



"Bunk"

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

Diary Dates 2016

Museum Open
10am to noon
Monday to Friday

Meetings at Museum
22 Alexandra Street
Hunters Hill

Thursday 27 October

General Meeting

Followed by

Guest Speaker:

Dr Peter Mitchell
Bennelong

In 2011 Peter Mitchell was successful in identifying the probable position of Bennelong's grave in Putney. This talk will tell the story of that search and give insights into the life of a man whose achievements have been tarnished by historic myth.

Thursday 10 November
Tour of St Joseph's College
Led by Mayor Richard Quinn
Meet outside Ryde Rd Gates
11am

MEMORIES OF SCHOOL

Beverley Sherry recently compiled, edited and designed a well-received publication about her old school, *Our Stories Our Lives: 1955 Seniors of Brisbane State High School*. It is a collection of memories and stories of the Class of 1955 of which Bev was school captain. If you wish to read it, then you can find it on the school's website:

<https://brisbaneshs.eq.edu.au/Supportandresources/Formsanddocuments/Documents/Ourcommunity/PSA/our-stories-our-lives.pdf>

Innkeepers were a colourful part of Australia's second oldest city

Ten years after the First Fleet settlement, Parramatta's first public houses, or inns, were licensed.

Before that, illicit liquor was brewed and sold, and the entrepreneurial John Macarthur, famous for the development of merino sheep, controlled the grog carts which operated in the outer areas. On 19 July 1798, it was announced that five inns were to be licensed in Parramatta, one of which was The Masons Arms. It later became The Freemasons Arms and then The Woolpack, which is still in business today. Other inns in the area in the early 19th century were Babes In The Wood, Hit And Miss, Currency Lass, Straggler, Lame Dog and Old Pansy, as well as favourites like the Sportsman's Arms, Sailor's Return, Coach And Horse and Horse And Jockey.

The Masons Arms, of which James Larra was the licensee, stood on land leased by John Macarthur. Larra had built a wattle and daub house on the site in 1796.

He chose the name Masons Arms because military members of the Masonic Lodge chose his inn for their meetings. Freemasonry thrived in British regiments, and because of their itinerant nature, they would choose an inn to meet where they could dine afterwards. It was the custom for lodges to display the arms of the fraternity over the door of the inn.

Larra was noted in the district for his hospitality, in spite of the meagre fare existing in the colony at that time. But he eventually fell on hard times, and in 1821 was forced to sell the Freemasons Arms, as it then was, to Andrew Nash. Nash, who held the licence until 1854, changed the name to the Woolpack, extended the building and introduced even finer accommodation and amenities. A later licensee, Nathaniel Payten, laid down a lawn bowls rink in place of the vegetable garden, and formed Australia's first lawn bowls club, the Woolpack Bowls Club. The inn closed its doors in 1888, when it was bought by the State Government to build a court house and police station, and moved across the road.

Thanks to Parramatta Historical Society for the information for these articles.

ANDREW NASH'S MAGPIE

The *Sydney Gazette* of 9 June 1840 records that Andrew Nash, the landlord of the Woolpack (see main story) had a magpie, which had been with him for fifteen years. The bird was noted for its 'extraordinary sagacity and facility of speech', and Nash had refused three hundred pounds for it. It used to perch at the front of the house, and if it saw anyone passing in a hurry, it would cry out "Too late for coach – better stop here tonight – good house this." If he saw any person going in or out of the house inebriated, he screamed "Drunk again! Drunk again!" and sometimes, where he was acquainted with the parties, he used to attach their names to his exclamation. The report says 'there is no instance in natural history that can compare with Nash's magpie'.

THE TRAVELLERS' REST INN

Not all inns in Parramatta enjoyed success. The Travellers' Rest Inn, together with two cottages, was built on the corner of O'Connell and Hunter streets in the late 1830s. It wasn't a paying concern and didn't operate for long. The Benevolent Society acquired the buildings, and aged women were cared for there until the 1950s.

For many years after that, the buildings lay disused and deteriorating. Conservation orders were placed on them, but the owners said they couldn't afford the approximately \$1M required to bring them up to standard. But money must have come from somewhere, because the buildings are now restored and occupied (see picture).



HUNTERS HILL HISTORICAL
SOCIETY INC

ABN 72012103152

Address Mail To
The Secretary
Hunters Hill Historical Society Inc
PO Box 98 Hunters Hill NSW 2110
Phone 98799443
Email:
museum@huntershill.nsw.gov.au
Editor: Ian Adair

Hunters Hill Historical Society Inc

Officers for 2016-2017

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Hunters Hill students visit our museum



Year 1 and 2 students from Hunters Hill Public School visited the museum on two days during September. Top: Graham Percival was the centre of attention as he answered students' questions. Bottom: Year 1 students in front of the World War I German gun.



NASTY SMELL IN HUNTERS HILL

After the termination of the council's business at Hunters Hill on Friday night, in general conversation it cropped up that Hunters Hill, the model suburb, had been invaded – and its sense of propriety, vandalised – by the establishment of a boiling-down establishment* on the confines of the Lane Cove River, and Alderman Brown assured his brother aldermen that the smell was very noisome and injurious. This statement was corroborated by a person who volunteered the information that “you could cut it with a knife”.

*The process of rendering fat from the carcasses of animals to produce tallow.

Extract from the River Times, 16 August 1893

WEBSITE ATTRACTS ATTENTION

It appears our new website is helping to attract attention to our museum. Over the last couple of months, we've had visits from French students brought to Hunters Hill under the Le Vesinet exchange program, the Parramatta Historical Society, when over 30 members came to visit and were taken on a guided tour by Graham Percival, visits by years 1 and 2 from Hunters Hill Public School, and this month we'll be hosting the Holdsworth Community Centre, Woollahra.

Our website is

*huntershillmuseum.org.au
and is continually being updated.*

All aboard for a heritage talk

Peter Cane, a volunteer from the Sydney Heritage Fleet, was our guest speaker after the August General Meeting.

SHF has 600 volunteers, and an operational fleet of seven vessels, five of which are over 100 years old. They include the flagship steam launch *Lady Hopetoun* (1902), the steam tug *Waratah* (1902), the gentlemen's schooner *Boomerang* (1903), *Protex* (1908) and the tall ship *James Craig* (1874). Younger boats include inner-harbour ex-RAN harbour workboat *Harman* (1943) and general Botany Bay workboat *Berrima* (1955).

Restoration projects include the coastal steamer *John Oxley* (1927), the pleasure speedboat *Kookaburra II* (1956) and the ferry *Kanangra* (1912). Peter was accompanied by **David Logie**, who is an expert on *Kanangra* (the name means beautiful view). It was decommissioned in 1983 and given to the National Maritime Museum by the NSW Government in 1983 together with a gift of \$75,000 to go towards restora-

tion. It's still in the water, but the cost of restoration has been estimated at \$5.5M.

Kanangra was built by Mort's Dock Company on the slipway at Clarke's Point, Woolwich, and was launched on the 14 August 1912. It has a steel hull, with Australian cedar windows and New Zealand kauri decking. Up to 1959, it was powered by a triple-expansion steam engine. From 1959 to 1987 the ferry ran economically with a Crossley eight-cylinder diesel engine. For its final 25 years it was the “heavy lift” ferry for the inner harbour services run by the NSW Government.

