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"Bunk"

"History is more or less bunk"-

HENRY FORD, Chicago Tribune, 1916

FOUNDED 1961
HUNTERS HILL
SEEK AND SAVE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Diary Dates 2020

OWING TO THE CURRENT HEALTH CRISIS THE MUSEUM WILL BE CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

THE APRIL GENERAL MEETING HAS BEEN CANCELLED

WELCOME ABOARD

The Society wishes to introduce Rebecca Nisbet, a third - year student at Macquarie University, who has been assigned to assist us with planning our proposed Aboriginal display at the Museum. Rebecca is studying to become a museum curator. Part of her studies includes a practical project in the community. She is keen to extend her knowledge of indigenous culture and its application in museum settings. We ask that you welcome Rebecca and support her in her endeavours on our behalf. The Society has been fortunate in securing a Commonwealth Government grant of $3,000 towards the project. This was made possible through the backing of our local Federal MP, Trent Zimmerman.

An act of kindness leads to international honours

An act of kindness by a Hunters Hill man led to him receiving an international award for his humane gesture.

The man was Milan-born Angelo Tornaghi (1831-1906) who emigrated to Australia in 1855 and rose to business and civic prominence in his new-found country. Tornaghi first worked as a Sydney agent for a London-based scientific instrument firm but later began making his own scientific instruments and clocks.

In Hunters Hill, where Tornaghi and his family lived, he devoted himself to its development and served for 13 years on the Borough Council, during which time he was Mayor on three occasions. He became one of the leaders of the expanding Italian community in the colony and it was for this that he earned overseas recognition.

In 1889, a French nobleman Marquis de Reys, with an eye to making a fortune, attempted to start a colony in the South Pacific. He induced 340 Italian colonists, seeking relief from the poor conditions in their homeland to pay to travel to his fledgling settlement.

They set sail from Europe aboard the ship Indie but on their arrival at Port Breton, which is now part of Papua New Guinea, they found that the Marquis had deliberately misled them. Although they had been promised they would find majestic public buildings, wide roads, rich arable land, and a beautiful climate similar to the French Riviera, they found they had been duped as there was hardly any development and the weather was inhospitable. The governments of both France and Italy described the Marquis's venture as a fraud.

Tropical diseases and starvation led to the deaths of more than 100 of the settlers. The remaining group then decided to try to reach Australia but their ship only got as far as Noumea before it was deemed unseaworthy. It was then that the Australian authorities stepped in with Colonial Secretary of New South Wales, Sir Henry Parkes, organising for the destitute settlers to be brought to Sydney. Once here, they were befriended by the local Italian community.
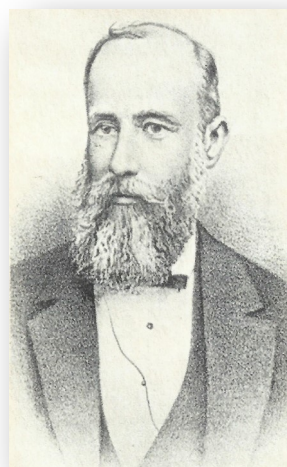
Angelo Tornaghi's journey across the world

Angelo Tornaghi was born in Milan in 1823. As a young man he supported the Italian patriots Giuseppe Garibaldi and Giuseppe Mazzini in their unsuccessful campaigns of 1848-9 to defend Rome against the French.

Following their defeat by the French, Garibaldi, Mazzini and many of their followers left Italy to make a new home in various parts of the world. Some came to Australia, including Tornaghi who arrived in Sydney in 1854. He married Antonia Maritti shortly after his arrival, and they had three children, Angelo Jnr, GarIbaldina and Remo.

Tornaghi established a business as a mathematical and scientific instrument maker and horologist at 312 George St, Sydney. When the Sydney GPO building was being built, commencing in 1866, Tornaghi was selected to design the building's clock. Unfortunately, because the clock face was difficult to see from street level, and then only from directly in front, it was unpopular with the public and was replaced with one with three faces which projected from the building's façade.

