 1901 council received a petition from Shelley offering a new suggestion for renaming. Shelley argued that the name Blandville caused confusion and was misleading to many because it was similar to Granville and close to Gladesville. The petition suggested the name be changed to The Brothers after the Three Brothers rocks at the southern point of Blandville. The council preferred the earlier suggestion of Henley, to avoid confusion with the "Brothers' College" in the locality.

At a council meeting on October 25 1901 it was formally decided that the name be changed to Henley and the change was duly notified in the Government Gazette. Thus the memory of Dr William Bland was erased from the map for nearly 60 years until a Housing Commission block on Victoria Road was named *Blandville Court* in reference to the earlier name of the locality.

ROWING HERITAGE

Regattas had been a regular feature of social and sporting life on the Parramatta River since at least the mid 1840s. In June 1877 the first race for the title of "Champion Sculler of the World" was held on the river, with the Three Brothers rocks designated as the finishing point and the starting point opposite Uhrs Point, near today's Ryde Bridge. Also in 1877 the Victorian Rowing Association suggested to Sydney Rowing clubs that an international eight-oared race be rowed on the Yarra. When the first race took place in 1878, New South Wales was represented by the Mercantile Rowing Club which had been formed in 1874.

By 1882 the club had a training establishment at Blandville in the centre of what is now 15 Dick Street. (ref: jetty lease to the Club shown on 1882 Lands Department plan no.135-574 sheet 5) This establishment was described in the 1886 *Yearbook of New South Wales* as having an area of 100 ft water frontage by 200 ft depth, with thereon erected a "boat shed, 60 ft by 20 ft; housekeeper's cottage of three rooms, and club dwelling of brick, containing dining hall, 30 ft by 15 ft; two sleeping rooms, each 30 ft by 15 ft." A verandah ran around both sides and accommodation was provided for 20 members. The yearbook listed the club fleet as comprising 3 eights, 1 six pair, 1 four pairs, 5 string-test fours, 3 clinker fours, 1 tub four, 3 pair oars, 4 racing and 6 practice skiffs and 3 sculling clinkers, a total of 30 boats which were capable of putting afloat 124 members.

It was thus from the beach of 15 Dick street that some of Australia's best oarsmen took to the water during the years when rowing was a sport which drew the level of spectator interest shown in football today. In those heady days it was reputed that rowing fans in Canada and England could match their Australian counterparts in reciting river depths and tidal conditions between Uhrs Point and Three Brothers Point.

One legendary oarsman was Henry Ernest Searle (1866-89), the "Clarence Comet". He first won sculling races on the Clarence River at Grafton, before coming to Sydney in 1888 and breaking all previous time records against "Big Jim" Stanbury on the Parramatta River. In October 1888 Searle defeated Peter Kemp over the Parramatta River course to win the world championship and £500. In 1889 Searle went to England and defeated W.J. O'Connor, champion oarsman of America, on the Thames championship course. On the voyage back to Australia he contracted enteric fever and died on December 10 1889. His death shocked Australia.

When his remains arrived in Sydney on their way north the whole city was decked out in a display of mourning. "Such a scene", said one newspaper "has never been witnessed in Sydney before and the streets were never so crowded on any occasion, not even excepting the day of the departure of the Soudan Contingent". (*Sunday Times* 15.12.1889) In devoting six lengthy and closely-printed columns to describing the city's mourning, the *Times* declared that the whole community felt that "a national loss had been sustained and that a calamity had overtaken our country".

A memorial to Searle was erected in the Parramatta River at the Three Brothers rocks off Blandville. The memorial became the finishing marker for Parramatta River rowing races. After recent damage by a speed boat it has been restored and remains one of our few memorials to an Australian who was an international sportsman in the 19th century. Just as the Searle monument was erected at Blandville because of the site's association with rowing, so too recognition of the nearby beach at 15 Dick street would similarly honour the pride which Australians have in their rowing sportsmen and women.

HOUSING COMMISSION

In 1910 the Mercantile Rowing Club moved its main clubhouse to Mosman. It subsequently became the Mosman Rowing Club. The Club's Dick Street land became the property of H E and A T Morgan and remained in their ownership until February 1947 when the land was resumed by the Housing Commission of NSW.

