



www.huntershillmuseum.org.au

“Bunk”

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

The Don knocks Gladesville for six!

The day the legendary Don Bradman took the field at Gladesville is one which would not have been forgotten by those who attended. He produced a spectacle of batting which was a masterclass in cricketing prowess. The occasion was the annual fixture between Gladesville Hospital and The Sydney Morning Herald. It was held on the hospital’s oval, close to Victoria Road, on Wednesday 12 February 1930. Bradman turned out for the hospital in a show of support for the staff and patients. In fact, it seems he had been invited to a luncheon at Parliament House in Sydney but declined the invitation so as to be able to keep his promise and play.

In a vigorous performance, the master batsman gave a fine display of hitting. He sent the ball onto the roofs of nearby buildings or cleared them so as to disappear into the interior of the institution. At other times, he knocked chips off the tops of trees or

the ball flew over them to land in neighbouring streets among tram cars and motor traffic. On several occasions the game was held up during a search for the ball. To the last ball of the day, Bradman ran halfway down the pitch and struck it with the full force of his bat. When last seen, it was travelling due north. At the end of his two hours at the crease, he had scored 228 not out, including 20 boundaries, ensuring the

Gladesville Hospital team emerged victors. The whole event was witnessed by a crowd including scores of excited schoolboys and some 200 hospital patients. One commentator described the match as “a delightful ex-

hibition of good bowling, very fair fielding and an all-round sporting temper.”

The very same commentator was impressed when, at afternoon tea, Bradman spied a home-grown watermelon on the refreshments table. The commentator suggested that Bradman should take a cut from the red heart of it “without circumlocution or delay”. The commentator added: “To see him with flushed face and bright eyes, after his batting, get outside that wedge of pure fruit was a sight for sore eyes”.

After much urging, Bradman addressed the gathering, saying he would sooner play cricket than make a speech. As well, he gave an assurance that it was his intention to ensure the Ashes were brought home to Australia in the upcoming series later that year. And they were!

Chris Schofield



Cricket in Hunters Hill



It’s said that cricket has been played in Hunters Hill since before 1870, but the Hunters Hill Cricket Club wasn’t formed until 1874. Before that, cricket and other sports were played at Fern Bay near

Pulpit Point, at grounds near the public school and in Dr Plomley’s paddock, later known as Durham’s paddock on the south side of Church Street. Woolwich Cricket Club was formed in

(Continued on page 2)

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.

(Continued from page 1)

1899, largely through the efforts of C.A. Fairland, and continued until 1903 when lack of numbers forced amalgamation with Hunters Hill. In 1878 the Hunters Hill Amateur Athletics Club was formed, and regular meetings were held on land owned by D.N. Joubert on Ryde Road near Boronia Park; a grass cricket pitch was also laid down. Hunters Hill Historical Society has a collection of photographs of ladies' and men's cricket teams around the turn of the 20th century.

In May 1906, a match was held at the SCG between ladies' and men's teams. The men batted left-handed (see picture).

A cricket score book in the possession of the Historical Society shows that between September 1878 and February 1879 the Hunters Hill Cricket Club played matches against Stanmore, Ashfield, Gladesville Hospital, Burwood, St Leonards, Clyde, Ryde, Toxteth, Independent, Manly, NSW Artillery and Belvidere (*sic*). The last match of the season was played between East and West Hunters Hill teams.

In the early 1890s Hunters Hill Cricket Club competed in the Ryde District Competition against clubs ranging from Dundas and Carlingford to Drummoyne. Hunters Hill won the competition in 1897 and was awarded the Edward Terry Trophy. The captain was H.S. Dettman, headmaster of Sydney Grammar School.

In 1903 the club became a member of the newly formed City and Suburban Cricket Association, using the Boronia Park pitch as its home ground. In 1905 a turf pitch was laid, paid for by funds raised by the club.

Hunters Hill Cricket Club folded in 2000 when it was unable to field teams. Ryde Hunters Hill Cricket Club (The Pirates) was formed in 2003 and is one of the largest sporting teams in the area.

HUNTERS HILL HISTORICAL
SOCIETY INC

ABN 72012103152

Address Mail To The Secretary
Hunters Hill Historical Society Inc
PO Box 98 Hunters Hill NSW 2110
Phone 9879 9443

www.huntershillmuseum.org.au

Email:

contact@huntershillmuseum.org.au

Editor: Ian Adair

The cabbage king of Cockatoo Island

During his nearly two-decade reign as Cockatoo Island's Superintendent (1841 to 1859), Charles Ormsby gained a reputation for his willingness to bend the prison system to his will.

