

# Hunters Hill Trust Journal

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## CHARACTER ASSASSINATION Foreshores under threat from 10/50 Clearing Code

The foreshores of Hunters Hill are under threat from the new 10/50 clearing code that came into effect on August 1, 2014. The State Government, at the behest of the Rural Fire Service (RFS) introduced the code in response to the disastrous bushfires that destroyed houses in parts of the Blue Mountains last year.

The code is designed to facilitate clearing of trees and vegetation on private land in areas that are designated "Bushfire Prone" to mitigate the potential impact of bushfires. The code has effectively extended existing Bushfire Prone areas by 350 metres (subsequently modified to 150m in some areas) in all directions. The new 10/50 code applies to properties within these extended zones.

The code allows property owners, without any formal approval from their local councils or any other authority, to cut down any tree within 10 metres of their buildings and to clear vegetation within 50 metres of those structures.

Bushfire prone areas in Hunters Hill include areas of foreshore land adjacent to Boronia Park, Kelly's Bush, Buffalo Creek and Ferdinand Street Reserve. There are similar areas in other local government areas around the harbour and its various inlets as well as in Lane Cove, Pittwater and Sutherland.

Because of its interface with the Parramatta and Lane Cove Rivers, much of Hunters Hill's unique character contributes to the wider character of Sydney Harbour so that these areas also have regional significance. This is encoded in the Sydney Regional Environmental Plan (Sydney Harbour Catchment) 2005, which includes a list of planning principles for land within the Sydney Harbour Catchment to preserve and maintain the bushland character that is such a feature of much of Sydney Harbour.

The impact of unmitigated tree and vegetation removal from these sensitive foreshore areas is clearly a

major threat to the character of the harbour as a whole, not just to Hunters Hill.

While The Trust understands the need to mitigate the potential impact of bushfires on buildings and properties, we are opposed to the blanket introduction of this scheme into sensitive urban areas such as Hunters Hill.

We are also disturbed by the cavalier and underhand way this scheme has been introduced. There has been no discussion with affected local councils or other interested bodies and there are no maps of the areas to which the code applies. Individual property owners can only discover if their properties are included by using the DIY tool on the FSR website. Councils have had to quickly produce unofficial sketch maps of the revised Fire Prone Areas to get a handle on the revisions.

Not only has the RFS increased the extent of Bush Fire Prone Areas but they have also introduced new areas that are now designated bush fire prone. In Hunters Hill, for example, the Ferdinand Street Reserve and houses surrounding it were never considered Bush Fire Prone and are not included on the Local Environment Plan maps. It is only by using the RFS online tool that one discovers that properties in North Parade, Ernest St, Ady St and Ferdinand St are now included in the 10/50 clearing code area.

Recent newspaper articles have reported that uncontrolled tree felling and clearing is already well under way in sensitive bushland areas around Sydney Harbour. The Sun Herald of September 7 reported that tree loppers are touting for business under the new code with pamphlet drops and offers of discounts if the whole street comes on board. Mosman Council reported that 14 trees on private property had been removed in the previous week for "improved views" of the harbour.

Mosman mayor Ron Bendall was reported as saying that Council had complained to the RFS and had been

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Preserving Australia's  
Oldest Garden Suburb

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**MEMBERSHIP**

The Trust welcomes everyone interested in preserving the unique character of Hunters Hill to become a member.

**Single membership \$20**  
**Family membership \$40**

Contact the secretary to join or download a form from the website.

**Foreshores under threat from 10/50 clearing code - continued from page 1**

promised a “workshop”. He said he feared that this was all “window dressing, trying to placate us and not addressing the fact, that while this policy has merit in rural and heavily vegetated areas, the sheer scale of the clearing zones is ridiculous in highly urbanised areas.”

The article notes that “in Pittwater, the Council resolved to continue to make representations to the RFS to address the unintended consequences of the code and to write to the government about the indirect impact on the planning process as well as threatened species legislation.”

The article cited a case in Pittwater, which had been contested in the Land and Environment Court in an effort to save a significant spotted gum. Immediately the code was introduced the tree was lawfully removed.

Hunters Hill Mayor Richard Quinn has written to the premier and various ministers calling for the immediate cessation of the 10/50 vegetation clearing code in urban areas. He pointed out that a substantial proportion of the land within the entitlement area is within Hunters Hill’s Heritage Conservation Areas, Environmental Protection Areas and includes Riparian areas, Class 2 Acid-sulphate soils and land with biodiversity value.



