



FOUNDED 1961

# “Bunk”

“History is more or less bunk”-  
HENRY FORD, Chicago Tribune, 1916

## Diary Dates 2014

**Museum Open**  
10am to noon **Monday**  
to **Friday**

**Meetings At Museum**  
22 Alexandra Street  
Hunters Hill

### Tuesday 8 April

Tour of Gladesville Hospital  
With Peter Colthorpe of  
Friends of Gladesville Hospital  
10:30

**NOTE THE CHANGE OF DATE**

See this page

Phone 98799443 if attending

### Wednesday 16 April

10 for 10:30 am

Official Opening of  
Heritage Week *Journeys*  
*Exhibition*

### Thursday 24 April

#### General Meeting

10am for 10:30

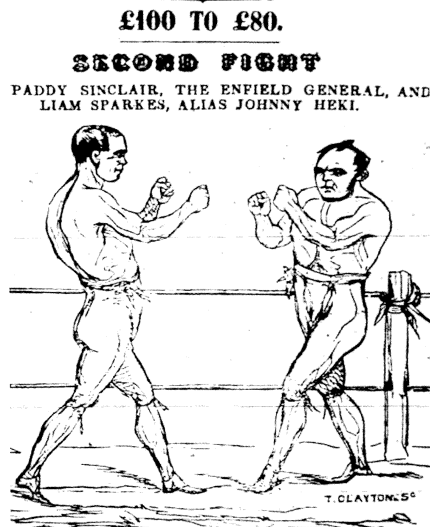
Speaker: Rosemary Broomham  
The History of AGL  
Australia's oldest industrial  
company  
Come along and bring a friend

### Wednesday 30 April

Visit to the old  
Needham's Store  
5 Alexandra Street  
10:30am

**YOU MUST REGISTER**

## Prize fighting on Cockatoo Island



Paddy Sinclair, nicknamed 'the Enfield General', was a prize-fight crowd favourite. (Source: Sketch of the Life of John Perry, from Bell's Life in Sydney and Sporting Reviewer, 20 October 1849, National Library of Australia)

**T**he unacknowledged activity on Cockatoo Island in the early to middle 19<sup>th</sup> century was prizefighting. It was officially illegal in the colony, but on Cockatoo Island matches were staged out of sight in the enclosed barrack square and watched by officers, the military, their guests and prisoners. Isolated

by water, sealed off by prison regulations and patrolled by sentries with orders to shoot at interlopers, the island made a perfect and rather exclusive venue.

In 1852 two of the colony's most famous bare-knuckle fist-fighters, John Perry and Patrick Sinclair, arrived on Cockatoo Island. It was by chance that Perry and Sinclair arrived at Cockatoo Island at the same time, in June 1852. Sinclair had been sentenced to five years hard labour for robbery and Perry to six years for larceny. Perry taught pugilism on the island, and became instructor to the Superintendent's son.

They were the fittest men on the island. Perry was the

*(Continued on page 2)*

## HAPPY RAFFLE WINNERS

**A**t our Society's 2013 Christmas banquet, Ted and Margaret Gifford won a tour and lunch aboard the luxury liner *Diamond Princess*, at the Sydney International Terminal.

Security was very tight, with photo licences held by the shipping company, photos of ID cards taken, bags x-rayed and airport-type doorway checks done before boarding.

A leisurely cocktail with our group in a luxurious sprawling lounge and an outline of the day preceded a guided tour of three different cabins and balconies, the casino, four separate dining rooms, pools, spa, huge outdoor movie screen and the 1,000 seat tiered theatre.

The fifteen person lifts (stairs for the fit), quickly moved us between many of the eighteen decks on this 2,600 passenger, 115,000 tonne vessel before a delightful three course lunch with wines and coffee and excellent service. A magnificent prize – greatly enjoyed!

Thank you Princess Cruises and Hunters Hill Historical Society.

**This prize was donated by Hardy Schneider of Cruise Express**

## PLEASE NOTE

We have had to change the date of the tour of Gladesville Hospital to **Tuesday 8 April**. Meet in the car park opposite Banjo Paterson Restaurant in Punt Road.

The tour starts at 10:30am.

Phone 98799443 if attending

## WEDNESDAY 30 APRIL 10:30am

**VIEWING OF THE OLD NEEDHAM'S STORE circa 1881** We have been kindly invited by the owners to view this building. It is now a private residence. The address is 5 Alexandra Street Hunters Hill. Come along and hear the interesting history of this building. Morning tea will be provided.

**There is no charge, but numbers are strictly limited and prior registration is a must.**

Call the museum on 98799443 or Tony on 98171432

## HUNTERS HILL HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

ABN 72012103152

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Editor: Ian Adair

### Hunters Hill Historical Society Inc

#### Officers for 2013 - 2014

*President* Ian Adair

*Vice President* Pat Cox

*Treasurer & Public Officer*

Graham Percival

*Secretary* Tony Saunders

*Committee*

June Beck

Jan Griffiths

Bob Mostyn

Dorothy Cubban

John Rogers

Chris Schofield

(Continued from page 1)

current New South Wales bare-knuckle champion. He was also a ship's carpenter and a wheelwright, both valued trades on the dock. But Perry and Sinclair were classified in a category for the physically unfit or those with no usable trade. Perry was made the island's cook, and Sinclair was given the job of barber.