In its June 1948 issue, the magazine *Building and Engineering* reported that the Commission planned to build a block of 30 one-bedroom flats at Henley and the block was opened by Mr Clive Evatt on April 22 1949. On March 27 1997, 15 Dick Street was sold at auction for \$5.35 million. Hunters Hill Council is trying to secure the beach for public use.

HERITAGE LISTING

Items of environmental heritage in the Dick street neighbourhood are listed in Schedule of Local Environmental Plan no 14, published in September 1991. Items in Dick street in the Schedule are 6 Dick street, 8 Dick street, 9 Dick street, 21 Dick street, 23 Dick street, 24 Dick street (built 1887), 35 Dick street and the punt ramp at the south end of Dick street. These are items numbers 103 to 109 and item 492. The schedule was prepared by Meredith Walker and Hector Abrahams in 1983 as part of the Hunters Hill Heritage Study. **The Hunters Hill Trust asks that the beach at 15 Dick street be added to the Schedule.**

Santa can't use this Woolwich chimney!

A year ago it was the Hunters Hill Hotel, now the Woolwich Pier Hotel has been singled out as a site for a mobile phone antenna. Vodaphone proposes to put an antenna, disguised as a chimney, on the roof. The Woolwich Pier Hotel is visible from the Parramatta River and has been a landmark for more than 100 years. The hotel is item 403 on Hunters Hill Council's schedule of Items of Environmental Heritage (schedule 6 L.E.P. no.14) dated September 1991. The Hunter's Hill Trust views the proposal as an interference with heritage and has protested to the Hunters Hill Council, the Member for Bennelong, John Howard MP, and Vodaphone.

The Trust at Moocooboola

This year's Moocooboola Festival will be held on Saturday July 19 1997 in the streets around the Hunters Hill Town Hall. The surprising feature of Moocooboola is the way it brings out the large number of young families who live in Hunters Hill. They take part in school floats, sell food to raise money for their community projects and activities, and watch their children tap and dance on the Town Hall stage.

The Trust gives these people an opportunity to participate year-round in decision making in the municipality. Other areas have their progress associations, Hunters Hill has the Trust. At Moocooboola we can make known our complete agenda - an interest in quality of life all the way from heritage buildings, street traffic, retention of parklands and bush, to the quality of water in the rivers.

Last year we went in costume to Moocooboola and this year we would like to mount a float in the parade. The Hunters Hill Private Hospital offers a cash prize for the best float. For this we need a truck. Can you help? We also need some young people who want to get involved in making a statement. Please contact either the president Gil Wahlquist or the secretary, Len Condon.

HERITAGE WEEK

Trust members are invited to participate in the Vienna Cottage Heritage Week program in April. Events are as follows:

Friday April 18 at 7.30 pm - **CONVERSAZIONE**
at *Vienna Cottage* 38 Alexandra Street

An evening of anecdotes and reminiscences about Hunters Hill identities *Rose Lindsay, R D Fitzgerald, Nancy Keesing* and *Kylie Tennant*. This will open Vienna Cottage's Heritage Week Exhibition celebrating the work of Hunters Hill literary figures with excerpts from their life and times. Drinks and appetisers. Bookings essential.

April 20 to 27 EXHIBITION

the cottage will be open from 10am to 4pm on the 19th, 23rd, 26th and 27th April for an exhibition celebrating the literary figures of the conversazione, and others.

April 20, 23, 27 at 1pm HERITAGE WALKS
starting at the cottage. Admission \$5 includes admission to Vienna Cottage.

Thursday April 24 at 2 pm FELLOWSHIP OF AUSTRALIAN WRITERS meeting
Moocooboola branch. Members will read from their works. \$3 admission.

Sunday April 27 2pm to 4pm AFTERNOON IN THE ORCHARD
Musical performances by local artists under the trees in the Vienna orchard.

Tarban Creek must be cleaned up

Sally Gaunt

Heavy rains in Sydney during February have once again focussed media attention on the pollution of Sydney Harbour. We have heard how the antiquated sewerage system presided over by Sydney Water cannot cope with the increased flow during deluges, and how untreated sewage, mixed with stormwater, is allowed to overflow into the harbour and its tributaries at 3000 different points, making the harbour unsafe for swimming for days afterwards, and sometimes causing deadly algal blooms.