Tree-lined Bonnefin Road – every one of these trees can be cut down without approval under the 10/50 Code, which has extended Bushfire Prone Land to include this entire street.

Mayor Quinn anticipates that he will be “mobilising my fellow mayors and their communities” to resist implementation of the code.

Over the years The Trust has campaigned for the protection of trees. We have supported Council in its efforts to list trees on its Significant Tree Register and to prosecute those who have cut down trees without approval.

The Trust fully supports Council in calling for the cessation of the 10/50 Code and we have written to the Premier and other involved ministers expressing our opposition to its application in Hunters Hill and other urban areas, particularly around the harbour.

Other contentious aspects of the proposal and its implementation include:

- No proper documentation of the areas affected
- No consultation with Councils or property owners
- The removal of professional oversight and assessment of tree removal and clearing
- No consideration of trees listed as significant or as heritage items

David Shoebridge, the hard-working Greens NSW MP, has pointed out in his submission that “the data shows that the greatest bushfire risk to property is living within 100 metres of a forest, not the proximity of a small number of trees closer to a house. That is because in many cases it is the ember attack, which travels up to 100 metres ahead of the fire front that is responsible for spot fires in residential areas and for the loss of many residential homes. Even intensive clearing around homes will not alleviate this risk. It may however create a false sense of security in householders who have undertaken this clearing.”

**Latest News**

Bonnefin Road was letterboxed with an anonymous letter advising residents that they can now remove and prune trees and vegetation on their properties *without requiring any approvals*. “*But be quick as efforts are in progress to try and get these laws changed and restrictive approval processes reintroduced (e.g. by the Council).*”

Already one magnificent Angophora has been removed from on the high side of the road leaving it looking bare and bereft.



Angophora gone from the front garden

As reported in the Sydney Morning Herald of 1 October 2014, The Rural Fire Service has announced changes to some of its controversial regulations “after mounting evidence that home owners in built-up areas were using the powers to clear land for development and to improve views”.

The RFS has now reduced the distance from 350 metres to 150 from Category Two bushfire-prone land. However this does not adequately address the problem in Hunters Hill and other affected urban areas. The Herald quotes Nature Conservation Council chief executive, Kate Smolski as saying that the changes have not removed the risks to trees in most urban bushland areas. “People will be justifiably angry when they realise the

changes do not address their legitimate concerns”.

Trust members can join the struggle by writing to Stuart Ayres, the minister responsible for the RFS [office@ayres.minister.nsw.gov.au](mailto:office@ayres.minister.nsw.gov.au) And to Anthony Roberts [lanecove@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:lanecove@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

Check out the Hunters Hill Trust website for more detail.

**GLADESVILLE SHOPPING VILLAGE UPDATE**

The proposal for the redevelopment of the Coles shopping centre site is currently on hold. In the last Journal we reported that the developer, Moch Pty Ltd, was in the process of preparing amended plans, which were to address the many concerns raised in the 277 submissions received by Council and the criticisms from Architectus, the consultants employed by Council to assess the scheme.

Since then the developers have withdrawn the proposal entirely and have engaged a whole new team of consultants to prepare a new submission. Harry Loi from Moch has assured The Trust that they are committed to consulting widely with the community and others as part of the process of preparing a new scheme.

The Trust addressed Council at its 14 July meeting welcoming the withdrawal of the original scheme. We believe any new proposal should include

- The retention in-situ of the cottage at 10 Cowell Street
- A reduction of the heights of the proposed towers
- A setback along Flagstaff St
- The construction of a proper car park, access points and loading areas
- No gated community
- High architectural values

**A Revised DCP**

In the meantime the Council has voted for a proposed revision the Development Control Plan 2013 that relates to the site.

The revision involves adding the following two amendments to the DCP:

1. An additional objective to “ensure adequate landscaping, deep soil planting, pedestrian amenity and buffering between the GSV development and surrounding residential areas”, and

2. A 4 metre setback from the Flagstaff Street boundary alignment.



*The original scheme was to leave the zero setback to Flagstaff Street as it is now. Architectural value – less than zero*



*How Flagstaff St might look with a setback, planting and a green wall*

The proposed changes need to be publicly exhibited to allow for the community and interested parties to make submissions.

