



www.huntershillmuseum.org.au

"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 28 June
WINTER LUNCH
IN THE FUNCTION ROOM
HUNTERS HILL CLUB
12 FOR 12.30PM**

**ORDER AND PAY FOR
LUNCH AT THE BAR**

**GUEST SPEAKER
ANGELA PHIPPEN
LOCAL STUDIES LIBRARIAN
RYDE LIBRARY**

**PLACES ARE LIMITED
SO BOOK EARLY
PHONE PAT COX
98171359**

Tour of war memorials proves popular

A large group came along for the RSL War Memorial Walk on Sunday 29 April. The walk was organized by Rod Stewart, past president of Hunters Hill RSL Sub-Branch, in association with the Hunters Hill Trust and the Hunters Hill Historical Society.

trophy, one of many presented throughout Australia.

We walked down Alexandra Street to the RSL hall, which is itself a listed war memorial. The hall houses mementoes of the Army Small Ships Squadron which was based at Woolwich Dock and served in Vietnam. Outside the RSL hall is a memorial wall.

Each year a ceremony is held at this wall before moving up to the Town Hall for the official Anzac Day event. We then moved only a few metres to a kerbside bronze plaque under



We did a tour of the war memorials between the Hunters Hill Museum and All Saints church. There is a surprising number of memorials in that short distance, and they are all on the NSW Register of War Memorials. We began outside the museum, where there are two me-



memorials, the Hunters Hill War Memorial* and the German howitzer captured at La Motte Farm, France, in the final months of WWI. The granite War Memorial obelisk pays tribute to citizens of Hunters Hill who served and died in World Wars I and II, Korea and Vietnam. The howitzer was presented to the Hunters Hill Municipality as a war

box tree at the corner of Alexandra and Ferry Streets. The plaque commemorates the planting of the tree by His Excellency Sir Walter Davidson on 13 September 1919 in honour of the patriotism of the youth of Hunters Hill.

It was another short walk to the grounds of All Saints Church, where there are two memorials – one to members of the AIF from

Hunters Hill who gave their lives in 1914-1918, and one to Corporal Walter Spier, who died in the Second Boer War at Cape-town in January 1901. It was erected by his friends.

Rev'd Michael Armstrong welcomed us into the War Memorial Hall, which houses

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SOCIETY INC

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the 1914-1918 Woolwich Roll of Honour. He then led us into the church, where he told us about the architecture of the building and showed us the stained- glass windows.

Our tour finished with morning tea in the RSL hall.

***The Hunters Hill War Memorial was originally erected at the corner of Woolwich Rd and Ferry St on 20 March 1927 and dedicated by the Governor-General, Lord Stonehaven.**

Pictures: Our group at the war memorial in front of the museum; Rod Stewart at the memorial wall in front of the RSL hall.

HUNTERS HILL WAR EFFORT

Historical Society member and past president of Hunters Hill RSL sub branch Rod Stewart has hopefully put to rest a dispute about whether Hunters Hill provided a higher proportion of volunteers to the Great War than any other area in Australia.

This followed questioning of the claim at a recent Historical Society general meeting.

Rod states that all over the country

Field of Mars commemorates colonial settlers

On the western border of Hunters Hill lies an historic area known as the Field of Mars. It was set aside by

Governor Phillip and originally covered 2,500 hectares, stretching over two kilometres from the Lane Cove River at what is now Boronia Park to North Epping. Land was granted to soldiers, convicts and free settlers in the hope they would become successful farmers. Among those to receive parcels of land in this area were eight marines.

Phillip named the area the Field of Mars as a reference to the Roman god of war. Soldiers and free settlers were given up to 120 acres each while emancipated convicts received 30 acres with a further 20 acres if they married and another 10 acres for every child. By 1809, most the Field of Mars had been allocated. However, a swathe of land along the Lane Cove River remained vacant and was designated as a common for local inhabitants to run stock and collect firewood.

In the 1880s part of the common was sold off by the NSW Government to pay for the construction of the first Gladesville Bridge and the Iron Cove Bridge. This land was developed into market gardens, orchards and poultry farms to supply the growing population of Sydney. The remaining common land became the Field of Mars Cemetery, which was proclaimed in 1887, and a public recreational area, gazetted as a wild-life refuge in 1979.

Some famous people have been interred in The Field of Mars Cemetery over the years. They include a state Premier, John Storey (1869-1921), composer Peggy Glanville-Hicks (1912-

there were localities big and small where all or most of the men signed up, but based on local government areas Hunters Hill had the highest proportion.

He added that at the re-dedication of the WW1 howitzer in 2015, the Hon. Joe Hockey quoted this statistic in his speech.

Rod also said Hunters Hill LGA achieved the trifecta when it also contributed most to the War Bonds and the Comfort Fund appeals, although he has been unable to ascertain whether these two items were in proportional or absolute terms.

His source for this information is a book on William Windeyer (Mayor of Hunters Hill between 1916 and 1924), which is held by the Hunters Hill Historical Society.

Windeyer's support included contributing 25 per cent of the building cost of the RSL Memorial Hall.

1990), Australian Test cricketer Archie Jackson (1909-1933), and several Hunters Hill residents - landscape painter William Pigenit (1836-1914), writer Rachel Henning (1826-1914) and organised crime figure, Lennie McPherson (1921-1996). The cemetery also contains reinterments from Gladesville Hospital Cemetery and St Anne's Anglican Churchyard in Ryde.

The public recreation area is a 56-hectare reserve which is bounded by Buffalo Creek. The woodland reserve contains some 300 plant species which support a wide range of animals from ringtail possums to birds such as finches, whip birds and wrens.

The reserve also has an environmental education centre which caters for school students to carry out fieldwork on environmental and sustainability education.

Chris Schofield

The Secret Garden

Go to the end of Alfred Street, Woolwich, close to the entrance to Kelly's Bush, and walk up a small path to your right...there you will come across what I have named the "Secret Garden". This is a discovery only recently made after years of neglect and overgrowth. We must thank Kelly's Bush Regeneration Group for their work in clearing the area of lantana and other noxious weeds which had completely taken over.

What they uncovered were stone retaining walls and steps and flower beds which made up the front garden of a villa which once stood on the site.

Sadly, there are no longer any signs of the house except a few stones or a brick or two scattered around.

The villa was built in the 1930s by workers from the adjacent smelting works for their manager.

Apparently, construction was commenced during the depression as the workers were under-occupied at that time.

When Kelly's Bush was under threat of development in the 1960s, the smelting works and the manager's house were vacated and gradually fell into disrepair.

Kelly's Bush Regeneration Group first worked on rehabilitating the immediate house site which included the outline of a tennis court as well as remnants of a hen yard and orchard.

Chris Schofield