Hunters Hill residents are probably aware of the major overflow point at Lane Cove which causes severe pollution of the Lane Cove River. However, they may not be aware of our very own overflow point at Tarban Creek, 60 metres upstream from the Gladesville Bridge. It looks innocuous enough, just like the other pipes carrying stormwater into the canal. But from this point untreated effluent flows for about 1 kilometre through the public parkland of Tarban Ck Reserve, before discharging into Tarban Cove.

Sydney Water is licensed to discharge untreated effluent into Tarban Creek up to 20 times a year. Each of these "events" as they are called may last for several days. Mostly they occur after heavy rain when stormwater enters the sewer system either via illegal hookups or through seepage into the cracked pipes. The NSOOS, or Northern Suburbs Ocean Outfall Sewer, which serves the whole of northern Sydney as far out as Blacktown, cannot cope with the huge extra volume and discharges at overflow points along its length. The effluent entering Tarban Creek can reach a volume of up to 100 litres per second. There are also dry weather "events", caused mainly by the overloading of the system by heavy industry further back up the system.

Tarban Creek runs through the middle of the Hunters Hill Local Government Area and has a catchment covering roughly one third of the municipality. It is a little stream but one which has been subjected to a series of indignities from the beginning of white settlement in the area. In 1855 a stone-built reservoir was constructed on the Creek, upstream from what is now Manning Road, to provide water for the Gladesville Hospital, then called the Tarban Creek Lunatic Asylum.



DRAWING A NET AT TARBAN CREEK.

engraving reproduced from the *Illustrated Sydney News* 17.10.1889

The first minutes of the newly-formed Hunters Hill Council in 1862 record a meeting of aldermen with Asylum officials concerned about the contamination of their water supply from a dairy further upstream. In the 1930s the stream was taken over by the Water Board and encased for much its length in a metre-deep brick and concrete channel. It was at

this time that the present sewerage system was put in place.

The Water Board, now Sydney Water, has held a complete monopoly over sewage disposal ever since. This has led inevitably to complacency in the face of a failing system, and a monolithic disregard for alternative solutions. The latest breakdown, however, with its very visible harbour pollution, has led to a call from the head of the Environmental Protection Authority for Sydney Water to lift its game, and fix up the harbour before the Olympics. Hence Sydney Water's surprise \$400 million plan to pipe sewage sludge from North Head back out to a new sludge treatment plant at Camellia. This, they say, will solve the problem of the major outfalls in the Lane Cove River and Middle Harbour, and is meant to reduce harbour pollution by up to 80%.

But the scheme has been criticised as a band-aid solution which would lock Sydney firmly into outdated technologies and which would cause enormous environmental havoc in its implementation. When asked if it would stop the overflow events at Tarban Creek a spokesperson for Sydney Water was not able to give an unequivocal "Yes".

The Environmental Protection Authority asserts that the greatest environmental benefit would come from finding solutions locally, in the freshwater catchments. The pollution is quickly diluted once it reaches the harbour and is flushed away by the tides, but a heavy overflow into a suburban freshwater creek can cause ecological damage lasting many months or years.

It is obvious that the ecology of Tarban Creek cannot cope with the volume of effluent it is required to process, and is suffering, gravely. The public health risks are also considerable, with the possibility of water-borne diseases such as cholera, typhoid, hepatitis, and middle-ear infections from swimming in the water or swallowing it, and skin infections a real risk just from contact. A Sydney Water employee admitted to members of the local resident group, the Tarban Creek Community Action Group, that he believed he had been made severely ill just from inhaling the vapours from sewage effluent such as that which runs through Tarban Creek. Mosquito-carried diseases may also become a problem.

No water quality testing has yet been done on the effluent within the creek, with a lot of buck-passing taking place. However the evidence of our eyes and noses is enough to tell the story. The smell is overwhelming after an "event", and bad all the

time. Councillor Peter Astridge was quoted, after visiting the area, as saying "It is so putrid it almost makes your stomach turn". The colour of the effluent is poo-brown, whereas the water in the stream above the outflow pipe, coming down the stream from further up the catchment is clear and odourless and during the recent Clean-up Australia day, just after the heavy rain when the creek had been in flood, volunteers at the site below the spillway were finding toilet paper and sanitary napkins caught in the water weeds.

However not all is gloom and doom. At the macro level private companies with overseas experience in alternative methods of sewage disposal are breathing down Sydney Water's neck with a range of creative and economic solutions. The State Government is about to hold a public enquiry into the problem of sewage disposal at which many of these solutions will be canvassed.