At first glance this appears to be a win for all those, including The Trust, who argued against the ugly 17m high wall along the site’s boundary with Flagstaff and Cowell Streets and who argued for the need to provide a transitional green space between the GSV development and the existing low – density residential areas in Flagstaff and Cowell Streets.

Council’s consultant, Architectus, does not support a setback to Cowell and Flagstaff Streets. As well, Council’s planning staff and the General Manager do not support this proposal in isolation. They have successfully argued that Council should only consider any change to the setback in the context of an overall review of the GSV area that Council has commissioned.

**“Managing change in Gladesville”**

At its 25 August 2014 meeting, Council considered proposals from four different firms to prepare a review of the Gladesville DCP to develop “controls for the Gladesville Village area that encourage a high standard of architectural and landscape design”.

According to the minutes of its April 2014 meeting, which set out the scope of the review, it “may identify complementary changes that are required to be made in other parts of the DCP especially Part 2, The Character and Heritage of the Hunters Hill Municipality.

The review was to determine an agreed idea of what the future of Gladesville should look like and to assist Council adopting an “image and brand” for Gladesville. As well, the review would undertake a Public Education and Communication Campaign.

Place Partners, “a specialist place making consultancy”, was chosen at the August Council meeting to undertake the review. The term “image and brand” has been dropped. Instead, the focus of the review will be to develop “design parameters”.

Place Partners will be making a presentation to Council on October 20 to finalise the design and scope of the review.

Council will be distributing a flyer advising the community and interest groups of the particulars of the review and the schedule of its consultation meetings. At the same time the 28-day exhibition period for the revisions to the setback for the GSV site along Flagstaff Street will be advertised.

It is anticipated that Council officers will be in a position to report back to Council in December. When Council has signed off on the report and any proposed changes to the DCP, this will go on exhibition for a further period of time.

The Councillors who backed the introduction of the 4m setback to Cowell Street had a clear intention to reduce the impact of the development of the Gladesville Shopping Village on the surrounding area by introducing a softening green edge to the scheme. It is hoped that this clarity of purpose is not lost in the review.

Clearly the process has a long way to go and members of the community who want the best development in Gladesville are urged to make an effort to be actively involved in the consultation.

The Trust will keep members informed via our email list and the website.

**The fate of 10 Cowell Street**

The Trust and many others argued in submissions to Council for the retention the cottage at 10 Cowell Street, firstly as an item of heritage that has been recommended for inclusion in Schedule 5

of the Local Environment Plan (but strangely ignored by Council) and secondly as an element to break the scale of the GSV development and to provide a transition to the residential scale of Cowell Street.

This is similar to the way the heritage-listed cottage at 62 Gladesville Road breaks up the scale of the two new developments either side of it.



62 Gladesville Road

Whether or not No 10 Cowell Street can be saved from demolition now rests with the Councillors. At the moment the retention of the cottage in-situ lacks majority support.

**No 11 MARK ST UPDATE**



11 Mark Street – still mouldering away

This small worker's cottage at 11 Mark Street, which is owned by St Joseph's College, featured on the front page of the last Journal under the heading *Character Assassination - Heritage vandalism or demolition by neglect*.

Following publication of the Journal, The Trust wrote to the headmaster of St Joseph's College, Ross Tarlington, about our concerns for the cottage. We expressed our hope that the college had not really abandoned it and had plans for its eventual restoration. In reply Mr. Tarlington wrote that the college's "preliminary consideration was to use the site for additional car parking in the short term if the retention of the cottage was not

feasible". He went on to detail the professional architectural and engineering advice the college had received. The engineers recommended that because of "the extensive loss of fabric due to termite attack, we do not consider it feasible to retain or conserve the cottage". The heritage consultant recommended demolishing the structures on the site following archival recording, "due to the low intactness of the place". He supported demolition of the site for a landscaped parking area, which included "interpretation of the retained chimneys and lost significance on the site in the developed landscape" (whatever this means).

Mr. Tarlington also listed the "significant capital expenditure" that has been set aside for the restoration of the college's other heritage assets.

The Trust expressed our dismay that the college has abandoned this small heritage-listed cottage to the ravages of wind and weather for the sake of a couple of car spaces. We noted that, despite the consultants' advice, the condition of the cottage is not beyond repair and that the cost of the work had increased as a result of the college's deliberate neglect but that this would be insignificant when compared with the sums that the college has recently spent on new buildings and on other restoration works.

