

www.huntershillmuseum.org.au



“Bunk”

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

Little to mark thousands of years of occupation

The Historical Society is considering the possibility of a display of Aboriginal heritage at the museum.

Despite Australia’s indigenous community being the sole occupants of the Hunters Hill peninsula for all but the past two centuries or so, there is little now to show for their presence. The Historical Society would like to remedy this situation. Some could argue it is too little, too late but the Historical Society maintains it is worth making the effort to recognise Aboriginal engagement.

While much has been written about our suburb’s European settlement, details of indigenous activity are sketchy to say the least.

It is generally accepted that the Aboriginal people who occupied the peninsula belonged to the Wallumedegal or Wallumattagal clan. Their name was derived from either the word for snapper fish – wallumai – combined with matta, meaning a place of water, or the spiny rush plant which grows prolifically in the area. These early inhabitants possibly referred to the area as Moco Boula, meaning two waters, specifically the Parramatta and Lane Cove Rivers. Jules Joubert, one of Hunters Hill’s pioneers, used the name for one of his houses at 65 Alexandra Street. It is interesting to note that Joubert wanted to use the name Moocooboola for the newly established municipality; he was unable to convince his peers and the name Hunters Hill prevailed. However, Moocooboola survives as the name of the local community festival.

There are believed to be several dozen Aboriginal archaeological sites in the Hunters Hill Municipality. Their exact whereabouts have been generally kept secret, which is partly a deliberate policy to keep them safe from vandalism. They have become over-

grown and mostly inaccessible and any evidence of Aboriginal occupation has diminished. These sites indicate that indigenous people were active on the peninsula, although the length visits may have been only to eat a meal from fish caught in the surrounding waters or to stay just a few days. As the majority of the sites are close to the shoreline, this leads to the conclusion that access to the peninsula was mostly by canoe. There are said to be three main areas showing signs of aborigi-

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Diary Dates 2019

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

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

Thursday 17 October

**Tour of the
Australian Army Museum
of Military Engineering
Holsworthy**

**SEE FLYER WITH THIS
NEWSLETTER**

**Phone Tony Saunders
98171432 or Museum
98799443**

With identification details

Thursday 31 October

10.30am

GENERAL MEETING

**In the Council Chamber
At Hunters Hill Town Hall
Morning tea will be served
at 10am in the museum**

GUEST SPEAKER

BRUCE SHYING

**Seafaring Yarns:
Women and The Sea**

DONATION OF THOMAS MUIR BOOK

Beverley Sherry has generously donated a signed copy of *Thomas Muir of Huntershill—Essays for the Twenty First Century*. It includes her essay *Thomas Muir’s Short Life and Long Legacy in Australia*.

URBAN IDYLL

Hunters Hill resident, feminist and educationist, Maybanke Anderson (1845-1927), wrote this description of the suburb in 1926:

“The long peninsula which bears the name of Muir’s home remains almost unaltered. On the grassy slopes of its narrow streets possums play in the moonlight. In its leafy gardens birds find green sanctuary. No rumble of trams, no shriek of trains disturbs its abiding peace. While time deals gently with its crumbling walls, behind them the tender grace of a day that is gone lingers about the old-world houses and gardens”.

While Anderson contended that Scottish martyr Thomas Muir was the source for naming Hunters Hill, later historians are of the view that the suburb was named after the second governor of NSW, navy officer John Hunter.

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2019-2020**

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nal occupation – near Woolwich Dock, at Kelly's Bush in Woolwich and in Boronia Park. There are also a couple of sites within private properties. These sites have been recorded as being rock shelters, axe-grinding grooves in the rocks, middens consisting of discarded shellfish and even human burial grounds. The subject of the pictures in the rock shelters are not readily identifiable, having faded because of weathering or by graffiti which has obscured them.

Human skeletal remains were discovered many years ago. Two skulls were located near the Woolwich Dock area- a woman and a juvenile. A third skull was found nearby. Two of these skulls are recorded as being in the possession of the Australian Museum.