The son of a Church of England clergyman, Ormsby was born in County Roscommon, Ireland in 1798. He served with the Baronial Police and later the Royal Irish Constabulary before moving to Sydney with his family in the late 1830s.

In 1840, Ormsby arrived at Norfolk Island to commence an appointment as both the assistant superintendent and magistrate of the penal establishment. He was also made superintendent of agriculture, a position he used for personal gain.

This did not pass the notice of the island's Protestant chaplain who noted, in one of his diary entries, that Ormsby's proclivity for distilling spirits from sugar cane could have "fearful consequences".

Ormsby was also known to have clashed with Alexander Maconochie, the Governor of Norfolk Island.

Ormsby's short-lived tenure at Norfolk Island ended after he was put on trial for arranging the 'culling' of sheep by convicts. Although acquitted of the charges, Ormsby was found morally guilty by his superiors and dismissed.

Despite causing controversy, when Ormsby arrived back in Sydney, the *Sydney Herald* claimed that Norfolk Island was a utopia for convicts.

Further, the governor of NSW, George Gipps, appointed him superintendent of Cockatoo Island,

commencing 1 October 1841. Nevertheless, Gipps resolved to keep a tight leash on him. Consequently, Ormsby was forbidden from interfering with the military guard, made to take directions from the Principal Superintendent of Convicts and the Royal Engineer, and only permitted to leave the island twice a year – with Gipps' approval – for private business.

Despite these restrictions, Ormsby managed to uphold his ideas about disciplining prisoners. This included building solitary confinement cells and employing leg irons and the cat-of-nine-tails to keep the island's convicts in line.

When Sir Charles Fitzroy superseded Gipps as governor in 1846, Ormsby gained complete control of Cockatoo Island and treated it as his private fiefdom. He chose favourites among the convicts and had discretion to grant them privileges. Known for his wild temper, he earned the nicknamed 'Stormsby'.

In 1849, Edward Deas Thomson, the colonial secretary of NSW, launched a private investigation into Cockatoo Island, which revealed Ormsby had been running private enterprises. This included keeping 400 pigs, poultry and goats fed from prisoner rations and using convict labour to grow cabbages. In addition to pork and eggs, he had been selling up to 40,000 cabbages per year.

Ormsby was also accused of keeping more than the assigned number of convicts as personal servants and using the prison guard boat for personal use. He was reprimanded over the findings of the investigation, his livestock was confiscated, as was his boat, and he was forbidden from trading.

In 1857, Henry Parkes, editor of the *Empire* newspaper, commenced a media campaign to encourage a government investigation into the management of Cockatoo Island. The resulting inquiry – the fifth and final during Ormsby's reign as superintendent – revealed widespread corruption and illegal undertakings. These included the pervasiveness of alcohol and other contraband, convict boxing matches, and the poor discipline of prisoners. Despite having 26 charges brought against him, Ormsby was permitted to temporarily remain superintendent until a replacement was appointed. On 1 August 1859, Gother Kerr Mann, already engineer-in-chief of Cockatoo Island, succeeded Ormsby as superintendent. Ormsby died of a stroke at Millers Point in 1868, aged 70.

Thanks to Sydney Harbour Federation Trust The Evening News, Saturday 4 August 1900, page 9. Castrique, Sue, (2014) Under the Colony's Eye. Gentlemen and convict on Cockatoo Island 1839-1869. Anchor Books

EXCLUSIVE SUBURB By Kylie Tennant

In Sydney's early days it was not unusual for a resident of Hunters Hill to see a head bobbing along in the water; then its owner would climb dripping and shivering ashore. That was one way of reaching Hunters Hill, and the convicts of Cockatoo Island prison availed themselves of it. The resident would call reassuringly to the newcomer, "I haven't seen you," and set off for another part of the peninsula, comfortable in the knowledge that, should the fugitive manage the second swim across to Lane Cove, there were settlers at Pittwater or the Hawkesbury ready to welcome a quiet, well behaved farm hand.

The Sydney Morning Herald, 2 May 1953

Hunters Hill Historical Society Inc Office Bearers and Committee

2019-2020

President Chris Schofield

Vice President Pat Cox

Secretary Tony Saunders

Treasurer Peter Kelly

Committee

Judith Butt

Dorothy Cubban

Jan Griffiths

Dean Letcher

Ross McBride

Bob Mostyn

Jean Pritchard