Cottages like this one, which pre-dates the main college buildings, are an important part of Hunters Hill's rich and diverse character and history and it is disappointing to see them abandoned with the prospect of demolition and replacement by car parking when it is possible to resurrect them. A good example of the ability to bring such a cottage back to life is 'Exeter Farm' which was restored by the Historic Houses Trust of NSW from arguably a far worse state of repair.



Exeter Farm before

The Trust also wrote to the Mayor and Councillors about our concerns.



Exeter Farm restored

Unfortunately it would seem that there is little that Council is able (or prepared) to do to ensure that the cottage is repaired and properly looked after. It is a sad reflection on the strength of the NSW State heritage laws that this can still happen in the 21st century. As the pressures on Sydney increase, it will become increasingly important to preserve such humble examples of our past for future generations to understand where we have come from.

So far no specific development application has been submitted to Council regarding the cottage. In the meantime its condition continues to deteriorate.

It is interesting to note that back in 1976 the cottage at 10 Gladesville Road (see *My Place* on page 7), which is very similar to 11 Mark St, was in an even worse state of repair and yet a young family was able to find the money to restore it so that 37 years on it continues to be a place that is loved by its current owner.

The Trust continues to hope that the school will have a change of heart and restore this humble cottage to its rightful place as an important element in the history of Mark Street.

**BORONIA PARK UPDATE**

**Review of the Plan of Management**  
Council's consultants for this review, Thompson Berill Landscape Design Pty Ltd (<http://www.tbld.com.au/>), have completed their initial consultation with the community, as described in a letterbox drop. Originally Council had planned the review would be completed (and the new Plan adopted) before Christmas, but this now seems unlikely.

Consultation consisted of meetings with representatives of community organisations (12 Aug), and sporting clubs (13 Aug), and on-site consultations with the general public (Fri 15 August 8am – 10am; Sat 16 Aug 2pm – 4pm). Council also conducted an on-line survey. The next opportunity the community will have to comment will be when the draft Plan of Management goes on public exhibition.

Council's Project Reference Group was due to meet with the consultant on Tuesday 30 September to discuss the community consultation and direction of the Draft POM, and to lock in key dates. More information is promised in the next Council newsletter (September 2014): be sure to take up Council's offer to add your email address for updates. The review is being managed by Jacqui Vollmer, Bushland Management Officer, 98709430 or email [VollmerJ@huntershill.nsw.gov.au](mailto:VollmerJ@huntershill.nsw.gov.au).

**Work on No.3 Oval**

Most of the work on No.3 Oval has now been completed, after being out of use for almost four years. The Rugby Club received a grant for this project in 2009, and (with some Council assistance) has raised the level of the oval, extended its area, installed irrigation and turf, and rugby posts. It is now a full-sized rugby field.



*The soggy soggy turf at No 3*

The work was carried out by the Club as 'exempt development', and so required no Development Application, and was conducted without community consultation. Council has received a consulting engineer's statement that the irregular rock retaining walls on the eastern side are 'adequate' provided the slopes are 'stabilised with planting' to prevent erosion.

The final surface of the oval has been surveyed and shows a steady fall to the east, but in spite of this the ground takes a long time to dry out after rain rendering it unusable for days on end. Work still to be completed includes an access path and steps down to the cul-de-sac at the bottom of Boronia Ave, and stabilisation (by plants) of the slopes above the retaining walls.

It is understood that the Rugby Club still hopes to build a clubhouse-type structure between Nos 2 and 3 Ovals, and to reinstate the carpark located there, with access from Princes St. This would mean the Princes St entry gate into the reserve

would again be open whenever access was desired.

**Status of walking tracks in Boronia Park**

The route of the Great North Walk through Boronia Park was documented by surveyors during August (you might have seen their little fluoro tabs nailed into the track), presumably as part of the review of the Plan of Management.

Generally this track remains in good condition, in spite of receiving little maintenance (just an annual swipe with a whipper-snipper, and the removal of large fallen trees after a storm). Other tracks are also OK except during and after heavy rain when they become rivulets.

*Alister Sharp*

**Annual General Meeting**

This year's AGM was well attended, thanks no doubt to the interest in our speaker, The Hon Justice Michael Pembroke, Supreme Court of NSW who spoke of his book *Arthur Phillip, Sailor, Mercenary, Governor, Spy*. Prior to Michael's really interesting and entertaining talk, the business of the meeting was quickly conducted. The outgoing President, Robyn Christie, gave a rundown of the year's work of the Trust and her husband, the outgoing treasurer, Peter Stockdale, reported on the financial position of The Trust.

