

# Hunters Hill Trust Journal

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## From the President's Desktop

As we all know only too well, 2020 has so far been an 'unprecedented' year!

But life does go on and we are pleased to announce that our initial batch of The Heritage of Hunters Hill ('The Green Book') has all but sold out and we are now preparing for a second print run. In the meantime the contents are also available free of charge on the Green book website: <https://www.greenbook.huntershilltrust.org.au>

We're also very excited to let you know that the Green book has been nominated for entry into the National Trust of NSW Heritage Awards - so watch this space!

## Boronia Park Plan of Management

In spite of our submissions, and the wishes of the community, it appears that the major part of recent State and Federal Grants totaling \$1.5 million will be spent on an over-large 'Sports/Community Facility', primarily serving the Rugby Club. An independent consultation exercise by Council's consultant found that of 244 responses, 97 people were in favour of a location in the proximity of the grandstand, and only 6 opposed this siting. In spite of this, the Plan adopted by Council (which voted 6 to 1 to approve the amended final draft) locates the facility between Ovals 1 and 2, a site favoured by only 2 of the 244 respondents. See page 2 for the full story.

## Revised Plan of Management for Riverglade Reserve

The Trust has a representative on the Community Advisory Group which has been advising the consultant for this review, but progress has been delayed due to some legal matters. We understand that the 'Everyone can Play' playground is proposed for its original location near The Priory, high above Tarban Creek.

## Council Matters

As quickly as one project is completed several more emerge. We're sad to learn that Council has discontinued its long-running Public Transport and Traffic Advisory Committee, but (fortuitously, in



*One of the many examples of spectacular autumn colour around our streets this year*

view of the Covid19 pandemic) has commissioned a consultant to review the Hunters Hill Bike Plan. This is long overdue (the current Bike Plan is dated 2004), but should lead to safer cycling for people of all ages. Watch for the release of a Draft Bike Plan early in July.

## Oversight of Development Applications

Our committee continues to 'keep an eye' on proposals for development coming to Council, and how these developments then proceed, since most now are overseen by Private Certifiers. Further details on page 4 but several recent applications have seemed so inappropriate that the Trust has made formal submissions, including:

- *Erection of giant illuminated commercial advertising hoardings on the Overpass:* opposed on the grounds of safety (it would distract drivers from the road), and its aesthetics.

- *61 Downing Place:* an impressive 1930's house (listed in the new edition of the Green Book) which has now been largely demolished and a mature garden excavated to create a large underground garage and a very large 3 storey (due to excavation) structure covering most of the block.

We are also alert to the protection of heritage generally, not just of heritage-listed items and properties, but of the general feeling of Hunters Hill being an important part of early Sydney. A particular issue that hasn't surfaced for some years - the replacement of sandstone kerb and guttering. In this case we were not in time to prevent Council from replacing the heritage sandstone kerb and gutter along Joey's frontage onto Gladesville Road, but having brought this to Council's attention we are hoping the rest of the municipality's precious sandstone kerbs will now be safe.

Beyond our borders, we worked with many others to defeat the proposed loss of a direct ferry service to Circular Quay, and have continued to lobby the State Government to abandon the plan to 'relocate' the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta. Our argument has been that the current site, in Ultimo is more relevant to its heritage collections. Moreover, the proposed flood-prone Parramatta site would involve the demolition of two heritage buildings. We also propose that in addition to retaining the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo, that Parramatta deserves a museum of its own, devoted to the development of western Sydney.

**Alister Sharp**

## FINAL PLAN OF MANAGEMENT FOR BORONIA PARK



**Potential open parkland site between Ovals 1&2, with mature trees under threat**

Readers of the December 2019 journal will recall that Hunters Hill Council has been revising all its Plans of Management (normally reviewed every 10 years or so) due to changes in the Crown Land Management Act 2016 and its subsequent Regulation.

Revision of the 2015 Boronia Park Plan of Management commenced early in 2019 with a timeline for the end of the year. But due to the flaws and complexities of the consultation process undertaken, it took 14 months to complete.