It is easy to imagine the excitement for the 11<sup>th</sup> Regiment stationed on the island when they realised they were guarding two of the colony's prize-fighting stars. When Perry and Sinclair performed in town the public houses were packed. When they walked the streets, crowds followed. The excitement in Sydney when John Perry had won the championship three years earlier had been "unprecedented". He was an African-American born in Dublin, and was known as "Black Perry".

Paddy Sinclair was an Irish favourite, nicknamed "the Enfield General", three times champion of Van Diemen's Land, Port Phillip and the former champion of New South Wales.

From *Journal of the RAHS Volume 98*  
Part 2 December 2012 by Sue Castrique

## The house on The Point

**W**hen I was a child, the whole of Woolwich Point was one house and garden. When I say whole, I mean that portion which was later resumed by the Hunters Hill Council for subdivision, now between 67 and 77 The Point Road. In those days, the house was called The Keep, built and owned by a family called Andrews. Their son, Pentreath, was killed in the 1914 war. Shortly after the war, The Andrews sold and went to live at Balgowlah. I was told they no longer found happiness at The Keep, the memories were too poignant; nevertheless, it must have been a wrench to leave their lovely home and garden which had been landscaped by Searles, one of Sydney's leading florists. During the next eight or so years, the house changed hands several times, the local comment being that it didn't live up to its name, The Keep. None of these owners made any impression on me, and I should imagine are now almost all forgotten. In the late 1920s, yet another family moved in, bringing young children, a car (still a novelty), a bulldog called Portia and a handyman. The inclusion of the latter was soon made apparent – the waterfront reclamation was to be turned into a prize poultry farm, and the handyman set about constructing fowl runs. The neighbours were horrified, but the venture, whether from natural causes or intervention of the Council, withered on the vine. It was still at that stage customary for conservative ladies to call on newcomers. Several ladies rang The Keep's doorbell. Although inviting them in, the hostess informed them she would not be returning the gesture, explaining she was too occupied with domestic duties for the social life. The callers withdrew. The family was left to its own devices, until, in a few years, they too, left the district. The house became empty, and fell into disrepair. It was the late 1920s/early 1930s, and the country was in the grip of the depression. Many people lost properties and faced poverty. But I often wondered why from 1929-31 to when the Council claimed the property for unpaid rates at the end of the war, no one showed any interest in the place. All this is forgotten now, even the name, but sometimes I wonder what the full story of The Keep is. Perhaps, one afternoon, when I'm at The Point, pondering on the past, Pentreath will come back to his boyhood home.

*From More Tales of Hunters Hill by Margaret Oliver*

**Margaret Oliver** was a founding member of the Hunters Hill Historical Society. She was born in Hunters Hill in 1913 and died in 1996. Her keen observations, humour and love of place offer interesting insights into life in a special suburb in the early part of the 20th Century.

### APRIL SPEAKER

10am for 10:30 Thursday 24 April

ROSEMARY BROOMHAM

THE HISTORY OF AGL

#### AUSTRALIA'S OLDEST INDUSTRIAL COMPANY

Rosemary Broomham is a consultant historian and archaeologist. The story of the Australian Gas Light Company, or AGL, was her first commission to write a corporate history.

She has also written:

*Myall Lakes National Park: A People's History*

*The Urban Garden: Double Bay and Rose Bay Between The Wars*

*Vital Connections: Roads in NSW Since 1788*

*On The Road: The NRMA's First 75 Years*

*and many other publications.*

### GRAB YOURSELF A PIECE OF HISTORY

Newspapers dating back to the earliest colonial times are being offered for sale.

The papers cover some of the major events in Australian history in words and pictures – front page stories depicting such milestones as the beginning of federation, the end of the first and second world wars and significant royal events such as births, marriages and deaths over the centuries.

They contain a treasure trove of valuable information for the serious collector and the interested reader.

The papers have lain on shelves in the museum for years, taking up valuable storage space.

As the Historical Society has a policy of keeping only local artefacts, it has now decided to dispose of them.

So call into the museum, make us an offer we can't refuse and grab yourself a piece of history...

IN 60 PARTS AT TWO SHILLINGS AND SIXPENCE PER PART.

### AUSTRALASIA ILLUSTRATED:

The Story of the Discovery, Settlement, and Progress of the Greater Britain of the South, FROM 1606 TO THE PRESENT TIME.

HISTORICALLY AND GRAPHICALLY DESCRIBED BY WELL-KNOWN AND EMINENT WRITERS.

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EDITED BY THE HON. ANDREW GARRAN, M.A., LL.D., M.L.C.