If you have any pictures, information or suggestions for the display, please contact the Museum by emailing contact@huntershillmuseum.org.au or better still, bring it in!

The Ernest Street Precinct— continued

Opposite No 3 is a lane which provides vehicular access to residents along Madeline Street. It had remained nameless all these years until I contacted Council and suggested either the name of Hillman Lane or perhaps, Hoad Lane – i.e., to honour Lew Hoad, the tennis player, who had lived at No 6 Ernest Street. Councillors did not like these suggestions, however they agreed to Ernest Lane. Shortly after this a street sign was erected!

And yes, Lew Hoad and his wife, Jenny (formerly Jenny Staley) lived in “Malvern” – (this was originally a school) on the northern end of Ernest Street. Later he moved to Spain to set up a tennis camp and sadly he died far too early of cancer! Jenny Hoad, I believe, is still alive and has been seen attending the Hopman Cup in Perth as a guest. She would be in her eighties by now. Back in 1968 my wife attended a fund-raising lunch there for the Hunters Hill Pre-School, and although the

Hoads had moved overseas, Lew's many Tennis Trophies were still on show in the house. Vera Hillman sold ‘Alroy’ in the mid 1970's to local business men, Geoff and Glenn who restored the house. At the same time, they ran a grocery and small goods business in Alexandra Street in the property which is now known as, ‘No 54’ – a popular restaurant.

Following the death of Gladys and Vera Hillman, Vienna Cottage was purchased from their estate by the National Trust of Australia (NSW) in 1984. The Hillman Orchard, next to “Vienna”, was eventually given to Hunters Hill Council and provides an open space for the enjoyment of residents.

No 5 Ernest Street is now owned by the Hillmans' great-grandnephew, Adrian McKenzie, who is an academic based in Canberra and the house is leased by tenants.

We have lived in No 3 Ernest Street for over fifty years – it is indeed an interesting precinct in which to live. **Ross McBride**

The many lives of 6 Ernest Street

The house at 6 Ernest Street was built in 1890 for Andrew Francis Lenehan.

The land the house is built on was part of *Potsdam* (25 Ernest Street) which was owned by his father, Andrew Lenehan, fine furniture maker.

The house was originally named *Huaba*, the Maori equivalent of Emoh Ruo. Rachel Henning lived there between 1900 and 1906. By 1912 the Malvern Preparatory School was being run by Mr Frederick Frith in a wooden building on the property. He renamed the house *Malvern*. The Preparatory

School was sold in 1914, and the Malvern School was opened by Rev. A.J. Rolfe in 1915.

On Rev. Rolfe's death in 1941 the school was taken over by his son-in-law, Mr A.D. Martin. The school continued until 1962 and at its peak would have had 100 pupils. Guy Menzies, the first pilot to fly solo across the Tasman was a student. The school's motto was *Aut Discere Aut Discede* (*Either Learn or Leave*).

In 1976, after the Hoads had left (see story above), the name was changed to *Ysabel*, after Jules Joubert's first small steam ferry. The name has since been changed back to *Huaba*.



Plaque to commemorate St Joseph's College student

On Friday 30 August 2019 representatives and guests of St Joseph's College held a short ceremony at Field of Mars Cemetery, East Ryde, to remember Peter Scanlan, the first student to die at and have his funeral celebrated at the college more than a century ago.

The College has had a memorial plaque commissioned and installed on his grave.

In January 1898, at the age of 17, Peter commenced at St Joseph's. He died from pneumonia in the College infirmary the following August.

Peter was the son of Patrick and Mary Scanlan from Eromanga, Queensland. His father died in 1892 leaving instructions in his will for the education of his son. Peter's remains have been in an unmarked grave, far away from his home town for 120 years. It is believed Peter's widowed mother was not able to make the trip from Eromanga to Sydney to visit her son's grave. She died exactly one year after Peter. The graveside blessing took place on the 121st anniversary of his death.

