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# "Bunk"

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

## Truganini and the Jeannerets

### Diary Dates 2017

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

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

**Thursday 31 August**  
**Morning Tea 10am in**  
**the Museum**

**Followed by**  
**ANNUAL GENERAL**  
**MEETING**  
**IN THE COUNCIL**  
**CHAMBER**  
**Commencing 10.30am**

**GUEST SPEAKER**  
**Brian Scott**

**Will speak on his book**  
**THE BUSINESS OF THE**  
**LANE COVE RIVER FROM**  
**1788**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF MEM-  
BERS WILL BE HELD IN HUNTERS HILL  
COUNCIL CHAMBER ON THURSDAY  
31 AUGUST 2017 AT 10:30AM.  
BUSINESS

1. TO ADOPT THE ANNUAL AND  
FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE  
YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2017
2. TO ELECT OFFICERS AND  
COMMITTEE MEMBERS.
3. TO TRANSACT ANY OTHER  
BUSINESS.

TONY SAUNDERS HON. SECRETARY

Nominations for the Committee  
close 7 days before the AGM.  
Please contact the Secretary on  
98171432 if you wish to receive a  
nomination form

Hunters Hill Historical Society is currently digitizing its extensive collection of pictures. During this process,

we discovered the photograph shown here.

There is a notation on the back, 'Truganini, last of the Tasmanian aborigines, with John Woodcock Graves.'

Historian Beverley Sherry has verified that the woman is Truganini.

Graves (1829-1876), arrived in Van Diemen's

Land with his parents in 1834. He became a solicitor and barrister in Hobart.



### VALE JOHN ARMATI

John Armati OAM (1940-2017) was an active member and supporter of Hunters Hill Historical Society. On behalf of the Armati family, he assisted the Society by generously funding the first tranche of plaques, east of the Overpass to mark significant people and places in the municipality. The Armati family also covered the cost of publishing the booklet, *Hunters Hill Heritage Walks*, which illustrates various walks that highlight the location of all 70 plaques. Society President Chris Schofield said John Armati's contribution had ensured that residents and visitors to Hunters Hill, as well as future generations, would be made more aware of the suburb's unique history. He said that John Armati had demonstrated his commitment to and love of the area by his practical support, and the Society was especially grateful to him.

Graves was described as genial, eccentric and generous.

He took a great interest in the aborigines of the colony and denounced the actions of early settlers that had led to extermination of

their numbers. He was a friend and protector of Truganini (1812-1876), said to be the last of the full blood Tasmanian aborigines..

So, how did the picture get into our archives? Well, it was a case of mistaken identity. It was thought the man was Charles Jeanneret's father, Henry.

Henry Jeanneret, (pictured above), was born in Gloucestershire in 1802, and graduated in medicine at Edinburgh. He emigrated to Sydney in 1829 and practiced mainly in dentistry. He married Harriett Merrett, and in 1834 they moved to Hobart. Their son Charles went with them. Henry subsequently entered the service of the Crown, and in 1842 was posted to the aboriginal settlement on Flinders Island as

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## The 'last word' on Thomas Muir

Beverley Sherry advises that *Thomas Muir of Huntershill: Essays for the Twenty First Century*, edited by Professor Gerard Carruthers and Don Martin, is *the* book to read on Thomas Muir and the Scottish Martyrs.

Thomas Muir and his four companions, who later became famous as the Scottish Martyrs, were among the prominent figures for reform that emerged in Britain in the late eighteenth century. In 1794 they were sent to the New South Wales penal colony for 14 years for

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June Beck

Dorothy Cubban

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superintendent and surgeon. The settlement was called *Wybalena*. He took his duties with the aborigines seriously, and waged war against the authorities, who rejected his ideas. Lt Governor Denison wrote: *'The whole thing is a tissue of absurdity from end to end. If Dr Jeanneret had his deserts he would be whipped like an unruly schoolboy, and his whelp of a son as well.'*

In 1844 he was suspended, went to England to fight his case, and was reinstated in 1846.

The Jeanneret family returned to England in 1851, but Charles later came back to Australia.

While he was at *Wybalena*, Henry came into contact with Truganini, who was living on the settlement. She was called Lallah Rookh by the previous superintendent, George Augustus Robinson, who gave the aborigines fancy European names. She was known as a rather independent character. She had a husband, but 'didn't take much notice of him.'

Information for this article from *Wybalena And The Jeanneret Family*, Roma Williams, and *The Case of Dr Henry Jeanneret*, R.W. Halliday, with advice from Beverley Sherry.

