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“Bunk”

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

Diary Dates 2018

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

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

**Thursday 26 April
Morning Tea 10am in
the Museum
Followed by
GENERAL MEETING
IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER
Commencing 10.30am
GUEST SPEAKER
CATHY DUNN
LAW AND ORDER
IN SYDNEY
1788 TO 1800**

Cathy Dunn reviews some of the cases brought before the Court and Magistrates' Bench in Sydney, their outcomes and punishments.

William Pignuenit, one of Hunters Hill's famous artists

A Hunters Hill man became known as the first Australian-born great landscape artist. He was William Charles Pignuenit (1836-1914).

Born in Hobart, he was the eldest son of English-born Frederick Le Geyt Pignuenit, of French Huguenot origins, and his English wife, Mary Ann. His father had been sentenced to transportation to Van Diemen's Land for trying to sell Government stores.

awe at the raw beauty of nature. In essence, it was a more European way of looking at Australia.

His paintings sold slowly until an influential admirer of his works persuaded the government to buy six of his paintings which are now in Hobart Art Gallery.

By the late 1870s Pignuenit had moved to Sydney to live close to his cousin, Alfred Randall, in Avenue Road, Hunters Hill.

Randall was a surveyor for the New South

Department of Railways. Randall, another admirer of Pignuenit's work, built for him a stone cottage next door. A special studio was added on at the back for Pignuenit to work in.

Just as he had done in Tasmania, Pignuenit travelled widely looking for natural scenery for his landscapes. His subjects included the Darling, Nepean and Hawkesbury Rivers as well as the Lane Cove

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At the time of Pignuenit's birth, his father was a clerk in the Colonial Convict Department in Tasmania. Pignuenit was tutored in drawing and painting, firstly by his mother, a private school teacher. He was later commended for his superior drawing, mapping and penmanship abilities.

In 1850 he was appointed a draftsman in the Tasmanian Lands and Survey Department. However, in 1872, he resigned from that post to devote himself full time to landscape painting.

Pignuenit's native Tasmania inspired most of his early paintings. His style was what is termed romantic realism, imbued with Victorian and Gothic overtones. His works are redolent with Celtic mists and a sense of

HERITAGE VISITS WANTED

Do you have a heritage dwelling in Hunters Hill? Would you welcome a visit from limited numbers of members of our Historical Society? Of the occasional visits we do during the year, those to local historical buildings are the most prized. If you are willing to open up for a morning visit, please contact Tony Saunders 9817 1432

HUNTERS HILL HISTORICAL
SOCIETY INC

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River close to his home.

He joined a group of artists in the Blue Mountains, where he had what was said to be 'the first opportunity of illustrating our mountain scenery from the points where it can be studied to the best advantage, from the bottom of the gorges instead of the summit of the ranges'.

It was at this time that he became one of the founders of the Art Society of NSW and one of its major exhibitors.

In 1898 and 1900 Pignuenit visited Europe. His work was included in an exhibition of Australian Art in London and the Paris Salon.

In 1901 one of his finest canvases, *Thunderstorm on the Darling* won the Wynne prize in Sydney. In 1902 the NSW Government commissioned him to paint Mount Kosciusko for £175 and £25 expenses.

Pignuenit died at his home at the age of 78 shortly after an appendix operation. He was buried in the Field of Mars Cemetery at Ryde.

Some of Pignuenit's paintings now fetch in excess of one hundred thousand dollars at auction. Hunters Hill Historical Society is proud to have been bequeathed one of his works.

Chris Schofield

How the Rum Corps hijacked the Colony's currency

When Captain Arthur Phillip, tired and ill after almost five years in charge of the Colony of New

South Wales, was granted leave to return to England in late 1792, no replacement had been appointed. The government of the Colony passed to the Lieutenant Governor, Major Francis Grose. As Commander of the 102nd Regiment of Foot, or New South Wales Corps, Grose issued orders that the Colony would pass from civil to military rule. This was a decision he, and others, would live to regret; it gave the officers of the Corps the opportunity they were looking for. Many had joined the Corps with the intention of making fortunes, as had happened in India. Grose allotted them large areas of land and convicts to work it. As almost the only men of means in the Colony, they became de facto merchants, importing goods and reselling them at exorbitant prices. They imported wheat and stills to manufacture rum.* When the Hawkesbury Valley was settled in 1794 and the grain from its farms became plentiful, they found it was more profitable to turn it into spirits than sell it for food.

The flood of liquor became a prime cause of drunkenness and lowering of moral standards. And because the Colony had no official currency, using only small quantities of coins brought in from other countries on ships, rum filled the vacuum. As the New South Wales Corps pro-

duced most of the rum, they controlled the means of exchange. Hence the name Rum Corps.

As the Colony grew, it became obvious this situation could not continue. Lieutenant Governor Grose had gone home, and there was little improvement under Governors Hunter and King, although King tried to regulate the foreign coinage in circulation.

Lachlan Macquarie arrived in 1809 as Commander of the 73rd Regiment of Foot, and was subsequently appointed governor. The 102nd Regiment, or Rum Corps, was disbanded. Many of its former officers had become farmers or gone into business.

In 1813 the British Government sent 40,000 Spanish dollars to the Colony. Macquarie had the centre punched out, the outside portion being called the 'holey dollar' and the solid centre the 'dump'. The coins were stamped with the words 'New South Wales.' These were used as currency until 1825, when the British Government passed the Stirling Silver Money Act, making British coins the only recognised currency in Australia.

So ended the Rum Corps' currency racket in New South Wales.

***The term 'rum' was used to cover all forms of spirits.**

The sign says it all

In its first stages of renovating the inmates' cemetery at the former Gladesville Hospital, the NSW Government has erected a sign at the entrance. It makes interesting reading:

'In closing this road to vehicles we begin to restore some respect to those whose remains are here in unmarked graves. Our community acknowledges their journeys of suffering, distress and abandonment. Designating this burial place will mark the beginning of a journey to honour their memory.'

'Initially known as the Tarban Creek Lunatic Asylum (1838-1868), the hospital was re-named Gladesville Hospital for the Insane (1868-1914) and finally known as Gladesville Hospital (1915-1993).'

'When the asylum opened on 29 November 1838, women were transferred from the Liverpool Asylum and the Parramatta Female Factory. In 1839, male patients were transferred here from the Liverpool Asylum, which then closed.'

'Overcrowding soon became an issue, and people's rights were routinely violated and their humanity ignored. It is now clear that many of the people incarcerated here may not even have had mental health issues as we now know them.'

'Almost all the graves are unmarked – an indication of the high level of ignorance and shame that pervaded attitudes towards those who experienced mental health issues in the 19th century. Burials began in 1869, and of those buried here we know names, dates of admission and death for 923 people. However we have no records for the first 306 burials.'

'This site is a poignant reminder that we must never again allow vulnerable people to be abandoned, devalued and hidden away. As you walk through this cemetery you are invited to reflect on the value of every person interred here and honour their hidden lives.'