

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



[www.huntershillmuseum.org.au](http://www.huntershillmuseum.org.au)

# “Bunk”

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

## HUNTERS HILL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### Diary Dates

*Annual General Meeting  
of members:*

**Wednesday 28 August  
2024**

10 00 am for 10 30 am start in the  
Hunters Hill Council Chamber.

After the meeting our guest speaker  
will be Ian Burnet who will talk on the  
Voyage of the Able Tasman.

**Notification is hereby given that  
the Annual General Meeting of  
members will be held in the Hunt-  
ers Hill Council Chamber on  
Wednesday 28 August 2024 at 10  
30 am.**

#### BUSINESS : -

- 1.To adopt the annual and financial reports for the year ended 30 June 2024.**
- 2.To elect officers and committee members.**
- 3.To transact any other business.**

**Nominations for the committee  
close seven days before the AGM  
and forms are available from the  
museum.**

**Tony Saunders,  
Honorary Secretary**

## Nude carving shows artistic era of a home



The Paul Beadle carving above the kitchen fireplace at 16 Alexandra Street commissioned by Hal Missingham.

When Stephen Ryan and his family moved back into his childhood home Hayling, 16 Alexandra Street, he started to trace its history and was drawn to the stone carving of a naked woman above the fireplace in the kitchen.

It seemed a central place to start given its prominence, beauty and elegance representing an era of the house where art dominated its walls and artists its spirit from the mid 1940s. “I moved back with my wife Deb and our children to caretake after mum and dad went into aged care two years ago,” Stephen said. “My parents bought the house in 1982 from Hal Missingham who was an artist and also director of the Art Gallery of NSW from 1945-71,” Stephen said. “When Hal retired from the gallery he was presented with a book titled “Fully Bound” as a tribute to his work as a director and has more than 200 contributions of art, illustrated notes and poems from artists and admirers including Brett Whitely, John Olsen, Arthur Boyd, William Constable, Russell Drysdale, Max Dupain, Nora Heyesen, Sidney Nolan and Lloyd Rees.”

Hal Missingham AO was born in 1906 in Claremont, Western Australia. He was an apprentice process engraver for four years before moving to London to study painting

and lithography from 1926-32 and then exhibited his work there. Returned to Sydney in 1941 and had several successful exhibitions until 1945 when he was appointed Director of the Art Gallery of NSW. He was the first permanent director to fully embrace modernism and soon after his appointment began purchasing paintings by contemporary artists including Drysdale and Nolan. His achievements include increasing professionalism of the curatorial and conservation departments, establishing the Art Gallery Society of NSW and building expansion.

Stephen knew that a friend of Hal’s had done the carving but needed to know more and after finding an interview on the internet with Hal’s son Peter learnt the sculptor Paul Beadle had “chiseled a, a kind of motif relief of a siren woman in the sea – which was naked.” So Stephen invited Peter to visit his former home to view the carving and share his memories of living there.

The house was painted dove grey when Peter lived there and he described it as “a kind of dream, bounded by a pre-school, school and high-school.”

“I had a tricycle, Cyclops, and there were pathways and by-ways to the water and we would go down the back lane to Mount Street,” Peter said. “Artists and

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photographers would visit; Max Dupain, David Moore and Gordon Andrews. “Hal had a big party every year for his birthday on December 6 and there would be a big turnout of artists.”

On viewing the sculpture, Peter said: “It’s lovely to see that sitting there – rather nice.”

After Hal retired from the gallery he started painting again but then decided to move to Western Australia to be closer to his sisters and mother. He lived east of Perth in Darlington in an “artist colony”. Peter moved back into the house for a while after his father moved west and then he rented it. Tony and Adrienne Ryan bought Hayling in 1982 and there Stephen his brothers Patrick and William and sister Bridget grew up. Hayling was built in 1879 by Felix Cullen and is a weatherboard two-storey cottage with a generous garden. Stephen and Deb also own an historic cottage in Ryde Road. For Stephen and Peter the sculpture has been a mesmerising image connecting memories to their childhood home. (The Hunters Hill Museum has a Hal Missingham painting in its collection).

Kate Armati

### Hunters Hill Historical Society Inc

Office bearers and committee  
2023/2024

President: Rod Stewart

Vice-President and Secretary:

Tony Saunders

Treasurer:

Felicity McCaffrey

Committee: Dorothy Cubban, Jan Griffiths, Dean Letcher, Jean Pritchard, Chris Schofield

Newsletter editor: Kate Armati

HUNTERS HILL HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
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Peter Missingham admires the carving which he remembers in his childhood home.

## Banjo Paterson’s cottage history lives on

Historic Rockend Cottage, variously known as Rock End Cottage or Banjo Patterson Cottage, located at 40 Punt Road, Gladesville, has been recently in the news following a dispute between Ryde City Council and a restaurateur over renovations and repairs to the 19<sup>th</sup> century single-storey sandstone building. Situated on a rocky elevation overlooking Looking Glass Bay and the Parramatta River, the cottage was believed to have been constructed in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century by an Irish born builder named John Crotty. Punt Road was part of the then Great North Road, one of the main routes from Sydney to Newcastle. It was a substantially built residence with a verandah, seven rooms, a kitchen, a cellar and a large attic. Outside there was a yard with a water reservoir at the rear and a flower garden at the front. There was also an orchard and a bathing house at the riverside. By 1861, Crotty’s heirs were in financial difficulties and sold the cottage to a gentleman named Edward Craig Corner. He too got into financial difficulties and in 1866 the cottage was purchased by Emily Mary Barton, the widowed member of a leading local gentry family, the Darvalls. Various members of Emily Mary’s extended family lived at Rockend. One of those was her widowed daughter, Rose Paterson. Rose’s eldest son, Andrew Barton “Banjo” Paterson (1864-1941) (pictured) was resident at Rockend in the 1870s while he attended Sydney Grammar School. “Banjo” Paterson was born near Orange in rural NSW. After his schooling at Sydney Grammar, he was first a law clerk in Sydney and then admitted as a solicitor in 1886 before taking up literature as a career. His

claim to fame was through his writing. He is widely considered as one of the greatest writers of Australia’s colonial period. He was a bush poet, journalist and author. Some of his well-known



poetry includes “Clancy of the Overflow”, “The Man from Snowy River” and what is regarded as Australia’s unofficial national anthem, “Waltzing Matilda”.

What is not as well known about him was that he served as a war correspondent for The Sydney Morning Herald and The Age during the Second Boer War in 1899 and during the Boxer Rebellion in 1901. “Banjo” Paterson retired with his family to a property near Yass in 1908. He died from a heart attack in Sydney in 1941. He was aged 76. He is buried at the Northern Suburbs Memorial Gardens and Crematorium at North Ryde. As for Rockend, when Emily Mary died in 1909 at the age of 92, the house had various tenants until 1923 when it was bought by industrialist Harold Meggit, who established a linseed oil extraction factory nearby. The cottage was used as an office until the plant closed in 1974. The cottage gradually fell into disrepair but was saved from demolition and was acquired by the State Government for public use. This led to its lease as the Banjo Paterson Restaurant. Rockend is listed on the Register of the National Estate and State Heritage Register.

Chris Schofield

(Acknowledgement: City of Ryde)