



FOUNDED 1961

**"History is more or less bunk"-
HENRY FORD, Chicago Tribune, 1916**

"Bunk"

Rebuilding a Hunters Hill icon

Diary Dates 2014

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

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

**Thursday 26 JUNE
Winter Meeting
Woolwich Pier Hotel
Pavilion 1**

**From 12 noon
Guest Speaker:
Dr Andrew Simpson
Looking Beneath The Surface
See notice on this page**

**Thursday 28 August
10am for 10:30
AGM**
Guest Speaker: John Cutler
The Cutler Tailoring Dynasty

**Thursday 25 September
Visit to Riverview College
Details in August**

**Come in and see our
Journeys to Hunters
Hill
Exhibition**

Some 30 members of the Historical Society crossed the road from the museum at the Town Hall on Wednesday 30 April to view the newly renovated heritage home, Alexandra House, at 5 Alexandra Street, at the kind invitation of the owners, Peter and Bridget Hawthorne.

As Historical Society member Graham Percival explained at the beginning of the tour, the colonial era building has had a chequered past, having first been a 10-room house and small shop, then extended to a general store, then to a restaurant, with a separate hairdressing salon at the side, and finally, after arson devastated the place, recently restored to a splendid modern residence.

The original house and small shop was built by John Cuneo in 1867. It was replaced by a larger building in 1882 and subsequently passed to William Needham. For the next 70 years it was known as Needham's Store, the largest retail outlet in Hunters Hill, selling a wide range of goods from men, women and children's clothing to hardware, fancy goods and stationery.

In the 1980s, it opened as a restaurant. On the night of 28 December 2004, fire swept through the building, gutting the interior and destroying the roof. Investigations revealed that the blaze was deliberately started, and the damage was not covered by insurance. One person was convicted of arson, and another escaped overseas.

After being boarded up for seven years, Peter and Bridget Hawthorne bought the house in 2011. Over the following two years they have lovingly restored it. As owner builders, the couple oversaw every piece of detailed work on the site. The historical integrity of the building has been maintained, with the help of photographs and documents held by the Hunters Hill Historical Society.

Bridget said they have left as much sandstone exposed as possible throughout the interior

even though in Victorian times the walls would have been fully plastered. Peter added: "From being a blank canvas, it has turned out better than anyone could have imagined. We are very proud and pleased about what we have accomplished". Peter and Bridget said the council was supportive of their efforts in trying to be faithful to the original structure.

The Historical Society members were treated to an inspection of the downstairs living areas and the upstairs bedrooms as well as the extensive back garden. The visit concluded with morning tea.

In thanking Peter and Bridget Hawthorne for allowing Historical Society members to have a first-hand look at the inside of the house, Historical Society president Ian Adair said what had been a ruin had been transformed into an elegant home. He said:

"This visit provided a rare opportunity to see what has been achieved. Peter and Bridget are to be congratulated on their painstaking renovation" *Story and picture by Chris Schofield*



**WINTER MEETING
AT THE WOOLWICH PIER HOTEL
Thursday 26 June
From 12 noon at Pavilion 1
Guest Speaker Dr Andrew Simpson
*Looking Beneath the Surface***

Dr Andrew Simpson was Head of Museum Studies at Macquarie University. He has always taken a great interest in small and community museums and insisted that students must undertake projects in such institutions.

'Objects are sticky with meaning, and this meaning can change with time. To illustrate this I will look at two historic 19th century Australian objects that are both very similar in nature. One is very well known, (in fact almost unavoidable) and the other is hardly known. I discuss the reasons why this is so.'

HUNTERS HILL HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

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Hunters Hill Historical Society Inc

Officers for 2013 - 2014

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THE HISTORY OF AGL

Rosemary Broomham was guest speaker at the Historical Society's April meeting. Her subject was *The History of AGL*, Australia's oldest industrial company, based on her book *First Light: 150 Years of Gas*.

The Australian Gas Light Company was formed in 1837, and supplied town gas for the first public lighting of street lamps in Sydney in May 1841, celebrating Queen Victoria's birthday. It was the second company to list on the Australian Stock Exchange.

Gas was first stored in tanks cut out of solid sandstone at Darling Harbour. As the business expanded, a gas works was opened at Mortlake. The Mortlake Ferry delivered workers from the north side of the harbour to their place of work. By 1925, the company was the seventh largest gas provider in the British Empire. Further expansion followed, with gas works acquired throughout Sydney. The company gradually diversified into electricity, and in 2006 AGL and Alinta merged their infrastructure assets.

Rosemary's presentation included many historic pictures of the various installations, showing how gas was produced and distributed.