Council was very keen to accelerate the updating of this Plan to take advantage of major drivers in the form of government grants. They wished to use the funds to facilitate projects within the Park that have evidently been long supported by Council and local organised sporting interests.

In particular there was \$1m from the NSW government's Stronger Communities Fund grant program for 'Upgrade of Boronia Park grandstand and sporting fields' (apparently in compensation for the amalgamation debacle) and \$500,000 (gained via the Federal government from the contentious Sports Australia grants program), announced as being for much-needed women's changing rooms.

It appears the second tranche of funds came through an application by the Rugby Club and was received by them, but will need to have met with Council's approval and sign-off as the land manager.

We have been unable to obtain details of either grant, in particular whether both

grant funds can be allocated exclusively to an over-sized Club facility. The fact that the Trust was a member of Council's Community Advisory Group unfortunately did not assist us in gaining transparency on these matters despite our best efforts.

The public exhibition of the Plan became complicated by Council's inclusion of multiple 'siting options' for the major project as well as for an extensive new playground (via a \$200,000 NSW grant) which will now be placed in Riverglade Reserve where it was originally intended; and a last minute proposal for a BMX circuit track was added, to be built if there's proven demand.

Of most concern to the Trust was the two-storey sporting facility which at a proposed 525 square metres would drastically impose on the Park's special character, sightlines and inherent values if centrally positioned. The only site that would not encroach on open parkland was alongside the grandstand backing onto Ryde Road ('Site 1' in the draft Plan).

This option, combined with upgrading of the heritage grandstand, long neglected by Council and the Clubs, would have allowed for a much smaller construction footprint and made good use of an existing building. This site was identified in the 2015 Plan as being the most appropriate. It was reported by the Independent Consultant as having overwhelming popular support this time also (see President's notes for details).

However, despite the consultant's findings and in what could be seen as confirming a pre-determined outcome, the positioning promoted by Council and organised sport

proponents has been selected and the Clubhouse/community facility will be designed to the specifications of the Rugby & Cricket Clubs. At this stage we only know that it will be located in an "undetermined" area of parkland between Ovals 1 & 2 and potentially necessitate the removal of several mature trees.

True to form, with no exact location agreed for the facility (now marginally reduced in size to 450sqm) and no details of the proposed design, we remain in the dark. The community will be advised of what's in store when the Rugby Club submits its Development Application to Council and it goes on public exhibition.

We anticipate that, with all the available funds to be directed towards this major construction, the required upgrade of the grandstand, specifically mentioned in the NSW government grant, will sadly remain in limbo.

We also argued strongly against the installation of floodlights on Oval 3 on the grounds of interference to the nocturnal wildlife in adjoining bushland, particularly the vulnerable Powerful Owls. Ovals 1 and 2 already have lights for night training but unfortunately lights have now been permitted for Oval 3. This Oval will now officially be an off-leash dog walking area which is widely welcomed by dog owners.

Council is required to revise the Plans of Management for our other reserves within the next year. Hopefully the consultation process and outcomes for these public parklands will be much more harmonious and in line with the expectations of the local community.

**Brigid Dowsett**



**The 'Upgrade of Boronia Park grandstand' specified in the grant has not been mentioned by Council and remains in limbo**



## The 1919 Influenza Epidemic in Sydney

Many epidemics have swept Sydney since white settlement. With millions of travellers, visitors and immigrants passing through, it has always made this port city susceptible. Social responses to epidemics show a number of constants: initial panic, confusion among the various authorities about how best to deal with the disease, searches for causes that often spilled over into scapegoats, policies that sacrificed individual rights and liberties with little apparent compunction.

The similarities of what the populace faced during the influenza pandemic one hundred years ago and 2020's COVID19 are notable.

The Great War had already taken many lives by 1918 but as the war was in its death throes, a new enemy struck – the influenza pandemic of 1919. Over the course of about a year, up to one in three people in the world had been infected and 5 percent of the global population killed. This represented an astonishing 50 to 100 million lives lost which was well in excess of the 17 million lives lost to the First World War. The illness was also notable for taking the lives of an unusually high number of young and healthy people. It reached Australia in early 1919 with a third of the population succumbing to the pandemic, causing up to 15,000 deaths.