With regard to our specific problem, Sydney Water was recently required by the EPA to submit an environmental impact statement for continuation of its license to discharge into Tarban Creek. This was rejected and is back on the drawing board. And at a recent meeting of local school principals much interest was shown in involvement of students in monitoring water quality in the creek, with St Joseph's College agreeing to purchase a kit for the purpose.

In addition the Tarban Creek Community Action Group is intending to apply for a grant for the purpose of implementing eco-engineering solutions to the problem of water quality in the creek below the spillway, with a project encompassing a gross pollutant trap, settling ponds and a wetland. None of these measures will solve the problem at its source but will help restore the environmental health of the creek in the new Riverglade Reserve.

LIMIT TO DEVELOPMENT

Which brings us to the point of the Riverglade development and its relation to the sewerage problem. The sale of the northern campus of Gladesville Hospital for residential development presented serious environmental concerns. Stormwater runoff, visual pollution, landfill and tree removal have all had to be considered by Council in assessing the Development Application.

The problem of sewage disposal is the most sensitive, being seen as a limiting factor to the potential size of the development. The Huntleys Point submain, which at present services the site, is at capacity. Any increased flow would cause even more discharge into Tarban Creek.

The developers appear to have found ingenious solutions to the problem, involving a new pumping station, a holding tank on site, a flow detection device, and relocation of the development's overflow point to the mouth of Tarban Creek where, they say, the effluent will dissipate harmlessly into the mangroves. Council is sceptical about these proposals which remain very vague, and are demanding more detailed plans up front.

The authors of the Riverglade Environmental Planning Study, undertaken in 1991 prior to the Development Application, had this to say: "The sewage overflow ... into Tarban Creek presents a serious hazard to health and to the environment. It is the considered opinion of the study team that this hazard should be removed in order to prevent further deterioration in the environment in and adjacent to the site and to prevent the health risk imposed on future residents on the site." However this is resolved, the problem of sewerage in Tarban Creek will not go away until some very lateral thinking or a good deal of money is thrown at it. We shall have to wait and see.

► *local boys playing near the overflow*



Developers contribute \$100,000

At an extraordinary meeting of Hunters Hill Council on March 13 1997, the developers of the Riverglade site, Australand and Oceania Property Developments, said they were prepared to commit to an agreement where they will provide \$50,000 each for the rehabilitation and improvements of the marine environment of Tarban Creek. The \$100,000 will be held in trust. If not spent within three years, they will be refunded. A committee will be formed to administer the rehabilitation work. It will be comprised of Councillors Jane Waddell and Ross Williams, two members of the Tarban Creek Community Action Group, one each from Australand and Oceania, a council staff member and a citizen representative.

Bush regeneration

Council has held two meetings of its bush regeneration committee. Following the example set by the programme of bush care at Kelly's Bush, a group has formed at Tarban Creek and another is forming at Pains road. The Tarban Creek group has a wider agenda than bush care - it is concerned with the health of the area and with the environmental effects of the housing development on the Riverglade site. This group conducted a successful clean-up of the creek on Clean-Up Australia Day. Representatives on the council's Bushland subcommittee are - Geoff Grace (Friends of Boronia Park), Sally Gaunt (Tarban Creek Community Action Group), Leonie Parker (Woolwich Foreshore Walk), Connie Ewald (Friends of Kellys Bush), Cathy Merchant (Ryde Hunters Hill Flora and Fauna Society), Leona Hole and Gil Wahlquist (Parks and Trees Advisory Committee), Phil Sutton (Parks overseer), Don Cottee (Deputy General Manager), Cr Sue Hoopman (chair).

Meeting wants army land as park

PLEASE CONSIDER:

- ⇒ the Sydney Maritime Museum at Morts Dock with the James Craig fully rigged with three masts;
- ⇒ the Woolwich Ferry wharf moved across the bay from Valentia Street to a dockside wharf with loads of car parking alongside;
- ⇒ the horse paddock retained as open space, with horses grazing -

This is part of the wish list that came from the audience of 250 people who met at the Hunters Hill Town Hall on Wednesday, March 5 1997 to consider the future of the army land at Woolwich. The 32nd Water Transport Squadron which occupies the seven hectare site is expected to be relocated at Townsville by the end of the year. The army has been in residence since 1964.