The Tornaghi family lived in a two-storey house at 31 Madeline Street, which he

**Hunters Hill Historical Society Inc
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2019-2020**

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An Act of Kindness

He provided them with their immediate needs and helped them to resettle by finding them accommodation and work.

Because of Tornaghi's philanthropic efforts, King Umberto 1 conferred upon him the distinguished honour of the Cross of Italy. As for the Marquis, he was tried for criminal negligence and imprisoned for six years in France. **Chris Schofield**

Angelo Tornaghi's Journey

purchased from Antonio Bondietti in 1866. He named the house *Milano*, and it later became known as *Clevedon*. He also bought and sold other properties in Hunters Hill. Tornaghi was an inaugural councillor when the Hunters Hill Municipal Council was created in 1861, and was mayor in 1879, 1882 and 1883. Angelo Tornaghi died in Sydney Hospital in October 1906 after a long illness, aged 83. He was buried at Waverley Cemetery.

Oronsay makes an unscheduled visit to Woolwich Dock

The Royal Mail Ship Oronsay set out on its maiden voyage from Tilbury in London on 7 February 1925 for a five-week voyage to Australia. Built by John Brown and Company of Clydeside in Scotland, the 20,000 tonne ship belonged to the British-based Orient Steam Navigation Company. She carried a crew of about 430 and was able to accommodate 600 first class and 1,200 second class passengers.

On reaching her first Australian destination in Brisbane, the ship struck a submerged object in the Brisbane River; she was forced to steam down the coast at reduced speed and was late in arriving in Sydney Harbour.

The Oronsay had been due to berth at Circular Quay but instead the ship's captain decided to have the vessel moored at Neutral Bay for a damage survey. A diver from the Mort's Dock Company was called in and carried out an examination. He discovered two of the blades on the port propeller were bent.

Arrangements were made for the ship to be floated into Mort's Woolwich Dock at high water for repairs. The blades were replaced by spare parts carried on board. At the same time, the hull was repainted. All this was accomplished in a turnaround time of just over a day. The Oronsay was repositioned at Circular Quay

where 2,000 boy scouts, girl guides and naval cadets were invited to look around and be entertained. The vessel was also thrown open to the public with an admission charge of one shilling in aid of the Hospital Saturday Fund of NSW. She sailed several days later, bound for her home port of London.

The Oronsay continued on the UK-Australia route until the outbreak of the Second World War when she was requisitioned as a troopship. On 9 October 1942, with some 476 personnel aboard, she was sailing unescorted in the Atlantic from Cape Town to the UK when she was torpedoed by an Italian submarine off Liberia. As the boats were being lowered, a second torpedo was launched, hitting one of the boats and killing five of those on it. In all, six crew members were lost; the remainder got the ship's boats away and were rescued after several days at sea. Two hours after the attack, and two more torpedoes later, the Oronsay sank. The captain was later awarded the CBE for courage and seamanship during and after the sinking. **Chris Schofield Picture: Workers repairing the damaged liner Oronsay in Woolwich Dock, 28 March 1925**

The ships named Oronsay

There have been four ships named after Oronsay, an island in the Scottish Inner Hebrides. The first, a screw steamer, was built in Glasgow in 1887 by Charles Connolly & Co. for carrying cargo. It was renamed *Hainaut* after 1900,

and wrecked off the island of Skyros, Greece in 1911. The second, also a cargo vessel and built by Charles Connolly & Co., was torpedoed by German submarine UC22 off Malta on 28 December 1916. The two liners with which we are more fa-

miliar are those built in 1924, whose story appears above, and 1951.

The second one was built by Vickers-Armstrong at Barrow-in-Furness for the Orient Line and competed in 1951. She also operated on the UK to Australasia service. In 1960 the Orient Line merged with P&O.

As jet airliner services between Europe and Australia expanded Oronsay spent more time as a cruise ship. However, declining passenger numbers and the oil crisis of 1973-4 forced her withdrawal from service. She was scrapped in 1975. **Picture: Oronsay from a 1925 Orient Line postcard**