Commonly known as the Spanish 'Flu' the disease is now thought to have originated in Kansas, USA and was transported by American troops heading to Europe for war. The uncensored press in Spain, neutral in the war, were the first to report large-scale fatalities.

In the City of Sydney in 1919, 42 per cent of all deaths were due to the flu. Hunters Hill experienced higher than average infection rates mainly resulting from the effects of an efficient public transport system eg the ferries. Suburbs on the main train lines experienced the same infection spikes. In January 1919 the New South Wales Government issued a series of proclamations restricting public movement.

# SYDNEY HOSPITAL.

## Pneumonic - Influenza Epidemic.

### General Information for the Citizens of New South Wales.

1. Masks should be made of four thicknesses of gauze or butter-muslin, and worn so as to cover mouth and nose.
2. Persons in contact with influenza patients should also wear goggles—motor goggles are a good pattern.
3. Personal cleanliness is even more important during the epidemic than at any other time. This especially applies to persons in close contact with cases. They should rinse their hands in  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. Kresolvo solution, and then wash them in Lifebuoy Soap and water.
4. The general health should be carefully watched. Regular exercise short of fatigue should be taken daily. The bowels should be evacuated daily and a nourishing dietary is essential. It is only by means such as these that the individual resistance, which is the first line of defence against the scourge, can be kept at a high level.
5. In all cases of illness of sudden onset, isolate the patient and call in a medical man immediately.
6. Watch for and implicitly obey all instructions issued by the Public Health Department.

*The more things change, the more they stay the same!*

The proclamations directed closure of all "libraries, schools, churches, theatres, public halls, and places of indoor resort for public entertainment". Use of public transport was discouraged, and it became compulsory to wear masks in public.

Aboriginal communities were particularly affected and in some, pneumonic influenza mortality rates approached fifty percent.

The result was not only economic hardship, but significant interruptions in education, entertainment, travel, shopping and worship. The nation's quarantine system held back the flu for several months, meaning that a less deadly version came ashore in 1919. It did however cause delay and resentment for the 180,000 soldiers, nurses and partners who returned home by sea that year. Whilst the disease touched almost every community, causing illness, disruption and bereavement, it also led to profound moments of charity, courage and

community spirit. The wartime spirit of volunteering and community service saw church groups, civic leaders, council workers, teachers, nurses and organisations such as the Red Cross stepping up. A substantial proportion of these courageous carers were women, at a time when many were being commanded to hand back their wartime jobs to returning servicemen.

Paradoxically there are often long term beneficial results from epidemics; improved medical techniques for dealing with disease and a heightened public awareness of the situation of minority groups, often changing attitudes to those groups and their problems.

In the two centuries of European settlement, Sydney has experienced many epidemics and major infections from smallpox, measles, scarlet fever, flu, polio, tuberculosis, AIDS and now COVID19. Each of these have had an extensive impact on life in Sydney and they all have a tale to tell. What will yours be?

**Karen Presland**

**Balmain 'posties' 1919**



Contributed by National Archives of Australia [DAB76, 1919/58]

#### References:

- Royal Australian Historical Society – "An Intimate Pandemic" [www.rahs.org.au](http://www.rahs.org.au)
- "Centenary of Spanish flu Pandemic in Australia" article by Dr Peter Hobbins, Dept of History, University of Sydney
- "Epidemics" by Garry Wotherspoon 2008 – Dictionary of Sydney
- "Pandemic in Parramatta. The Influenza Outbreak of 1919" Research Services, City of Parramatta Council
- "The 1918 influenza pandemic affected the whole world. Could it happen again?" ABC News 13/04/18

## DA UPDATES

### THE LOST & FOUND DEPARTMENT 39 Alexandra Street



We're delighted to report that the owner of this landmark building has decided not to pursue the case through the Land & Environment Court for its change of use to "a long day care centre". This is definitely a win for common sense and the community but we are still wary of potentially disastrous applications being proposed in the future.

