

*We acknowledge the traditional custodians of Hunters Hill  
and show respect to Elders past and present.*



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# “Bunk”

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

## Sydney 1839 — Recollections of Jules Joubert

### NORA HEYSEN

Born 11 January 1911 in Hahndorf SA, Nora Heysen was the daughter of famous Australian painter Sir Hans Heysen. She studied art in Adelaide and in Sydney at the Julian Ashton School of Art. As her father was fairly well off, she was able to travel to London in 1934 to study art and paint for a few years.

She returned to Sydney and in 1938 became the first woman to win the Archibald Prize. It was a controversial choice with a few male artists at the time who thought a woman should not have been chosen.

In 1943 she became the first woman to be appointed a war artist with the rank of captain, serving mainly in Papua New Guinea. She completed over 170 works – a lot are with the War Memorial Museum in Canberra.

She moved to Hunters Hill in 1954 and her residence, The Chalet, in Yerton Street at the bottom of Ferry Street has one of the Historical Society plaques outside.

Whilst she painted some buildings, Nora mainly painted portraits, flowers and her favourite cats. She said, “my father has a copyright on gum trees.”

She died on 30 December 2003 at Hunters Hill and is buried at Hahndorf.

***Nora Heysen’s painting of St Mark’s Anglican Church in Figtree Road is in the Community Art Gallery.***

Even amongst Australians the Sydney people are daily “chuffed” for the pride they on all occasions evince about what they call “Our Harbour.” I must say that after Brest, Cork, Rio Janeiro [sic], and the Bay of Islands—even the far-famed Bay of Naples, all of which I have visited, and in turn admired—I did not anticipate any very great surprise at the first glimpse of Port Jackson.

But when, at daybreak, on that beautiful summer morning, I came on the poop of the brig *Martha*, and, for the first time, saw as we turned round the inner South Head this vast expanse of placid blue water—North Harbour and Manly on the right, Middle Head and Middle Harbour facing us, and Port Jackson on the left, with the Blue Mountains in the distance—all other harbours dwindled down to almost insignificance. As we sailed towards Farm Cove, and each succeeding bay, inlet, or headland were passed, my admiration increased.

I have spent many years in Sydney; very many days boating; have visited every nook and corner of that immense bay, and I must confess that the natives of Sydney have every reason to be proud of their “Harbour.” Sydney in 1839 was, as compared to its present condition, a very small village. It was a quaint, old-fashioned township, principally

occupied by Government officials—military and civil—troops and convicts—some already rich and arbitrary, the others still serving their sentence—obedient, even cringing—but holding their rich “pals” in perfect abhorrence.

It was in those days quite a common occurrence to hear of a woman arriving in the Colony as an emigrant, claiming her husband—a convict—as her assigned servant, and *vice versa*. Couples re-united in this wise have, in many instances, begun the world over again in Australia, and ended their days in affluence and respectability. Officers, public servants, in those days, when the male sex predominated, in many instances married their assigned servants, picked at random at the “factory” in Parramatta.

This may now seem outrageous, nevertheless in most cases the result of what may appear a most objectionable match, has proved quite the reverse from what might have been expected. It would not do even now to search too deeply into the pedigree of some of the Australians; but I will say that some of the most honourable, best educated, and highly refined men of the day, would, if their escutcheon was scratched, show beneath the emblazon-

*(Continued on page 2)*

I had not been very long in Sydney, when the French corvette—the *Aube*—called for stores on her way to New Zealand. Captain Lavaud, hearing that I had been there, asked me to accompany him, and act as his interpreter. On our way down to the Bay of Islands I learned that his orders were to take possession of New Zealand for the French Government. At the Bay of Islands, at a *déjeuner* given by

the Resident Magistrate, M. Lavaud indiscreetly mentioned the object of his errand in the presence of the commander of an English man-of-war brig. During the afternoon, whilst we were paying a visit to the French Mission the brig sailed; and when, a few days after we reached Akaroa, we found her at anchor, and the Union Jack flying on shore!! **Jules Joubert**

(Continued from page 1)

ments, a trace of the broad arrow on some part of it.

