



www.huntershillmuseum.org.au

"Bunk"

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

Diary Dates 2018

**Museum Open
10am to noon**

Tuesday to Friday

Mondays by appointment

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

Thursday 25 October

**GENERAL MEETING
In the Council Chamber
Hunters Hill Town Hall
Commencing 10.30am**

GUEST SPEAKER

Stewart Piggin

**The Churches in a Secular
Nation: A Revised Under-
standing of Australian
History**

VISIT TO HARPERS MANSION BERRIMA

On Monday 15 October the Historical Society will conduct a visit to historic Berrima, including a morning private tour of the National Trust Harper's Mansion, c 1836. A coach will leave the Museum at 9.30 am, and return at approx 4.30 pm. Lunch is at own cost, maybe at the historic Surveyor General Hotel, or BYO.

In the afternoon we can visit the 1830's Berrima Courthouse or take a stroll by the river.

Numbers are limited to 19. Book with the museum 9879 9443 or Tony Saunders 9817 1432.

VALE GRAHAM PERCIVAL

2018 President's Report

Chris Schofield presented the 2018 President's Report at the AGM on Thursday 30 August.

A highlight of the year was the development of links with Ryde and Lane Cove Historical Societies and we have begun a joint walks program with the Hunters Hill Trust. One of our members, Greg Griffiths is coordinating our involvement and leading some of the walks. Greg took over from Graham Percival, who led our walks for many years.

The Society presented a program of interesting speakers during the year and we enjoyed a visit to the Sydney Heritage Fleet. Our midwinter lunch was held at the Hunters Hill Club, as was our Christmas Dinner. Plans are in hand for the 2018 Christmas Dinner.

A project that has been earmarked for completion in the coming year is the publication of a revised booklet on the history of Hunters Hill. The initial booklet, of which we still hold copies, was produced over 30 years ago. Society member and well-known historian Gregory Blaxell has agreed to oversee its compilation. The new booklet is being made possible with the financial backing of the Mostyn Family Foundation.

VISIT BY HUNTERS HILL PUBLIC SCHOOL

During September it was our pleasure to welcome Year 1 and 2 students from Hunters Hill Public School to our museum. For the occasion, we put together a display of items that we thought the children would find interesting. We had typewriters, which the children always find fascinating; manual sewing machines, ticket machines and various toys and household items children are not familiar with today. We also took the opportunity to tell them a little about the history of our area and some of the early pioneers.



Historical Society pictures at Ironwood Café



Ironwood Café at Woolwich has installed a wall of old photographs—courtesy of the Historical Society. The images, depicting local scenes, were provided from the society's extensive digitised collection. Worth a look!

HUNTERS HILL HISTORICAL
SOCIETY INC

ABN 72012103152

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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

Graham Percival

Jean Pritchard

Convict Days in Maitland

Very few present-day citizens have personal knowledge of the atrocities of the convict days in the Maitland district, but many can tell of the tales told by their fathers.

High Street was a scene of torture and suffering for the wretched convicts. Immediately after it had been marked out, work began on laying gravel to provide a foundation for the road. The gravel was carried in boxes having four long shafts, but no wheels. Two convicts shouldered each shaft and carried the gravel, a cubic yard, to where it was required. The convicts were 'encouraged' in their work with the lash.

The same conditions prevailed along the Great Northern road out towards Singleton. At Harper's Hill, there was a tree which was

the centre of the most appalling brutality. Men were flogged there daily. An Anglican chaplain from Newcastle declared that a piece of human flesh as large as the first joint of his thumb struck him in the face, and he was 30 paces from the flogging tree. He said that on that occasion the ground around the tree was deluged with blood. The man who was responsible for such atrocities was said to have been partly crippled. Evidently, he was crippled in soul as well as body.

Master's son enjoyed the flogging

Magistrates at one period appeared to have the right to order the use of the lash for the slightest offence, alleged laziness, giving impudence, loss of anything entrusted to their care and other frivolous offences. In one place close to Maitland in 1834 an unfortunate convict had received 25 lashes in the yard of his master, and the master's wife called out that her little son had enjoyed it immensely. She asked that some of the flogging be repeated. Ten more lashes were added to the punishment.

Guyra Argus 14 November 1935

How great was the Great North Road?

How great was the Great North Road? Well, the truthful answer is that it proved to be not so great.

In 1825 the New South Wales Government began work on an inland road to connect Syd-

bridges, it had fatal weaknesses. It was isolated, had steep gradients, making horse-drawn travel difficult, insufficient access to water and feed for horses, and it bypassed existing settlements. But the decisive factor in its unpopularity was inroads made by steam ships.



Victoria Road Gladesville



Old Gladesville Wharf Bedlam Point



Relics can still be seen along the entire length of the Great North Road

People could travel between Sydney and Newcastle more quickly and comfortably.

The road started at the junction of Parramatta Road and Great North Road Five Dock and ran to Abbotsford Point. It then resumed on the other side of the Parramatta River at Bedlam Point, Gladesville and proceeded along what is now Victoria Road to the Hills District, then through Wisemans Ferry, Bucketty and Wollombi to the Hunter Valley. Most of it was eventually absorbed into urban and rural highways, buried beneath modern bitumen.

While it's true the Great North Road can't be called a great strategic success, it was evidence of the desire of the colonial administration of the day to provide the infrastructure to transform New South Wales from a penal settlement to a permanent colonial society.

All that is left of the original Great North Road is a 40-kilometre stretch through rugged country from Wisemans Ferry in the south to Bucketty in the north. This portion, named the Old Great North Road, remains relatively intact, and is promoted by the Convict Trail Project. It includes the oldest surviving stone bridges in mainland Australia. The road is closed to vehicles but can be walked over in two or three days. Part of the old roadway is of such cultural significance that it is included on both the Australian National Heritage List and UNESCO's World Heritage List.

Chris Schofield