Robyn and Peter's contribution to The Trust over many years was acknowledged by the meeting. We wish them all the best in the UK and hope to see them back on the committee some time hence.

A new executive committee was elected unopposed. The committee includes three new members, Gulliver Coote, Caroline Mackaness, Justin Parry-Oakden and re-elected members, Tony Coote (President), Brigid Dowsett (Secretary), David Gaunt (Treasurer), Maureen Flowers, Kate Russell and Alister Sharp.

**Front Stone Wall Restored**

Congratulations to the owners of the house at No 38 Ryde Road on the careful restoration of the stone wall at the front of their house. The work involved the painstaking process of firstly numbering the existing stones prior to their removal, then stacking them in order on site prior to the construction of a properly engineered concrete foundation and finally the relaying of the stones as they were followed by carefully repointing the joints.



*The restored front fence at 38 Ryde Rd*

The importance of visible front gardens and appropriate fences to the garden character of Hunters Hill are essential cannot be overstated.



*Another restored stone wall Bonnefin Rd from some years ago*

The character of our front gardens is increasingly under threat. Despite the guidelines in Council's DCP, the proliferation of inappropriate heavy steel security fences, locked front gates, minimal planting and increased areas of hard surfaces for parking continues as do the demands of some for high front fences to block off their front gardens from view.

**State Heritage listing for Gladesville Bridge**



The Gladesville Bridge was listed on the State Heritage Register on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014. It was completed in 1964 and was the longest concrete arch span bridge in the world (1000 feet) until 1980. "It set new standards for design and construction on the international stage".

A byproduct of the bridge construction was the bisection of Hunters Hill, the demolition of a number of heritage houses including St Malo and the relocation of St Mark's church.



Gladesville Bridge Under construction

**NT Listing for the Garibaldi Inn**

The National Trust of Australia (NSW) has listed the former Garibaldi Inn on the corner of Alexandra and Ferry Streets on the Trust Register.



The Register lists those buildings, sites, areas and items that, in the Trust's opinion have aesthetic, historical, archaeological, scientific or social significance or other special value for future generations, as well as for the present community.

Listing of the building by the National Trust does not have any legal force but it is recognised as an authoritative statement of its importance and advises the public of the value of Australia's national heritage.

**Proposed subdivision and semi-detached houses at 41 Bonnefin Rd**

The Trust made a submission to Council opposing the proposal to subdivide the existing lot at 41 Bonnefin Road, demolish the existing cottage and constructing two semi-detached houses on the site. We argued that this proposal was out of character with the scale of single houses

in the street, would result in minimal sized front gardens and have an adverse impact on the riverscape.

The Council refused the application noting that as well as not complying with various numerical controls and character objectives it would not be in the public interest and would create an undesirable precedent for Council.

**MUSINGS**

An occasional column

**Passy still in the news**

Kate McClymont and Linton Besser's book, *He who must be Obeid*, is a must-read for anyone at all interested in how planning and local and state government is conducted in NSW. The book is an historical analysis of the Obeid family and the influence its patriarch, Eddie, has had on politics and government at all levels in NSW.



The house that Eddie is building in Matrite

The book is a real page-turner and takes the reader from the countryside of Lebanon, where Eddie Obeid was born to Passy, the marine villa in Hunters Hill, where "today the garden is unkempt and overgrown and the inside of the once-famed house is losing its lustre – the tapestried sofas frayed, the flock wall paper faded."

It details the backroom political manoeuvring and deal-making that has led Eddie to be described as 'Australia's most corrupt politician whose brazen misdeeds were said to be "unexceeded since the days of the Rum Corps"'.

It is also supremely depressing to have one's worst fears of how the property development business is conducted in NSW confirmed. The book makes it abundantly clear that property development and mineral exploitation are all about making a motzer through the simple expedient of land rezoning. This process, of course, is so easily subverted by corrupt individuals that you begin to question all such activity and when a piece of land is rezoned or a publicly-

owned asset sold off, your first thought becomes "what was in it for so-and-so?"

**Infrastructure Planning**

An electricity box and telephone manhole have been located immediately in front of the main entrance to the residential units at the new Mapledoram's corner development in Hunters Hill.



Look where you walk!

