



# “Bunk”

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

## Diary Dates 2015

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

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

**Thursday 26 February  
10am for 10:30  
General Meeting  
Guest Speaker:  
Father Peter McMurrich**

***History of The  
Marist Fathers in  
Hunters Hill***

**See this page**

### ADVANCE NOTICE

**On Wednesday 22 April  
we will have a half day  
bus trip to Rouse Hill  
House, including  
morning tea.**

**DETAILS IN APRIL BUNK**

### LATE NEWS

**Our own June Beck has  
been awarded an OAM  
in the 2015 Australia  
Day Honours**

**For service to the  
tourism and hospitality  
sector,  
and to the community  
CONGRATULATIONS  
JUNE**

## Secret sites of Hunters Hill's Aboriginal past

While much has been written about the history of Hunters Hill from colonial times onwards, there is much less material that covers the earlier and vastly longer period of aboriginal occupation, dating back thousands of years.

There is, of course, a lot of written evidence chronicling the harbour suburb's later European settlement while details about aboriginal occupation are sketchy to say the least. This is not surprising because, apart from occasional rock engravings, middens and the tradition of passing down information from generation to generation, nothing was written down. Nevertheless historians and archaeologists have attempted



over the years to piece together a factual fabric of aboriginal occupation from what little evidence exists. The result of their research covers a wider area than just the Hunters Hill peninsula. The aboriginal story of the suburb is an integral part of the human history of the Sydney basin.

While some observations were made by Governor Phillip's survey party in 1788, the most comprehensive research carried out to date was by Dr Val Attenbrow of the Australian Museum in 1988. It is from her report, as well as from *Hunters Hill: Australia's Oldest Garden Suburb*, by Beverley Sherry, and other documents held within the Historical Society's archives, which are available for viewing, that the following information is drawn.

It is generally accepted that the aboriginal people who occupied the peninsula belonged to the Wallumedegal or Wallumattagal clan. They were the traditional owners of this land. Their name was derived from either the word for snapper fish, wallumai, combined with matta,

meaning a place of water or after the spiny rush plant which grows prolifically in the area, whose seeds could be used in damper and whose leaves were used to weave bags. Their language was known as Darug.

These people possibly referred to the area as Moco Boula, meaning two waters, specifically the Parramatta and Lane Cove Rivers which lie on each side of the peninsula. The name was originally used by one of the Municipality's early pioneers, Jules Joubert. He

claimed that this was how local aboriginal people had referred to the area. However, he provided no source for his assertion.

As an aside, it is interesting to note that Joubert wanted to use the name of Moocooboola for the newly es-

tablished Municipality. His peers were not as supportive, and preferred Hunters Hill. Moocooboola exists, though, in the council's coat of arms and in the name of the local community festival.

The smallpox epidemic in 1789, brought by Europeans, virtually wiped out the local aboriginal population. If the disease didn't kill

*(Continued on page 2)*

### GUEST SPEAKER—Thursday 26 February

**Father Peter McMurrich SM is the vicar-provincial of the Marist Fathers in Australia. His talk will cover the origins of the Marist Order around Lyons, France in 1836, its entry into the Pacific and the establishment of its headquarters at the Villa Maria Monastery in Hunters Hill, which as well as being a working farm was a house of recovery for missionaries**

HUNTERS HILL  
HISTORICAL  
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**The Private Life of Jules  
Joubert**

**Beverley Sherry** has kindly made available to the Historical Society copies of letters from **Jules**

**Joubert** to his future wife, Adelaide (Ady) Levi. His first wife, Florence Sarah Imlac Owen, had died in 1850. He also lost his young son and daughter. Jules married Adelaide Levi at North Adelaide in

February 1855 and the couple settled at Hunters Hill in a timber cottage built by Jules on the Lane Cove River. Jules described it in a letter to Adelaide as 'a pretty little nook.' It was called *Gros-Caillou*, perhaps after the quarter in Paris of the same name. Later it was named *Villa Floridiana* (1 Sea Street) and was demolished in 1990.

The letters, written between August 1852 and January 1855, were given to Beverley Sherry by Peter and Kay Hendley, who is a great-grand-daughter of Jules Joubert. The letters describe day to day events in Jules's life as he courts his beloved Ady.