The meeting was chaired by the mayor, Cr Bill Phipson. The hard motion carried unanimously was that Hunters Hill Council contact the Prime Minister and Local member to have the site, currently under consideration for disposal by the Department of Defence, declared part of the Sydney Harbour Foreshore National Park.

Bernard Blackley, director of the Sydney defence property disposal unit told the meeting he had 30 sites to dispose of in Greater Sydney. He hoped that by forming a consultative committee with local residents the Woolwich land could be disposed of in a situation which would be win/win for the residents and the Defence Department.

A series of wall displays showed that the Defence Department had employed property consultants Fitzwalter & Associates Pty Ltd and ten consultancy groups to provide ideas for the site. The objective of the consultation process was to estimate the approximate revenue which the Defence Department could expect from the sale of the land, to follow sound and modern urban planning principles and to leave behind something to be proud of.

Mr Blackley said that at present there were no lines on paper and there was no particular revenue expectation. In answer to a question, Mr Blackley said that the cost of relocating the 32nd Water Transport Unit was between \$70 and \$80 million. Cr Phipson said that the draft plans for future use of the land would have to be approved by the Hunters Hill Council with a final decision by the NSW Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning. When the meeting began, the deputy mayor Cr Jane

Waddell, called for a show of hands from those who wanted the land returned to the public as parkland. This received unanimous approval. Jim Millar, of Woolwich Road, asked that the Army not move, saying that they were good neighbours. The meeting resulted in two groups being formed. One, proposed by Rhonda Steen, of Mars road, Gladesville, to be an action group opposed to development of anything other than parklands, the other as a Community Reference Group to negotiate with the consultants managed by Fitzwalter and Associates on behalf of the Defence Department.

Hunters Hill Trust members belong to both groups. A letter from the State MP Mrs. Kerry Chikarovski was read to the meeting. Mrs. Chikarovski offered to serve on the consultative committee. This offer was declined by the meeting. John Smith, manager of the Sydney Maritime museum said that the museum would have to vacate their Blackwattle Bay site when the James Craig was fully rigged and they would like to move to the Morts Dock site which has a heritage listing.

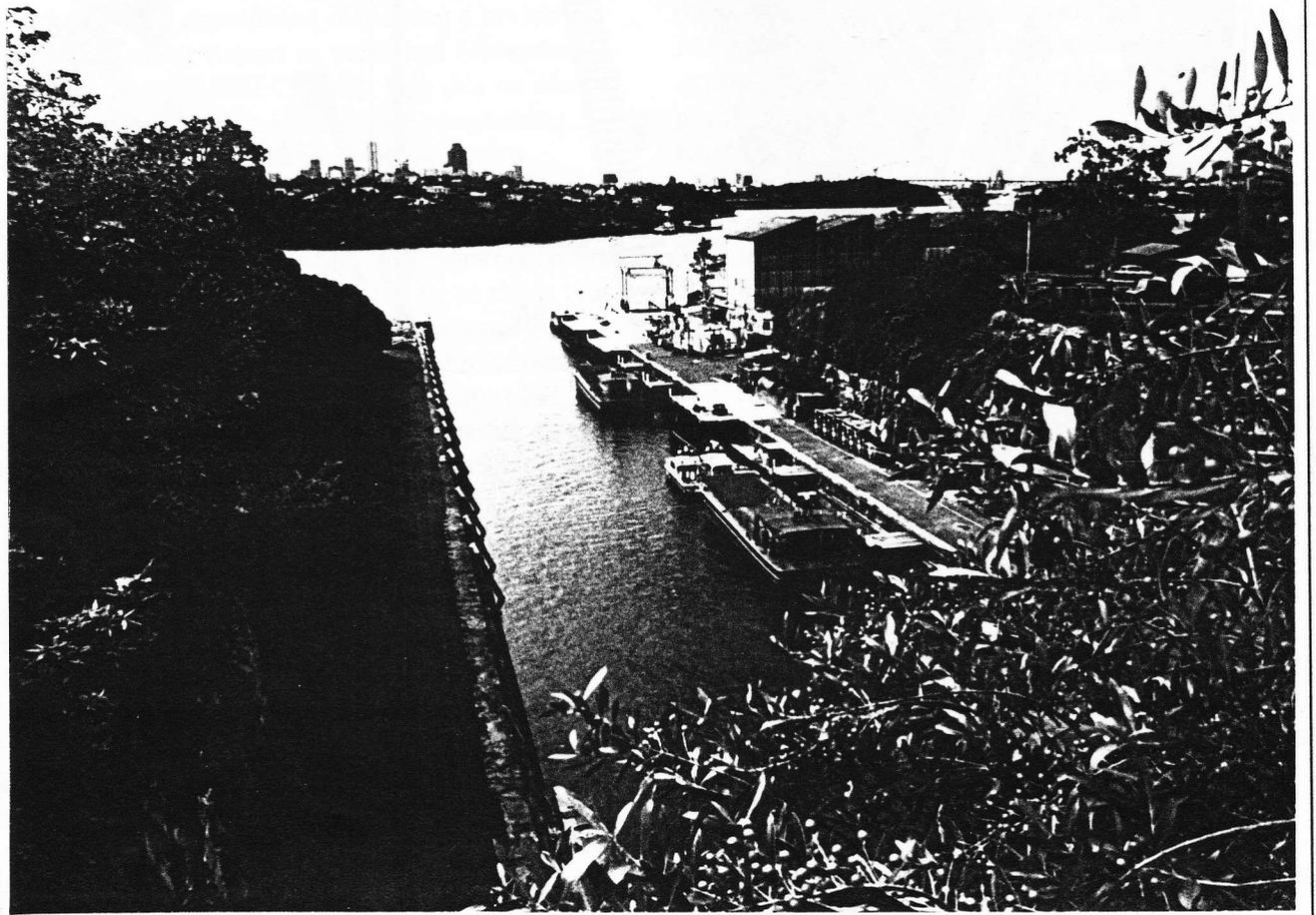
The consultancy team working for the Defence Department is as follows:

