



www.huntershillmuseum.org.au

"Bunk"

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

Diary Dates 2019

Museum Open
10am to noon
Tuesday to Friday
Mondays by appointment

Meetings at Museum
22 Alexandra Street
Hunters Hill

Thursday 28 February
GENERAL MEETING
In the Council Chamber
Hunters Hill Town Hall
Commencing 10.30am

GUEST SPEAKER

Wal Walker
Jane & D'Arcy
The Evocation of a
Lost Romance

2019

GENERAL MEETING DATES

Thursday 28 February

Thursday 2 May

Thursday 27 June*

Thursday 29 August (AGM)

Thursday 31 October

***WINTER LUNCH**

Visit to Harper's Mansion, Berrima

On Monday 15 October last, members of the Historical Society visited Harper's Mansion, in Berrima in the Southern Highlands. Harper's Mansion was built by James

signed as chief constable. The hotel still operates today.

The house that James and Mary built was originally known as Harper's Hill. Though not large by today's standards it was far grander than other



residences in the village, which were mainly slab cottages. James had high aspirations, his home was stylish, modelled on those favoured by the middle-classes in Sydney. The two-storey rectangular house has walls three bricks thick laid on a foundation of sandstone blocks. The sandstone probably came from

and Mary Harper on 100 acres purchased in 1834. From the early 1820s James Harper was a rural worker and later overseer on several large properties in the Southern Highlands. In 1829 he was appointed constable for the Sutton Forest district based at Bong Bong. He went on to become chief constable. When Surveyor General Thomas Mitchell surveyed a new line of road to link Sydney with the pastoral areas of the Monaro and the Riverina he selected the site of Berrima to be the district's centre. James no doubt saw an opportunity to better himself and bought land in the centre of the township on which he built The Surveyor General Inn, named after Mitchell. He became its first licensee in 1835 and re-

a quarry nearby and might have been worked by convicts. The bricks, too, are likely to have been made locally. It has hardwood floors, with cedar doors, windows, fireplaces and skirtings. In June 1844, James was nominated to the District Council of Berrima, and from this we can infer he was a man of substance and standing in the community.

The 1840s saw a general financial downturn and James was forced to mortgage the house. Had he lived, he would possibly have been able to service his commitments, but when he died in 1845, aged 39, Mary was unable to meet the debt and the house went to the mortgagee. He was buried in Sutton

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HUNTERS HILL HISTORICAL
SOCIETY INC

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**Hunters Hill Historical Society Inc
Office Bearers and Committee
2018-2019**

President Chris Schofield

Vice President Pat Cox

Secretary Tony Saunders

Treasurer Judith Butt

Committee

Dorothy Cubban

Barbara Gardner

Jan Griffiths

Peter Kelly

Ross McBride

Bob Mostyn

Jean Pritchard

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Forest churchyard. In 1853, the Catholic Church bought the property using it first as a presbytery then as a home for the Sisters of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, who ran a school in the village. From 1910 the house was rented until the church sold it in 1970.

When the National Trust acquired the house in 1978 it was in a very poor state, and extensive work was carried out to bring it back to its present condition. Only two acres of the Harpers' land remains. The house is now managed on behalf of the Trust by local volunteers.

After our inspection of this beautifully restored and historic property, we adjourned to the Surveyor General Inn for lunch. This brought back memories for Carolyn Percival, where she and her husband Graham were once licensees.

New display cabinet

The Historical Society has taken possession of a new timber display cabinet, constructed by the Hunters Hill Ryde Men's Shed. The cabinet was presented to the Society by members of the Men's Shed and unveiled by the Mayor of Hunters Hill, Councillor Mark Bennett on Wednesday 12 December. We thank the Men's Shed and congratulate them on the quality of the workmanship on the cabinet.



Top: The new cabinet

Bottom: Mayor Councillor Mark Bennett (right) does the honours



Christmas Banquet

Forty members and guests attended the 2018 Christmas Banquet at the Hunters Hill Club on Monday 3 December. President Chris Schofield welcomed everyone for an evening of Christmas cheer. Alister Sharp, president of the Hunters Hill Trust, was a guest of the Society. Our thanks to Jan Griffiths for organising the event.