**MORE POLICE NEEDED IN HUNTERS HILL**

**The River Times**

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 16, 1893**

HUNTER'S HILL is gaining a rather unenviable notoriety. Some time since, several houses were burglariously [!] entered and a highly respected resident was shot. Next the inhabitants were astonished at hearing of the seizure of an illicit still on the premises of a well-known local baker. Then came the attempt of an incendiary to burn down a two-storied wooden building – all within a short space of time! Surely the authorities will sooner or later awaken to the fact that extra police supervision is needed in the district and will station a man at the Woolwich end. As has been pointed out by us, time after time, no one man can do all the work that is required, satisfactorily.

**HOW YOUR MONEY IS BEING SPENT**  
**The Hunters Hill Historical Society and Museum is constantly updating its equipment to enable it to fulfil its objectives of efficiently recording the documents, photographs and oral histories held in our archives, and making them available to the people of Hunters Hill and the wider world.**

**Over the past 12 months we have purchased a new computer system, new digital camera to keep a record of exhibitions, digital voice recorder for our oral histories program and a scanner for digitising our extensive collection of historic photographs.**

**This work could not continue without the support of our members.**

**Thank you.**

**On the Ferries**

Although we lived at Woolwich, which had an established school, I, and a number of other children were sent across the river to Greenwich for our primary education. To reach this centre of learning we crossed the Lane Cove River from Gale Street to Bay Street by ferry, dragged ourselves up either a steep flight of steps or an equally steep hill, then trudged still further uphill to our destination.

Like everything else, of course, travel had its bright spots, and they were the ferry and crew, especially Albert, his blue eyes twinkling, asking us riddles, chasing a shrieking group of youngsters round the lower deck with a mop.

Everybody knew the regular passengers by sight, who they were related to and in the majority of cases where they lived. Like everything else there was an exception, and I and my companions were completely baffled by

(Continued from page 1)

them, those that remained were driven from the area by colonisation.

What is not as well-known are the several dozen archaeological sites spread around the municipality. Their exact whereabouts have been generally kept secret, which is partly a deliberate policy by the authorities to keep them safe from over zealous enthusiasts and vandals.

As it is, their locations have become overgrown and mostly inaccessible and any evidence of aboriginal occupation has diminished, not least because of natural erosion.

Attenbrow cites some 47 sites recorded in Hunters Hill, which she estimates represent an average of eight sites per square kilometre and three per kilometre of shoreline.

These sites indicate that aboriginal people conducted a range of activities on the peninsula. It is likely, though, that visits may have been for just a few days. As the majority of the sites are close to the shoreline, this leads to the conclusion that access to the peninsula was mostly by canoe.

There are said to be three main areas showing signs of aboriginal occupation – near Woolwich Dock, at Kelly's Bush in Woolwich and in Boronia Park. There are also a couple of sites on private property, such as in Wybalena Road and Sea Street.

These sites were rock shelters, axe-grinding grooves in the rocks, middens of shells of mussels, oysters, cockles and whelks and even human burial grounds.

The drawings in some of the rock shelters are not readily identifiable, having faded because of weathering or by graffiti.

According to Attenbrow, human skeletal remains were discovered in two rock shelters and in one open site. From one location, near Woolwich Dock, two skulls were recovered – one of a woman and the other of a juvenile aged about 11. A skull was also found at Wybalena Road. Two of the skulls are in the possession of the Australian Museum.

Attenbrow hoped to make Hunters Hill's aboriginal heritage accessible to the public for recreational and educational purposes. It is a wish that remains to be fulfilled.

**Chris Schofield**

'the man in the ladies' cabin' on the afternoon trip. It was popularly believed that 'he was a musician, and that he dyed and curled his hair'. I never saw him sit anywhere else, or speak to anyone.

Life of course changes, and although I still catch the ferry on my infrequent trips to the city, there is no longer the sense of belonging or homeliness so familiar in my childhood. Gale Street Wharf was demolished years ago, and on the modern ferries there is no 'Ladies Cabin'. **From MOSTLY HUNTERS HILL by Margaret Oliver**