- *Planning manager* - Fitzwalter and Associates;
- *Urban design* - Woods Bagot;
- *Town planners* - BBC consulting planners;
- *Heritage/archaeology* - Edward Higginbotham & Associates;
- *Pre-European archaeology* - Mary Dallas Consulting archaeologists;
- *Traffic planning* - Traffix;
- *Engineering services* - Connell Wagner;
- *Environmental engineers* - Woodward-Clyde;
- *Ecology, flora & fauna* - Gunninah Environmental Consultants;
- *Contamination auditor* - CH2M Hill;
- *Facilitator* - The Professional Facilitators.

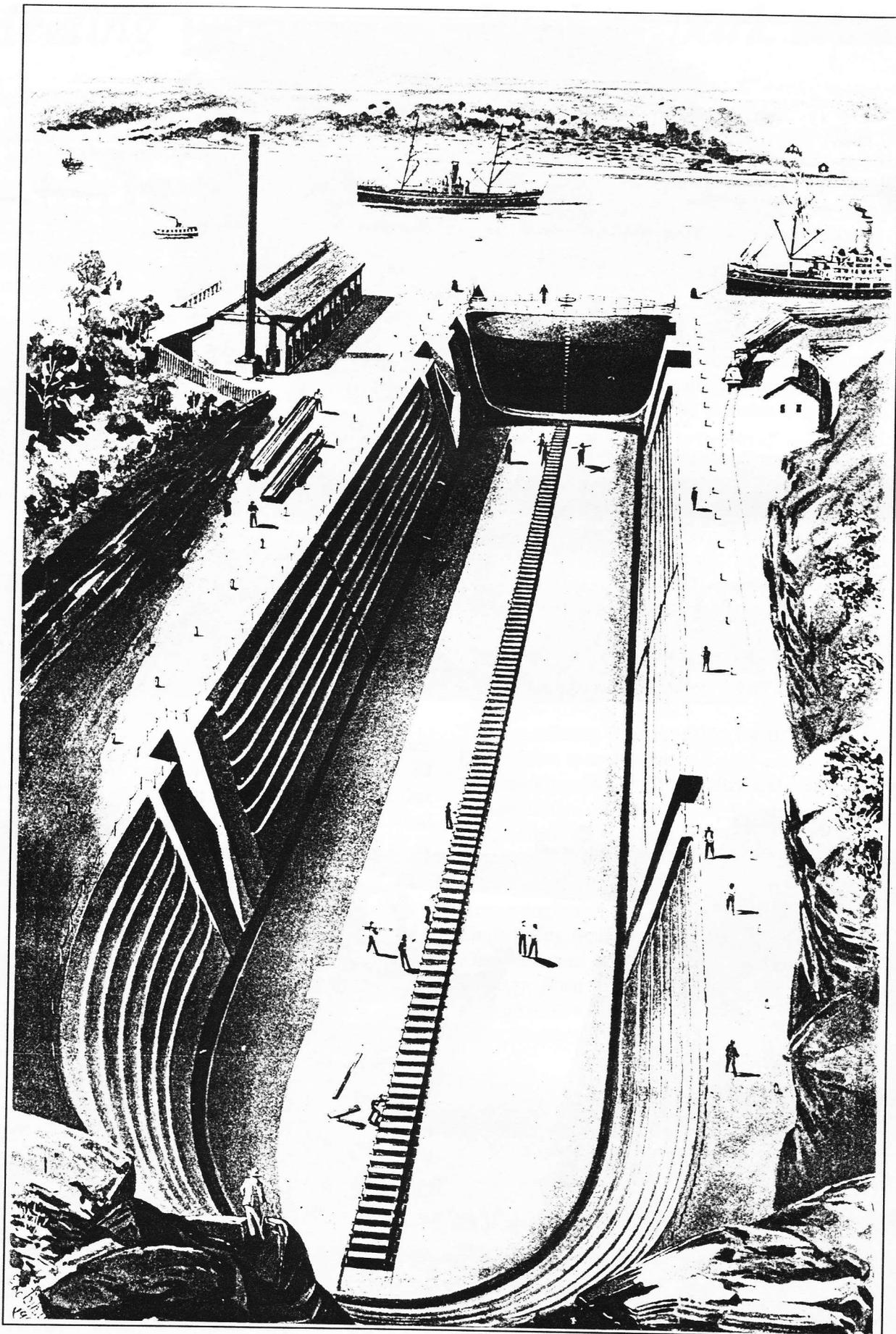
Residents nominated to the Community Reference Group were: Penny Griffith, Gil Wahlquist, Anthony Geoghan, James Lamerton, James Millar, Trudi Kallir, Richard White, David Ingham, Juliet Corish, Philip Jenkyn, Jenni Scottford, John Boots, Pamela Alvarez, Jim Barrett and Jenny Lee.

The Hunters Hill Trust suggest that residents with views on any aspect of the site place their concerns in writing and forward them either to the consultants or to citizen members of the Community Reference Group.

Gil Wahlquist



The Woolwich Army land: the horse paddock & Morts Docks. in March 1997



*Artist's impression of "the new graving dock at Woolwich"
published in the Town & Country Journal on December 21 1901, shortly after opening.*

Report on Council answered

The February issue of the Trust Journal contained a report on the Department of Local Government's management overview report on Hunters Hill Council. The journal undertook to publish any answering documents. Mr Murray Butt, of 17 Mount Street, Hunters Hill, has written to the journal and we publish his correspondence in full, beginning with a covering letter:

"Thought you might like a copy of a letter sent to the Department of Local Government to add a little balance to the argument presented in the recent Trust newsletter. The bases of my ICAC complaint were the auditors reports going back to 1992, which were not on council records and were obtained from the auditors themselves. These were quite critical of many council practices but were not revealed to members of council as they were addressed to the General Manager.