### 'WINDERMERE' 25 ERNEST STREET

In December's journal we recounted the sorry saga of 'Windermere' 25 Ernest Street, bought by Chinese billionaire Kuizhang 'Sam' Guo who cleared bush land on a neighbouring public reserve, spray painted over Indigenous artwork, constructed a structure in the Lane Cove River and built a bar inside a heritage-listed Aboriginal rock cave. After a lengthy battle through the Land and Environment Court, Mr Guo was ordered to demolish what had been built and rehabilitate the reserve. Checking on progress of the remedial works, we have now been informed by Council that it is:

*'Currently gathering comments from Department and waterways and will provide an update soon'.*

We will keep you advised of progress.

### 61 DOWNING PLACE

Downing Place is located where Prince Edward St meets Manning Road and Tarban Street. The DA approved in 2016 was for "alterations and additions to an existing dwelling and new swimming pool and landscaping". The application was approved by Council on 23 May 2016, subject to several heritage conditions.

This house was recommended for listing on Schedule 7 (Contributory Buildings) in 2005 and while it is not 'heritage' listed, it was an excellent example of the style of house gradually being destroyed in our suburb. It is also on a very significant corner site in a heritage precinct. The decision to allow a second storey above the excavated garage is also a travesty as it then appears as a 3 storey dwelling (from the excavated ground level) and sets a bad precedent.

**Before:**



A significant mature tree has also been removed.

Councillor Ross Williams raised the issue with the planning officer when it was clear that work was drastically altering the building and Council have now confirmed:

*"A Stop Work Order was issued on 20 March 2020 following unauthorised demolition works. The owners of the site have been advised that further justification for the works and modification of development consent are required prior to Council releasing Stop Work Order. As a consequence the owner is in the process in providing a response to Council in order to remedy the issue. If works are carried out regulatory action will be undertaken. In summary, at present no works undertaken on site, the matter is under investigation and Stop Work Order remains".*

**Now:**



## LOSS OF SANDSTONE KERBS

Recently the Trust was shocked to discover that Council had authorised the removal of a large section of heritage sandstone kerbing in Gladesville Road alongside St Joseph's College. We immediately contacted the General Manager for a full explanation for this decision, which goes against Council's own Local Environmental Plan 2012 where one of its particular aims is, 'to conserve Aboriginal heritage and European heritage that influence the character and identity of the municipality'.

We received a reply from the General Manager, Ms Miscamble, who stated:

*'The works were discussed with our Heritage Adviser at the time who advised that the sand stone gutter was not heritage listed, therefore appropriate infrastructure works could be undertaken.'*

*Please be assured that although it was not used in this instance it was removed and has been stored for future use in the Municipality and so will not be lost to the area.'*

Obvious to most people is the fact that although our sandstone kerbs are not 'listed', they are in fact 'heritage' and should never have been removed.

As a result of this debacle, Councillor Ross Williams put a motion before Council at their meeting on 1 June which included the following points:

- Council develop a policy to protect and conserve our unique and historically important sandstone kerb and gutter;
- Council nominate these as heritage items - for listing as locally, state or nationally significant places as appropriate;
- Council develop guidelines and protocols for managing and restoring these kerbs and gutters

The full motion with one amendment was accepted by 5 votes to 2, with Councillors Zac Miles and Ben Collins voting against it.

Interestingly, at the same meeting, in spite of the assurance in her letter that the sandstone kerbs were 'stored for future use', the explanation the General Manager gave to Councillors for their removal was that 'the sandstone was in such condition that it was crumbling and it wasn't possible to retain ...'. So which is it? We will be following up with the GM to clear up this confusion. Certainly those of us who walked past when the stones were being extracted saw huge intact kerbstones.

We hope that with Councillor Ross' and the Trust's prompt actions, our irreplaceable sandstone kerbs and gutters will now be fully protected.



## VALE JACK MUNDEY

17 October 1929 – 10 May 2020

We were very saddened to hear of the death last month of the indomitable Jack Munday, a man dear to the heart of many local residents who valued his incredible contribution to our neighbourhood.