It reminds me of the notice that hung on the wall behind the counter at the old A E Primrose timber yard on Victoria Road -

**THINK AHEAD**

**Gehry unveiled**

Most of the scaffolding has now been removed from UTS's Chau Chak Wing, which was designed by Frank Gehry and has cost \$180 million at around \$11,000/m2.



The really weird crumpled paper bag look of the original model has not been achieved and, strangely, the building ends up looking surprisingly pedestrian despite all the gratuitous complexities of the facade. The jarring junctions of the strictly geometric and plumb windows and the undulating facade seem badly resolved and the facade becomes a paean to that least lovable of building materials - the extruded cream brick. Not unlike Lord Norman Foster's Gherkin

in London (also known as the Towering Innuendo), everyone has an opinion about the building. Nicknames are also appearing - e.g. "the melted turd". So, even before anyone except the builders has been inside and even before the first complaints have come in about leaking roofs and windows, Frank Gehry has successfully fulfilled his brief and, like Bilbao and a couple of other places that he has lent his name to, has managed to put the name of a little known educational institution on the world map.

**My Secret Sydney**

It was good to see the Trust getting a mention in the national press when Trust treasurer David Gaunt was interviewed recently for *My Secret Sydney*, a regular feature of SMH's Good Weekend.



*Gladesville Hospital*

David's answer to the question "Is there a place in that area that's special to you?" was: "The stand-out would be, without question, Gladesville Hospital. It was a 19th century mental hospital, so there are places with a sad history, but it really is part of secret Sydney.

I've been heavily involved in conservation preservation – I've been involved in the Hunters Hill Trust for years. It means I have a vivid memory of what Jack Munday, the BLF [Builders' Labourers Federation] and caring people did in The Rocks back in the 1970s to save it from the same fate as the rest of old Sydney. I love to go there and walk around because I think it's beautiful. It reminds me of what people who care enough to make an effort can do".

Asked what annoys him about Sydney David said, "The worship of false progress is just horrendous. In my own area [of Hunters Hill], I see people buy these beautiful old houses in a garden suburb and the first thing they want to do is rip out the garden and put in a five-car carport. It's a constant battle. Once you've destroyed the past, you've destroyed the past. I think you need to be immensely conscious of how much responsibility you've got for the things that you've inherited. *Tony Coote*

**MY PLACE**

**10 Gladesville Road**

Trust member **Karen Presland** has been looking into the story of her house at 10 Gladesville Road and here is what she has found out.

The timber cottage known as "Dene Hollow" nearly didn't reach its one hundredth birthday, as by the 1970s it was in severe disrepair bordering on demolition. "Dene Hollow" had started its life as a typical workman's four-room timber cottage, built in the mid 1880s.



*Karen in front of the cottage today*

Originally the home of Charles Nathaniel Purnell, a Baker from Windsor, and his wife Eliza Ann Purnell, its location on Gladesville Road, just a block from St Joseph's College and the Holy Name of Mary Parish, had been part of a sub-division of the 30-acre tract of land originally purchased by Mary Reiby in 1835.



*Dene Hollow in 1976 – front*

Deeds and Sands Index Searches confirm that in 1897 Ellen O'Shea purchased land and cottage from the widowed Eliza Ann Purnell and lived there up until 1926. She remained in Hunters Hill until her death in 1929.

"The parish of Villa Maria, Hunters Hill, sustained a great loss in the death of Miss Ellen O'Shea" reports the Catholic Press Newspaper on the 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1930. It

goes on to state, "the late Miss O'Shea was of Irish Parentage, and was born at Ryde on August 18<sup>th</sup>, 1850. Miss O'Shea carried out the duties of sacristan and organist at St Charles Parish for many years. On one occasion she had the privilege of entertaining Mother Mary MacKillop, at her home (in Ryde)." This occasion, it is believed, followed on from the funeral mass of Mother Mary MacKillop's mother Flora, where Ellen had been the organist.

On the death of her sister, Mrs Mary Bertha Jenkins, (aged 40 years) in 1888 – Ellen moved to Hunters Hill to take charge of her brother-in-law Thomas William Jenkins' home and raise the family of eight children, ranging in ages from two to fifteen years.

"She continued her holy and useful life" the paper goes on to state, "a fervent and practical Catholic, ever foremost in every good work for the Church, and a constant visitor to the sick".