Mary Ann Bugg, Captain Thunderbolt and Cockatoo Island

Information for this article was taken from Mrs Thunderbolt: Setting the record straight on the life and times of Mary Ann Bugg by D.A. Roberts and Carol Baxter, RAHS Journal Volume 99 Part 1 June 2013

Mary Ann Bugg was born on 7 May 1834 near Gloucester, on the Mid North Coast of New South Wales. Her father was James Bugg, a convict assigned to the Australian Agricultural Company as overseer of shepherds. Her mother, listed at Mary's baptism as 'an Aboriginal woman', was Charlotte, probably a Worimi woman. They had eight children, Mary Ann being the eldest.

On 1 June 1848, Mary Ann, aged fourteen, was married at the Anglican Church in Stroud to Edmund Baker. They separated in 1849 or 1850, having had a daughter. After doubtful marriages to James Burrows (two children) and James McNally (three children), she met Frederick Ward in Mudgee, probably in 1860 after Ward had been discharged from Cockatoo Island with a ticket of leave. There is no evidence that they married. Ward took the pregnant Mary Ann to her father's farm at Monkerai, near Dungog, which caused him to be late for his quarterly muster at Mudgee. His ticket of leave was revoked and he was sent back to Cockatoo Island to serve the remaining six years of his sentence for receiving stolen horses, plus an additional three years for allegedly returning to Mudgee on a stolen horse.

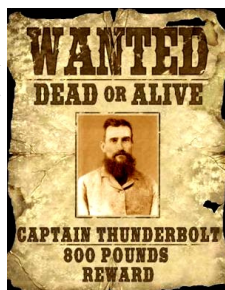
Ward escaped from Cockatoo Island on 11 September 1863 with mail robber Frederick Britten, who drowned in the attempt. He later appeared in the Hunter Valley, reportedly to reunite with 'a coloured lady of his acquaintance.' In a series of robberies and hold-ups, he announced himself as Captain Thunderbolt. By 1867, they had separated. They had three children.

In 1927 a story appeared in the *Manilla Express*, attributed to William Langworthy, a retired policeman, in which he said Mary Ann Bugg claimed to have assisted Ward in his escape from Cockatoo Island. She said that, 'being in domestic service in Sydney, she repeatedly swam across Sydney Harbour to the island over a succession of nights, providing tools to remove Ward's leg irons and food to sustain him while he hid in a disused boiler. On the fourth night he made his famous swim.' But is it true? Did Mary Ann Bugg help Ward escape from Cockatoo Island?

There are problems with Langworthy's account. Ward was not wearing leg-irons at the time of his escape, unlike his co-escapee, Britten, whose irons were found discarded

on the island's shoreline. Contemporary reports did not mention the involvement of an accomplice, nor did any other account over the next fifty years. On her website, Carol Baxter (see above) reproduces a report to Parliament from magistrate Thomas Nicholls, dated April 1866 in which he says that Mary Ann stayed with her father in Dungog from Ward's arrest in 1860 until he returned there to join her after his escape in 1863. If this is true, she couldn't have gone to Cockatoo Island. Ward was shot and killed by police at Kentucky Creek, near Uralla on 25 May 1870.

The details of Mary Ann Bugg's subsequent life and death are subject to conjecture. Carol Baxter offers evidence that after Thunderbolt's death in 1870, Mary Ann Bugg returned to John Burrows, had four more children with him, and died in 1905.



TOUR OF GLADESVILLE HOSPITAL

Over thirty members and friends of the Society went on a tour of Gladesville Hospital on Wednesday 9 April, led by Peter Colthorpe, Coordinator of Friends of Gladesville Hospital.

Walking around the grounds evokes a sense of the care given to the unfortunate inmates, led by Dr Frederick Norton Manning, well ahead of his time in the treatment of the mentally ill.

Gladesville Hospital is the oldest purpose built mental hospital in Australia. It is of national significance, with its unique collection of buildings in a picturesque setting, designed by most of Australia's Colonial and New South Wales Government architects.

Friends of Gladesville Hospital was formed to promote the retention of the site in public ownership and to show it to its owners – the people of Australia.

HUNTERS HILL AND THE GREAT WAR

We are currently preparing material for our exhibition opening in September in association with The History Council of New South Wales, entitled **Hunters Hill And The Great War**, to commemorate the 100th anniversary of this conflict.

Do you have any items of World War I memorabilia which we can use in the exhibition? We would also like to know the story that goes with them. They must have a Hunters Hill connection.

Please give us a call on 9879 9443 between 10am and noon Monday to Friday.