Jack was a visionary union leader at a time of great destruction of Sydney's heritage who, in addition to his achievements in saving many heritage landmarks including our own Kelly's Bush, was awarded honorary doctorates from two universities, was made a Life Member of the Australian Conservation Foundation and Patron of the Historic Houses Association of Australia and was declared a 'National Living Treasure'.



Jack (centre) in 2012, at 83 still fighting for heritage (with John McInerney and Caroline Pidcock)

### The World's First Green Ban

In 1969 a proposal for re-zoning Kelly's Bush for private residential development was advocated by the State government and approved by Hunters Hill Council. A huge housing estate was proposed by AV Jennings for Kelly's Bush, leading down to Parramatta River, the last undeveloped open space in the area.

The newly formed Hunters Hill Trust strongly condemned the proposal which threatened this important area and supported a group of thirteen local housewives, the 'Battlers for Kelly's Bush', who spearheaded the campaign to save the bush for their children and the community. Through their determination and commitment, and with the help of Jack Munday and the Builders Labourers' Federation, the world's first green ban was applied in Sydney at Hunter's Hill in 1971.

Jack Munday was to write of this time:

*"After the President, Bob Pringle, made initial contact with 'The Battlers' a delegation from the Battlers came to meet the Executive of the Builders Labourers' Federation (BLF) in the Trades Hall, seeking our support. The Battlers made an impression. They were very passionate about their cause and highlighted the fact that this bush was the last bit of bush on those reaches of the Parramatta River....*

*We decided that the Bush should be saved....but insisted that the Battlers call a public meeting in Hunters Hill so as to determine that they enjoyed widespread public support in the area and so demonstrate that it was not just a handful*

*of residents concerned with their immediate amenity. Over 500 people met and formally requested our union to impose a ban on work. We acceded to this public request and a ban on work was imposed.... AV Jennings said they would ignore the ban and use non-union labour to do the work..... A fitting response came from BLF members on a high rise office block under construction in North Sydney being built by AV Jennings. Over 100 workers met and decided that if Jennings carried out the threat to build in Kelly's Bush, that half-completed office block would be left half-completed as a monument to Kelly's Bush. This had the desired effect and Jennings backed down.....*

*So yes, the Kelly's Bush saga had international repercussions and I am so proud, as are my union mates, to have become dear friends of the wonderful 'morning tea matrons' and having together written a page of Australian history – a living history."*

Its success at Kelly's Bush saw the union inundated with similar requests for help, including the successful 'Battle for The Rocks' in October 1973.

In a letter to the Sydney Morning Herald in 1972, Jack argued that while his members "want to build", they preferred to construct hospitals, schools, other public utilities and high-quality housing, rather than "ugly unimaginative architecturally-bankrupt blocks of concrete and glass offices..... Though we want all our members employed, we will not just become robots directed by developer-builders who value the dollar at the expense of the environment" he wrote.

Driven by a sense of social responsibility, the BLF strove to defend open spaces, existing housing stock and historic buildings. These bans were placed to give communities a say in development and to protect heritage and the environment.

Jack's speech at the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust's opening of a Cockatoo Island exhibition in 2014, summed up his passion for heritage:

*"Over 100 heritage buildings stand in Sydney today because, back in the 1970s, my colleagues and I imposed a green ban on any building that the National Trust considered worthy of preservation. Heritage buildings that were under threat were preserved for posterity.*

*The green bans were also important for two other reasons. First, they brought diverse groups of people together to bring about social change. Sydney would be a very different city if it hadn't been for the green ban movement. Second, they brought about a qualitative change in our society's attitude towards historic buildings. The spirit of the green ban lives on in our program of heritage legislation."*

His legacy is invaluable to Sydney and he remained dedicated to equality for all and to being an environmental activist until the day he died. Into his eighties he was still campaigning to save Millers Point, the Sirius building, Bondi Pavilion and Windsor Bridge.

His passion and integrity will be sadly missed by all of us attempting to continue his work of preserving our heritage.