23rd January, 1997

Dear Mr. Davies

I write to your department requesting a review of the Management Report as published November 1996 for Hunters Hill Council. I do this on advice from the Ombudsman Office after complaining about the content and conduct of the review.

I served as a councillor on Hunters Hill Council from 1991 to 1995. It is most disappointing to first make a comment on a report relating to those years after it has already been published as a public document. The fact that no public submissions or advice was sought prior to the final report has left it open to abuse for political means. This has already been evidenced by the reports in the media.

On the 13th Sept 1995 I contacted I.C.A.C. in relation to concerns I had with the conduct of audits going back to 1992 and after review they decided to refer the matter to the Department of Local Government. As the matter had been referred to your department in 1995 I take exception to the statement "It is noted with concern the delay in bringing the allegations of corruption regarding the former council to the attention of the appropriate authorities." Once again I include a copy of my letter to I.C.A.C. and include copies of the Auditor's report, none of which were on council files but were obtained from Coopers and Lybrand. This in part answers the statement "Councillors and

staff seemed either unaware of these provisions or reluctant to use the powers of the Act" P 34. The author of the report goes to great effort to mention P5 and P23 "the services of the General Manager and former Town Clerk of 27 years standing were terminated". Surely it would have occurred to the author his position as a current Councillor with sufficient control of the numbers of council to be elected the current Mayor and the then Deputy Mayor would have some influence on a report conducted by "Council's management being required to provide key data and complete a questionnaire". If it was important to mention the 27 years standing then why not his current position as Deputy Mayor.