I do not wish, in making this statement, to say anything disparaging of these people—quite the reverse. The history of New South Wales is quite unparalleled in that of the world. The management of the penal settlements of Australia is one of the most striking instances of the thoroughly admirable system of colonisation on record. With a country like Australia—in view of its distance—the trying and capricious climate—the wretched poverty of the soil—it could never have been colonised by free emigration. It needed the indomitable energy, and the spirit of enterprise of a British Government, and the pluck of the Anglo-Saxon race, to cope with the difficulties of such an enterprise. ***This is an excerpt from Shavings & Scrapes From Many Parts, the memoirs of Jules Joubert.***

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## Hunters Hill memorials to Boer War soldier

In the grounds of All Saints Anglican Church, Hunters Hill there is a monument in polished pink granite. Listed in the War Memorials of NSW, it is to Corporal Walter Laishley Spier, who died in the Second Boer War in 1901. In the Hunters Hill Town Hall there is a small shield-shaped plaque adjacent to the large honour boards for WWI and WWII casualties; this shield also commemorates Corporal Spier. Who was Corporal Walter Laishley Spier and why have these monuments been erected in his honour? Walter Laishley Spier was born in South Melbourne in 1874 and enrolled at Caulfield Grammar School in 1888 as a boarder while his parents Walter and Charlotte lived in Hunter's Hill. In January 1889, as a 14-year-old he was enrolled at Sydney Grammar School, and his parents address was given as Alexander Street, Lane Cove. We believe Alexander should have been Alexandra Street as records have his parents moving into "Araluen" at 71 Alexandra Street, Hunters Hill in 1889. Spier was a station overseer in country NSW/Victoria when he enlisted for the Boer War on 13 February 1900; he gave his parents'

home address. He joined the NSW Citizens' Bushmen, the third mounted infantry contingent sent by NSW to South Africa. The contingent consisted of 30 officers and 495 other ranks, with 570 horses. He would have enlisted at Victoria Barracks, Sydney.

The CO was originally to have been Lt Col Harry Lassetter, a former British regular, now a reservist. He had led the Jubilee contingent in 1897 but due to business commitments could not accept command in 1900 so Colonel Airey, another regular, took command.

*The Australian Star*, Sydney, 27 Feb 1900 covered the farewell of Corporal Spier in part as follows: "DEPARTING BUSHMEN. Corporal Spier, B. Company, Bushmen's Contingent, eldest son of Mr. W. L.

Spier, 'Araluen,' Alexander Street, Hunter's Hill, received an enthusiastic send-off the other evening. The gathering took the form of a harbour excursion on the steamer *Rose* and was attended by about 150 of Cor-

poral Spier's personal friends, who assembled to bid him farewell prior to his departure for South Africa."

Spier sailed to South Africa on 28 February 1900. From April 1900 to April 1901, the Citizens' Bushmen served in Rhodesia, West Transvaal, including the defence of Elands River Post, and in northern Transvaal. He died of enteric fever (typhoid) at Woodstock

Hospital in Cape Town on 23 January 1901 and was buried in Maitland Cemetery, Cape

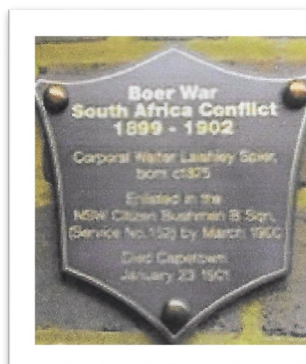
Town. He was posthumously awarded the Queen's South Africa Medal with clasps.

*The Sydney Morning Herald* of Friday, 1 March 1901 reported "At a well-attended meeting of the residents of Hunter's Hill and surrounding districts held at the council chambers, Hunter's Hill, on Tuesday last, at which Mr. Henry Deane, in the absence of the Mayor, occupied the chair, it was

unanimously decided, on the motion of Sir George Dibbs, seconded by Mr. Justice A. H. Simson, to erect a monument to the memory of the late Corporal Walter Laishley Spier, of the Bushmen's Contingent, who died at Capetown on January 23 last." The dedication of the memorial in the grounds of All Saints Church is described in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 May 1901.

Corporal Spier is also commemorated on the memorial at Maitland Cemetery, Capetown, South Africa. **Rod Stewart, past president of Hunters Hill RSL.**

**Pictures: Memorial to Cpl Walter Laishley Spier in the grounds of All Saints Anglican Church, Hunters Hill; Plaque in Hunters Hill Town Hall.**



## From the Newspapers

### EXPLOSION OF A CARTRIDGE AT HUNTERS HILL

While playing with a cartridge at Hunters Hill Yesterday afternoon, Charles Morris, aged 8 years, was seriously injured.

The boy picked up the cartridge somewhere and set it on top of a heap of lighted matches.

It exploded and he was badly burnt about the eyes and hand. He was taken to the Sydney Hospital, where he was admitted for treatment.

He resides at Ryde Road, Hunters Hill.

*The Daily Telegraph*, 23 December 1897