### Thomas Muir and the Scottish Martyrs

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'propagating seditious ideas undermining the security of the State', having been inspired by the French Revolution. The British ruling classes were concerned that their revolutionary ideas might spread to Britain and contaminate its population. When they arrived in Sydney Cove, they were not treated as common felons. On the orders of Judge Advocate David Collins, they were given brick huts in a row on the eastern side of the cove, away from the convicts. Muir was assigned two convicts, and was able to purchase land. This was 'a small farm across the water,' as he wrote to a friend. Just where this farm was is a matter of conjecture. In an 1831 biography, it was suggested Muir had named his farm *Huntershill*, after his father's home in Scotland. This appears to have raised speculation, particularly in this area, that Muir was responsible for the name Hunters Hill in the colony. In fact, the 'district of Hunters Hill', not Huntershill, was named in government documents before Muir arrived, and is accepted as honouring Captain (later Governor) Hunter, who charted the harbour. Although barred from expressing his political views, Muir was allowed to go about his business, doing legal work for friends and working his farm. Of the five Scottish Martyrs, only Muir and one other were Scottish, the other three being English. Only one returned to Britain after serving his full sentence.

In 1796, Thomas Muir stowed away on an American ship to France, where he died on 26 January 1799. **Thomas Muir of Huntershill: Essays for the Twenty First Century may be obtained from Amazon.com**

### Boarder's bravery in convent fire

What was described at the time as a "sensational fire" took place in Hunters Hill 110 years ago.

Early one Saturday morning in April 1907, the School and Convent of the Sisters of St Joseph, at the junction of Mary Street and Gladesville Road, burnt to the ground.

As *The Catholic Press* newspaper stated: "In less than half an hour only smoking ruins indicated that the convent and school ever existed".

The buildings were constructed of weather-board which meant the flames quickly took hold.

The newspaper said that the fire was remarkable for the quiet heroism of the inmates and particularly for the unusual presence of mind of one of the boarders – a 16-year-old girl, Jessie Barrett.

Jessie was the first to awaken to the danger and warned the rest of the household.

In all, five Sisters and seven boarders were in residence.

The nuns were asleep, as were the girl boarders in their dormitory on the other side of the corridor.

Of Jessie's actions in raising the alarm, *The Catholic Press* said: "Shortly after midnight, there

### A midden in my garden

In 1940, we lived at 21 Joubert Street North. The Lane Cove River was not far away; it has all changed now.

In a sheltered part of the property, under the shade of some gum trees was an Aboriginal midden. It didn't look very exciting, just a grey area with some shells in a shallow depression. Presumably that was where an Aboriginal family would sit down to eat. We didn't think much about it, we didn't disturb it, though. In 1960 the government decided to replace the old Gladesville Bridge. It meant they needed to resume our land for the approach roads we have now. Our house, together with much older ones, St Malo and Mary Reiby's Cottage, had to go. The little Anglican church of St Mark's was taken down stone by stone and rebuilt elsewhere.

The Aboriginal midden must have disappeared in an instant, as the huge bulldozers dug right down three and a half metres to the level of the new road. You can still see the various layers of rock and soil they had to cut through at the side of the road.

Aboriginal middens, like the one on our land, are now carefully excavated by archaeologists, layer by painstaking layer. There used to be lots of these middens in the area.

Traditional Aboriginal eating habits are quite different from ours. They think us quite strange. You eat whatever is in season. If there is a certain kind of fruit available, you eat mostly that, with perhaps a bit of something else.

There were bones, as well as shells in the middens, and they would have built some sort of shelter nearby. *Marilyn Wilkin 2010*

was a pattering of bare feet in the hallway, a beating of hands on the Mother Superior's door and a loud voice crying on her to waken." It went on: "Five minutes afterwards, nuns and children stood out in the playground and saw a blackened tangle of iron crash down on the beds in which they had been sleeping".

Apparently the last to leave the burning building was the Mother Superior who attempted unsuccessfully to save the Blessed Sacrament in the oratory.

The newspaper added: "Eleven lives depended on Jessie Barrett's courage on that momentous night and the calm-eyed little Australian maid came through the ordeal as triumphantly as a brave man in the battlefield".

It said Jessie became the star of the moment with reporters besieging her and half the newspapers of Sydney seeking her photograph.

The complex belonged to the Marist Fathers' Parish. While other arrangements were made for the school and convent, the Sisters and their boarders took up temporary accommodation at the Mother House in North Sydney.

At that stage, the Sisters of St Joseph had been established at Hunters Hill for 25 years.

*Chris Schofield*