Statements such as that in the opening list of matters of prime concern "Council's recent inability to manage its finances which has resulted in a major deterioration in its liquidity" are inaccurate and misleading. The Auditors' reports show the problems have been evident since at least 1992 not 1995 as the report infers. The liquidity problem is also misleading as the redundancy payments, other than the car kept by the redundant General Manager, were a debt which would have to be expended some time. It is like comparing the positions of the State and Federal Governments in a single year if all Superannuation payments were taken into account.

This leads to the problems of legal fees. If the author had taken note of the statement in the opening paragraph "Heritage issues are of concern to the local community" it would have gone a long way to explaining the blow out in legal fees. The operation of SEPP 25 Dual Occupancy during that period was seen as an attack on the heritage of Hunters Hill. A breakdown of the areas in which the legal expenses occurred would have shown the vast majority of money spent in this area. The law has subsequently been changed, removing and in part justifying the cause of this expense.

In conclusion I request that a review of the Management Overview Report be conducted so that the inadequacies as pointed out can be corrected. Also I request that the department review the process where a document can be released as a Public document prior to all parties concerned being afforded the opportunity to make submissions.

Yours sincerely, Murray Butt.

Making the Trust work

The next Trust meeting this year will be the

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

to be held on *Thursday May 22* at the RSL Hall corner Alexandra Street & Ady Street starting at 8 pm.

Other meetings will be held at the RSL Hall as follows:

- ⇒ Thursday July 24 - General topic
- ⇒ Thursday September 18 - General topic
- ⇒ Christmas function - Thursday November 28 venue to be announced. The meetings provide an opportunity for members and friends to comment on issues affecting the municipality.

The Trust committee meets on the second Thursday of every month at Vienna Cottage, Alexandra street at 8 p.m. and members are invited to attend. The Trust rents a room at Vienna. Our archives are housed there.

TRUST CONTACTS

President: Gil Wahlquist - phone/fax 9816 2627
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Treasurer: Andrew Yew - phone 9816 3254
Journal Editor: Megan Martin - phone 99528340.
All mail to Hunter's Hill Trust, P.O. Box 85
Hunters Hill 2110

TRUST PUBLICATIONS

The *Heritage of Hunters Hill* published by the Hunters Hill Trust has 150 pages of historic houses of the municipality. All are accompanied by a description. The book also has an authoritative history of the peninsula. It is available for \$18 from the Hunters Hill Post Office.

The Trust has also published *The Vision and the Struggle*, by Reg Martin and Richard Temple, which tells the story of the foundation of the Trust and its early years. This is available for \$6.50 a copy and is given to new members.

The book *The Battlers for Kellys Bush*, priced at \$10, is available from Hunters Hill Council, National Trust, Vienna Cottage and by mail for \$12 posted from The Battlers for Kellys Bush, P. O. Box 85, Hunters Hill, 2110. When purchasing by mail, please send a cheque or money order with your name and address.

Self-sufficient House

The guest speaker at the Trust's Annual General Meeting on Thursday May 22 1997 will be **Michael Mobbs**, environmental law and policy consultant.

Last year Michael rebuilt a terrace house in Chippendale to be wholly self-sufficient. Rainwater is collected for drinking. Waste water is treated and recycled to flush the toilet. Solar panels run the electrical appliances with power left over to export to the grid for use by others.

Last year Michael Mobbs had an article in the *Weekend Australian* on the Federal Government's responsibility to protect suburban streets from Optus and Telstra cables.

The annual general meeting will be held at the RSL Hall, Alexandra street at 8 pm.

Join the Trust!

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

- a copy of *The Vision and the Struggle*
- a car sticker
- a badge
- copies of the Trust Journal as printed
- copies of newsletters
- a lovely warm sense of belonging.

Please send your application with cheque or money order to The Hunter's Hill Trust, P.O. Box 85, Hunters Hill, 2110