The photo above depicts the wedding of James Jenkins to Genevieve Makinson in 1913 at "Llanthony" 6 Everard St, Hunters Hill. The groom is to the left of the photo holding white gloves and his bride is seated next to him elegantly draped in a white fur. Ellen O'Shea stands proudly at the back of the photo in the far right hand corner (photo kindly provided by Margaret Farlow, granddaughter of the bride and groom). Various members of the Jenkins family are represented in this photo as well.

In April 1976, Stephen and Jane Ramsey purchased this sad looking cottage to restore and revitalise "Dene Hollow" to her former glory. They engaged their friend Tony Coote, Architect and Builder, to accompany them on this journey of restoration and conversion to a liveable family home. Tony's wife Gillian had in fact been the visionary who had first spotted the house and encouraged the Ramseys to make it their home.

The cottage's structure had remained intact with a single hallway leading from the front to the back door, two bedrooms to the left of the hall and living/dining and kitchen built around the large brick

fireplace on the right. In later years a ramshackle fibro add-on had been built onto the front porch. A small outhouse building was situated just outside the backdoor.



Stephen Ramsey's watercolour of No 10

Work began in earnest and by 18 January 1977 Tony recalls quite clearly that whilst they worked on the roof that day, they had been wondering why sirens were going off all day long. The Granville Train Disaster was the reason – with 83 Deaths and 210 injuries- and all Sydney emergency services were racing, throughout the day, to assist at the scene.

The restoration was much in keeping with the style of the original timber century old cottage, with wide weatherboards, recycled timber windows and French doors, leading out onto a timber deck at the back.

The newly added annex provided a further two bedrooms, internal bathroom and laundry and the front verandah of the house was fully restored.



The name "Dene Hollow" resplendently displayed on a red and gold sign, announces the name of house to the right of the front door. This name is recorded in the Historical Places Trust information and the various publications of Historical Homes in the Hunters Hill area. Searches carried out on the internet revealed two pieces of information – one was that it was book of some note written by Mrs. Henry Wood in 1871 and the other that this was a small village in Birmingham, England.

Tony Coote revealed that Gillian had recycled the sign from a rubbish heap in

the early 1980s and gifted it to the Ramseys for their newly restored home!

Eight years on in 1984, with the needs of a growing family to be accommodated, the Ramseys sold their beloved "Dene Hollow" to Josephine Black, and moved up the road to Hillcrest Avenue. Jo Black was responsible for adding the second story, which contained the Master bedroom and ensuite in a loft style on its own floor.

Just over two years ago, it was my turn to take responsibility for "Dene Hollow". From the moment I walked up to the white picket fence, took a few quick steps to the front door and glanced inside I was immediately in love! The owner at the time had decorated it beautifully with an eclectic mixture of well-matched old and new furniture and French silver antiques.



The back garden and first floor addition

With transference of ownership came the reality check that this 130-year-old home was now my responsibility to ensure that it continues on its life and remains around for generations to come. The two owners since the Ramseys had lovingly maintained it and all that was really needed was a lick of paint here and there and a garden makeover.



The living room

I also found myself being drawn to discovering more around the history of the home and its prior inhabitants.

The Historian Librarian at Ryde Library provided the answers to many questions. Sands Index information and Google searches of old editions of Sydney Newspapers revealed information on Ellen O'Shea, which consequently led me to a

direct descendent and the O'Shea Family historian, living in Ryde, who was able to furnish me with a photo.

*The HHT Journal's editor's involvement in Karen's story came as quite a surprise (Ed).*

**YOUR PLACE** We would love to hear from other Trust members with the stories of their places.

## HUNTERS HILL TRUST CHRISTMAS PARTY



The venue for this year's Christmas Party is special. It is a house that has risen from the ashes of an infamous deliberately lit fire in the kitchen of what was then a restaurant. It has been wonderfully restored by the owners, Peter and Bridget Hawthorne, and is now their home. The National Trust honoured their work this year with a Built Heritage Award that includes the following commendation:

*This project involved total reconstruction of a house on the edge of destruction showing an extraordinary amount of passion and commitment by its owners who clearly love it.*

**When:** Thursday November 27, 2014 at 6.30 pm

**Where:** Bridget and Peter Hawthorne's house at 5 Alexandra Street

**Cost:** \$50 per person

**RSVP:** Maureen Flowers  
maureenf@fairfaxbm.com

*Post your cheque to  
The Secretary, Hunters Hill Trust  
PO Box 85 Hunters Hill 2110*

**Or** *Direct deposit (with your name)  
HHT Westpac Gladesville  
BSB 032 185  
Account No 500410*