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“Bunk”

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

Three hearty cheers for the Queen

This article is based on a talk given by Gil Wahlquist at the January 2012 meeting of Hunters Hill Proboscis Club.

The cry “The Russians are coming” was taken seriously in New South Wales just over 100 years ago, particularly in Hunters Hill. The British Empire, a few years before, had decided that the Australian colonies should defend themselves. Artillery regiments manned forts at harbour entrances.

In 1885 the government decided to recruit two regiments of volunteers in Sydney. On the night of Wednesday 29 April 1885, 98 men presented themselves at Hunters Hill Town Hall to form a company of volunteer infantry to defend the district. The medical officer, Dr Dansey passed 92 fit. Thanks were given to Mr Numa Joubert for offering the use of his pavilion at the Pleasure Grounds for drill purposes and to convey members of the corps in his steamers free of charge when going to or returning from drill.

The proceedings ended with three hearty cheers for the Queen. Six months later, in September, the Hunters Hill Corps went to Riverview for a rifle match against ten members of the St Ignatius College Cadet Corps. The cadets defeated the corps by 100 points. Something had to be done to get the corps into shape.

Senior subaltern of the corps was James Henry Watson, a department manager at David Jones*; he had previously served with the British militia and the Duke of Edinburgh’s Highland Brigade** in Sydney. Parades were held in Watson’s yard at *Corio*, 15 Ferdinand

Street.

The corps was ready the next year for a large camp at the Field of Mars; more than four hundred men were housed in tents for four days from 6 November 1886. Regiments included the 5th Regiment (Scottish Rifles) who were paying off their kilts at ten shillings a week.

The next public activity of the Hunters Hill Corps was the next year, in June 1887, the celebration of Queen Victoria’s Jubilee and their second anniversary. At 7 o’clock about forty sat down to dinner at the Gladstone Hotel. The Herald reported that “a large number of capital songs and recitations were rendered” and the night’s only toast was “Her Majesty the Queen”. Next morning a large proportion attended the service at the Anglican church. The Boer War began in 1899 and did not require the attendance of the Corps but Hunters Hill men volunteered to join a Bushmen’s Contingent.

The volunteer corps was largely an activity of the middle and upper classes. While they were being formed, 1,500 unemployed were demonstrating in Sydney.

*In 1889 James Watson joined with William Beard to form Beard Watson and Co., furniture retailers.

**Scottish volunteer corps formed in 1868 for the visit of Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh. It was disbanded in 1878.

SPECIAL EDITION

To allow members of the Historical Society to keep in touch while it is not possible to hold meetings, the committee has decided to publish additional editions of BUNK.

Some of the articles will be about people and events outside the scope of life in Hunters Hill.

We hope you enjoy them.

Hunting the Hun

In 1918 the following information was distributed around Hunters Hill:

THE HUNTERS HILL HUN HUNTING HUNDRED will fall in at Circular Quay on Monday July 1st, 1918 at 8:45am and will march, headed by the 2nd District Guard’s Band, to the Hyde Park Recruiting Depot.

Strong Posts will be outside the Café Francais, George St; W.D. & H.O. Wills Sales Branch, at the corner of Kent and Bathurst Sts; and in Liverpool St at the corner of George St.

A large number of those composing this “Hundred” are married men with families who have decided that despite domestic responsibilities, their place is in the firing line.

If you are willing to assist us, you can do so by swelling our numbers with recruits, by helping to strengthen the strong points, or by encouraging us en route by your cheers. Any of the undersigned will be glad to arrange for your inclusion with our “Hundred” and to join us in “Our Hut” at Liverpool.

W.R. GOULDING

C.E. HOLGATE

W.C. HOWARD

Joint Organisers

‘Meryla’, Hunters Hill
Tel: Hunter 58

This hidden gem of a secluded beach is in the Gladesville Hospital complex.

Head down Campbell Drive and walk along the path on the southern side of the football field, next to Parramatta River. Head east. Just up the pathway on the right are some decent steps leading down to this hidden beach.

There is a history board on the beach telling us all about it.

Dr Frederick Manning, who was the Inspector General of the Lunatic Asylum in 1868, decided that a secluded bathing area would be good for patients' recreation. So steps were constructed down to the beach and a building was erected - this building is no longer there.

The sign states - "The bathing house has been covered in so as to screen the bathers from observation and is all but ready for use, so that the patients will be able to enjoy their customary sea bathing during the summer - Dr Frederick Manning 1886"

It further states, "An excellent

Where is this and what is its history?

out-door bathing place has been made at the bottom of the general grounds, by



enclosing with piles a piece of Parramatta River, and erecting a shed and platform.

"Situated just beyond the perimeter walls, the substantial baths enabled countless patients to cleanse themselves in the cool

Harbour waters during the summer months. Saltwater bathing also alleviated the need to wash in the asylum's fresh water supply, which was scarce. The bathing complex comprised a series of sandstone sea walls, dressing sheds, hardboard boardwalks and timber pylons which encircled the baths with a protective shark net. When the modern hospital swimming pool was erected in 1956, the superseded sea baths were largely demolished along with a network of stone boundary walls. Still, sections of the sea wall survive, while some of the remnant shark net pylons can also be glimpsed at low tide".

Next time you are out on your Sunday walk, visit this delightful spot. You will probably be the only one there.

Tony Saunders

Picture: Bedlam Bay as it is today.

Is it a folly or a Bush House?

As you walk through the grounds of Gladesville Hospital towards Bedlam Bay, you'll pass what was once a garden, now barely recognisable, and a Gothic building, known colloquially as The Folly.

The Gladesville Hospital folly, or Bush

House, is part of a 19th century garden complex in the grounds of the Gladesville Hospital South Campus. It has been described at various times as a Victorian garden folly, guest house, tool house, gardener's store, and half-



way house for patients at the Gladesville Hospital. 'Bush House' is its most consistent name on contemporary maps and plans. An 1885 map shows the building surrounded by terraced rose gardens; architectural researchers suggest that in 1870 the complex included a gardener's cottage and a vineyard. A mid-20th century plan shows the rose gar-

den had disappeared and the site had been overrun by native bush.

The design of the building is out of character with the Government Architect's office at the time. Perhaps the inspiration for the structure came from within Gladesville Hospital. Dr Frederick Norton Manning, the superintendent of the

Gladesville Hospital after 1868, believed in the healing powers of nature and introduced animals and gardens.

Draft Conservation Analysis and Guidelines for the Gladesville Hospital, South Campus, which includes the area

the Bush House is on, was in the hands of the Heritage Commission and NSW Health Department as at May 1996.

Thanks to Friends of Gladesville Hospital for *The Bush House, Gladesville Hospital*, by Michael Bogle, published in *Australiana*, May 1996.

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