**Maureen Flowers**

## AGM Report

Our 2020 Annual General Meeting was held on Thursday 25 June by Zoom, when members joined us online for a short meeting.

Alister Sharp as President spoke to his report and the outgoing Treasurer, Justin Parry-Okeden, was on hand to go through the financial accounts. Many thanks go to Justin who has streamlined the technology and has very ably carried out his role over the last 5 years. We are extremely grateful to Jenny Craigie, one of our committee members, who has been persuaded to put up her hand to fulfil the role in future.

One of the more important actions of this meeting was to acknowledge the incredible service given to the Trust by Tony Coote and David Gaunt over many years.

Tony has served an unparalleled 21 years on the committee including 9 as President and 7 as editor of this Journal. He has been a leading force in ensuring the Trust was involved in many of the past heritage battles and successes. He continues to represent the Trust on Council's Conservation Advisory Panel (CAP), having been a member since its inception in 1989, giving freely of his knowledge and expertise on numerous heritage matters.

David Gaunt was President of the Trust for 4 years and Secretary for 6 years and has always brought a thoughtful professionalism to the work of the Trust. The committee has very much appreciated the enormous help he has been in organizing and running many past events and his energy and unfailing humour have inspired us all.

We are delighted to announce the award of Honorary Life Membership to both Tony and David in appreciation for their dedication and commitment to the Trust and to heritage.

## THE GREEN BOOK

Our updated publication The Heritage of Hunters Hill (pictured right) has proved so popular that we are now arranging a reprint!

Copies will be available within the next few weeks but if you would like to pre-order your copy simply email [members@huntershilltrust.org.au](mailto:members@huntershilltrust.org.au)

In the meantime, don't forget the publication is also online at <https://greenbook.huntershilltrust.org.au>

## STOP PRESS

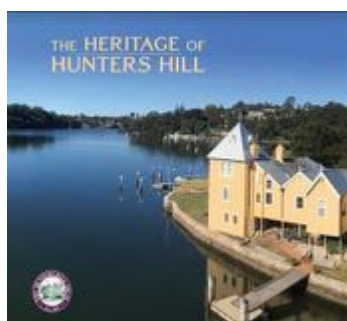
The final report of the Independent Review of the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust (SHFT) was released on 18 June. The review got off to a slow start at the end of 2019 with little publicity, but it became clear that there was a high level of passion about the future of the Harbour Trust when the community realised the Commonwealth Government was proposing significant changes.

The SHFT was established as a statutory body under the *Sydney Harbour Federation Trust Act 2001*. Its purpose was to "conserve and preserve land in the Sydney Harbour region for the benefit of present and future generations." The Trust manages the environmental and heritage values of seven important historic sites which have all required remediation.

The Hunters Hill Trust wrote a submission and attended meetings, one with Environment Minister Sussan Ley present. The Minister was left in no doubt that attendees wanted the SHFT to continue to be supported by Commonwealth legislation, be sufficiently funded and remain in public hands in perpetuity. Most were largely supportive of the management model but felt the Trust's Board should be selected on a relevant skills base and the public needed to be more actively engaged. Commercialisation and long term leases for the sites were opposed.

It is very pleasing that we were heard loud and clear by the Minister and reviewers. The report includes 21 recommendations and the Minister has indicated her broad support subject to the detailed planning required. We hope it is not overly optimistic to believe this could be a turning point in the Federal government's approach to heritage and its protection, coming so soon after the appalling destruction of the ancient Juukan caves in WA. It is vital that the EPBC Act, meant to protect our nation's precious natural and built heritage and currently under review, is greatly strengthened.

*Brigid Dowsett*



**Preserving our heritage**

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### Why not join us?

and help swell the number of voices speaking up for our unique municipality

*Membership runs calendar year from Jan-Dec 2020*

To become a member or to renew your membership email  
[members@huntershilltrust.org.au](mailto:members@huntershilltrust.org.au)

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### Publications:

*The Heritage of Hunters Hill*  
*The Vision and the Struggle*  
*The Industrial Village of Woolwich*

Available at Hunters Hill Post Office